

LI

CZECH  
LITERATURE  
GUIDE

CZECH  
LITERATURE  
GUIDE

TE

CZECH LITERATURE GUIDE



czech  
literature  
portal  
www.czechlit.cz

RA

TU

ISBN 978-80-7008-272-0



9 788070 082720 >

RE

**CZECH**  
**LITERATURE**  
**GUIDE**







Supported by the Ministry of Culture  
of the Czech Republic



© Institut umění – Divadelní ústav  
(Arts and Theatre Institute)  
First edition  
ISBN 978-80-7008-272-0

All rights of the publication reserved



# CONTENT

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>ABOUT THE CZECH REPUBLIC</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>A CONCISE HISTORY OF CZECH LITERATURE</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| LITERATURE 1900-45  | 13        |
| LITERATURE AFTER 1945   | 13        |
| <b>CONTEMPORARY CZECH LITERATURE 1995-2010</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| PROSE   | 20        |
| POETRY  | 26        |
| ESSAY   | 31        |
| LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  | 37        |
| THE BOOK MARKET   | 41        |
| THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC   | 48        |
| <b>CONTEMPORARY LITERARY LIFE</b>   | <b>51</b> |
| ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS  | 51        |
| LITERARY AND BOOK AWARDS  | 56        |
| FESTIVALS AND FAIRS   | 58        |
| EDUCATION   | 59        |
| LEGISLATION AND LITERARY AGENCIES   | 62        |
| LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES  | 63        |
| GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS   | 65        |
| LITERARY CAFÉS AND TEA-ROOMS  | 68        |
| ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSHOPS   | 71        |
| <b>MEDIA</b>  | <b>77</b> |
| LITERARY PERIODICALS  | 77        |
| CZECH LITERATURE ON THE WEB   | 82        |
| LITERARY PROGRAMMES ON TV   | 83        |
| LITERARY PROGRAMMES ON RADIO  | 83        |
| <b>CZECH LITERATURE ABROAD</b>  | <b>87</b> |
| VARIOUS LINKS   | 87        |
| OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN CZECH STUDIES SCHOLARS,<br>TRANSLATORS AND FRIENDS OF CZECH CULTURE | 87        |



# **DEAR READERS** **WITH AN INTEREST** **IN CZECH** **LITERATURE**

Allow us to draw your attention to our Czech Literature Guide. It presents a panorama of the contemporary life of Czech literature with a short historical overview. It has been produced for everyone who has an interest in understanding Czech literary culture and its milieu, from the specialist and scholarly to the active and practical.



## ABOUT THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic (CR) is a landlocked country with a territory of 78,865 m<sup>2</sup> lying in the centre of Europe. The country has borders with Poland, Germany, Austria and Slovakia, and is currently divided into 14 regions. Since 2004 the CR has been a member of the EU. At the end of 2009 there were 10.5 million people living in the CR; those aged 0-14: 1,488,000, 15-64: 7,425,000, 65+: 1,578,000. The capital is Prague with a population of approximately 1,249,000. A resident is someone who has a place of abode in the CR for 183 days or more during the year. Residents in the CR have full tax-paying status.

The history of the Czech state goes back to the 9th century (Greater Moravia) and the 10th century (the first Bohemian state). Historically, its periods of greatest political influence and cultural flowering were in the 13th and 14th centuries (the last Premyslids, Charles IV) and in the 16th century (Rudolph II). After centuries of rule as provinces of the Habsburg Empire (from 1620), Bohemia and Moravia became an independent national state (with Slovakia) in 1918 as Czechoslovakia. Between the two world wars Czechoslovakia was a democratic state with a highly developed economy. The communist period started in 1948. In 1989 Czechoslovakia changed its political regime. In 1993 the country was peacefully divided into two independent states: the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Václav Havel was the first president of the new Czech state. The current president is Václav Klaus.

The GDP per capita in CZK in 2010 was 361,986 (exchange rate EUR 1 = CZK 24.5) and the inflation rate in the year 2010 was 1.5 %. The Czech income tax rate for individuals' income in 2010 was a flat rate of 15 %. Corporate tax in 2010 was 19 %. Pension and investment funds paid 5 % corporate tax and the rate of corporation tax in 1992 was 45 % as compared to the present rate of 19 %. The minimum wage in the year 2010 was 8,000 CZK, the average monthly salary was CZK 25,803, but in the cultural sector only 22,233. The current unemployment rate is approximately 9.6 %.

The cultural sector is administered by the Ministry of Culture, with non-profit organisations playing an important role. Since 1989 the latter have taken the form of civil associations, non-profit companies, endowment funds and church legal entities involved in the provision of educational and cultural services, the majority of which are civil associations. In 1996 Forum 2000 was founded in Prague as a joint initiative of the Czech president Václav Havel, the Japanese philanthropist Yohei Sasakawa and the Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel. Since 2000 the Forum 2000 Foundation has supported the international NGO Market.

Approximately 15 % of the population has a university education and the proportion is growing. The number of households directly connected to the internet is rising dramatically. In the year 2010 it was 49.2 %, while 94.6 % of households used mobile phones (active SIM cards).

# A CONCISE HISTORY OF CZECH LITERATURE

## LITERATURE 1900–45

At the end of the 19th century Czech literary modernism was moving away from the prevailing realism. Anti-realistic tendencies and a resistance to the national literary traditions grew in the first decades of the 20th century, led by a desire to follow, imitate and even anticipate European trends. This can be seen particularly in the works of the poetists and later the surrealists, such as Vítězslav Nezval (1900–58). In interwar Prague there was a large community of authors writing in German, the most celebrated being Franz Kafka (1883–1924), who influenced literature worldwide and is still widely read. In his immortal *Švejk*, which is famous across the world today, the humorist Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923) precisely captured the type of Czech mentality which outwardly appears to be kowtowing but is in actual fact not capitulating to the oppressive powers which regularly alternate in the heart of Europe. The armed mobilisations during the world wars inspired writers such as Karel Čapek (1890–1938) to write dystopias, warning against the destruction of the world. A way out from the crisis of private and social problems was offered by the Catholic literary current, for example by Jaroslav Deml (1878–1961), as well as by left-leaning authors such as Julius Fučík (1903–43). The latter were the forerunners of the poetics of socialist realism which became institutionalised following the communist seizure of power in 1948. Attempts at authenticity and experiments on the border between literature and visual art came from Jiří Kolář (1912–2002) and the influential Skupina 42 [Group 42]. Vladimír Holan (1905–80) stands out amongst the poets as an author of intellectually demanding, reflective and meditative poetry of personal images.

## LITERATURE AFTER 1945

The year 1945 is popularly considered an important milestone, at which point the effect, role and subject matter of Czech literature undergoes profound change. However, we can speak neither of this time nor of many others as a break with our past to be expressed in terms of a definite date. To begin with, also the period of occupation which immediately preceded 1945 can be characterized by its developments and transformations (viewed in terms of its effect, the literature of 1940, for instance, is very different from the literature of 1943), while the year 1945 is considered and interpreted as a step in two directions – both as a return and as the taking of a new way. The period of wartime and occupation is without doubt one of hiatus; we have breaks in continuity given by the cutting of short of lives (including those of Vladislav Vančura, Jaroslav Kratochvíl and Bedřich Václavěk) and the disruption of artistic output (the falling silent, for various reasons, of published voices – such as those of Egon Hostovský and Vítězslav Nezval). We also have enforced change in the practice of reading, by which literature obtains a keenly allegorical function and once again becomes a tool for social, political and patriotic ends. This latter provides an explanation for the understanding of 1945 as a point of return, a re-engagement with a tradition which has been suspended. And this return also embraces a return to the time of the occupation – many works published between 1945 and 1947 are witness accounts based on real experiences, whether in the form of autobiography (memoirs, diaries) or politically-engaged poetry, publication of which was impossible in wartime.

The harsh reality of occupation includes the control of literature by institutions (censorship, self-censorship, the view of literature as an instrument of society); it sees a renewal of the conception of literature as the “conscience/consciousness of the nation” but at the same time it provides a completely new impetus which ushers in literary development from within. During the occupation the course of existential poetry is plotted (for which see the *Poets' Almanac for Spring 1940*, and in this, most importantly, the contributions of Jiří Orten and Hanuš Bonn), and it comes together in the immensely influential and productive Skupina 42 [Group 42], which spawns the work of Jiří Kolář, Ivan Blatný and Josef Kainar. The poetry and prose writings of this period (in particular those of its younger generation) embrace a myriad of new ways to

explain the purpose of humanity, and they are open to new poetic techniques which go beyond their domestic tradition. Newness becomes in and of itself a positive value. And this search for a new way is intensified in the early post-war years; links are strengthened between literature and art, literature and philosophy and literature and politics. Between 1945 and 1948 literary activity forms for itself a distinct programme; no longer does literary criticism limit itself to matters of culture but it also addresses politics. Literature looks for mythological models and a way of depicting the ideal.

The fiction of the time brings together the simply described, monochrome, collectivized world of Drda's *Silent Barricade* (1946) and the Czech editions of the wartime and post-war works of Egon Hostovský, in which the world's confusion is a playground for the forces of destiny.

In the 1945–48 period works written during the occupation are published as well as new works, and this perhaps blurs the impression of continual development and movement. For synthetic and holistic conceptions, whose natural tendency is to emerge in groupings, we have to wait for the advent of the poetry night (and the cycle of poetry nights at the Žofín in the winter of 1947/8) and for the growth of a platform provided by the publishing industry. The sphere of book publishing grows in leaps and bounds. In 1945 not many more than 3,500 books are re-published (as has been the case in every year since 1942), and this increases in 1946 to over 5,500 and in 1947 to over 6,000, this latter exceeding the figure for the years before 1940.

In the new and newly-published work of the time, developments in genre and theme are also clearly apparent. Poetry turns for its material to the diction of everyday life; it draws inspiration from the shout, the exclamation, decontextualized speech, which it then works into the lines of the poem. This is a turning away from the use of metaphor and symbol based on analysis and melody. This shift is a tenet not only of Skupina 42: it can also be found in the work of the surrealist poets (eg., Karel Hynek Zbýněk Havlíček) and the post-war work of Halas (*What Now?*, not published until 1957), Hrubín (*Hiroshima*, 1948) and Zahradniček (*La Saletta*, 1947).

Prose fiction of the time addresses the relationship between the individual and history through an analysis of war-time – and often autobiographical – experience, and a search for what is solid and universal in both components of this

relationship. While in some work the individual views the events of history as a derailing, a disruption which is permanent (see Mucha, Hostovský, Weil), in other work a solution is proposed which sees the individual identify with a given collectivity (see Drda, Jariš, E. F. Burian).

A readiness to use literature as an aid in facing the demands of society and politics, in which the 'old' is replaced with the 'new' (see Hrubín's *Job's Night* and Holan's *Red Army Soldiers*), provides a setting for the notion of a literature which is controlled by institutions. In literature, as in film and the theatre, the role of organizations (notably that of "Syndikát spisovatelů" – the Writers' Union) increases in importance as the activities of the publishing industry and the Ministry of Information become more closely connected. A significant proportion of writers welcome and will continue to support the developments wrought by the great political changes of February 1948; it is as though purely aesthetic values can not satisfy the citizen's need to make a stand, nor his need for an interconnection of life and work and the influence on writing of a real-life context. (Some writers, such as Jakub Deml, take a citizen's stand which leads to the banning of their publications.)

The year 1948 represents another break with the past by virtue of pre-existing tendencies reaching a level where there is nothing more to conceal them. Although the criteria by which this is defined are but vague, the official literature of the time puts forward a single method of writing only – that of "Socialist Realism". The conflict between writers of the 1930s avantgarde left and the traditionalism of Zdeněk Nejedlý sees the latter victorious precisely because it has to hand institutional tools such as Operation Jirásek and the Fučík Badge. This is why means of expression of the official poetry of the early 1950s, with its epigones of Sládek and Vrchlický, look to the past: a given ideological standpoint is painstakingly set to rhyme and applied to a rhythmical groundplan, ensuring that no space is left for individual representation, imagination and metaphor. In this way also the ideological prose of the Reconstruction (see the work of Václav Řezáč, Jiří Marek, Zdeněk Pluhař) adheres to an unvarying narrative model in which the only variables are in the details but where the whole encourages a constant, mythical-archetypal interpretation of the world. Literary work which originates in exile – after 1948 a pleiad of authors leaves the country, including Jan Čep, Egon Hostovský, Viktor Fischl, Ivan Jelínek, Ivan Blatný,

Ferdinand Peroutka and Pavel Tigrid – finds itself drawn unavoidably into the sphere of political journalism reacting against developments in Czechoslovakia; it seeks to offer a corrective to the official interpretation but at the same time it is deprived by the Iron Curtain of the opportunity to communicate. Dozens of works remain underground, meaning that they are circulated among a very limited circle of friends only (e. g., the *Půlnoc* series, the surrealist almanacs, the *Život je všude* [Life is Everywhere] anthology), or else – as is the case with the extensive writings of Bohumil Hrabal, Jiří Kolář, Josef Škvorecký and Jan Zábana – they remain locked up in the author's desk.

Whereas 1948 sees the publication of over 5,300 books, in the year following only 3,600 titles are issued. The wide range of pre- and post-war periodicals is reduced to just two or three titles; it is true that literature finds its way into the pages of the newspapers and non-specialist periodicals, but this is in a form which amplifies the trivial and ideological. The author becomes a public figure whose work serves simply to illustrate and amplify his views on life (i. e. his political views). A work of literature becomes a product about which there is nothing mysterious or unique and of which the meaning is plain.

In the wake of 1956 there occurs a release of sorts, and this provides at least a limited space within which an author's work can take on aspects of individuality and an awareness of the autonomous worth to be achieved by talent and craftsmanship as opposed to matters ideological. In poetry we see the emergence of the "poetry of the everyday" (inspired by the generation of authors linked to the *Květen* magazine), the publication of Jiří Kolář's *Master Sun and the Poet's Art* (1957), the first appearance of Jan Skácel, while Oldřich Mikulášek and – with his collection *The Lazar and the Song* (1960) – Josef Kainar return to a style of writing which is more distinctively their own. In the novel, Škvorecký's *Cowards* is published in 1958 – to its immediate condemnation by the critics. The late 1950s and early 1960s see the emergence of a focus on "life around us". This new focus addresses themes which until this point have been more or less taboo, such as the plight of the Jews in the Holocaust (as shown in the works of Arnošt Lustig and Ladislav Fuks); it also sees a change in prose fiction away from the literature of Reconstruction to something which is more centred on the attainment of unique experience (which, in turn, is taken as an allegory for the building of society

as a whole – see Vaculík's *Busy House* and the early-1960s work of Ivan Kříž, Ivan Klíma and Jan Procházka). Other important tendencies of the time are the re-working of classical drama (see František Hrubín's *A Sunday in August* and *Crystal Night*, Milan Kundera's *The Owner of the Keys*, Josef Topol's *The End of the Carnival* and Václav Havel's *The Garden Party*) and improvised, 'text appeal' theatre, which emerges in the productions of Semafor and Reduta and in the work of Ivan Vyskočil.

In the course of the 1960s genres become much more diverse, as does the space for literary criticism. Whereas in the 1950s the range of literary periodicals is limited to *Nový Život*, *Literární noviny* and *Host do domu*, in the second half of the 1960s there seem to be dozens of titles to choose from (notably *Literární noviny*, *Host do domu*, *Plamen*, *Tvar*, *Impuls*, *Sešity pro mladou literaturu*, *Orientace*, and *Divoké víno*). The 1960s also see new editions of the post-February 1948 poems of Vladimír Holan, the emergence of the completely new poetics of Jaroslav Seifert, while the poetry of Oldřich Mikulášek and Jan Skácel reaches full maturity and then continues beyond. Poetry of the time ranges from the visual and the concrete (see the work of Josef Hiršal, Emil Juliš, Václav Havel, and the officially unpublished later poetry of Jiří Kolář), through the markedly experimental work of a younger generation reaching its maturity (e. g., Ivan Wernisch, Jiří Gruša, Pavel Šrut, Josef Hanzlík, Petr Kabeš, Miloslav Topinka), to the synthesized creations of František Hrubín (*Romance for Flugelhorn*) and Vladimír Holan (*A Night with Hamlet*). The distinctive methods of the poetry of Ivan Diviš are formed in this time, as is the cult surrounding the life and works of Václav Hrabě. In 1966 *Aesop of Vršovice*, an anthology of the hitherto officially unrecognised poetry of Jiří Kolář, is published, while at the end of the 1960s there is a partial return to the ranks of official literature for a group of authors with a marked faith in Christianity (most notably Bohuslav Reynek, Jan Zahradníček and Josef Kostohryz).

The 1960s is also the time in which several distinct streams of prose writing reach crystallization. Bohumil Hrabal's rewritten manuscripts from the 1950s are hailed immediately on publication for their freshness of style (evident in the free-flowing stream of words, an inventiveness in the telling, their colloquial nature) and for the fact that they focus not on historical figures but on the outsider, who either remains separate from the stream of greater events or for whom these events provide a path for the discovery of his own integrity (this latter being the case of *Closely Observed Trains*). The development of a storyline in a given, distinctive setting is characteristic of the fiction of Josef Škvorecký, Ladislav Fuks, Vladimír Körner and Vladimír Páral. The genre of the short story is given a new lease of life, as is evidenced by Kundera's three pamphlets entitled *Laughable Loves* (on the theme of games which cannot be controlled), Alexandr Kliment's *Hodinky s vodotryskem* (the title meaning "an impossible combination") and its shift away from the everyday in the direction of the absurd, Ivan Vyskočil's *Bones* and its laying bare of the guiding principle that the world as depicted is artificial. The new plays of Václav Havel, Josef Topol, Ivan Klíma and Pavel Kohout tame the guiding principles of the drama of the absurd and demonstrate an ability to use drama for purposes of political parable.

In the first half of the 1950s prose fiction has described an idealized future and poetry has offered codes for the finding of a key; towards the end of the decade both of these genres return to the stuff of life and its investigation. Generally and simplistically speaking, the poetry of the second half of the 1960s can be characterized by a tendency to examine the possibilities open to it in terms of theme and expression, whereas prose fiction strives again to depict a meaningful picture of the world in which the story is at once concrete and a universal parable. This latter informs the way two key novels from this time, Ludvík Vaculík's *The Axe* and Milan Kundera's *The Joke*, are read and interpreted: as products of their time they are seen for the most part as political novels interpreting and evaluating the decades past, while their value as art and a record of existence is played down.

And this kind of reception perhaps explains the restating of the connection between creative and social ambition of the later 1960s. The Presence IV congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union (1967), with *Literární noviny* as its organ, aspires to interconnect aesthetic and social val-

ues. The media 'cult' which surrounds certain authors (e. g., Vaculík, Kundera, Kohout, Klíma) and certain works generates the idea of the writer as a member of an elite group which forms the 'conscience of the nation'; the writer knows life as it is 'on the ground', but at the same time he is able to give shape to resolutions 'from above'. Once again, literature leaves behind the realm of immanent aesthetic values and resumes its potential for making a practical impact on the life of society. The ethos of learning from the mistakes of the 1950s provides this generation (for the most part those authors born between 1925 and 1932) with a space for the reforming of the original conception of how society is built. The idea of the author as an exceptional individual whose fate and standpoint are unique encourages the revival of the memoir form and an elucidation of one's own poetics and the poetics of other authors (see Hoffmeister's collections *Archetypes*, *Time Does Not Go Backwards* and *Likenesses*, Hrubín's *Loves*, Kalista's *Faces in Shadow*, the book *Bohumil Hrabal Presents...*, Hostovský's 1966 work-in-exile *The Literary Adventures of a Czech Writer Abroad*) together with a use of journalism by literary practitioners (e. g., Dušan Hamšík's *Writers and Power*, and Liehm's *Generation*, the publication of the latter being banned in 1969).

All this helps to explain why the onset of the 'Consolidation' or 'Normalization' period (1969-72) is so strongly to the detriment of the writer. Attempts which writers make to revive the ways of the past are attributed either to an inability to find their way in the world of politics or still more to efforts to lead progress astray. Early-1970s propaganda works to demonize the role of the writer and to reduce severely the range of possibilities open to him. Dozens of important writers are robbed of the right to publish and their *oeuvres* to date are removed *en masse* from libraries and second-hand bookshops, inclusive of translations into other languages and works that were perfectly in tune with the communist ideology of the time of their first publication. Many writers emigrate, either immediately after the Soviet occupation of August 1968 (e. g., Josef Škvorecký, Arnošt Lustig, Věra Linhartová) or - voluntarily or by compulsion - in the course of the 1970s (e. g., Milan Kundera, Jiří Kolář, Pavel Kohout, Jiří Gruša, Vlastimil Třešňák). Once again, literature falls into three strictly-defined divisions: official, underground (from the mid-1970s circulated in *samizdat* editions, mostly with print runs of only a few dozen copies), and exile. Some writers who have been denounced declare their repentance in public,

enabling sooner or later their return to the ranks of the official literature (e. g., Jiří Šotola, Miroslav Holub, Bohumil Hrabal). The 1970s and 1980s see the development of a relationship between the spheres of 'home-made' underground literature and literature written in exile, which did not exist in the 1950s; a range of titles are issued in *samizdat* and 'exile' editions. At certain points in this development disagreements between authors in exile and dissidents at home come to a head (e. g., in the quarrel concerning the quality of Kundera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being*). New authors-in-exile emerge who begin to publish only after leaving the home country (e. g., Jaroslav Vejvoda, Jan Křesadlo and Jan Novák), while certain of the best known authors of the 1960s gradually and/or partially (e. g., Škvorecký) or else completely (e. g., Kundera) come to concern themselves with the culture and society of their newly adopted homeland. Again in contrast to the 1950s, there is a marked tendency to adopt the language of the new surroundings. (Kohout, Gruša and Moniková write in German, Linhartová and Kundera in French, Novák in English.)

Those authors who decide to remain in the official sphere often demonstrate what appears to be a voluntary change in their poetics. Fuks' heroes were once deformed by society, but in his fiction of the 1970s they themselves are learning to form it; beginning with *The Young Man and the White Whale*, Páral's heroes demonstrate at least some positive values. The limited number of the authors to make it through the filter of Normalization create an environment in which a wide range of writers – including some who were published in the 1950s and then lost out to the competition and others only now finding their pleasure in writing – are able to publish. In the 1970s and 1980s, generational solitaries such as Josef Jelen, Karel Boušek and Václav Hons – together with Karel Sýs, Jiří Žáček, Michal Černík and Jaromír Pelc, productive members of an up-and-coming new generation of poets – are in a position to publish new collections practically every year. The requirements of ideological correctness are supplemented with a space for 'free creation', with the result that the offerings of many of these poets skip between the zealously political (written, for instance, in honour of one of various anniversaries) on the one hand and the poetry of love, nature or contemplation on the other. In the official criticism of the 1970s the polarity which characterized the differences between Nezval and Halas finds its echo, speaking out unequivocally for the 'down-to-earth', materialist poetry which is said to be of Nezval's

provenance. Once again a work of literature is evaluated on the basis of its author's value as a citizen; on the one hand those authors are revered whose ideological standpoints are deemed worthy of merit for their rather eclectic, authentic work (e. g., Ivan Skála, Josef Rybák, Donát Šajner), while on the other those works are published which are very popular with readers but which go unrecognised by official criticism (e. g., works by Bohumil Hrabal, Jiří Šotola and Vladimír Kórner and the later poetry of Skácel, Mikulášek and Seifert).

The underground literature of the 1970s reacts to Normalization by setting up self-contained samizdat editions and 'publishers'. This decade also witnesses the most important work of a number of authors, who thereby place themselves beyond the official canon. In the early 1970s Hrabal writes his great novels *I Served the King of England* and *Too Loud a Solitude*, Škvorecký demonstrates his full range in his works from *The Miracle Game* to *The Engineer of Human Souls*, Kundera publishes in French translation *Life is Elsewhere*, *The Farewell Waltz* and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Vaculík composes his *Czech Dream Book*, and by their German editions Pavel Kohout and then Jiří Gruša establish themselves as novelists of note. Recordings on magnetic tape of Václav Havel's plays with the protagonist Ferdinand Vaňek take these works beyond the dissident sphere. All of these works are published in translation abroad and/or circulated at home in *samizdat* form and/or issued by Czech publishers-in-exile.

The official literature of the time gives the impression of wishing to erase the 'crisis' years of the 1960s and to return to its more institutionalized role of the 1950s. But in this, too, there is evidence of certain shifts. Unlike in the 1950s – when an officially validated work is presented as the product of an author-critic-publisher collective, the guiding principle of which is ideological – the publishing world of the 1970s and 1980s feels the heavy presence of economic factors. A number of writers are able to make their livings by writing alone, and this leads to the emergence of imitative 'schools' which strive to tread a tried and tested path. We witness the arrival of Páral's 'North Bohemia' school and imitators of Hrabal. Certain genres become popular commercially and their works attract large readerships by their ability to remain within the confines of genre. These genres include the historical novel (in which history provides the setting for

the unfolding of a story, for which see the works of Jarmila Loukotová and Václav Erben), the 'doctor' novel (see Valja Stýblová and Ota Dub), and the novel which focuses on the problems of adolescence (see Václav Dušek, Zdeněk Zapletal, Martin Bezouška, Petr Hájek, and Radek John). Also to make waves commercially are novels with a rural setting (see Jan Kostrhun), especially where these take the form of humorous episodes in the problem-free world of a socialist village (see Jaroslav Matějka). Novels set in the factory or the works do not for the most part find such an appreciative readership, perhaps because such a setting is not perceived as exotic and as such does not satisfy the escapist urge. (The stylistically accomplished early novels of Josef Frajs are a notable exception to this.) In sum, it becomes the publisher's aim to issue books in accordance with a system, at regular intervals, in large print runs and attractive editions; this is a signal of the ability (of a work/author or group of works/authors) to win recognition and hence embark upon the path to prestige.

In spite of all the ideological declarations, official literature is perceived and read largely as a purveyor of escapist stories in which a discrete set of rules apply; poetry is seen as a world of allegorical allusions to the current political situation. The stagnation of the 1970s and 1980s stalls the progress of the completed manuscript so that it takes three or four years to make it into book form, though this delay in no way reduces its ability to communicate. When one considers that officially validated culture in the 1970s and 1980s has only two television channels to offer, newspapers which are more or less uniform in content and only a handful of family, professional and special-interest magazines, the space available for book-reading is a relatively large one. As only a limited number of works of high-quality literature are published (although the range of interesting works in translation is widening), it is possible for book lovers to own and read all the important titles.

And the reading of literature will maintain this position in cultural life through the 1980s and 1990s and into the present. The fall of Communism at the end of 1989 opens the market to almost 2,000 private publishing houses, the activities of which are registered in the following year. Many of these take the decision to publish books for ethical reasons - by promoting literature hitherto banned; many are motivated by economic reasons, too - they anticipate print runs in hundreds of thousands for the *oeuvres*

of formerly banned authors, emulating the 1970-80s achievements of Hrabal and Páral. But the majority of new publishers plainly lack an understanding of the full range of such works and differences in their quality. For this reason, the market is flooded with hundreds of titles, the majority of which prove impossible to sell. Readers themselves lack the knowledge of which of an author's works are his/her best and worst, and they might not get beyond the first work to fall into their hands. The situation is complicated further by the transformation of society: in this new context, many previously unpublished works are read as bearing witness to times past, as calls to challenge a society which exists no longer. In a world which demands the individual make many decisions for which he/she lacks the experience, literature no longer has the power to advise, is no longer a source of solutions with which the reader can identify. Attempts at novels with political themes, whether at the beginning of the 1990s (e. g., Kohout's *I Am Snowing*) or the turn of the millennium (e. g., works by Viewegh, Urban, Kantůrková, Martin Nezval) generally fail because of the extraordinary dynamism of change and development, meaning that one-year-old subject matter has lost its interest.

In the first half of the 1990s, literature works by and large to plug the gaps. In looking to the past, editors are drawn not only to the banned authors of the 1970s and 1980s but also to authors of the 1950s and still further back (e. g., Jakub Deml, Ladislav Klíma). For this reason it proves impossible for the casual reader to maintain an awareness of literary development; only the expert is able to trace a chronological order of published works for a given author. Books are published in collected works editions (notably those of Hrabal, Kolář, Šiktanc, Bondy, Vodsedálek, Arnošt Lustig and Ivan Klíma, as well the works of authors of generations past such as Seifert, Poláček and Hostovský), which is, of course, to be commended. Often, however, these new editions - in some cases running to twenty volumes - fail to find success among readers, meaning that financial returns are disappointing.

Another major problem is a loss of understanding as to how to assess a work's value. Real criticism exists only in specialist periodicals with small readerships, while the attitude of the mass media to literature is highly selective and prefers to report on the events rather than to comment on the writing. Also, the last fifteen years have seen the deaths of a number of leading critics (e. g., Jan Lopatka, Josef Vohryzek and Růžena

Grebeníčková) and a shift in literary criticism in favour of the simple relaying of information about a work, the departure point of which is often determined by the closeness or otherwise of the relationship between critic and author. The mass media's choice of which writing to cover is more often than not the result of an author's general popularity (a case in point being Halina Pawlovská) and the attractiveness of the personal story the author succeeds in conveying over time to the media (see. Michal Viewegh and Petr Šabach).

In the 1990s literature gives up its role as provider of an alternative world as escape in favour of products which are far better suited to the task: magazines and the cult of celebrity they propagate, film and television in their manifold guises, and - for the book - hitherto unknown and untried genres such as romance and fantasy fiction. Fiction as such - with its basis in the author's imagination - is superseded by a type of non-fiction which might be termed "faction", and which promises to improve the reader's understanding of the world.

# CONTEMPORARY CZECH LITERATURE 1995–2010

## PROSE

The new homegrown prose [1] is distinguished by several main trends and directions. [2] By far the most significant of these is an autobiographical tendency and (pseudo)authenticity in modern prose. This trend can be seen in **Michal Viewegh's** (1962) literary diaries *Báječný rok* (2006) and *Další báječný rok* (2011) and in his latest novel *Biomanželka* (2010). The most commercially successful and popular author, loved and loathed by the literary critics, he works as a professional writer and usually brings out a book every year. In his novels about contemporary life he focuses mainly on the description of interpersonal relationships and people in crisis situations through the use of simple but skillfully crafted stories (*Andělé všedního dne*, 2007, or *Román pro muže*, 2008).



### Michal Viewegh

His books have been translated into more than 20 languages. A. G. Brain's translation of *Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia* (Readers International, 1997) was published in English.

Recently, however, Viewegh has been more successful in the German market: several translations have been published by Deuticke publishers, with Eva Profousová's translation *Engel des letzten Tages* (2010) enjoying particular success. [www.viewegh.cz](http://www.viewegh.cz)

A large group of the "autobiographical" prose writers present stories which are set in relatively normal situations – from these they then look for various paths and points of departure. Some of them consciously resign themselves to the everyday and describe tired and sometimes confused main characters whom readers can easily relate to. This banal world is often connected to the city, pub culture and small-scale stories.

**Emil Hakl** (1958) is one of the most significant authors from this group. He is characterised by his easy flowing style, his ability to capture the

language of the city and his self-ironic gestures and in his latest works, such as the book *Pravidla směšného chování* (2010), there is also (self)reflection and weighty themes (a dying father). Even greater introspection is in evidence in the works of **Ivan Matoušek** (1948), for example in the critically well-received opuses *Spas* (2001) and *Oslava* (2009).



### Emil Hakl

His works have been translated into eight languages. Hakl's most successful book, *O rodičích a dětech*, translated into English by Mark Tomin (*Of Kids & Parents*, Twisted

Spoon Press, 2008), captures the idiosyncratic dialogue of a father and son discussing fundamental as well as relatively unimportant problems in life. The book was made into a film in 2007 by Vladimír Michálek and two years later Tomin's translation was nominated for the prestigious Oxford-Weidenfeld prize. The book was also chosen as one of the seven best books of the year by the Californian magazine *Ralph*. [www.emilhakl.cz](http://www.emilhakl.cz)

The acceleration of our extra-literary reality has understandably also influenced domestic prose: attempts at dynamism often lead to the motif of the journey as the central point in prose. In Czech prose over the past few years there has been a significant trend towards finding material in foreign countries. With slight exaggeration, part of the domestic production can be divided into "pro-Western" and "pro-Eastern". The exceptions to this are works which are directed elsewhere, such as the Croatian short stories *Sůl, ovce, kamení* (2003) by **Magdaléna Platzová** (1972) or the Australian subject matter (*Slečno, ras přichází*, 2004, and *Záliv osamění a zapomenuté australské povídky*, 2007) in the works of **Edgar Dutka** (1941).

The principle of nomadism, the journey into the unknown, is as much a form of escape as a search for oneself or an attempt at exoticism. Many are also able to employ the journey as a wider (or deeper) metaphor. In this too can be seen a strong tendency towards the autobiographical. **Jaroslav Rudiš** (1972) was the first to draw attention to himself in this regard with his novella *Nebe pod Berlinem* (2002), in which he established a type of "fleeing" unanchored thirty-year-old. In his other works, i.e. the graphic novels in the *Alois Nebel series* (2003–2008, together with Jaromír 99), the novel *Grandhotel*

(2006) and the latest book to be published, *Konec punku v Helsinkách* (2010), Rudiš also deals with the converging lines of Czech and German 20th-century history. He himself comes from the borders of Sudeten Bohemia, where the German as well as Polish past remains alive. The Sudeten motif has often appeared in literature since 1989.



#### Jaroslav Rudiš

His works have been translated into six languages. Rudiš's debut *Der Himmel unter Berlin*, translated by Eva Profousová, was published in German in 2005 by Rowohlt publishers.

Rudiš's regular publishers Labyrint also brought out an English version of the comic *Alois Nebel*. <http://jaroslavrudis.wordpress.com>

Among the globetrotting authors, the documentarist **Martin Ryšavý** (1967) stands out with his *Cesty na Sibiř* (2008). Due to its well-developed structure and rich language this two-part saga about several years of return visits to remote corners of the world precisely captured the feelings of a generation from 1989 to the present.

**Ryšavý's** latest works are *Vrač* (2010) and *Čtyřsloupový ostrov* (2011), where he uses his documentary and objective style to capture Russian society in the 20th century in the form of smaller human stories.

A completely different environment – although still connected with travel – is used in some of the works of **Petra Hůlová** (1979), in particular in her debut from the Mongolian steppes, *Paměť mojí babičce* (2002). The core of her texts is a carefully constructed, centripetal and often boldly inventive story. She employs language in an original way, which is a mixture of normal Czech with surprising similes, and is also unique in her courageous use of narrative (*Cirkus Les Memoires*, 2005, *Stanice Tajga*, 2008). In her latest novel *Strážci občanského dobra* (2010) she chose the surprising viewpoint of a main character who, even in contemporary society, finds herself agreeing with the postulates of pre-revolutionary socialism.



#### Petra Hůlová

The author's books have been translated into eight languages, with Luchterhand immediately publishing three translations by Michael Stavarič and Christa Roth-

meier. Alex Zucker won the national translation prize of the American Literary Translation Association for his translation of Hůlová's debut work, *All This Belongs to Me* (Northwestern University Press, 2009). [hulova@gmail.com](mailto:hulova@gmail.com)

In a linguistic-stylistic sense Hůlová is close to **Jáchym Topol** (1962), an outstanding author of incredibly complex novels. Topol works in an original manner with space and particularly time. He is thus able to move along time axes from the contemporary world to a type of archetypal non-time, constructing metaphors which are demanding but at the same time attractive for the reader (for example in the book *Noční práce*, 2001). Topol's latest prose offerings, *Kloktat dehet* (2005) and *Chladnou zemí* (2009), are set on the Russian front (present-day Belarus) during the Second World War.



#### Jáchym Topol

Son of the dramatist Josef Topol and brother of the musician Filip (Pší vojáci), he was instrumental in the formation of the Czech underground.

In 2010 he won the prestigious Jaroslav Seifert Prize. His works have been translated into fifteen languages. In 2011 *The Independent* newspaper nominated his *Gargling With Tar* (Portobello Books, 2010, translated by David Short) for the foreign literature prize. [jatop@volny.cz](mailto:jatop@volny.cz)

There are relatively few authors in the Czech Republic who step away from reality. Recently the saga novel has become very popular. Through the prism of multiple narrators, writers usually present the chronicle of a single family extending across the whole of the 20th century (filled with wars and totalitarian regimes). This typifies the novels of **Anna Zonová** (1962), e. g. *Za trest a za odměnu* (2004), based on the events surrounding the expulsions in Moravian Sudetenland. *Patriarchátu dávno zašla sláva* (2003) by **Pavel Brycz** (1968) describes a Ukrainian family's break with traditions in the 20th century. **Markéta Pilátová's** (1973) debut work *Žluté oči vedou domů* (2007) is concerned with the issue of homeland

and emigration in the lives of four women.

**Radka Denemarková** (1968) also achieved success with her novel on Czech-German guilt and forgiveness, *Peníze od Hitlera*. **Tomáš Zmeškal** (1966) attempted to move away from this popular generational form of novel with his remarkable debut *Milostný dopis klínovým písmem* (2008), where the family chronicle merges with bizarre philosophical visions. With the mixing of genres, the use of letters and embedded narratives – today text messaging and emails are as common as alternating narrators – we can see that postmodern traits are still alive and well in Czech prose.



#### **Radka Denemarková**

Her books have been translated into five languages. The work which has received the most acclaim, *Peníze od Hitlera*, for which she and the translator Eva Profousová

received a prize at the German festival Usedom Literary Days, was translated into English by Andrew Oakland in 2009 (*Money from Hitler*, Canadian Scholars' Press – Women's Press). In 2010 the author was among the guests at the New York festival New Literature from Europe. [www.denemarkova.cz](http://www.denemarkova.cz)

It was within the confines of the “civil” – or rather merciless, demystified and very contemporary – family that the prematurely deceased **Jan Bala-bán** (1961–2010) sought his subject matter. His prose on bankrupt lives is marked by stringency as well as urgency. The author convincingly avoided the usual clichés associated with life on the edge, pubs and alcohol and homelessness. His characters may have lost their way through their own fault, but they live in God's world and a certain hope remains for them.

The family as suffering and childhood as the climactic trauma are described by the bestselling young writer **Petra Soukupová** (1982) in her second novel *Zmizet* (2009), which won Book of the Year at the 2010 Magnesia Litera awards. The repetitive stories and variations on the same motifs affect the reader principally due to the language and style: the author presents them with a cynical timelessness – and always with a pre-determined fatalism.

An expressive opulence and baroque luxuriance are characteristic of the authors who satisfy the readers' desire for a story, the supreme Czech postmodernists **Jiří Kratochvíl** (1940) and **Miloš**

**Urban** (1967). Both of them set their novels in specific, real environments, but they transcend these and offer a very distinctive point of view. Kratochvíl (*Lady Carneval*, 2004) continuously – and explicitly – plays a game with his readers and turns to them throughout the course of the entire text. Urban (*Lord Mord*, 2008) constructs detective stories which pass through various time realms; his aim is obviously to amuse and excite.



#### **Jiří Kratochvíl**

The works of this Brno patriot have been translated into ten languages. The novel *Slib* was translated by Christa Rothmeier and Julie Hansen-Löve as *Das Versprechen des Architekten* (Braumüller Literaturverlag) and was listed among the top ten detective stories by the German daily *Die Welt* in June 2010. [dopisy@druhemesto.cz](mailto:dopisy@druhemesto.cz)



#### **Miloš Urban**

His “gothic” and “mysterious” novels, replete with mystification and postmodern games, have been translated into thirteen languages. Thanks to translations into Spanish he

has become particularly commercially successful in Hispanic and Hispanic-American areas. Urban's first translation into English came out in 2010: the novel *Sedmikostelí* was translated by Robert Russell as *The Seven Churches* and was published by Peter Owen publishers. [www.milos-urban.cz](http://www.milos-urban.cz)

**Irena Dousková** (1964) and **Petr Šabach** (1951) are important writers whose works lie somewhere between short stories and the novel. They have become famous mainly through prose which looks back on life in Czechoslovakia during normalisation. Both of them view the world through the eyes of children, e. g. Dousková in her opus *Oněgin byl Rusák* (2006) and Šabach in his novel *Opilé banány* (2001).

A specialist interest in semiotics and deconstructionist philosophy has influenced several of the novels of **Michal Ajvaz** (1949), written in the style of magical realism. There was a similar specialist interest in literary-science discourse in the more complicated opuses of **Daniela Hodrová** (1946).



### Michal Ajvaz

His books have been translated into eight languages. Recently the American publishers Dalkey Archive Press published two of his novels in quick succession: *The Other City* and *The Golden*

*Age* (translated by Gerald Turner and Andrew Oakland respectively). The internet shop Amazon.com listed the second title in its prestigious Editor's Top Ten in the Science Fiction/Fantasy category. The book was also listed amongst the best titles of 2009 by the periodicals *Time Out New York* and *Locus Magazine* and was nominated for the translation prize by the American university portal Three Percent and for the Californian prize for the translation of sci-fi and fantasy literature into English.

dopisy@druhemesto.cz

Alongside the above-mentioned there are of course a host of other authors in the Czech Republic. Their profiles and contact details can be found on the Czech Literature Portal in the Authors section ([www.czechlit.cz/authors](http://www.czechlit.cz/authors)).

## Prose from elsewhere

A relatively large percentage of contemporary Czech writers are recruited from outside literary circles. The most numerous are film-makers, screenplay writers and documentarists, such as the already mentioned Martin Ryšavý and Petra Soukupová as well as, for example, **Pavel Góbl** (1967). This fact may change with the increasing number of publishing graduates emerging from the Josef Škvorecký Literary Academy, where several successful writers have taught and are currently teaching.

Several successful literary works have given rise to theatre plays (*Hrdý Budžes*, (2003), based on the novel of the same name by Irena Dousková, had an exceptionally long run at the Divadlo bez zábradlí) as well as films (many films have been made from Michal Viewegh's novels; an animated version of *Alois Nebel* based on the graphic novellas by Jaroslav Rudiš and Jaromír 99 was released in 2011). The authors often collaborate on screenplays. Literature also occupies an indispensable place on the radio, for example the Czech Radio Vltava station with its project A Play for the Third Century, which looks at contemporary Czech writers including **Arnošt Goldflam** (1946) and **David Záborský** (1977).

Sci-fi and fantasy have enjoyed sustained popularity in the Czech Republic, especially among younger readers. The most successful artists in this area include **Ondřej Neff** (1945), **Jiří Kulhánek** (1967), **Františka Vrbenská** (1952), **Leonard Medek** (1955) and **Miroslav Žamboch** (1972). Since 2000 there has also been an increase in readers' interest in original Czech comics. Alongside the above-mentioned J. Rudiš and Jaromír 99 it is also necessary to mention **Jiří Grus** (1978; author of the four-part series *Voleman*, 2007-2010), **Džian Baban & Vojtěch Mašek** (both 1977; authors of the four-part series *Monstrkabaret Freda Brunolda*, 2004-2009) and **Lucie Lomová** (1964; *Anna chce skočit*, 2007), who concurrently publishes her work in French.

Post-1989 Romany literature in the Czech Republic is known primarily through the collections of traditional folk literature. A representative sample of original literary creations by Romany authors from the end of the Second World War to the present day can be found in the anthology *Sytá duše* (eds. Jana Kramářová, Helena Sadílková, 2007). Other significant minorities in the Czech Republic are the Vietnamese community and the community of Anglo-American

writers: while the representatives of the first group have their own communication channels, the representatives of the second group who have been living for a longer period in Prague (Louis Armand, Stephan Delbos, Jason Mashak and Justin Quinn) occasionally collaborate with the local literary scene.

Alongside the large literary festivals in the Czech Republic, such as the Měsíc autorského čtení [Month of Author's Readings] (Brno, 2011 was its 12th year), Svět knihy [Book World] (Prague, 17th year) and Festival spisovatelů [Writers' Festival] (Prague, 21st year), regular authors' readings are held in libraries and clubs, as well as other less traditional venues. The touring programme *LiStOVáNí* is dedicated to stage adaptations of newly published books – not all of which are Czech.

## Prose in translation

**Czech authors in English, German, Spanish and other languages.** In the Excerpts section of the authors' profiles on the Czech Literature Portal ([www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)) you can find passages from writers' works in several world languages.

A complete bibliography of translated Czech literature since 1989 does not yet exist. For this reason the following section deals with those contemporary Czech authors who have been translated the most and also takes into consideration how their texts reach foreign readers.

Since 1989 works by deceased writers have been frequently translated. These include the ever popular **Bohumil Hrabal**, **Jaroslav Hašek** and **Karel Čapek**, followed by **Jaroslav Durych**, **Ladislav Klíma**, **Arnošt Lustig**, **Josef Váchal** and **Jiří Weil**. The most frequently translated living authors – often with more than one title translated into several languages and with relative commercial and critical success – are **Ivan Klíma** (1931), **Václav Havel** (1936), Jáchym Topol, Jiří Kratochvíl and Michal Viewegh; in Spain and Latin America **Miloš Urban** has enjoyed success with his “gothic” novels. Of the younger writers **Petra Hůlová** has started to make a name for herself.

For a Czech author to be exported abroad it is essential for him to be popular in the Czech Republic; this is measured in part by the number of books sold, and in part by the literary awards gained (the State Prize for literature, Magnesia Litera, the Jaroslav Seifert Prize, etc.). In the 1980s and shortly after November 1989, when the political system changed in Czechoslovakia, foreign publishers and their readerships were interested in literary reflections on the totalitarian system which had governed in Czechoslovakia since the postwar years; however, in the 1990s this interest waned. Today other themes are more attractive: from partner and family relationships and their problems and crises (M. Viewegh), through the Second World War and its subsequent effects on society, culture and specific individuals (Radka Denemarková), to genre writing (the story-telling of Jiří Kratochvíl, the magical realism of Michal Ajvaz, the postmodern detective novels of Miloš Urban). Experiences in foreign countries and socio-cultural “oddities” are also attractive subjects for translation (Petra Hůlová: Mongolia, USA; Jaroslav Rudiš: Germany; Markéta Pilátová: Brazil, etc.).

The translation of Czech literature is systematically supported by the Ministry of Culture in the Czech Republic. A programme was established in 1998 which has given financial support to more than 450 translations of Czech novels into various languages (grant applications from foreign publishers always have to be submitted by November 15th). Last year the Ministry brought out a Czech-German-English publication *Czech Literature in Translation (1998-2010)* (ed. Radim Kopáč, 2010). [3] In addition, every year the Ministry (in collaboration with Svět knihy) sends 40 contemporary Czech writers to various book fairs and literary festivals (Bologna, Leipzig, Frankfurt, London, Moscow, etc.) and at the same time supports the annual Seminar for Foreign Scholars of Czech Studies run by the Obec spisovatelů [Association of Writers] – an event where foreign scholars of Czech can meet with local publishers, authors, literary critics, historians and scientists. Foreign Czech scholars' work is recognised by the Premia Bohemica prize, which has been awarded by the Obec spisovatelů since 1993. Among the prize winners have been Anželina Penčeva, Edgar de Bruin, Eckhard Thiele, Margarita Kjurkčijeva, István Vörös, Reiner Kunze, Leszek Engelking, Eero Balk, Ewald Osers, Christa Rothmeier and Oleg Malevič.

Literary agents provide an invaluable service to writers. Contemporary Czech literature is catered for by two such agents: Dana Blatná ([www.dbagency.cz](http://www.dbagency.cz)) and Edgar de Bruin ([www.pluh.org](http://www.pluh.org)). Together they represent forty authors. Their experience of getting Czech literature published in foreign markets is reflected in the previously mentioned publication *Czech Literature in Translation (1998-2010)*. It is worth noting that there is another organisation called Literature across Frontiers which organises translation seminars and writers' readings across the world.

Due to their joint historical and cultural ties, Czech literature is exported mainly to its neighbouring countries, particularly Poland and Germany. Translations into German – promoted by a series of authors' readings – open the gates for writers not only to the Austrian and Swiss markets, but often also to other European countries and sometimes even overseas. In recent years this has been confirmed by the success of Jaroslav Rudiš, Jáchym Topol and Radka Denemarková. In 2010 the project *So nah, so fremd* (*So near, so foreign*) was implemented, thanks to which excerpts from various works have been

translated into German by authors such as Michal Ajvaz, Antonín Bajaj, Jan Balabán, Jiří Hájíček, Jan Novák, Jana Srámková and Vlastimil Třešňák. (These translations can be found in the Excerpts section of the relevant authors' profiles on the Czech Literature Portal).

Czech literature has not only been translated into the languages of its neighbouring countries, but also into Russian, Italian and Slovenian. The tradition and current state of Czech studies in each given country is decisive in this respect. Often specific translations are the result of the personal involvement of Czech scholars and translators. However, in recent years several editorial series have been published which are systematically dedicated to (contemporary) Czech prose: in the first place it is necessary to mention the Belgian-Dutch publisher Voetnoot, which in its Moldaviet edition has published eighteen authors to date (including Michal Ajvaz, Edgar Dutka, Sylva Fischerová, Jiří Kratochvíl, Jáchym Topol and Miloš Urban). This year the Swedish publisher Aspekt brought out titles by Jaroslav Rudiš, Emil Hakl and Michal Ajvaz.

The Austrian publisher *Braumüller* also has a systematic approach to new Czech prose (Jiří Kratochvíl, Edgar Dutka and Stanislav Komárek). In France, where no great interest in new Czech literature has otherwise been in evidence, the works of Květa Legátová (1919), *Jozova Hanule* (*La belle de Joza*, 2008) and *Zelary* (*Ceux de Zelary*, 2010), and Martin Šmaus (1965) *Děvčátko, rozdělej ohníček* (*Petite, allume un feu...*, 2009) have been successfully published.

In English-speaking countries Michal Ajvaz has been doing particularly well. He has made his mark as a distinguished sci-fi and fantasy author with his books *Druhé město* (*The Other City*, 2009) and *Zlatý věk* (*The Golden Age*, 2010), published by the American publishers Dalkey Archive Press. The major exporter of Czech literature to the Anglo-American market is the Prague publisher Twisted Spoon Press, which has brought out prose by Ladislav Klíma, Bohumil Hrabal, Pavel Brycz (*Jsem město - I City*, 2006) and Emil Hakl (*O rodičích a dětech - Of Kids & Parents*, 2008). The various award nominations (e. g. the American portal Three Percent's Best Translated Book Award for Michal Ajvaz) show the high regard in which the English translations of Czech literature are held.

Contemporary Czech literature is only rarely translated into what local authors would term as exotic languages, such as Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese or Korean; there is more interest in the classics such as Karel Čapek, Jaroslav Hašek or Bohumil Hrabal. In Brazil last year a translation of Markéta Pilátová's *Žluté oči vedou domů* was published (Olhos de Loba, translator Jana Cardoso); there was also a Brazilian Portuguese translation of the "anthology of contemporary women's short stories" *Ty, která píšeš* (ed. Radim Kopáč) entitled *Elas Escrevem* and translated by Martina Malechová.

[1] This study is aimed solely at authors who have been continually present in a Czech cultural context: for this reason we have omitted Milan Kundera, Věra Linhartová, Patrik Ouředník, Iva Pekárková and Josef Škvorecký.

[2] The article is loosely based on Marta Ljubková's text "Contemporary Czech literature", which came out in 2010 as part of the research project *Study of the state, structure, conditions and finance of art in the Czech Republic*, carried out by the Institute of Art.

[3] The publication includes a bibliography of translations of Czech literature supported by the Czech Republic Ministry of Culture from 1998-2010; an identical list can be found on the Ministry's website ([www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny](http://www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny))

## POETRY

After 1989 the situation in Czech poetry paradoxically became more chaotic – and not only in the new poetry coming out after 1989, that is over roughly the past quarter of a century.

It might seem that the three forms of literature which operated in Czech or Czechoslovak culture from 1948-1989, a period when the culture and society were dominated by the ruling ideology of the Communist Party – official, unofficial (underground or samizdat) and exile literature – all merged into one stream, that with the fall of communism in November 1989 and the arrival of freedom a real normalisation of conditions finally came about. However, a new player appeared on the scene, and one who with hindsight was to be even more dangerous. Whilst the power of the Communists was transparent and recognisable and could therefore be effectively opposed, the power of the market and liberal capitalism, which over the past twenty years has directed the development of Czech society and its culture, is opaque, hidden and diffuse. As part of its ethos, culture is nothing more than an economic item or product which has to be sold in order to justify its existence. And today artistic or aesthetic values are no longer marketable – only that which is easily visible and can therefore be properly advertised. So, from which angle should we look at new Czech poetry after 1989?

There are a minimum of four angles or criteria for selecting specific names and individual poetry collections. Firstly: literary prizes. Secondly: anthologies plus themed collections. Thirdly: media interest. Fourthly: translations.

## Literary prizes

Unfortunately, in the Czech Republic there is no literary prize which would serve to annually reward a particular author's achievements and consequently highlight the author's distinct poetics in the genre of poetry. [1] Meanwhile in the West such prizes are the norm, for example the Great Poetry Prize (conferred by the French Academy), the Pulitzer Prize for poetry (USA) or the Dresden Poetry Prize (Germany), which was won last year by **Marie Štastná** (1981), who had earlier been awarded the Jiří Orten Prize (2004).



### Marie Štastná

She has published four books of poetry, the most recent being *Interiéry* (2010). In her poetry she demonstrates the outer and inner strength of so-called female writing using

an unpretentious fragility linked to the themes of family and traditional relationships.

[redakce@hostbrno.cz](mailto:redakce@hostbrno.cz)

Amongst Czech literary awards, the Jiří Orten Prize (awarded since 1987) has a specific function: it is aimed at authors under thirty and therefore serves as a signpost for new Czech prose and poetry. Twelve poets have won the prize. Retrospectively they are **Jan Těsnohlídek jr.** (the winner from 2010), **Jonáš Hájek** (2007), **Marek Šindelka** (2006), **Radek Malý** (2003), **Martin Langer** (2002), **Věra Rosí** (2000), **Bogdan Trojak** (1998), **Božena Správcová** (1996), **Petr Borkovec** (1995), **Jaromír Typlt** (1994) and **Jaroslav Pízl** (1992). In the history of this prize the greatest stir was caused by the multi-talented Radek Malý (1977), who is active not only in poetry but also as a German translator, author of children's books, radio plays, teaching handbooks and a study looking at the influence of Georg Trakl's works on Czech poetry in the 20th century.



### Jaromír Typlt

An author of poetry and prose from the avant-garde tradition, particularly surrealist and literary experiments. He debuted in 1990 with his poetry collection *Koncerto Grosso* and most

recently published the collection *Stisk* (2007), the eighth title in succession.

[www.typlt.cz](http://www.typlt.cz)



### Petr Borkovec

He has written nine books of poetry and prose, the latest being *Vnitrozemí* (2005) and *Berlínský sešit/Zápisky ze Saint-Nazaire* (2008). He is

"an author of reflective poetry

influenced by the Christian tradition but also with a sense for the distinctiveness of language. The fundamental constant for him is an awareness of oneness with the world and the people around him. At its core his poetry remains unchanged, but only becomes more precise and mature" (Petr A. Bílek).

[borkovecpetr@gmail.com](mailto:borkovecpetr@gmail.com)



### Bogdan Trojak

He is the author of five poetry collections (the latest being *Kumštkaabinet*, 2005) and the poetical prose *Brněnské metro* (2007). His work, which

sparkles in form, flows from family memory and the myths of the Moravian-Silesian countryside.

[redakce@hostbrno.cz](mailto:redakce@hostbrno.cz)

In 2006 Radek Malý won another prize which is extremely significant within the context of modern Czech culture: Magnesia Litera. Since 2002, with some exceptions such as Malý and Bogdan Trojak (1975), who won in 2005, the Litera has awarded prizes in the poetry category to poets from the middle and older generations, well-known authors whose works have been systematically developed over several decades: **Jiří Gruša** (2002), **Vít Slíva** (2003), **Karel Šiktanc** (2004), **Stanislav Dvorský** (2007), **Tašo Andjelkovski** (2008), **Bohumila Grögerová** (2009), **Viola Fischerová**, who died last year, (2010) and **Josef Hrubý** (2011). Unlike the less assertive Jiří Orten Prize, the Magnesia has pushed its way into the media spotlight: the announcement of the individual categories takes place every year on prime TV and the winners are subsequently referred to both in specialised periodicals and national daily and weekly newspapers. This has its positive effects, as has been noted above: if something gains media attention it is visible and therefore sells significantly better. This can be seen in the example of Bohumila Grögerová's poetry collection *Rukopis*: after winning the previous year's competition the number of sales of this book increased tenfold - to some twelve hundred copies.



### Radek Malý

In his poetry can be found the poetics of expressionism combined with a Morgenstern-like playful linguistic absurdity. His gesture is defiance, underlined on the one hand by (self)-irony and on the other by a virtuoso handling of bound verse. He has written four books of poetry: *Lunovis* (2001), *Vraní zpěvy* (2002), *Větrní* (2005) and *Malá tma* (2008).  
[kastanvkapse@seznam.cz](mailto:kastanvkapse@seznam.cz)

Like the Magnesia Litera, the State Prize for Literature, which in its current form has been organised by the Ministry of Culture since 1995, and the Jaroslav Seifert Prize (with a tradition going back to 1986) give priority to the older generation of writers and to lifetime achievements – they therefore recognise those writers who were banned from publishing under the previous regime (the poets include **Zbyněk Hejda**, **Ivan M. Jirous**, **František Listopad**, **Zdeněk Rotrekl**, **Pavel Šrut**, **Miloslav Topinka** and **Ivan Wernisch**).

## Anthologies and readers

In the Czech Republic after 2000 several anthologies were published which aimed – with various shifts of emphasis – to look at Czech poetry over the past decades. The most ambitious of these was the several-hundred-page-long “anthology of Czech poetry of the XX century in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia” entitled *Ryby katedrál* (2002), which was compiled by Petr Stančík; according to him it is “the first anthology which contains Czech poetry from the last century in its entirety. In it you can find 100 authors who were instrumental in carrying the torch of our poetry [...]”

The subsequent work *Pegasovo poučení* (2002), edited by Petr A. Bílek, Miroslav Huptych, Jan Macháček and Vladimír Pistorius, has the subtitle “an anthology of Czech poetry 1945–2000” and surveys the territory not from the point of view of individual authors but in thematic blocks. “For us it wasn’t about individual poets or about remembering particular milestones in one period or another that seemed to contemporaries to be important,” said the editors. “However, we tried to outline [...] the basic themes and motifs as well as the significant poetics which formed Czech poetry in this time [...]”

In their *Anthology of New Czech Literature 1995–2004* (2004) Radim Kopáč and Karolína Jirkalová alphabetically ordered excerpts from 60 new Czech writers and poets within a restricted time period. Their aim was to give readers an idea of the postmodern character of new Czech writing, of its variety in expressive, thematic and generational as well as aesthetic terms, as revealed through excerpts from the poetry of **Miloš Doležal** (1970), **Jiří Dynka** (1959), **Radek Fridrich** (1968), **Petr Hruška** (1964), **Vít Janota** (1970), **Milan Ohnisko** (1965), **Tereza Riedlbauchová** (1977), **Kateřina Rudčenková** (1976), **Martin Stöhr** (1970) and **Mnoháček Zgublačenko** (1969). [2]



### Miloš Doležal

He has published six books of poetry (the latest being *Sansepolcro*, 2004), in which he shows that “he is not a nostalgic lyric poet but a being in search of the lost community

of humankind, the proximity of life in a village, and the union of souls and Man with Nature” (Jan Suk). milosdolezal@rozhlas.cz



### Jiří Dynka

He is a poet with a widely expressive palette: experimental new-speak mingles with an awe of tradition, pop culture is balanced with references to the classics. His theme is

eroticised love, the animal body inspired by the metaphysical dimension. He has published six books of poetry, the latest of which is called *Naučná stezka Olšanské hřbitovy* (2010). jiri.dynka@centrum.cz



### Radek Fridrich

Author of nine books of poetry and shorter prose. In his works, which emerge from the tradition of expressionism and civilism, he is a chronicler of North Bohemia through the

poetic memory of local Czech-German loves and hatreds across the centuries. His latest works are *Šrakakel / Der Schreckliche* (2005), *Žibřid* (2006) and *Modroret* (2008). radek.fridrich@email.cz



### Vít Janota

A romantic of the post-socialist housing estate, a follower of movements in the dark side of the city. He is the author of three collections of poetry (*K ránu proti nebi*, 2002;

*Fasování košťat*, 2004; *Miniová pole*, 2008) and two poetic compositions: *Praha zničená deštěm* (2006), *Jen třídít odpad nestačí* (2011). vit.janota@gingerall.cz



### Tereza Riedlbauchová

She has written three books of poetry (*Modrá jablka*, 2000; *Velká biskupovská noc*, 2005; *Don Vítor si hraje a jiné básně*, 2009) and the poem *Podoba panný pláč* (2002). On the

one hand her poetry, carried along by surreal imagery, consists of an elemental eroticism and harmonic sensuality, while on the other there are tones of anxiety and loneliness. teriedl@post.cz



### Kateřina Rudčenková

Writes poetry, prose and drama. She has published three collections of poetry: *Ludwig* (1999), *Není nutné, abyste mě navštěvoval* (2001) and *Popel a slast* (2004). In

her work she explores the possibilities of dialogue with another and with oneself, just as she presents the raw message that love is the only, albeit usually cruelly deceitful, human refuge in this world.

rudcenkova@gmail.com

Czech poetry from 1966–2006 has been exhaustively examined in a two-part publication *Antologie české poezie* (2007, 2009), a 1,200-page anthology in which a collective of editors (headed by Jan Šulc and Jakub Šofar) introduced 350 poets from the classics to unknown writers' publications found on the internet. According to the critic Jan Nejedlý this book is “an attempt at an ecumenical resume, a stimulus for discussion, a document of one chapter”.

In the given context the description of attempts, stimuli and documents could also be applied to the following: the project *Lepé svihlí tlové* (an anthology compiled in 2002 by Ivan Wernisch as an overview of the poetry brought out by the Brno publishers Petrov), the “anthology of texts by Czech songwriters” *Den bude dlouhý* (editors Jan Šulc and Jaroslav Riedel, 2004), and perhaps the project *Nejlepší české básně* (*The Best Czech Poetry*), which was launched by the publishers Host in 2009 with reference to the tradition and success of a similar project that has been running in the USA since 1988. [3]

## Media interest

When considering the reception of Czech poetry in the print media, which in comparison with radio and television gives it its largest platform, this rule of proportion holds good: the closer a newspaper or magazine is to the mainstream, i. e. the more conformist its approach is (and with that the higher its sales), the less space is given to themes which are peripheral, alternative or nonconformist, which includes poetic output. In the national dailies such as *MF Dnes*, *Lidové noviny*, *Právo* or *Hospodářské noviny*, Czech poetry is referred to (in interviews, commentaries or reviews) almost exclusively in the above mentioned contexts – primarily in connection with literary prizes or with the death or important anniversary of an author. In general, renowned or “deserving” authors have a better chance of being mentioned, as do books which aim to summarise, such as collected works, anthologies or readers.

Relevant information (in the form of reviews, studies, essays or literary debates) is provided by *Host*, the “monthly magazine for literature and readers” – whose editor-in-chief Miroslav Balašík is also the author of the book *Post-generace* (2010), a study of the “retreat and battlefield of poetry in the 1990s” [4] – as well as by fortnightly magazines (*Tvar*) and quarterlies (*Psí víno*, *Revolver Revue*, *RozRazil*, *Souvislosti*, *Weles*, etc.). Their scope is limited by the print run (generally somewhere around 500 to a maximum of 1,500–2,000 copies) as well as by the restricted distribution network: among potential readers there are far more subscriptions to the above-mentioned dailies.



### Petr Hruška

Poetry must “excite, astonish, surprise, unsettle, destroy existing aesthetic norms and create new ones”, says the urbane metaphysical poet, a sensitive observer of existential dilemmas. In 2004 he brought out a collection of his works to date, *Zelený svetřel*, and his latest works are collected under the title *Auta vjíždějí do lodí* (2007).  
lijavec@volny.cz

## Translations

Translations into foreign languages also tell us something about Czech poetry since 1989. As was shown in *Czech Literature in Translation (1998–2010)* (2010), a publication which summarises the foreign adaptations of Czech writers’ books which were sponsored by the Ministry of Culture during that period, the new (and relatively new) names in Czech poetry who have enjoyed this support include Petr Borkovec (German), Miloš Doležal (Polish), Zbyněk Hejda (French), Ivan M. Jirous (Russian), **Lubor Kasal** (Slovenian), **Pavel Řezniček** (Romanian) and Ivan Wernisch (English). [5] Dalibor Dobiáš compiled “an anthology of recent Czech poetry” for the Polish market, *Gdyby wiersze miały drzwi* (2005), which included poetic texts by **Bohdan Chlábec**, **Pavel Kolmačka**, **Vít Kremlička**, **Jiří H. Krchovský**, **Peter Motýl**, **Pavel Petr**, **Tomáš Přidal**, **Božena Správcová** and **Jáchym Topol**. Similar anthologies have been published elsewhere, in Russia *Iz věka v věk: Češskaja poezija* (2005; editors Sergej Glovjuk and Dalibor Dobiáš) and in France *Anthologie de la poésie tchèque contemporaine 1945–2000* (2002; ed. Petr Král). [6]



### Jiří H. Krchovský

He came to attention in 1998 with his collection *Básně*. His more recent work is represented in the books *Poslední list* (2003), *Nad jedním světem* (2004) and *Dvojitě dno* (2010).

He writes on a new-decadent note with a virtuoso command of verse. He has chosen love and death as his themes, which he presents in expressively stylised scenes. Self-deification is confronted with feelings of unease and futility, and fear of nothingness is carried away by a current of black humour and absurdity.  
redakce@hostbrno.cz

Of course two caveats should be added to this enumeration. Firstly, not every author knows how to get translated, and if the author lacks assertiveness or a capable agent then – like **Svatava Antošová**, **František Dryje**, **Roman Erben**, **Jiří Gold**, **Jaroslav Chobot**, **Miloš Vodička** etc. [7] – he may remain neglected, despite the undoubted strength and originality of his poetic vision. Secondly, not every author can be translated, as can be seen in the case of Jiří H. Krchovský (1960). Although he is one of the greatest names in Czech poetry over the past fifty years, his formal refinement means that translations into foreign languages are significantly more complicated (as can be seen by the laborious translation of his verses into Polish, published in the above-mentioned Dobiáš anthology).

[1] The Jan Skácel Prize, awarded at irregular intervals since 2001 by the Brno section of the Obec spisovatelů (Community of Writers), is limited both by region and by its remit (the prize is awarded for "important Czech works of poetry which follow in the best traditions and spirit of Moravian poetry"): on the last occasion (2009) it was won by Petr Hruška for his collection *Auta vjíždějí do lodí*.

[2] Mnoháček Zgublačenko, real name Pavel Hlušíčka, is mentioned for one other reason: he belongs among those authors who joins his texts to music – as with Petr Nikl, Jaromír Typl, the Vitrholc group and Petr Váša, author of so-called physical poetry, where the body is used as a musical instrument. The phenomenon of slam poetry, which appeared on the Czech scene more than ten years ago, shares a similar basis.

[3] For further reading see the following: *Báseň mého srdce* (2005), *Jezdec na delphině* (an anthology of Czech erotic literature from 1990–2005, 2005), *Letenka do noci* (an anthology of contemporary surrealist poetry, 2003) and *S tebou sám* (an anthology of love poetry, 2005).

[4] For further reading see, e. g., Karel Piorecký's study *Česká poezie v postmoderní situaci* (2011) and the collective work *V souřadnicích volnosti* (2008), examining Czech literature from the 1990s with profiles of roughly 80 poetry, prose and drama works.

[5] Some of the classic writers published abroad include Konstantin Biebl, Vladimír Holan, Miroslav Holub, Vítězslav Nezval, Jaroslav Seifert, Jan Skácel and Jan Zahradníček.

[6] The second book was published without Ministry support.

[7] To these names can be added those of poets who have been in exile for a long period and who are not well known to the Czech reader, nor even to local literary history: Karel Zlín, Ivan Schneedorfer, Milan Nápravník, Inka Machulková, Tomáš Frýbert, Vladimíra Čerepková and others.

## ESSAY

Unlike the traditional great essay-writing nations like France and England (the homes of Montaigne and Bacon), this elusive genre lying somewhere between fiction and academic text has not evolved to such beauty and scope in the Czech lands. The essay genre first took root here at the turn of the 20th century (**Arthur Breisky**, **Otokar Březina**, **Jiří Karásek of Lvovice**). During the interwar period it continued to develop within the avant-garde and philosophical movements of the time (**Ladislav Klíma**, **Jindřich Chaloupecký**, **Karel and Josef Čapek**). In connection with the orientation of modern Czech literature, philosophy, art history and literary history (structuralism and phenomenology in particular) towards European culture, it was only in the 1960s that the time became favourable for the creation of essays. From the pre-war tradition there emerged proficient, philosophical essayists such as **Jan Patočka**, **Karel Kosík** and **Josef Šafařík**, as well as a host of literary scientists whose studies might be said to be close to the essay genre (the Romance scholar and comparatist **Václav Černý**, the structuralists **Roman Jakobson**, **Jan Mukařovský** and **Felix Vodička**, as well as the initiators of surrealism in the Czech lands, **Karel Teige** and **Vratislav Effenberger**). Poets and writers living in exile (**Václav Bělohradský**, **Jan Čep**, **Petr Král**, **František Listopad**, **Lubomír Martínek**, **Milan Nápravník**, **Patrik Ouředník** and **Jan Vladislav**) were in contact with Francophone or Anglophone literature, which – as has been noted – regards the essay as an exceptionally challenging but particularly regal genre.



### Václav Bělohradský

The philosopher and sociologist Václav Bělohradský (1944) worked in Italian universities in the 1970s and 1980s and since 1989 he has also been active in the Czech Republic. His works were initially oriented towards modern eschatology and then at the turn of the millennium he became one of the most distinctive critics of globalization. He has written ten books in Czech, the latest being *Mezi světy a mezivěty* (1997) and *Společnost nevolnosti* (2007).

"I think that we are living in an era where we have a special offer on worlds of our own: instead of engaging in a common world we emigrate to our own well-equipped worlds," he says. [www.tady.cz/hawkmoon/](http://www.tady.cz/hawkmoon/)



### Lubomír Martínek

Writes prose and essays and translates. Martínek (1954) graduated from Prague's technical college and in 1979 left for France, where he had various jobs and worked with the publication *Revue K*. Since 1989 he has published 15 books, the most recent being *Mýtus o Lynkeovi* (2008), *Olej do ohně* (2007) and *Dlouhá partie biliáru* (2004). His key themes are nomadism, identity and culture. "I write mainly because of the process that you go through while writing and what that writing forces you to do, even if you'd rather avoid it. Each of my books has influenced my life in some way," he said.

[lubmartinek@volny.cz](mailto:lubmartinek@volny.cz)

After 1989 several seminal essays from world literature were translated into Czech and published officially for the first time. During normalization essays came out only occasionally in samizdat form or via exile publishers. These were mainly French modern and postmodern essays (translations of the works of J.-F. Lyotard, M. Leiris, J. Derrida, Y. Bonnefoy and G. Bataille) but also Anglo-American, German, Austrian and other essays. The works of these essayists par excellence were an inspiration for Czech writers, although there were not many examples of special, distinctive, "pure" essayists in post-1989 literary development.

Due to some kind of boundary or classification system it seems to be a fact that the essay tends to be an addendum to larger works of fiction, poetry or even drama. This is the case with **Milan Kundera**, **Daniela Hodrová**, **Václav Havel**, **Michal**

**Ajvaz**, the above-mentioned Martínek and the author of magical experimental prose and cultural history **Věra Linhartová**. **Libuše Moníková's** essays on Kafka, which were written mainly while in exile in Germany, can be seen as supplements to her novels. The second major area that contemporary Czech essays reflect upon is literature, or other artistic genres and forms. However, in this case the essay has a distinctly academic and cognitive character. The essay often blends academic text and scientific study and to a certain extent lacks a novelistic and aesthetic accent. Paradoxically the essay also occasionally strays into the worlds of journalism, political science and theories of mass media and media communication. Despite these minor areas of contention and the vagueness surrounding the genre, which has no fixed boundaries and yet is a superb literary form, it is possible to recognise many contemporary Czech authors as noteworthy essayists.



### Tomáš Halík

In his essayistic writings, professor of theology Tomáš Halík (1948) reflects both on his own work as a priest and on his wide knowledge of world religions – Catholicism in particular – which he examines from a reformist stance. He has published fifteen books, the most recent being: *Co je bez chvění, není pevné* (2002), *Oslavit Zachea* (2003), *Vzýván i ne vzýván* (2004), *Noc zpovědníka* (2005), *Prolínání světů* (2006), *Vzdáleným nablízku* (2007), *Dotkni se ran* (2008), *Stromu zbývá naděje* (2009), *Divadlo pro anděly* (2010) and *Smířená různost* (2011). [www.halik.cz](http://www.halik.cz)

## Prizes (and prize-winners)

Unlike for fiction or artistic translation there is no prize for the appraisal of essays in the Czech Republic today, the closest thing being the F. X. Šalda Prize, which has been awarded since 1995 for “exceptional work in art criticism”. Among the prize-winners in recent years have been the above-mentioned Věra Linhartová (2010); for the collection of historic-cultural essays *Soustředné kruhy*, **Miloslav Topinka** (2008); for the collection of literary-historical essays *Hadí kámen* and **Jan Štolba** (2006); for the collection of literary essays *Nedopadající džbán*; others include the philosopher **Zdeňek Vašíček** (2003), the film critics **Karel Thein** (2002) and **Jiří Cieslar** (1997) and the theatre critic **Vladimír Just** (1996).

The State Prize for Literature also straddles fiction (including literary history and science) and essays. It has been awarding prizes since 1995 for “the recognition of important original literary works published in Czech” or “the recognition of existing literary works”. Essayists who have won the prize include Daniela Hodrová (2011), **Zdeněk Rotrekl** (2009), **Milan Kundera** (2007), **Věroslav Mertl** (2001), **Josef Škvorecký** (1999) and **Vladimír Macura** (1998).

The judges of the Tom Stoppard Prize and the Jaroslav Seifert Prize occasionally choose as prize-winners authors in whose works the essay plays a prominent role (the Tom Stoppard Prize: Lubomír Martínek, 2009; **Zdeněk Neubauer**, 2008; **Přemysl Rut**, 2007; **Stanislav Komárek**, 2006; **Václav Cílek**, 2005; **Václav Jamek**, 2004; the Jaroslav Seifert Prize: **Ludvík Kundera**, 2009; **Václav Havel**, 2008; **František Listopad**, 2007; **Ivan Martin Jirous**, 2006; **Michal Ajvaz**, 2005).



### Stanislav Komárek

The professor of philosophy and natural-science history Stanislav Komárek (1958) is an essayist commentator on the state of the contemporary world and a novelist who liberally

sprinkles meditations and historical passages throughout his fictional stories. He has written three prose works (*Opšlístisova nadace*, 2002, *Černý domeček*, 2004, and *Mandaríni*, 2007) and more than 15 books of essays, most recently: *Sloupoví aneb Postila* (2008), *Zápisky z Okcidentu* (2008), *Zápisky z Orientu* (2008), *Listy v lahvi* (2010), *Eseje o lidských duších a společnosti I.* (2010), *Eseje o přírodě, biologii a jiných nepravostech* (2011) and *Eseje o lidských duších a společnosti II.* (2011).

[www.stanislav-komarek.cz](http://www.stanislav-komarek.cz)



### Václav Cílek

A qualified geologist and climatologist, has published several academic texts since the 1980s but in the last decade he has established a reputation as an original essayist, which

extends even to his book titles: *Krajiny vnitřní a vnější* (2002), *Makom: kniha míst* (2004), *Borgesův svět* (2007), *Dýchat s ptáky* (2008) and *Archeus: Fragment radostné vědy o trpaslících* (2010). He has been awarded the Tom Stoppard Prize (2004) and has been recognized by the Ministry of the Environment “for his significant contribution to the popularization of Czech science, particularly in geography and climatology” (2007) and the Vize 97 Foundation (2009).

[cilek@gli.cas.cz](mailto:cilek@gli.cas.cz)

## Publishers (and their authors)

In Bohemia and Moravia today there are tens, if not hundreds, of publishing houses which are involved in the publication of original (and translated) essays; among the best known and most active are Academia, Host, Karolinum, Malvern and Torst. In recent years Torst have published essay collections by Věra Linhartová, Patrik Ouředník (*Utopus to byl, kdo učinil mě ostrovem*, 2010), **Martin C. Putna** (*Česká katolická literatura 1918–1945*, 2010), **Jaromír Zemina** (*Via artis, via vitae*, 2010) and Jan Štolba. Malvern publish the essayists Zdeňek Neubauer and Daniela Hodrová and Host have brought out a collection of essays by Miloslav Topinka.



### Martin C. Putna

In his books of essays the literary historian and comparatist Martin C. Putna (1968) explores themes concerning spirituality and culture. He is the author of a monumental

two-volume work *Česká katolická literatura v kontextech 1918–1945* (2010) and *Česká katolická literatura v evropském kontextu 1848–1918* (1998) and more than ten other titles. Jan Jandourek wrote of him that: “MCP is a non-traditional traditionalist for whom Catholicism is a broad current which embraces everything pre-Christian and outwith Christianity. At the same time he manages to be a psychologist and a sociologist who puts literature into context. As a comparatist he knows the status of Czech literature in the world. And as a Catholic he knows what Catholics really believe in, some of them in particular.”  
www.mcputna.cz

In 2008 the publishers Karolinum brought out a collection of texts called *Pokusy a dobrodružství: poznámky k eseji*, edited by Barbora Osvaldová and Radim Kopáč, which reflect on the position of the essay in the Czech lands in a historical context as well as in the period after 1989. Among the contributors are **Jan Suk**, **Josef Kroutvor**, **Martin Hilský**, Václav Čilek, Stanislav Komárek, **Aleš Haman**, **Miloslav Petrušek**, Jan Štolba, Petr Král, **Karel Hviždala**, **Pavel Švanda**, **Viktor Šlajchrt**, **Roman Erben** and **Ivo Harák**.



### Josef Kroutvor

Studied philosophy, history and art history at Charles University in Prague, and in his works he also looks at the issues of art photography, design, architecture and the

sociology of culture. Jan Suk wrote that, “He is an author who creates his own literary, though fundamentally inner world from the fragments of ancient as well as modern architecture and city labyrinths, from the echoes of artistic works from the past and present [...], from the memories and whispers emanating from the café tables of Prague, Vienna, Paris and Venice. He is one of the last representatives of a dying Central Europeanness. He is a melancholic pilgrim of the margins and lost enclaves of our world...” He has had twenty books published, including *Dandy a manekýna* (1999), *Města a ostrovy* (2002), *Můj Mácha* (2003) and *Klobouk, kniha a hůl* (2009).



### Jan Suk

The poet, essayist and literary critic Jan Suk (1951), a graduate of philosophy, history and aesthetics from Charles University in Prague, has published five collections of

poetry and two books of essays: in the first, entitled *Krasy v Hadrianově vile* (2004), he looks at the contemporary decline of the myths which have provided the basis for ancient-Christian civilization and culture, while in the second he examines selected female characters in opera, particularly from the 19th century (*V aréně prachu, stínů a večerů*, 2010).  
jan\_suk@centrum.cz

Separate editions dedicated to the essay have been brought out by the above-mentioned publisher Torst (Collections of Studies and Reflections), as well the Prague publisher Protis (Criticisms and Essays), who have published Viktor Šlajchrt (*Putování pomezím*, 2008), **Vladimír Novotný** (*Ta naše postmoderna česká...*, 2008), Ivo Harák (*Býýýt odněkuď*, 2010) and **Erik Gilk** (*Prozaická zastavení*, 2010). At present the publishers Pulchra are issuing a series dedicated specifically to the essay; since 2008 they have published **Milan Balabán** (*Domov a bezdomoví a jiné zprávy*, 2008), Josef Kroutvor (*Klobouk, kniha a hůl*, 2009), Jan Suk (*V aréně prachu, stínů a večerů*, 2010), **Michal Janata** (*Sypká nehmátnost smrti*, 2010), Roman Erben (*Šero v holubníku*, 2010), **Jakub Guziur** (*Slep-*

*noucí Apollon, kastrováný Dionysos*, 2011) and **Karel Zlín** (*Oblaka naší nepřítomnosti*, 2011). Some authors, such as the Jungian **Rudolf Starý** and the esoteric **D. Ž. Bor** (real name Vladislav Zadrobílek) publish their own essays (along with translated literature) through their own companies (Sagittarius, later Horus and Trigon).

### Zdeněk Kratochvíl

Educated as a theologian, an expert on ancient and pre-ancient philosophy, Zdeněk Kratochvíl (1952) is a university lecturer on the history of philosophy and religion who outlines in his many studies and essays the causes of the crisis of European spirituality, which he sees in the rise of postmodernism and religious fundamentalism. He has published more than ten books, including *Filosofie mezi mýtem a vědou* (2009), *Délský Potápeč k Hérakleitově řeči* (2006), *Obrana želvy* (2003) and *Pramen poznání* (1996).

## Translations

The contemporary Czech essay is not a genre which foreign publishers normally take an interest in, and if they do, then it is usually a one-off or unsystematic undertaking. Authors who are bilingual, or rather who have been living abroad for a long time and publishing concurrently in the language of their second country, have a natural advantage. Among them are some writers we have already mentioned, starting with the world-famous Czecho-French Milan Kundera, then Václav Bělohradský, whose philosophical essays are published mainly in Italian, František Lis-topad (living and publishing in Portugal), Libuše Moníková (also writing in German) and Zdeňek Vašíček (whose books have been published in Great Britain and France), as well as a wider spectrum of authors publishing in Francophone areas such as Karel Zlín, Jan Vladislav, Patrik Ouředník, Lubomír Martínek, Věra Linhartová, Petr Král and Václav Jamek.

In recent years more methodical attention has been focused on Daniela Hodrová (in Bulgaria) and in particular on Patrik Ouředník, whose work *Europeana* (2001), poised between essay and fiction, mystification and a serious journey into the "history of the 20th age", has been translated into more than twenty languages including Belorussian, Danish, Georgian, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Dutch, Greek, Slovenian, Swedish and Turkish.

## ...and others

The list of contemporary Czech essayists which has so far been given is certainly not exhaustive. Alongside the bigger names who have attracted media attention are other less well-known authors who, though perhaps less intellectually distinguished and stylistically original, deserve a mention, such as Václav Cílek (originally a geologist), Tomáš Halík (theologian), Martin Hilský (English scholar), Stanislav Komárek (biologist and philosopher), Arnošt Lustig (writer), Martin C. Putna (literary historian) and Jaromír Zemina (art historian).

From the field of literature and literary history it is worth mentioning **Zbyňek Hejda**, **Jiří Kratochvíl** (*Vyznání příběhovýchosti*, 2000; *Brno nostalgické i ironické*, 2001), **Jaroslav Med** (*Literární život ve stínu Mnichova*, 2010), **Jan Nejedlý**, **Jakub Šofar**, **Jiří Trávniček** and **Jaromír Typlt** (*Rozžhavená kra*, 1996), from music **Petr Kořouň** (*V budoucnosti spadne nově operní umění s nebe z čista jasna*, 2002) and **Vladimír Franz**, from art **Milan Knížák**, **Karel Srp**, **Jarmila Vacková** and **Petr Wittlich**, from photography **Anna Fárová** (*Dvě tváře*, 2009). Among the philosophizing and hermetic essayists, **Zdeněk Kratochvíl** and **Martin Stejskal** stand out alongside D. Ž. Bor, Zdeněk Neubauer and Rudolf Starý.



### Patrik Ouředník

Is a writer, poet, essayist and translator who has been living in France since 1985. He has translated Beckett, Jarry, Queneau and Vian into Czech, and he has translated Holan, Holub,

Vančura and Skácel, among others, into French. He put his translation experience and rich knowledge of languages to use in his very first title, the non-academic vocabulary handbook *Šmírbuch jazyka českého* (1988). He has written a further 15 books, the most successful being the prose works *Europeana: Stručné dějiny dvacátého věku* (2001), *Příhodná chvíle, 1885* (2006) and *Ad acta* (2006). The most recent publication is a guide to the history of literary utopias, *Utopus to byl, kdo učinil mě ostrovem* (2010).  
po.nlg@laposte.net



### Jan Keller

In his sociological and political texts the university professor and journalist Jan Keller (1955) examines the idea of sustainable long-term development and the links between ecology and sociology. He has written more than 20 books on this theme, including *Tři sociální světy* (2010), *Nejistota a důvěra* (2009), *Vzdělanostní společnost? (2008)* and *Teorie modernizace* (2007); his most successful re-printed titles are *Abeceda prosperity* (1997) and *Až na dno blahobytu* (1993).  
jan.keller@osu.cz

## LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Over the past twenty years Czech literature for children and young people has not only been influenced by developments in society and politics since 1989, but also by the changes in the new generations of readers, who are quickly maturing and moving about with ease in the digital world. The differences in their reading competencies are due to the fact that reading is only one segment in the range of multimedia structures of children's culture, and other media are often used for relaxation and education. Contemporary literature for children and young people is characterised by the relaxing of traditionally perceived boundaries which divided it outwardly as a subsystem, but also of those boundaries which inwardly divided it according to genre, ethos and reader categorisation. There are also works which, although they may be formally categorised by editorial practice, consciously allow for the presence of two potential readerships and appeal at the same time to children and adults (see Michal Viewegh: *Krátké pohádky pro unavené rodiče*, 2007).

The 1990s was a period of fluctuation for Czech literature for children and young people, influenced by the de-monopolisation and fragmentation of publishing activities, as well as by the challenges posed by the global production of books, both for the most highbrow of works and the most trivial and utilitarian. Homegrown works often remained in the shadow of editions which returned to previously silenced authors, whilst glossy translated literature took first place quantitatively in the book market. At the start of the 21st century it is possible to say that Czech literature for children and young people has managed to successfully avoid the crisis scenarios which the literary critics in the 1990s had predicted.

The welcome regeneration of the literary scene, which for decades had been dominated by the publishers Albatros, was represented by the growth of new publishers at home (for example, Meander, Brio, Práh, Baobab, the Raketa editions for Labyrint publishers, B4U Publishing), which not only focused attention on the texts and illustrations but also on the typography and book covers. Their products have shifted children's books more towards the form of aesthetic objects with active and playful functions.

One of the most dynamic and blossoming areas in contemporary Czech literature for children is without doubt the illustrated book. An important impetus for its growth was the inspirational influence of foreign products which quite often featured contributions by Czech artists: **Květa Pacovská** (1928), **Jindra Čapek** (1953), **Štěpán Zavřel** (1932-1999), **Josef Paleček** (1932), **Libuše Palečková** (1937) and **Petr Sís** (1949).

The contemporary illustrated book is characterised by a clear tendency towards playfulness with an inventive use of non-traditional artistic techniques and materials. **Eva Volfová** (1979) used embroidery instead of drawings in her story about the search for a safe home, *Kočíčka z kávové pěny* (2006), and **Vendula Chalánková** (1981) uses direct tactile sensations in her pop-up book *Červená karkulka* (2009). **Lukáš Urbánek** (1973), whose art installation with the distinctive Doctor Racek character (*Doktor Racek jede na prázdniny*, 2008; *Doktor Racek na horách*, 2009) complemented text by **Milada Rezková** (1979), combines illustrations with photographs. **Markéta Šimková** (1977) and **Petr Šmalec** (1974) gave an innovative treatment to the well-known fairy story about the hen and the rooster (based on the conflict between selfishness and self-sacrifice) in the book *Zik a Cháta* (2008), creating its protagonists by recycling old spare parts and sports equipment. In her story *Adam a koleno* (2007) **Dagmar Urbánková** (1972) creates a miniature world from natural materials, scraps and knick-knacks, which are hidden behind a curtain made from a boy's torn trouser leg; *Chlebová Lhota* (2010) was stylised as a village chronicle and the characters, scenery and furniture were baked or modelled from bread and then pictured as photographs or in comic-strip sequences. Art installation combined with photography characterises the work of **František Skála** (1956), whose "photographic comic" *Skutečný příběh Cílka a Lidy* (2007) is set in a real natural environment where Skála staged his own puppets made exclusively from natural materials. **Jiří Stach** (1944) and **Lenka Uhlířová** (1973) mix illustrations with photography in the parable *Velká cesta Malého pána* (2008). The question arises, however, as to whether these works will remain in the category of interesting experiments which are more appreciated by adult readers. An effective poeticisation of a child's world, inspired by the poetics of the pioneer of Czech animated film Jiří Trnka, can be found in the books of **Pavel Čech** (1968) *O zahradě* (2005) and *Tajemství ostrova za prkennou ohradou* (2009). The archetypal

themes of childhood sadness and fear of loss or separation are to be found in the illustrated books *Už se nebojím tmy* (2007) and *Prázdniny v nebi* (2008) by **Vojtěch Jurík**, writing under the pseudonym Vhrsti.



#### Pavel Čech

The illustrated book *Zahrada* (2005) was published in the same year in an English version called *The Garden* by the Czech publishers Brio; it was also brought out in a French translation that year as *Le jardin merveilleux* by the Parsian publisher Gründ.

[www.pavelcech.wz.cz](http://www.pavelcech.wz.cz)



#### Vhrsti

In 2003 he was represented in the world anthology of anti-war comics *Warburger* and received an honourable mention at the comics festival in Belgrade. He was also awarded

the Certificate of Excellence from the National Press Club of Canada (2006). The book *Už se nebojím tmy* was published in Upper Lusatian and Lower Lusatian (2009) by the publisher Domowina. Translations into English and Greek will be forthcoming.  
[www.vhrsti.cz](http://www.vhrsti.cz)

An original theme is represented by illustrated literature which looks at Czech history and significant figures from political and cultural life. In her works *Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk* (2006) and *Jan Ámos Komenský* (2007), **Renáta Fučíková** (1964) created monographic illustrated books in which the emotional impact of the aesthetic effect works in tandem with the intellectual function. **Martina Skala's** cycle (1958) *Strado & Varius* (2003–2010) is dedicated to the world of music and concerns restless little violins which are hatched from an egg found by the old violinist Varius. **Lucie Seifertová's** (1969) huge, original pop-up book *Dějiny udatného českého národa a pár bezvýznamných světových událostí* (2003) illustrates Czech history up to the present day with humour, exaggerated caricatures and appropriate brevity. The three-dimensional concept of the book and division of pages into part factual and part story allows children to choose their own form of reading.



#### Martina Skala

After the success of the illustrated book *Strado & Varius* (2003), which was translated into English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Korean and Chinese, the sequels are also

expected to be translated.  
[info@MartinaSkala.com](mailto:info@MartinaSkala.com)



#### Lucie Seifertová

Several of her extensive pop-up books have been translated by the Czecho-Slovak publishers Slovart and the Czech publisher Petr Prchal: for example, *Pražský hrad a jeho tajemství*

(*Mysterious castles and chateaux of Bohemia*, 2003) and *Tajemná Praha (Mysterious Prague*, 2005) in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Japanese versions; *Dějiny udatného českého národa a pár bezvýznamných světových událostí* in English (*The history of the brave Czech nation and a few insignificant world events*, 2005), *Tajemný Golem (The mysterious Golem*, 2003) in English and German.  
[www.seifertova.cz](http://www.seifertova.cz)

Contemporary poetry for children is characterised by playfulness and a close connection to music and art. On the boundaries between poetry collections and song books are the books by **Zdeňek Svěrák** (1936), **Jan Vodňanský** (1941) and **Jiří Weinberger** (1946). In the books by **Petr Nikl** (1960) his nonsense verse populated by fantastical creatures is given an added dimension by the typesetting and illustrations (*Záhádky*, 2007; *Jelěňovítí*, 2008; *Blázníček*, 2009; *Přehádky*, 2010). *Híršalův skicák* (2009), which was compiled by the editor Radim Kopáč from the poetry of **Josef Híršal** (1920–2003), was conceived by Nikl, in his role of illustrator, as a real sketch book, which in harmony with the energizing force of Híršal's poetry offers children room for their own artistic or literary expression.



#### Petr Nikl

The Czech publishers Meander brought out *Pohádka o Rybitince* and *O Rybabě a Mořské duši* in the English versions (*A fairy tale about a wee fish named Rybitinka*, 2001;

*Rybaba and the Sea Soul*, 2002). Excerpts from the book *Lingvistické pohádky* (2009) can be found in English and German under Nikl's profile on the Czech literature portal.  
[www.petnikl.cz](http://www.petnikl.cz)

The nonsense verse with which **Jiří Žáček** (1945), **Pavel Šrut** (1940), **Miloš Kratochvíl** (1948) and **Jiří Dědeček** (1953) continue an earlier tradition remains a predominant feature of Czech poetry for children. Šrut's collections have made a particularly great contribution (e. g. *Příšerky a příšeři*, 2005; *Šířatý švec a myšut*, 2007). Like English nursery rhymes they are closely linked to the world of children's games, unbridled imagination and linguistic jokes, on top of which a grotesque overtone is added to create a playground for the author's existential themes. Humour with sensitive didactics typifies the verse of the younger generation of poets, for example the collection *Houbeles pictus* (2008) by **Petr Maděra** (1970) or *Kam až smí smích* (2009) by **Radek Malý** (1977). In the later collection *Listonoš vítr* (2011), which was dominated by a nostalgic autumnal mood, Malý showed the viability of lyrical forms within children's poetry. An important editorial event, charting the peaks and transformations in children's poetry, was the anthology *Nebe, peklo, ráj. Tyglík české poezie pro děti 20. století* (2009), which was compiled by Petr Šrámek.



#### Jiří Žáček

The poetry collection *Kočkování* (2005) has been published in French (*Chat mailleries*, France Loisirs, 2005), German (*Spielende Katzen*, RM-Buch-und-Medien-

Vertrieb, 2006) and Spanish (*Engatusados: el libro para los grandes y pequeños amigos de los gatos*, Círculo de lectores, 2006). [www.jirizacek.cz](http://www.jirizacek.cz)

There are more and more authentic elements appearing within children's prose, just as within writing for adults. These reveal themselves in playful and mystifying forms (a play on authenticity, the author's inclination towards revealing themes from real family life), which are not necessarily recognised by the younger reader. *Kozí knížka* (2005) by **Tereza Řičanová** (1974) received attention due to the unpretentious clarity with which the author presents a child's life in the countryside, closely tied to the cycles of nature.

At the start of the 1990s a wave was sweeping through literature for children and young people which opened up taboo subjects. Works immediately began to appear which reflected current problems in society which up until then had been avoided or approached in a non-confrontational manner. The main character becomes an outsider

both in realistic stories of children's lives as well as in prose which contains elements of fantasy. In her prose works for children and young people **Iva Procházková** (1953) has shown since the 1990s that she is capable of sensitively communicating difficult themes to adolescent readers as well as to the youngest. The novel *Nazí* (2009) is a convincing account from a multi-narrator perspective on the vulnerability of adolescents in today's world. In her novella for children *Myši patří do nebe... ale jenom na skok* (2006) the author reflects on death as the inevitable boundary of any type of existence and even chooses it as the basis of a story.



#### Iva Procházková

During her time in exile (from 1983 in Austria and from 1986-1995 in Germany) she brought out books in German.

The novels *Die Sommer hat Eselsohren* (*Summer Wears*

*Donkey Ears*, 1985) and *Die Nackten* (*The Naked*, 2009) were nominated for the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis (a German literary prize for books for children and young people). In 1989 the novel *Die Zeit der geheimen Wünsche* (*The Season of Secret Wishes*, 1988) was awarded the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis in the children's book category. Other novels have been translated into French, Spanish, English, Swedish and Hungarian. [ivaprochazkova.com](http://ivaprochazkova.com)

Alongside the more difficult to digest trends in contemporary children's prose there is a strongly developing tendency towards undisguised utility, in which literature provides readers with clear instructions on how to resolve problematic situations in everyday life or attain an identified goal, and it does this by involving the child reader. Elements of instructional literature appear in the work of a range of contemporary authors, among whom the most prominent are **Petra Braunová** (1967), **Hana Doskočilová** (1936), **Martina Drijverová** (1951), **Daniela Krolupperová** (1969) and **Ivona Březinová** (1964). Březinová's cycle of prose for girls *Holky na vodítku* (2002-2003) and also the story for younger readers *Lentilka pro dědu Edu* (2006) expose relevant social themes such as drug addiction, gambling, eating disorders, old age and illness.

Literature of the fairy-tale type reverberates with the influence of **Václav Čtvrtek** (1911-1976), among whose successors can be ranked, for example, **František Nepil** (1929-1995), **Jaromír Kincl** (1930) and **Emil Šaloun** (1947). The modern

fairy tale retains the the constant features of the genre with an emphasis on the live act of story-telling. The role of the narrators and main protagonists are taken by the characters of the dads, whose natural authority does not exclude an ironic assessment of the father's position and derives mainly from loving family relationships, for example in Zdeňek Svěrák's stories *Tatínku, ta se ti povedla* (1991) or **Arnošt Goldflam's** (1946) *Tatínek není k zahození* (2004) and *Tatínek 002* (2006). Through shifts to a playful form of parody or travesty, which **Magdalena Wagnerová** (1960) employs in an innovative way in the books *Pavouk na šalvěji* (2003), *Strom s granátovými jablky* (2004), *Záhada č. 28* (2007) and *Krys Veliký* (2010), the potential of fairy tales and legends to address the adult reader is increased. In a similar way Šrut's novel *Lichožrouti* (2008) and its sequel *Lichožrouti se vracejí* (2010) or the short prose work *Pan Kdybych hledá kamaráda* (2009) offer a realistic account of the search for friendship and real values presented in the seemingly playful garb of a fairy tale.



#### Magdalena Wagnerová

The children's story books *Une histoire pour chaque soir: 366 histoires du petit bonhomme vert* (*Jablečňák*) and *Une histoire pour chaque soir: Grenouille & cie* (*Žabina & spol.*)

were published in 2003 and 2005 by the Parisian publisher Gründ.  
[dybbuk@dybbuk.cz](mailto:dybbuk@dybbuk.cz)

The other pole of author's stories is represented by texts more closely linked to the legacy of folklore and individualised by the distinctive poetic of the authors, as, for example, in the collections *Královské pohádky* (1994) and *O dobré a o zlé moci* (2000) by **Karel Šiktanc** (1928) or in the prose work *O ztracené lásce* (1995) by **Eva Hudečková** (1949).

Adaptations and anthologies of folklore material are an enduring part of the fairy-tale context. The legacy of Czech and world fairy tales is accessed by writers such as **Vladimír Hulpach** (1935), Martina Drijverová and **Milada Motlová** (1945); its timeless appeal is also demonstrated by the reissuing of the imaginative collection by **Jan Vladislav** (1923–2009) and **Vladislav Stanovský** (1922–2005), *První* and *Druhý strom pohádek z celého světa* (2008, 2009).

In the Czech Republic high-quality works of literature for children and young people are promoted through literary fairs, awards, competitions, campaigns and specialised websites, which are supported by the Czech Ministry of Culture, Svaz českých knihkupců a nakladatelů [Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers] and other non-governmental organisations and sponsors. The Children's Book Fair takes place every year at the exhibition ground in Liberec. The annual Zlatá stuha [Golden Ribbon] prize for the best books for children and young people is awarded by the Czech section of the IBBY, Obec spisovatelů [Association of Writers], Obec překladatelů [Czech Literary Translators' Guild] and Klub ilustrátorů dětské knih [Club of Children's Book Illustrators], and the SUK public opinion poll on the most popular books for children and young people is announced by the Comenius National Pedagogical Library. The most popular Czech book prize, Magnesia Litera, is also awarded in a category for children and young people. Various campaigns to promote reading among children have been implemented and websites geared towards children are in operation, e.g. Growing with the Book ([www.rostemesknihou.cz](http://www.rostemesknihou.cz)), the Reader's Friendly Advisor "Čtesyrád" ([www.ctesyrad.cz](http://www.ctesyrad.cz)), The Book – A Life-Long Addiction ([www.sckn.cz](http://www.sckn.cz)) or the charity project Reading Helps ([www.ctenipomaha.cz](http://www.ctenipomaha.cz)). With the support of the Ministry of Culture and the Svět knihy company, Czech literature for children and young people is also represented abroad, in particular at the international children's book fair in Bologna, Italy. Czech books for children and young people also appear in the prestigious White Raven catalogue, which is published every year by the Internationale Jugendbibliothek in Munich.

## THE BOOK MARKET

In 2010 the total number of published titles of printed books went down for the second consecutive year (this time by approximately 4 %). In total 17,054 titles were published (see table I). This represents an absolute decrease of around 550 titles compared to 2009. To what extent this was part of a fall in the total volume of sales of books, or whether it was even more pronounced, can only be surmised due to the persistent lack of credible data. In such a case there is generally a greater decline in sales in the regions than in the capital city of Prague.

On the other hand, there was a record growth in the number of translations published (see table II). In absolute terms that means 6,044 titles and a growth of almost 5 % in comparison with 2009, when a total of 5,777 translated literary titles were published. In 2010 translations also accounted for more than a third of the total book production of the Czech Republic.

2010 was also notable for the rapid emergence of e-books in the Czech book sphere. This confirmed prognoses of an expected development which should have a more tangible effect on the Czech book market in 2011 in particular. This is mainly related to the forthcoming entry of the biggest player in the Czech Republic's book market, the Euromedia Group company, into this segment of book production and sales.

However, in the second half of the year and the start of 2011 the greatest stir was caused by the government's forthcoming tax reform, which provides for the unification of the rate of value added tax. This is supposed to come into effect in 2012 and as far as books are concerned it would lead not only to a general rise in the cost of book production but also to a threat to the publication of certain types of literature. On a global scale it would also mean an increase in this rate for books of unprecedented sharpness in a very short space of time.

TABLE I

| THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHED TITLES OF PRINTED BOOKS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC (2010-2006) |        |        |        |        |        |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|   | 2010   | 2009   | 2008   | 2007   | 2006   |
|   | 17 054 | 17 598 | 18 520 | 18 029 | 17 019 |

Source: National Library of the Czech Republic

TABLE II

| OVERVIEW OF PUBLISHED TRANSLATIONS OF BOOKS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC (2010-2006) |              |              |              |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | 2010         | 2009         | 2008         | 2007         | 2006         |
| <b>In total</b>   | <b>6 044</b> | <b>5 777</b> | <b>5 546</b> | <b>5 384</b> | <b>5 240</b> |
| from the English  | 3 071        | 3 005        | 2 969        | 2 665        | 2 556        |
| from the German   | 1 058        | 1 157        | 1 168        | 1 115        | 1 186        |
| from the French   | 562          | 293          | 270          | 285          | 244          |
| from the Spanish  | 77           | 114          | 95           | 116          | 179          |
| from the Italian  | 111          | 102          | 94           | 81           | 86           |
| from the Polish   | 108          | 73           | 81           | 53           | 70           |
| from the Slovak   | 229          | 225          | 76           | 57           | 176          |
| from the Russian  | 73           | 78           | 66           | 66           | 68           |

Source: National Library of the Czech Republic

TABLE III

**THE LARGEST BOOK PUBLISHERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2010\***

(EXCLUDES UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE PUBLISHERS AND THE PUBLISHING DIVISIONS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES)  
INCLUDES THE BOOK PRODUCTION IN THE PERIOD 2009-2006

|  | 2010       | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
|--|------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Euromedia Group, Praha <sup>1</sup>                         | <b>484</b> | 440  | 446  | 409  | 425  |
| 2. Grada Publishing, Praha                                     | <b>391</b> | 464  | 345  | 361  | 344  |
| 3. Moravská Bastei – MOBA, Brno                                | <b>385</b> | 438  | 370  | 347  | 323  |
| 4. Computer Press, Brno  | <b>341</b> | 427  | 311  | 382  | 323  |
| 5. Egmont ČR, Praha  | <b>307</b> | 265  | 264  | 251  | 177  |
| 6. Tribun EU, Brno   | <b>280</b> | 190  | 230  | 139  | -    |
| 7. Fragment, Havlíčkův Brod / Praha                            | <b>221</b> | 213  | 258  | 231  | 130  |
| 8. Levné knihy / Československý spisovatel, Praha <sup>2</sup> | <b>206</b> | 172  | 50   | 45   | 45   |
| 9. Václav Svojtka & Co, Praha                                  | <b>200</b> | 294  | 143  | 228  | 133  |
| 10. BBart, Praha   | <b>191</b> | 273  | 277  | 228  | 299  |
| 11. Albatros, Praha  | <b>188</b> | 221  | 214  | 184  | 172  |
| 12. Mladá fronta, Praha <sup>3</sup>                           | <b>185</b> | 205  | 189  | 154  | 110  |
| 13. Rebo Productions CZ, Čestlice/Průhonice                    | <b>179</b> | 265  | 233  | 180  | 161  |
| 14. XYZ, Praha   | <b>174</b> | 161  | 12   | 27   | 19   |
| 15. Argo, Praha  | <b>138</b> | 135  | 80   | 117  | 111  |
| 16. Naše vojsko, Praha   | <b>120</b> | 114  | 63   | 57   | 74   |
| 17. Sloart, Praha  | <b>119</b> | 116  | 127  | 128  | 93   |
| 18. Academia, Praha  | <b>117</b> | 110  | 96   | 106  | 89   |
| 19. C. H. Beck, Praha  | <b>111</b> | 110  | 86   | 60   | 80   |
| 20. Baronet, Praha   | <b>110</b> | 88   | 108  | 65   | 101  |
| 21. Víkend, Praha  | <b>105</b> | 86   | 70   | 56   | 51   |
| 22. Fortuna Libri, Praha                                       | <b>101</b> | 150  | 143  | 86   | 26   |

Source:

\* Data provided and verified by individual publishers. Includes all entities whose production exceeds 100 newly published book titles in 2010 - without re-editions and new editions of previously published titles with a new ISBN number.

[1] The production of Euromedia Group is cumulative. Its individual publishers reported the following results from their five years of existence.

|             |            |            |            |            |            |
|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Knižní klub | 2010 - 281 | 2009 - 261 | 2008 - 267 | 2007 - 221 | 2006 - 194 |
| Ikar        | 2010 - 169 | 2009 - 155 | 2008 - 152 | 2007 - 164 | 2006 - 171 |
| Odeon       | 2010 - 34  | 2009 - 24  | 2008 - 27  | 2007 - 24  | 2006 - 24  |

[2] Out of which 70 titles were published under Československý spisovatel; the publisher co-published 63 titles that are not included in this list.

[3] Excludes the production of medical literature published by Medical Service.

TABLE IV

**LARGEST BOOK PUBLISHERS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2010**

(UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE PUBLISHERS AND THE PUBLISHING DIVISIONS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ONLY)

INCLUDES THE BOOK PRODUCTION IN THE PERIOD 2009-2006

|  | 2010       | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
|--|------------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Vydavatelství Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc       | <b>403</b> | 265  | 274  | 352  | 295  |
| 2. Masarykova univerzita, Brno                       | <b>354</b> | 224  | 350  | 303  | 279  |
| 3. Česká zemědělská univerzita, Praha                | <b>272</b> | 220  | 188  | 223  | 250  |
| 4. Vysoké učení technické, Brno                      | <b>240</b> | 258  | 234  | 169  | 227  |
| 5. VŠ báňská - Technická univerzita, Ostrava         | <b>34</b>  | 344  | 305  | 371  | 244  |
| 6. Karolinum, Praha                                  | <b>203</b> | 243  | 253  | 204  | 193  |
| 7. Vydavatelství ČVUT, Praha                         | <b>170</b> | 232  | 266  | 292  | 185  |
| 8. Technická univerzita, Liberec                     | <b>133</b> | 140  | 135  | 134  | 103  |
| 9. Oeconomica-VŠE, Praha                             | <b>122</b> | 166  | 183  | 149  | 141  |
| 10. Mendelova zemědělská a lesnická univerzita, Brno | <b>119</b> | 114  | 127  | 88   | 105  |
| 11. Univerzita Tomáše Bati, Zlín                     | <b>116</b> | 135  | 127  | 152  | 99   |
| 12. Univerzita obrany, Brno                          | <b>95</b>  | 134  | 171  | 102  | 58   |
| 13. Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem         | <b>90</b>  | 108  | 171  | 124  | 75   |
| 14. Západočeská univerzita, Plzeň                    | <b>87</b>  | 104  | 94   | 106  | 60   |
| 15. Ostravská univerzita, Ostrava                    | <b>85</b>  | 132  | 165  | 144  | 128  |

TABLE V

**NUMBER OF PUBLISHED TITLES ACCORDING TO SELECTED LITERARY GENRES (2010-2006)**

|   | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Fiction                                   | 4477 | 4475 | 4162 | 3927 | 3746 |
| Literature for children and youth         | 1336 | 1367 | 1385 | 1187 | 1290 |
| School textbooks and university textbooks | 1536 | 1489 | 2132 | 1971 | 1924 |

Source: National Library of the Czech Republic

## The production of printed books

In 2010 a total of 1,925 publishers contributed to Czech book production, with each of them bringing at least one title onto the market. From this perspective, publishers from the Czech capital city once again played an important role; a total of 688 entities, i. e. 36 % of them, were located in Prague and they had a share of almost 27 % in the total book production of the Czech Republic (a total of 4,519 published titles). In 2010 new releases represented almost 88 % of the total production of publishing entities in the Czech Republic; in absolute terms this represents 14,992 titles from the total number of 17,054. In comparison with some other EU countries, book publishing in the Czech Republic is still markedly divided up among a large number of publishers.

The activities of Czech publishers were comparable with the previous year, when 1,913 publishing entities participated in annual book production. However, in all probability the actual number of publishers will be several hundred more, because 2,461 titles were also published which were not identified with an ISBN number and so had to be allocated an alternative identification number in the National Library of the Czech Republic. This means that more than 14 % of published book titles were lacking this identifier!

A total of 21 private publishing entities (see table III) plus 11 publishers linked to universities and state institutions (see table IV) prepared more than a hundred new titles for the book market. Approximately a further thirty private publishers can also be regarded as large-scale: they reported production ranging from 50 to almost 100 published titles. In comparison with the previous year these indicators remain essentially unchanged. With respect to its number of inhabitants the Czech Republic thus maintains a position among the top countries exhibiting a large production of books.

With few exceptions, the tables of the largest publishers according to the number of titles published give evidence of mass book production and the production of bestsellers. In addition to this, of course, in the Czech Republic there is also a relatively powerful and important group of publishers (approx. 5-20 titles published per year) with a clearly defined editorial profile and specialisation, which concentrate on the publishing of worthy domestic and translated literature for minority readerships and bibliophiles or

literature for children. They include, e. g., Arbor vitae, Atlantis, Aulos, Baobab, Dauphin, Labyrinth, Meander, Literární čajovna Suzanne Renaud, Opus, Torst, Vetus via, etc. These complete the overall picture of the publishing sector and form an indispensable part of it.

The costs of book production for university and college publishers and the publishing divisions of central government authorities, which is tailored to the needs of the schools and their students and also state institutions and experts and specialists, are naturally not comparable with the costs of private publishers. In reality only around a half of the books produced will make it onto booksellers' shelves (the other half is made up of off-market and so-called grey literature, consisting of various publications by state authorities, statistics and methodological manuals and other specialist publications).

In the period up to 31. 12. 2010, 4,875 book publishers were registered in the Czech Republic; according to international methodology these include both active publishing houses and those which are defunct or entities which are not actively engaged in publishing activities. However, this figure is a reliable indicator of the volume of publishing activities in the Czech Republic since November 1989. At an estimate about half of the registered publishing entities are active. In 2010 approximately 100 publishers of non-periodical publications ceased their activities and 292 publishing entities were newly registered.

## The structure of Czech book production

Books in the Czech language once again predominated in 2010, forming almost 87 % of the book production of Czech publishing entities. A further 1,084 titles were brought out in Czech with a share of another language. Last year Czech publishers prepared a total of 198 multilingual publications for release. The foreign-language book production of the Czech publishing houses was once again strongly dominated by English, ahead of Slovak and some way ahead of German. The proportion of non-periodical publications which came out in English in the Czech Republic in 2010 represented almost 4 % of total book production. Overall in the period under observation books were published in the Czech Republic in a further 20 languages (e. g. 7 titles in Korean, 4 in Hungarian, 3 in Arabic and 2 in Persian). The proportion of fiction within the total book production of the Czech Republic increased again last year in comparison with the previous two years, to more than 26 %. The proportion of the volume of children's literature remained basically at the level of 2008-2009. This represents a total of 1,336 published titles of children's literature and a 7.8 % share in the year's total book production. The proportion of school and university textbooks published within the total book production of the Czech Republic increased in 2010 to 9 % (see table V). Specific figures for the last five years on the types of book production commented on above are set out in table V.

## Translations

In 2010 the proportion of translations in the overall volume of Czech book production exceeded a third, i.e. it formed a 35.4 % share. There was an increase of almost 5 % in the number of titles published compared to 2009 (see table I). The Czech Republic thus continues to be one of the leading countries in the world where translations form one of the largest shares of total book production. This has a certain logic, because the Czech language is not a world language, and so through the published translations we open our doors to the cultures of other languages, be they more numerous or those which have given rise to works of literature which are exceptional or worthy of recognition. In 2010 Czech publishers offered their readers translations from a total of 42 languages (the year before last, 39), including some very rarely frequented languages, such as Bengali, Icelandic, Persian or Coptic. The trio of languages from which the most translations are made in the Czech Republic has remained unchanged since 1990. Again it was clearly dominated by English, which accounted for more than half of all published translations (almost 51 %). German, followed by French, maintained their positions over the last year, some way ahead of the other languages from which the most translations are made. 2010 also saw a rise in the number of translations from Italian and especially from Polish. In the case of Polish, this was by almost half, placing it among the six most translated languages in the CR. Conversely, there was a similarly large decrease in translations from Spanish. In last year's Czech book production there was again a relatively strong representation of literary works translated from Dutch 45 (2009: 20) and from Scandinavian languages: Swedish 32 (28), Norwegian 11 (12) and Finnish 9 (10). Dutch became the ninth most translated language in this country and Swedish concludes the top ten. Twelve titles were also translated from Hungarian (in 2009: 15) and from Portuguese (2009: 13). In 2010 the rank of the most translated Slavonic language in the Czech Republic was again held by Slovak. Russian basically retained its position, and together with Slovak and Polish it formed the trio of Slavonic languages from which the most translations are made in the Czech Republic. In the long term a disproportionately low number of translations were made from other Slavonic languages. The number of translations published in recent years was more or less constant - only around 20 titles came out. In 2009, however, their number grew to 35 and this trend also continued last year. A total of 36 translations from other Slavonic languages were published: 9 from Serbian, 8 from Ukrainian, 7 from Croatian, 6 from Slovenian, 3 from Bulgarian and 3 from Sorbian.

## The rise of e-books

In the history of book culture in the Czech Republic and abroad, 2010 and the beginning of the following year were marked by the sudden emergence of e-books. This is confirmed by the sporadically emerging data. It manifested itself not only in the number of specialist events which took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, the Dilia agency, Svaz českých knihkupců a nakladatelů (SČKN) and libraries, but also within the Reklama-Polygraf trade fair devoted to the media; indeed, one of the main themes of the 17th annual international book fair and literary festival Book World Prague (12.–15. 5. 2011) was the World of E-Books. These specialist events focused mainly on the issues of technical equipment, access control software (DRM), the economics of e-book production, the pricing of e-books, their availability, the allocation of ISBN numbers and especially on the protection of copyright in connection with piracy in this area. One question which remains open is that of the legislative treatment of the lending of e-books in libraries, because in the relatively small Czech book market there is a real threat of the liquidation of a number of publishing houses.

The sales of reading equipment by the companies Acomp and Alza, especially in the second half of 2010, as well as the number of readers individually imported and ordered abroad testified to unprecedented interest from customers. It is estimated that around 50,000 of them are currently in operation (however, figures of as many as 100,000 pieces of operating equipment have appeared in the press). Some bookshops have also started selling readers. For example, the Barvič a Novotný bookshop in Brno immediately offered seven types in various price brackets. Libraries are also catering to the growing interest among their users. Readers and e-books can already be borrowed in Prague, Brno, Hradec Králové, Vsetín, Jablonec... And the number of these sites is continually rising. However, at present the works offered by libraries are limited to those which are no longer subject to copyright protection (i. e. the Čapek brothers, B. Němcová, K. H. Mácha, Sherlock Holmes detective stories, etc.). The National Library of the Czech Republic is currently engaged in the research task of the National Digital Library, where the Czech production of electronic documents is to be concentrated.

An increasing number of publishers are, either alone or in cooperation with legal literary portals,

publishing e-books or issuing them concurrently with a printed version (e.g. Portál, JOTA, Druhé město, Talpress, Host, Baronet, Fragment, Knižní klub and others). The media concern Ringier CR abandoned its project of trading in e-books, [www.gutenberg.cz](http://www.gutenberg.cz). All the indications are that there has been a certain awakening of publishers, mainly under the influence of illegal portals which are currently showing an unprecedented increase in the number of e-book titles offered (in the order of thousands of titles) and downloaded (in the order of hundreds of thousands), as well as registered readers. It should be noted that the offer of titles from illegal portals, which until recently was to a large extent only a digitalised version of printed book production, increasingly displays the parameters of professionally prepared e-books.

In 2010 the activities of Czech book portals also gathered pace (e. g. [www.palmknihy.cz](http://www.palmknihy.cz), [www.ereading.cz](http://www.ereading.cz), [www.wknihy.cz](http://www.wknihy.cz), [www.bookz.cz](http://www.bookz.cz), etc.). However, the range of titles they offer is generally in the order of hundreds and sales in the order of dozens. One breakthrough event appears to be the entry of the Czech Republic's largest book publisher, the Euromedia Group, into this segment of the book market. The company announced the commencement of sales of e-books in the Czech Republic on 1. 4. 2011 on the portal [www.ebux.cz](http://www.ebux.cz). Its initial offer comprises 800 titles from the production of around 40 publishers who have entered into cooperation with Euromedia Group. In collaboration with the firm Wooly a reader will also be launched on the market. Following the example of Amazon.com, however, this format will accept only e-books from the portal [www.ebux.cz](http://www.ebux.cz), which, given the strength of the Euromedia Group and the small Czech market for e-books to date, is raising fears of a monopoly and an understandable degree of indignation from the competition.

One fundamental problem appears to be the issue of the pricing of e-books and the share of e-books sold between publishers and authors, or the copyright holders. At the Dilia conference devoted to e-books which took place in Prague in October 2010, participants agreed that the acceptable price level for one e-book title appears to be around 100 CZK, in order to make sure it doesn't pay for internet enthusiasts to think up ways to get the desired title illegally. However, with reference to the cost of preparing e-books, Czech publishers have so far been inclined towards higher prices, in the amount of 50–70 % of the price of the published book.

## Threat of a record increase in VAT on books

The planned tax reform would place the Czech Republic among the countries where the highest rate of VAT on books applies (viz Denmark – 25 %, Albania, Bulgaria and Ukraine – 20 %). At the same time the country would surely set a record for the fastest increase in this tax in the world. Up until 31. 12. 2007, as in a number of other countries with a developed book market, the rate was still reduced, amounting to 5 %, but from 2008 it went up to 9 %, and in 2010 to the current 10 %. It should be noted that this rise in VAT did not bring about a significant increase in the price of books in the CR.

However, the announced increase in VAT on books to 19–20 % from 2012 caused a considerable outcry among the cultured public. The biggest response was obtained by the *Výzva na obranu knih* [Call for the Defence of Books] which was proclaimed by the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers (SČKN). Over time it was signed by around 150,000 signatories (as of 3. 5. 2011 the publishers' professional organisation had registered 42,707 people on signature sheets and 107,037 on the internet). The government eventually agreed to a two-stage increase in VAT; to 14 % from 2012 and 17.5 % from 2013. Following talks with publishers' representatives in the Czech Parliament, some signals suggest that there is still a possibility of books remaining at the lower rate.

Publishers put forward a number of compelling arguments to show how a sudden increase in VAT would cause a fatal decline in book production, lowering sales, and threaten the existence of a number of publishers, non-periodical publications and also the publication of certain kinds of literature, especially textbooks and specialist literature. If we ignore the fact that e-books, which in the Czech Republic as in most EU countries are not subject to a reduced rate of VAT, have not provoked any discussion and this is accepted as a given fact, then in the case of traditional printed books the reasoning of the economic indicators runs up against a fundamental limitation. This is due to the secrecy which has so far surrounded economic indicators related to the production and sale of books. Furthermore it is always difficult to point to which financial losses will be suffered by publishers and whether or not the support currently received from the state is sufficient.

## Conclusion

A realistic look at the year 2010 in terms of the production, sale and reading of books in the Czech Republic was also influenced by the results of the second representative survey of the Czech adult population on the subject of reading (a survey which was carried out in June 2010 by the National Library of the Czech Republic and the Institute for Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (AS CR) with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic) and the results of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey published by the Institute for Information on Education. These produced alarming facts which had already manifested themselves in other developed European countries but which we hitherto, perhaps mistakenly, imagined had not affected the Czech Republic to such an extent.

The first of the surveys in comparison with the previous survey from 2007 confirmed a further decline in interest in reading; there was a reduction in the number of books purchased and the volume of financial resources invested in their purchase. On the other hand, respondents reported an increase in the number of books read per year and also a rise in the average number of minutes spent on the internet each day. This could also indicate a turning point in the perception of literary and specialist texts. People have obviously not stopped reading in this country, but texts from the internet and e-books are taking up an increasing share of their reading. The results of the PISA study in comparison with 2000, when the international research into readers' literacy was first conducted, testified to a deterioration in the level of reading literacy among Czech children, pupils in the final years of basic school and the first years of high school. The Czech Republic was ranked in a group of nine countries whose pupils are less accustomed to critically assessing and evaluating what they read. In the CR this shortcoming was more pronounced among boys than girls.

These should act as timely warning bells for all interested institutions, including libraries, schools, cultural facilities and government institutions, not only to continue unabated their existing efforts to cultivate a positive relationship with books and reading among children and young people in particular but also, following models from abroad, to finally launch a systematically conceived campaign supported by the government, regions and municipalities to promote books and reading.

## THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Apart from the teaching of composition in primary and secondary schools, the development of the skills and abilities necessary for the creation of a text is provided in the CR by the fields of university study focusing on journalism, scriptwriting and dramaturgy. Since 1994 creative writing has appeared in the curriculum of secondary schools and universities, as well as selected cultural and educational institutions, as a field specialising in the development of the author's individual style, imagination, linguistic experimentation and ability to produce a compositionally balanced text (see Zbyněk Fišer: *Tvůrčí psaní: malá učebnice technik tvůrčího psaní*. Brno: Paido, 2001, p. 32). In 2000 the Josef Škvorecký Literary Academy was founded in Prague and it is even possible to develop one's literary talent in the Czech Republic using e-learning.

In 1995, when the field of creative writing first began in this country, the literary scholar and writer Zdeněk Kožmín published his pioneering work *Tvořivý sloh: malé traktáty a malé scénáře*. In 1994 the Studio of Creative Writing came into being at the Arts Faculty of Masaryk University (FF MU) in Brno. It was founded by Professor Zdeněk Kožmín himself and by the current head of the Institute of Czech Literature and Library Studies (ÚČLK) at FF MU, Dr. Zbyněk Fišer, Ph.D. Since 2003 the Studio has been an institutionalised part of ÚČLK and teaching usually takes the form of creative writing seminars. In 2004 the Creative Writing Summer School – a week-long course focused on the basics of literary and journalistic writing in Czech – was held there. The course was organised in cooperation with the Brno House of Arts. "I see the future of the Studio of Creative Writing as being the systematic preparation of undergraduates for the creation of appropriate, functionally adequate text, most often of a specialised nature. This preparation consists of both the development of individual linguistic or literary ability and most importantly the acquisition of effective working practices for creative thinking with a pen in hand, from the initial search for a theme to the fine-tuning of the text," states the poet, translator and pedagogue Zbyněk Fišer (Deset let Ateliéru tvůrčího psaní na Filozofické fakultě Masarykovy univerzity v Brně. In: *Tvůrčí psaní – klíčová kompetence na vysoké škole. Sborník textů*. Brno: Doplněk, 2005).

In 2005 Zbyněk Fišer and Dr. Raija Hauck from Universität Greifswald organised a Course in Creative Translation. The theme was partly linked to Fišer's publication *Překlad jako kreativní proces. Teorie a praxe funkcionalistického překládání*. (Brno: Host, 2009).

We find a similar field of study at the Silesian University in Opava, where Jakub Chrobák, Ph.D. runs the Seminar in Creative Writing at the Faculty of Philosophy and Science's Institute of Czech Literature and Library Studies. What is offered there, however, is "creative writing with a priority focus on literary competence, a formally concluded literary artefact in the field of poetry and prose." Since 1996 the poet and prose writer Lydie Romanská has also taught creative writing there.

According to Jakub Chrobák the teaching of poetry there focuses on demonstrating to students through their creative experiments how important it is to search for a contemporary language to express specific experiences and guiding them through genre forms like the sonnet, song or ballad. In the field of prose it focuses on the refined construction of text, work with dialogue, narrative situations, etc.

At the Department of Czech Studies in the Faculty of Education of Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem a seminar in creative writing is run by Dr. Ivo Harák, Ph.D. This seminar is dedicated to "the analysis, interpretation and above all the writing of poetic texts".

At the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the University of Pardubice, Jiří Studený, Ph.D. works in the Department of Literary Culture and Slavistics, and his pedagogical activities include the teaching of creative writing. He is the author of the publications *Drama jazyka. Teorie a praxe tvůrčího psaní* (Pardubice: University of Pardubice, 2004) and *Dramata jazyka. Teorie literatury a praxe tvůrčího psaní* (Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart, 2010). At the same institution Dr. Antonín K. Kudláč is engaged in the teaching of creative writing focused on genres of popular literature.

At the Department of Czech Studies of Palacký University in Olomouc, Soňa Schneiderová, Ph.D. runs the seminar Professional Creative Writing. It is dedicated "to the characteristics of the specialist stylistic area; work in the seminar is based on the analysis of specific texts, students' Bachelors and Masters dissertations, and consists of the stylisation of one's own texts."

Apart from teaching creative writing at the Faculty of Education of Masaryk University in Brno (PdF MU), in 2008 and 2010 Dr. Marie Pavlovská, Ph.D. organised festivals of creative writing (and storytelling) whose practical results can be scrutinised in the collections *MY, TY, ONI aneb tvůrčí psaní na PdF MU*.

In 2006 the Department of Czech Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice brought out a publication on this subject by František Skorunka, *Úvod do tvůrčího psaní*.

The creation of journalistic texts can be studied at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno or at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University, or alternatively at the College of Media and Journalism.

This year the Josef Škvorecký Literary Academy celebrates the 10th anniversary of its foundation. Its current rector, Dr. Martin Štoll, Ph.D., identifies the main principles of the school's approach as "teaching on an intimate scale, developing individual character, faculties and talents". The Literary Academy (LA) has the following departments: the Department of Creative Writing, the Department of Media and Journalism, the Department of Czech and World Literature and Czech Language, the Department of Social Sciences and the Department of Foreign Languages. Various genres of creative writing are currently taught there by members of the department: Radek Malý, Ph.D. (head of department, literature for children and young people and poetry), Petr Borkovec (poetry), Radka Denemarková, Ph.D. (prose), Daniela Fischerová (theatre, television and radio plays, prose), Prof. Július Gajdoš, Ph.D. (drama), Prof. Arnošt Goldflam (dramatic text, prose), Jana Šrámková (prose), Dr. Miroslav Kovářík (poetry), René Nekuda (prose), Prof. David Jan Novotný (scriptwriting). However, prominent Czech writers have also appeared and continue to appear among the teachers, including Alexandra Berková, Michal Viewegh, Milan Uhde, Jáchym Topol, Jiří Stránský, Alexandr Kliment, Vladimír Křivánek and Václav Jamek.

The aims with which the LA was founded in 2000 and the problems or issues it faced in its early years are discussed in the collection *Krok k autorské existenci*, containing papers from a conference on creative writing which the school held in June 2002. In this collection the organisers

state: "We consider creative writing to be the main subject to which all the others are closely or loosely linked. We therefore wished to clarify how this subject is taught at other schools of a similar or related type in the world and in the Czech Republic." Among the advisors/participants in the conference were the playwrights and screenwriters Arnošt Goldflam, Antonín Přidal, Jan Vedral and Ivan Vyskočil. However, in October 2004 at the international conference *Tvůrčí psaní - klíčová kompetence na vysoké škole*, held at FF MU in Brno (see also the aforementioned collection of the same name from p. 44), Petr Čornej expressed some doubt when he branded creative writing "a fashionable subject or field of study" and pointed out that LA had received accreditation for the programme "Media and Communication Studies", in which creative writing was only one, albeit central field of study. He believes that "the primary objective of the school is not to produce professional writers who in the future will flood bookshops and book fairs with their works," and adds that "graduates are finding and will probably continue to find employment primarily in the editorial offices of book publishers, in the world of print and electronic media, in advertising and artistic agencies and in cultural institutions." At present, however, LA is consciously moving away from the characteristics of a school of humanities with an artistic output towards a purely artistic profile. LA now has accredited Bachelors courses in Creative Writing and Journalism and Communication in the Media and related Masters courses in Creative Writing (specializations in Creative Writing, Editorial Work, Non-Fiction) and Communication in the Media. In addition to textbooks and collections of papers, the *Prvotiny* series has been published there since 2002.

The teaching of scriptwriting (and dramaturgy) has a longer history in the Czech Republic than courses in creative writing. The Film and TV School in Prague (FAMU), where it is now possible to graduate in screenwriting and script editing at Bachelors or Masters level, has been part of the Academy of Performing Arts (AMU) (initially as the film department) since the academic year 1946/47. The current head of the Department of Screenwriting and Script Editing is the author, scriptwriter and director Martin Ryšavý, and among the other teachers are Edgar Dutka, Petr Jarchovský and Marek Vajchr.

At the Theatre Faculty (DIFA) of the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts (JAMU), operating in Brno since 1947, it is now possible to study in the studios of directing and dramaturgy under the guidance of professors Josef Kovalčuk, Petr Oslzlý and Václav Cejpek. The studio of Radio and TV Dramaturgy and Scriptwriting (RTDS), headed by Jan Gogola, also offers the necessary grounding in this subject. Among the teachers can be found well-known authors like Prof. Antonín Přidal and Prof. Pavel Švanda.

The Studio of Audiovisual Arts, headed by Eva Šviráková, Ph.D., was established at the Faculty of Multimedia Communications at Tomáš Baťa University in Zlín. It is also possible to study directing and scriptwriting there.

At JAMU's Theatre Faculty one of the members of staff at the studio of Drama Education is Eva Brhelová, Ph.D., who in 2006 defended the dissertation *Tvorba dramatického textu a její pedagogické aplikace*. She teaches scriptwriting, dramaturgy and creative writing at the studio. She has also extended her sphere of activity to Brno's Leisure Time Centre Lužánky ([www.luzanky.cz](http://www.luzanky.cz)), where she takes classes in Creative Writing for beginners and advanced students.

Another teacher of creative writing who emerged from JAMU's DIFA, in this case the RTDS studio, is the scriptwriter Pavel Gotthard, who offers his courses through the Brno organisation Court of Moravia.

To these examples of courses taking place off campus we can also add the possibility of developing one's creative powers through the internet. On the website [www.tvurcipsani.cz](http://www.tvurcipsani.cz) can be found Markéta Dočekalová's School of Creative Writing. This scriptwriter and novel-writer also teaches creative writing at Jan Amos Komenský University in Prague. As well as assessing talent or literary texts, scripts and themes, she also offers other related services on her website, including creative writing courses. Among these are face-to-face courses, weekend or week-long residential courses, but also distance courses conducted on-line, or even combined studies. Markéta Dočekalová is also the author of the three-volume publication *Tvůrčí psaní pro každého* (Prague: Grada publishing, 2006–2010). As an example of the fact that other institutions offer occasional public courses in creative writing, it is worth mentioning the Karlovy Vary Regional Library, which as part of its Free Time University 2011 engaged Ivona Březinová to run a three-day course.

# CONTEMPORARY LITERARY LIFE

## ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

### Academy of Czech Literature (Akademie literatury české, ALČ)

The Academy comprises of writers, scholars and critics, whose mission is to contribute to the development of Czech literature. The Academy confers three awards: the Ladislav Fuks Award, the Božena Němcová Award and the Karel Hynek Mácha Award.

**Veverkova 765/23**  
170 00 Praha 7  
T +420 602 386 359  
E [ada99@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:ada99@mbox.vol.cz)  
[www.akademielc.cz](http://www.akademielc.cz)

### Czech Section of International Association of Writers of Detective Stories (Česká asociace autorů detektivní a dobrodružné literatury, AIEP)

**Pravá 15**  
147 00 Praha 4  
T +420 602 386 359  
E [ada99@mbox.vol.cz](mailto:ada99@mbox.vol.cz)  
[www.detektivka.com](http://www.detektivka.com)

### Czech Section of The International Board on Books for Young People (Česká sekce IBBY)

The Section organizes the Zlatá stuha (Golden Ribbon) competition.

E [ibby@seznam.cz](mailto:ibby@seznam.cz)  
[www.ibby.cz](http://www.ibby.cz)

### Czech Centre of International PEN (České centrum Mezinárodního PEN klubu)

The Centre is part of the worldwide association of PEN clubs. The Czech PEN was founded in 1925 by the journalist, novelist and playwright Karel Čapek. Currently it has almost 200 members, its presidium is composed of 12 major Czech authors. To pay homage to its founder and eloquent opponent of totalitarianism, the Czech PEN awards biannual Karel Čapek Awards and the PEN Club Lifetime Achievement Award.

Associated with the Czech PEN is the PEN Club Friends' Society, a civic association which organises authors' readings, exhibitions, regular spring and autumn literary festivals, as well as discussions with writers in schools, clubs and civic facilities.

**Klementinum 190**

110 00 Praha 1  
 T +420 605 253 238  
 T +420 224 234 343  
 F +420 224 234 343  
 E [centrum@pen.cz](mailto:centrum@pen.cz)  
[www.pen.cz](http://www.pen.cz)

**Union of Interpreters and Translators**  
**(Jednota tlumočnicků a překladatelů, JTP)**

The Union was founded in 1990, and currently has more than 600 members, who are professional translators, interpreters, and translatology teachers in the Czech and Slovak Republics and in other countries. During the period it has been in existence JTP has established itself as a leading representative of professionals in interpreting and translation fields. The aim of JTP is to achieve appropriate recognition and rewards for the respective professions in society, and at the same time to raise professional standards.

**Senovážné náměstí 23**

110 00 Praha 1  
 T +420 224 142 517  
 T +420 224 142 312  
 F +420 224 142 312  
 E [jtp@jtpunion.org](mailto:jtp@jtpunion.org)  
[www.jtpunion.org](http://www.jtpunion.org)

**Club of Authors of Non-Fiction**  
**(Klub autorů literatury faktu, KALF)**

The mission of the Club is the promotion of non-fiction. The Club organizes discussions, symposiums, seminars, etc.

**Na Petřinách 1715/65**

162 00 Praha 6  
 T +420 220 610 331  
 T +420 603 766 044  
 E [mirek.krimi@wo.cz](mailto:mirek.krimi@wo.cz)  
[www.kalf.cz](http://www.kalf.cz)

**Librarian Institute of the National Library of the Czech Republic**  
**(Knihovnický institut Národní knihovny ČR)**

Information point for libraries and librarians.

**Klementinum 190**

110 00 Praha 1  
 T +420 221 663 338  
 F +420 221 663 175  
 E [vit.richter@nkp.cz](mailto:vit.richter@nkp.cz)

**Linguistic Association of the Czech Republic**  
**(Jazykovědné sdružení ČR)**

The association was founded in 1956. Organizes discussions, maintains contacts with foreign linguists, etc.

**Letenská 4**

118 51 Praha 1  
 E [dubeda@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:dubeda@ff.cuni.cz)  
[www.ujc.cas.cz/js](http://www.ujc.cas.cz/js)

**Literary Salon (Literární salon)**

The Salon organizes readings and publishes books.

E [teriedl@post.cz](mailto:teriedl@post.cz)  
[www.literarnisalon.cz](http://www.literarnisalon.cz)

**The Book Museum (Muzeum knihy)**

Founded in 1957, part of the National Museum.

**Kinský Castle**

Č. p. 13  
 591 02 Žďár nad Sázavou  
 T +420 566 625 370  
 E [muzeumknihydzdar@seznam.cz](mailto:muzeumknihydzdar@seznam.cz)  
[www.nm.cz/knihovna-nm/muzeum-knihy.ph](http://www.nm.cz/knihovna-nm/muzeum-knihy.ph)

**Museum of Karel Čapek**  
**(Památník Karla Čapka)**

Dedicated to the life and work of Karel Čapek

**Stará Huť 125, 262 02**

T +420 318 522 265  
 E [pamatnik.vanova@tiscali.cz](mailto:pamatnik.vanova@tiscali.cz)  
[www.capek-karel-pamatnik.cz](http://www.capek-karel-pamatnik.cz)

### Czech Literary Translators' Guild (Obec překladatelů)

The Guild is a voluntary association of Czech translators of fiction as well as translation theorists, critics, historians and scholars. The role of the Guild is to protect the rights and professional interests of its members and promote the prestige of literary translation and its position in Czech culture. The Guild systematically follows literary translations published in the Czech Republic and in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Czech Literature Foundation awards the annual Josef Jungmann Prize and a number of awards of merit to the best translations of the year. In addition, the Guild holds an annual competition named after Jiří Levý, an eminent Czech translation theorist, with prizes awarded to young translator talents for promising work in several genres; the winners' works are presented at public readings and published in literary magazines.

Pod Nuselskými schody 3  
120 00 Praha 2  
T +420 222 564 082  
E [info@obecprekladatelu.cz](mailto:info@obecprekladatelu.cz)  
[www.obecprekladatelu.cz](http://www.obecprekladatelu.cz)

### Association of Writers (Obec spisovatelů)

The Association of Writers defends the interests of its members. It organizes seminars, conferences, discussions, etc.; every year it organizes seminars for foreign translators of Czech literature and scholars.

E [obecspis@volny.cz](mailto:obecspis@volny.cz)  
[www.obecspisovatelu.cz](http://www.obecspisovatelu.cz)

### Museum of Czech Literature (Památník národního písemnictví, PNP)

The museum was established to acquire, gather, permanently safekeep, catalogue, scientifically process and make available museum collections, specifically, collections of material which document the development of literature and literary culture in the historical Czech lands, including documents on the life, work and legacy of important figures of Czech literature and literary culture from the 18th century until the present, and a collection of works of visual art.

Strahovské nádvoří 1/132  
118 38 Praha 1  
T +420 220 516 695  
F +420 220 517 277  
E [post@pamatnik-np.cz](mailto:post@pamatnik-np.cz)  
[www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz](http://www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz)

### Museum of Literature in Moravia (Památník písemnictví na Moravě)

The museum covers the period from the 9th to the 20th century. The library comprises of approx. 65,000 publications.

Klášteř 1  
664 61 Rajhrad  
T +420 547 229 136  
F +420 547 229 895  
E [rajhrad@muzeumbrnenska.cz](mailto:rajhrad@muzeumbrnenska.cz)  
[www.rajhrad.muzeumbrnenska.cz](http://www.rajhrad.muzeumbrnenska.cz)

### Association of Libraries of the Czech Republic (Sdružení knihoven ČR, SDRUK)

Prokešovo nám. 9  
728 00 Ostrava  
T +420 596 138 240  
F +420 596 138 322  
E [prchalova@svkos.cz](mailto:prchalova@svkos.cz)  
[www.sdruk.cz](http://www.sdruk.cz)

### SEQUENCE

Civic association promoting comics, it organizes the KomiksFEST! Festival ([www.komiksfest.cz](http://www.komiksfest.cz)).

Křižíkova 18  
186 00 Praha 8 - Karlín  
T +420 775 065 480  
E [info@sequence.cz](mailto:info@sequence.cz)  
[www.sequence.cz](http://www.sequence.cz)

### The Franz Kafka Society (Společnost Franze Kafky)

Established in 1990, the Franz Kafka Society is a non-governmental non-profit organization. Its main goal is to contribute to reviving the traditions that gave rise to the phenomenon called Prague German literature, while restoring general awareness of the great significance of cultural plurality in Central Europe, a region where Czechs, Germans and Jews have been living together for centuries. Promoting those traditions, epitomized by the name of Franz Kafka, the So-

ciety devotes systematic attention to his works, seeking to make Kafka's heritage a natural component of the Czech cultural context. The Franz Kafka Society now has some 1,000 members in a total of 23 countries throughout the world.

Široká 14  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 224 227 452  
F +420 224 211 850  
E [mail@franzkafka-soc.cz](mailto:mail@franzkafka-soc.cz)  
[www.franzkafka-soc.cz](http://www.franzkafka-soc.cz)

### Society of Friends of Young Poetry (Společnost přátel mladé poezie)

Czech-Austrian society promoting young poets; organizes a competition.

Nálepková 3, 637 00 Brno  
E [spmp@email.cz](mailto:spmp@email.cz)  
[www.spmp.ic.cz](http://www.spmp.ic.cz)

### Society of Czech Bibliophiles (Spolek českých bibliofilů, SČB)

The Society of Czech Bibliophiles was established in 1908 as a voluntary organization of collectors, fans and creators of beautiful and rare books and prints with special regard to graphic art, design and bookbinding as well as all other applied arts. The activity of the Society has remained uninterrupted over its more than one-hundred-year history. The main scope of its work currently focuses on publishing bibliophile prints.

P. O. Box 22  
111 21 Praha 1  
E [scb@centrum.cz](mailto:scb@centrum.cz)  
[scb.wdr.cz](http://scb.wdr.cz)

### Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers (Svaz českých knihkupců a nakladatelů, SČKN)

Founded in 1879, the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers (ACBP) was dissolved in 1949 by the totalitarian regime. The Association, which was restored in 1990, aimed to protect the professional interests of publishers, distributors and booksellers within the context of a market economy. Subsequently in 1997 the ACBP established the company Book World that organizes the largest book fair and festival in Prague. The Association is a member of the Federation of

European Publishers (FEP) as well as the European Booksellers Federation (EBF), and also cooperates with the Geneva-based International Publishers Association (IPA).

Klementinum 190  
110 01 Praha 1 (invoice address)  
P. O. Box 117, 110 01 Praha 1 (post address)  
T +420 224 219 942  
T/F +420 224 219 944  
E [sckn@sckn.cz](mailto:sckn@sckn.cz)  
[www.sckn.cz](http://www.sckn.cz)

### Association of Librarians and Information Staff (Svaz knihovníků a informačních pracovníků ČR, SKIP)

The main objective of the Association is to systematically improve the quality of work in the library and information fields and thus increase their prestige and secure favourable conditions for their development and functioning from the state, library trustees and information institutions.

Klementinum 190  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 221 663 338  
F +420 221 663 175  
E [skip@nkp.cz](mailto:skip@nkp.cz)  
[www.skipcr.cz](http://www.skipcr.cz)

### Union of Czech Writers (Unie českých spisovatelů, UČS)

Founded in 2000 the Union is an organization of professional writers of books, literary scientists, critics, reviewers, and publishers of fiction and poetry. The goal of the Union is to improve conditions for all writers; to unite writers, literary scientists, critics, translators and publishers; and to promote writing in the Czech Republic. The Union intends to organize international conferences for writers, to establish an information centre for both literary professionals and non-professionals, to publish the works of its members, to organize fellowships and seminars, to offer consultation and expertise, and to cooperate with foreign writers' organizations, particularly PEN clubs.

Paláskova 1107  
182 00 Praha 8  
T +420 284 683 481  
E [redakce@obrys-kmen.cz](mailto:redakce@obrys-kmen.cz)  
[www.obrys-kmen.cz/ucs](http://www.obrys-kmen.cz/ucs)

**Department of Literature and  
Libraries (DLL)**  
**(Samostatné oddělení literatury  
a knihoven, SOLK)**

Every year the Department publishes calls for proposals within the Programme for the Support of the Translation of Czech Literature Abroad; the application must be submitted by the foreign publisher. The deadline is November 15. The grant is designed to support the publication of translated Czech literature (fiction, poetry, drama) and can be used only to cover the translator's fees. Priority is given to contemporary literature.

**Ministerstvo kultury**  
**Maltézské nám. 1**  
**118 11 Praha 1**  
**T +420 257 085 220**  
**E bohumil.fiser@mkcr.cz**  
**[www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny/default.htm](http://www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny/default.htm)**

**Czech Centres (Česká centra)**

The mission of the Czech Centres, an organization funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, is to promote the good name of the country abroad. The organization comprises of more than twenty offices in more than twenty countries worldwide. The individual centres organize exhibitions, readings, concerts, discussions, Czech language courses, etc.

**Czech Centres**  
**Václavské nám. 816/49**  
**110 00 Praha 1**  
**T +420 234 668 213**  
**F +420 234 668 215**  
**E sekretariat@czech.cz**  
**[www.czechcentres.cz](http://www.czechcentres.cz)**

**Book World**  
**(Svět knihy)**

The Book World Ltd. (Svět knihy, s. r. o.), company under the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers (SČKN), regularly organizes a book fair and festival of the same name in Prague as well as Czech literary exhibitions at foreign book fairs, and also publishes the export catalogue Czech Bookworld News.

**Fügnerovo nám. 3**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
**F +420 224 498 754**  
**E info@svetknihy.cz**  
**[www.svetknihy.cz/en/menu](http://www.svetknihy.cz/en/menu)**

**The Arts Institute – Theatre Institute**  
**(Institut umění – Divadelní ústav)**

The Arts Institute (AI) was founded in 2005 as a separate department of the Theatre Institute with the mission of advancing and elevating the social prestige of art. The AI supports the exchange of information and experience between artistic fields, provides information and advisory services, pursues educational activities, and presents and promotes Czech art abroad.

**Institut umění – Divadelní ústav**  
**Celetná 17**  
**110 00 Praha 1**  
**T +420 224 809 111**  
**E info@idu.cz**  
**[www.new.institutumeni.cz/en](http://www.new.institutumeni.cz/en)**

## LITERARY AND BOOK AWARDS

A basic overview of literary awards can be found below; more information is available in the database of the Arts Institute ([www.culturenet.cz](http://www.culturenet.cz)) and in the database of the Institute for Czech Literature of the Academy of Science ([www.ucl.cas.cz/ceny/](http://www.ucl.cas.cz/ceny/)), which contains an overview of awards as well as its holders and jurors.

### State Prize for Literature (Státní cena za literaturu)

Awarded for an original literary work in Czech published in a given year or the year previous to it. The award may also be awarded in recognition of a lifetime's work of excellence.

**Ministerstvo kultury**  
Maltézské nám. 1  
118 11 Praha 1  
T +420 257 085 221  
E [radim.kopac@mkcr.cz](mailto:radim.kopac@mkcr.cz)

### State Prize for Translation (Státní cena za překladatelské dílo)

Awarded for a translation of a literary work from a foreign language into Czech to have been published in a given year or the year previous to it. The award takes into consideration the previous literary translation work of nominees. The award may also be awarded in recognition of a lifetime's translation work of excellence.

E [radim.kopac@mkcr.cz](mailto:radim.kopac@mkcr.cz)

### Jaroslav Seifert Award (Cena Jaroslava Seiferta)

Awarded for an outstanding work of poetry or fiction published in the past three years.

[www.kontobariery.cz/Projekty/Ceny/Cena-Jaroslava-Seiferta.aspx](http://www.kontobariery.cz/Projekty/Ceny/Cena-Jaroslava-Seiferta.aspx)

### Karel Čapek Award (Cena Karla Čapka)

Conferred biennially for a "major contribution to Czech literature" by the Czech Centre of the International PEN Club; established in 1994.

[www.pen.cz/cz/cena-karla-capka](http://www.pen.cz/cz/cena-karla-capka)

### Magnesia Litera

Annual book award which aims to promote and popularize high-quality literature and book production; the award has several categories.

[www.magnesia-litera.cz](http://www.magnesia-litera.cz)

### Josef Škvorecký Award (Cena Josefa Škvoreckého)

Award for the best book of the previous twelve months; the award has its student category.

[www.literarniakademie.cz](http://www.literarniakademie.cz)

### Jiří Orten Award (Cena Jiřího Ortena)

Awarded to an author of a work of prose or poetry in Czech. At the time of the work's completion, the author may not be older than 30 years. The work should have been published in book form or a major part of it published in a periodical in the 12 months before the closing date of the competition.

[www.sckn.cz](http://www.sckn.cz)

### Czech Literature Fund Annual Award (Výroční cena Českého literárního fondu)

Awarded to outstanding artistic, academic and journalistic works.

[www.nclf.cz/ceny-nclf.html](http://www.nclf.cz/ceny-nclf.html)

### Premia Bohemica

Awarded to a scholar from abroad whose work has served to promote Czech literature in his/her country.

[http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cena\\_Premia\\_Bohemica](http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cena_Premia_Bohemica)

### Franz Kafka Award (Cena Franze Kafky)

International literary prize, initiated in 2001; the laureate is selected by an international jury.

[www.franzkafka-soc.cz](http://www.franzkafka-soc.cz)

### Josef Jungmann Award (Cena Josefa Jungmanna)

Awarded to the best work of translation into Czech from the previous calendar year, with nominees from prose, poetry, drama and non-fiction from the humanities.

[http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cena\\_Josefa\\_Jungmanna](http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cena_Josefa_Jungmanna)

### Tom Stoppard Award (Cena Toma Stopparda)

Awarded every May to an author of Czech origin, in most cases for an outstanding essay which inspires by its thoughts and ideas.

[www.kontobariery.cz](http://www.kontobariery.cz)

### F. X. Šalda Award (Cena F. X. Šaldy)

Awarded for an outstanding contribution to arts criticism or critical journalism, initiated in 1995.

[www.fxsaldo.ff.cuni.cz](http://www.fxsaldo.ff.cuni.cz)

### Artis Bohemiae Amicis Medal

For the propagation of Czech culture.

[www.mkcr.cz](http://www.mkcr.cz)

### Gratias Agit Award

The award of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the propagation of Czech culture abroad, initiated in 1997.

[www.mzv.cz](http://www.mzv.cz)

### Jan Skácel Award (Cena Jana Skácela)

In the words of its statute, this prize should be awarded to "an outstanding work of Czech poetry which is inspired by the best traditions and the spirit of Moravian verse".

### The Most Beautiful Czech Books of the Year (Nejkrásnější české knihy roku)

Awarded to a publication for the perfection of its technical production and its function as an object of excellent polygraphic and artistic quality.

[www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz](http://www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz)

### Golden Ribbon (Zlatá stuha)

Awarded by the Writers' Association, Illustrators' Club and the Czech section of IBBY to the authors of a book for children and young people.

[www.ibby.cz](http://www.ibby.cz)

### Jiří Theiner Award (Cena Jiřího Theinera)

Awarded since 2011 by the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers at the literary festival and trade fair Book World to foreign individuals and institutions whose longstanding efforts and activities significantly encourage the dissemination and promotion of Czech literature abroad.

[www.bookworld.cz/cz/menu/cena-jiriho-theinera](http://www.bookworld.cz/cz/menu/cena-jiriho-theinera)

## FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

### Festivals

#### Month of Author's Readings (Měsíc autorského čtení)

Biggest Czech literary festival, since 2000, takes place every July in Brno.

[www.autorskecteni.cz](http://www.autorskecteni.cz)

#### Prague Writer's Festival

International literary festival presenting foreign and Czech writers, takes place every year in June.

[www.pwf.cz](http://www.pwf.cz)

#### Fantasy Festival

Festival of fantasy and sci-fi literature, takes place in Chotěboř in June/July.

<http://festivalfantazie.cz/ff/en/>

#### KomiksFEST!

International multimedia comics festival – books, authors, films, theatre, discussions, etc.; takes place in October and November in Prague.

[www.komiksfest.cz](http://www.komiksfest.cz)

#### Jičín – City of Fairytale (Jičín – město pohádky)

Festival established in 1990, focused on literature for children.

[www.pohadka.cz](http://www.pohadka.cz)

#### Orten's Kutná Hora (Ortenova Kutná Hora)

Festival of poetry connected with a literary award.; takes place in September in Kutná Hora.

[www.okh.cz](http://www.okh.cz)

#### Šrámek's Sobotka (Šrámkova Sobotka)

Festival of Czech literature and language, takes place in June/July in Sobotka.

[www.sramkovasobotka.cz](http://www.sramkovasobotka.cz)

#### Day of Poetry (Den poezie)

Festival of Czech and foreign poetry held every year in November.

[www.denpoezie.cz](http://www.denpoezie.cz)

#### Slam Poetry

Festival of slam poetry; each round takes place in a particular region, the final takes place in Brno.

[www.slampoetry.cz](http://www.slampoetry.cz)

## Stranou

This international poetry festival is held each June in Beroun and at the nearby Krakovec castle. The most recent festival (2011) also took place partially in Prague.

<http://festivalstranou.webnode.cz>

## Fairs

### Book World (Svět knihy)

The biggest Czech international book fair and literary festival; takes place in May.

[www.svetknihy.cz](http://www.svetknihy.cz)

### We Grow with Books or Book World for Children (Rosteme s knihou, resp. Svět knihy dětem)

Campaigns that encourage children's reading, initiated by the Association of Czech Booksellers and Publishers (Book World, Ltd).

[www.rostemesknihou.cz](http://www.rostemesknihou.cz)

### Autumn Book Fair (Podzimní knižní veletrh)

The second largest Czech book fair, which has been held in Havlíčkův Brod since 1991.

[www.hejkal.cz/trh](http://www.hejkal.cz/trh)

### Libri Book Fair and Festival

Takes place in March in Olomouc.

[www.flora-ol.cz/en](http://www.flora-ol.cz/en)

### Polabský Book Fair (Polabský knižní veletrh)

Takes place in September in Lysá nad Labem.

[www.vll.cz](http://www.vll.cz)

### Book Fair of Literature for Children (Veletrh dětské knihy)

The fair includes lectures, seminars, discussions, etc; takes place in March in Liberec.

[www.veletrhdetskeknihy.cz](http://www.veletrhdetskeknihy.cz)

### Summer Book Fair (Letní knižní veletrh)

New book fair. Launched in Ostrava in 2011.

[www.hejkal.cz/lkvostrava](http://www.hejkal.cz/lkvostrava)

## EDUCATION

### Institute for Czech Literature at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (Ústav pro českou literaturu Akademie věd ČR)

The research activities of the Institute focus on the theory and history of Czech literature from its inception until the present. A special emphasis is placed on theoretical lexicography, phraseology, literary and historical research projects in the field of Czech literature in its broadest sense and literary theoretical analyses drawing largely from 20th century resources. The Institute provides information and consultation services within the literary theoretical realm.

**Praha, Na Florenci 3**

**110 00 Praha 1**

**T +420 234 612 111**

**E [literatura@ucl.cas.cz](mailto:literatura@ucl.cas.cz)**

**Brno, Květná 8**

**603 00 Brno**

**T +420 543 211 868**

**E [vrbova@brno.cas.cz](mailto:vrbova@brno.cas.cz)**

[www.ucl.cas.cz](http://www.ucl.cas.cz)

**Department of Czech Literature and Literary Theory, Faculty of Arts, Charles University (Ústav české literatury a literární vědy Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy)**

Czech Literature and Comparative Literature courses are offered by the Department.

**Nám. Jana Palacha 2  
116 38 Praha 1**  
T +420 732 668 944  
T +420 221 619 232  
E [ceslit@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:ceslit@ff.cuni.cz)  
[cl.ff.cuni.cz](http://cl.ff.cuni.cz)

**Department of Czech Studies, Faculty of Arts, Palacký University (Katedra bohemistiky Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Palackého)**

The Department offers several courses including Czech Philology, Czech Philology with Specialization in Editorial Work in Mass Media, General Linguistics and Theory of Communication.

**Křížkovského 10  
771 80 Olomouc**  
T +420 585 633 143  
F +420 585 229 162  
E [tajemnik.kb@centrum.cz](mailto:tajemnik.kb@centrum.cz)  
[www.kb.upol.cz](http://www.kb.upol.cz)

**Department of Czech Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of South Bohemia (Ústav bohemistiky Filozofické fakulty Jihočeské univerzity)**

The Department runs the following accredited undergraduate courses: Czech Studies and a combined programme of Czech Studies and Czech for Foreigners. Aside from its undergraduate courses, it also offers a follow-up graduate programme in Czech Studies and a postgraduate programme (PhD) in History of Modern Czech Literature which is a joint programme in cooperation with the Institute for Czech Literature at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

**Braňšovská 31a  
370 05 České Budějovice**  
T +420 387 774 808  
E [bauer@ff.jcu.cz](mailto:bauer@ff.jcu.cz)  
<http://ub.ff.jcu.cz/>

**Department of Czech Literature and Library Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University (Ústav české literatury a knihovnictví Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity)**

The Department's curriculum and research encompasses a thorough history of Czech literature, children's literature, theory of literature and tuition of Czech language and literature. Aside from the aforementioned, the department staff also teach Czech for Foreigners and Scientific Information and Library Studies and lecture at the Summer School of Slavonic Studies (<http://lsss.ff.cuni.cz>) and the University of the Third Age (series of lectures for the elderly).

**Arna Nováka 1  
602 00 Brno**  
T +420 549 493 158  
F +420 549 493 158  
E [ceslit@phil.muni.cz](mailto:ceslit@phil.muni.cz)  
[www.phil.muni.cz/clit](http://www.phil.muni.cz/clit)

**Department of Czech Literature, Literary Theory and History of Art, Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava (Katedra české literatury, literární vědy a dějin umění Filozofické fakulty Ostravské univerzity)**

The Department consists of two sub-departments. The Department of Czech Literature and Literary Theory offers courses focused on the history of Czech literature, literary theory and comparative literature. It provides education to students in a specialized field of study as well as aspiring teachers of Czech language and literature at secondary schools - both in structured undergraduate and subsequent graduate programmes, while the Department of History of Art offers art theory courses as part of its Bachelor's degree History of Art with a Specialization in the Care of Historical Monuments and Technical Sites and the Master's programme Cultural History.

**Reální 5  
701 03 Ostrava**  
T +420 597 091 870  
E [svatava.urbanova@osu.cz](mailto:svatava.urbanova@osu.cz)  
[www.osu.cz/ffi/kcl](http://www.osu.cz/ffi/kcl)

Institute of Czech Studies,  
Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Czech for Foreigners and specialized courses for visiting researchers and postgraduate students from European universities are offered by the institution. The Institute also organizes the Summer School of Slavonic Studies.

Nám. Jana Palacha 2  
116 38 Praha 1  
T +420 221 619 381  
E ubohstud@ff.cuni.cz  
<http://ubs.ff.cuni.cz/lsss.php>

Department of Czech Literature,  
Pedagogical Faculty,  
Masaryk University  
(Katedra české literatury  
Pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy  
univerzity)

The Department provides the following courses: Teaching (1st grade at primary schools), Teaching (2nd grade at primary schools) and Secondary School Teacher Education. As part of its lifelong education, it runs a joint programme, Czech Language and Literature for Secondary Schools, to improve teachers' qualifications.

Poříčí 7  
603 00 Brno  
T +420 543 129 270  
F +420 543 129 109  
E ladeni@jumbo.ped.muni.cz  
[www.ped.muni.cz/wczlit](http://www.ped.muni.cz/wczlit)

Department of Czech Language  
and Literature, Pedagogical Faculty,  
Charles University  
(Katedra českého jazyka  
a literatury Pedagogické fakulty  
Univerzity Karlovy)

M. D. Rettigové 4  
116 39 Praha 1  
T +420 221 900 161  
<http://kcjl.modry.cz>

Department of Czech Studies  
and Library Science, Faculty  
of Arts and Natural Sciences,  
Silesian University, Opava

(Ústav bohemistiky a knihovnictví  
Filozoficko-Přírodovědecké fakulty  
Slezské univerzity v Opavě)

Masarykova třída 37  
746 01 Opava  
T +420 553 684 419  
E helena.brendlova@fpf.slu.cz  
[www.fpf.slu.cz/ustavy/ustav-bohemistiky-a-knihovnictvi](http://www.fpf.slu.cz/ustavy/ustav-bohemistiky-a-knihovnictvi)

Department of Czech Studies,  
Pedagogical Faculty, University  
of Jan Evangelista Purkyně  
(Katedra bohemistiky  
Pedagogické fakulty Univerzity  
Jana Evangelisty Purkyně)

České mládeže 8 & Hoření 13  
400 96 Ústí nad Labem  
T +420 475 283 111  
T +420 475 282 111  
<http://pf.ujep.cz/bohemistika>

Josef Škvorecký Literary Academy  
(Literární akademie – Soukromá  
vysoká škola Josefa Škvoreckého)

The Academy offers Bachelor's (Creative Writing and Journalism; Media & Communication) and Master's courses (Creative Writing; Creative Writing – Non-Fiction; Creative Writing – Editorial; Media & Communication).

Na Pankráci 54  
140 00 Praha 4  
T +420 272 773 045  
T +420 241 403 367  
F +420 272 763 020  
E lit-akad@lit-akad.cz  
[www.literarniakademie.cz](http://www.literarniakademie.cz)

**Institute for Regional Studies,**  
**Faculty of Arts,**  
**University of Ostrava**

A research institute focused on the issue of regions, taking into consideration literary and art theory traditions. In a wider scientific scope, it examines the inter-ethnic aspect, linking literature to folklore, culture and history in general. The Department's team is primarily composed of literary researchers and art historians. Among the main research objectives of the Department are the study of regions in the Czech and Central European context as well as their inspiring role in cultural and artistic work. Its research activities centre on the cultural and historical development of the region of Silesia and northeastern Moravia.

**Dvořákova 7**  
**701 03 Ostrava 1**  
**T +420 597 091 111**  
**E [info@osu.cz](mailto:info@osu.cz)**  
**<http://ff.osu.cz/urs>**

**LEGISLATION AND LITERARY AGENCIES**

The legal framework for protecting intellectual property in the Czech Republic underwent significant changes as a result of a new copyright act No. 121/2000 Coll. (according to the Act No. 81/2005 Coll., Act No. 61/2006 Coll., Act No. 186/2006 Coll., Act No. 216/2006 Coll., Act No. 168/2008 Coll., Act No. 41/2009 Coll. and Act No. 227/2009 Coll.). Through the new legal amendment, the Czech Republic became a country with a high standard of copyright protection, protecting the rights of artists as well as other rights holders connected to the copyright.

The basic legal enactment, which directly amends publishing, is Act No. 37/1995 Coll. on non-periodical publications (Act No. 320/2002 Coll.) and ordinance No. 252/1995 Coll. through which certain enactments of Act No. 37/1995 Coll. on non-periodical publications are executed (as amended by Ordinance No. 156/2003 Coll.); Ordinance No. 488/2006 Coll. (as amended by Ordinance No. 408/2008 Coll.) which stipulates the types of instruments used for copy making; types of unrecorded media and the amount of fixed fees.

Aside from the aforementioned, there are also further regulations in place which likewise accommodate this without directly mentioning publishing (eg Act No. 455/1991 Coll. on trade) as well as general statutes such as the Civil Code, Commercial Code, the VAT Act and the Tariff Act.

## LITERARY AGENCIES

### Aura-Pont

A private arts agency focused on copyright which represents more than 400 Czech and international artists including writers. Established in 1990.

[www.aura-pont.cz](http://www.aura-pont.cz)

### Kristin Olson Literary Agency

The Agency negotiates and sells translation licences to Czech and Slovak publishing houses.

[www.litag.cz](http://www.litag.cz)

### Dana Blatná Literary Agency

Literary agency specialized in translations of Czech literature into foreign languages (Michal Viewegh, Jiří Kratochvíl, Petra Soukupová and others).

[www.dbagency.cz](http://www.dbagency.cz)

### Dilia

The theatre, literary and audiovisual agency, founded in 1949, is a civic association of authors and other copyright holders. The main objective of the agency is the protection of copyright.

[www.dilia.cz](http://www.dilia.cz)

### Pluh

Dutch literary agency with a special focus on Czech literature (Patrik Ouředník, Miloš Urban, Petra Hůlová and others).

[www.pluh.org](http://www.pluh.org)

## LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

### Libraries

The traditional work of the library is to collect, process, store, protect and render accessible published documentation in whatever form this may take. The library is an important instrument for the practical realization of basic human rights on equality of access to information (which applies to all irrespective of difference, whether this difference is between inhabitants of town and country, people with and people without disabilities, members of minorities and the majority in society), for the free exchange of information, for the acquisition of knowledge and for the free forming of opinion. It serves as a means for the fulfilment of the rights on information laid down in the constitution, and as such is one of the pillars of a democracy.

The act no. 257/2001 Coll. on libraries and conditions for the operation of public library and information services (the Libraries Act ) is the first new delimitation of the scope of library and information services provision for the general public to have been issued for more than forty years; it accommodates modifications to legislation concerning library services as determined by contemporary developments in society and technology.

In accordance with the act no. 257/2001 Coll. on libraries and conditions for the operating of public library and information services, the system of libraries in the Czech Republic is as follows:

- a) libraries governed by the Ministry of Culture - the National Library of the Czech Republic ([www.nkp.cz](http://www.nkp.cz)), the Moravian Library ([www.mzk.cz](http://www.mzk.cz)) and the K. E. Macan Library and Printworks for the Blind ([www.ktn.cz/index](http://www.ktn.cz/index));
- b) regional libraries governed by the competent regional authorities;
- c) basic libraries governed by the competent municipal authorities or another governing body;
- d) specialized libraries.

Every year the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic presents the Library of the Year Award, the award was initiated in 2003.

## Important links

Database of libraries and information institutions of the Czech Republic (maintained by the National Library of the Czech Republic)  
<http://aleph.nkp.cz>

Database of libraries, archives and museum (maintained by the Arts Institute)  
[www.culturenet.cz](http://www.culturenet.cz)

Database of university libraries  
<http://platan.vc.cvut.cz>

Knihovny.cz – portal about Czech libraries  
[www.knihovny.cz](http://www.knihovny.cz)

Knihovna.cz – website of the Municipal Library in Prostějov focused on libraries in the Czech Republic  
[www.knihovna.cz](http://www.knihovna.cz)

Knihovny.net – libraries in the Czech Republic  
[www.knihovny.net](http://www.knihovny.net)

National Digital Library (NDK)  
[www.ndk.cz/narodni-dk](http://www.ndk.cz/narodni-dk)

Association of Libraries of the Czech Republic (SDRUK)  
[www.svkos.cz/sdruk/](http://www.svkos.cz/sdruk/)

Association of Librarians and Information Workers of the Czech Republic (SKIP)  
[www.skipcr.cz](http://www.skipcr.cz)

Librarianship and Information Science (KIV)  
<http://kiv.jib.cz/>

## Archives

The field of archives is covered by the act no. 499/2004 Coll. Documents older than thirty years are available for studying, otherwise only with the approval of the archive's director.

### List of public archives

- a) National Archive ([www.nacr.cz](http://www.nacr.cz))
- b) state regional archives in Prague, Třeboň, Plzeň, Litoměřice, Zámorsk, Brno (Moravian Archive, [www.mza.cz](http://www.mza.cz)), Opava
- c) state district archives
- d) specialized archives (eg. Archive of Czech Radio, Archive of Czech Television, Archive of the National Museum, Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature ([www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz](http://www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz)) or Archive of the National Library)
- e) private archives (eg. Archive of the Jewish Museum)

## Links

Archive Funds and collections in the Czech Republic – database of archive funds and collections

Badatelna.cz – official public portal for searching in the archive funds and collections in the Czech Republic ([www.janusarchiv.cz](http://www.janusarchiv.cz))

Database of libraries, archives and museums – maintained by the Arts Institute ([www.culturenet.cz](http://www.culturenet.cz))

Czech Archive Society – association of archivists ([www.cesarch.cz](http://www.cesarch.cz))

## GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Apart from the below-listed grant providers, scholarships, etc. it's possible to apply at individual municipalities. A range of activities can also be supported within grant programmes of various foundations, not solely targeted at the field of literature.

### Arbor Vitae Foundation

The Foundation supports the publishing of books capturing the spirit of the countryside and the life of its inhabitants (villages up to 500 inhabitants); through its In lustrum trahere Programme it supports the creation of illustrations, its printing in various techniques, etc.

Jaselská 3/ 346  
160 00 Praha 6  
T +420 224 325 224  
F +420 224 311 148  
E [info@arborvitae.eu](mailto:info@arborvitae.eu)  
[www.arborvitae.eu/nadace](http://www.arborvitae.eu/nadace)

### Czech Cultural Contact Point – EU Culture Programme

The grant from 2,000 to 60,000 euros covers the translator's fees (max. 50 % of the overall budget). The application, submitted by the publishing house, can comprise up to 10 titles. The applications are evaluated in Brussels.

c/o Institut umění – Divadelní ústav  
Celená 17  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 224 809 118–119  
T +420 224 809 134  
E [info@programculture.cz](mailto:info@programculture.cz)  
[www.programculture.cz](http://www.programculture.cz)

### Dilia

Dilia, theatre and literary agency, regularly publishes calls for scholarships concerning the 2+2+1 workshop for young translators.

Krátkého 1  
190 03 Praha 9 – Vysočany  
T +420 283 893 603  
F +420 283 893 599  
E [info@dilia.cz](mailto:info@dilia.cz)  
[www.dilia.cz](http://www.dilia.cz)

### RWE & Barrandov Studio Film Foundation

Twice a year the foundation publishes calls for proposals for the support of screenplays.

Kříženeckého nám. 322  
152 00 Praha 5 – Barrandov  
T +420 267 072 012  
F +420 267 072 013  
E [nadace@barrandov.cz](mailto:nadace@barrandov.cz)  
[www.barrandov.cz/nadace](http://www.barrandov.cz/nadace)

### Arts Institute

The Arts Institute offers residencies for Czech writers (novelists, essayists...), poets and playwrights.

Institut umění – Divadelní ústav  
Celená 17  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 224 809 118–119  
T +420 224 809 134  
E [rezidence@institutumeni.cz](mailto:rezidence@institutumeni.cz)  
E [literatura@institutumeni.cz](mailto:literatura@institutumeni.cz)  
[www.institutumeni.cz](http://www.institutumeni.cz)

### Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

#### Department of Literature and Libraries (DLL) (Samostatné oddělení literatury a knihoven, SOLK)

On a yearly basis, the Department publishes calls for proposals within the **Programme for Publishing Non-periodical Publications**.

#### Grants

Support for Publishing Czech Literature (one and two years grant) – fiction, non-fiction, comics, audiovisual works, etc.

Support for Publishing Debuts in Czech Literature

Support for Publishing Translated Works (one- and two-year grants)

Support for Publishing Works with Demanding Editorial Preparations (long-term grants)  
Support for Publishing Czech Illustrated Literature for Children and Youth (one- and two-year grants)

The deadline is usually in October 31st.

Furthermore, the Ministry provides the **Programme for the Support of Periodicals and Literary Activities.**

#### Grants

Periodicals and Collective Volumes – printed as well as electronic periodicals

Public Lectures and Seminars

Literary Evenings, Readings, etc.

Exhibitions

Competitions and Contests

Literary Festivals

Year-round Activities – concerns the priorities no. 2–6, 8.

Other Projects from the Literary Field – with the exception of publishing of non-periodical publications

The deadline is usually in October 31st.

Furthermore, every year the Department publishes calls for proposals within the **Programme for the Support of Translation of Czech Literature Abroad**; the application must be submitted by the foreign publisher. The deadline is on the November 15.

The grant is designed to support the publication of translated Czech literature (fiction, poetry, drama) and can be used only to cover the translator's fees. Priority is given to contemporary literature.

**The Creative and Study Scholarships Programme** supports individuals (except students; maximum age of applicants for the Study Scholarship is 30 years old). The Creative Scholarship lasts from 6 to 24 months and its goal is the production of an art work; the Study Scholarship lasts at least 1 month and its holder must spend it at a Czech or foreign art, science or other specialized institution and its goal is to gain knowledge for further art, academic or other activity.

The deadline is usually in February.

#### Programme for the Support of Non-commercial Projects in the Field of Libraries Grants

Public Information Library Services (VISK)

- VISK 2 Extracurricular Education of Librarians in the ICT Field
- VISK 3 Information Library Centres
- VISK 5 RETROKON
- VISK 6 Memoriae Mundi Series Bohemica
- VISK 7 Kramerius
- VISK 8 Information Sources and the Integral Information Gate
- VISK 9 The Development of the CASLIN Catalogue and National Authorities

More information at <http://visk.nkp.cz>

#### The Library of the 21st Century (K 21)

Support for the work programmes with national minorities and integration of foreigners, broadening of the accessibility of library services for people with disabilities, the preservation of the book fund, etc.

#### Ministerstvo kultury

Maltézské nám. 1

118 11 Praha 1

T +420 257 085 111

F +420 224 318 155

E [bohupil.fiser@mkcr.cz](mailto:bohupil.fiser@mkcr.cz)

[www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny/default.htm](http://www.mkcr.cz/literatura-a-knihovny/default.htm)

## Department of Foreign Affairs

Every year the Department publishes calls for proposals within the Programme for Cultural Activities organized together with foreign partners – concerning the field of literature, it's possible to apply in the Projects Abroad section and in the Projects within the Visegard countries. The deadlines are in April and October. More information about the ministry's grant programmes can be found at [www.mkcr.cz](http://www.mkcr.cz) – Grants and Support (only in Czech).

**Maltézské nám. 1**  
**118 11 Praha 1**  
**T +420 257 085 111**  
**E [posta@mkcr.cz](mailto:posta@mkcr.cz)**  
**[www.mkcr.cz](http://www.mkcr.cz)**

## Czech Literary Fund (Český literární fond)

The fund supports the publication of periodicals and books from the fields of literature, theatre, science and film. With its scholarships the fund supports new projects.

**Pod Nuselskými schody 3**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
**T +420 222 560 081/082**  
**F +420 222 560 083**  
**E [nadace@nclf.cz](mailto:nadace@nclf.cz)**  
**[www.nclf.cz](http://www.nclf.cz)**

## František Topič Fund (Nadační fond Františka Topiče)

The fund supports young emerging authors and editors dealing with Czech literature, history and philosophy. The scholarships are intended to support the finalising of the particular work.

**Jana Masaryka 56**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
**T +420 221 183 111**  
**E [nf.frantisektopic@seznam.cz](mailto:nf.frantisektopic@seznam.cz)**

## K. H. Borovský Fund

The fund supports the publication of student works, brochures for seminars/conferences focused on the life and work of Karel Havlíček Borovský.

**Sobětuchy 81**  
**537 01 Chrudim**

## LitArt – Fund for the Support of Literature and Fine Arts

The mission of the fund is the enhancement of the arts, mostly literature. The fund gives precedence to young emerging writers.

**Daniel Podhradský**  
**Podleší 12**  
**378 82 Staré Město pod Landštejnem – Podleší**  
**T +420 777 120 613**  
**E [director@litart.eu](mailto:director@litart.eu)**  
**[www.litart.eu](http://www.litart.eu)**

## Fund for Central and East European Book Projects – Nederlands Fonds voor Midden – en Oosteuropese Boekprojecten (CEEBP)

The CEEBP was established in Amsterdam in 1992 under the auspices of the European Cultural Foundation. Its aim is to enhance the free flow of thought and information across borders, by supporting quality publishing in Central and Eastern Europe. The Fund assists associations of publishers and booksellers in improving the book trade infrastructure in their countries (provides contacts, training, etc. and gives support to publishers to cover the translators fees).

**Jan van Goyenkade 5**  
**NL-1075 HN Amsterdam**  
**T +31 20 573 386**  
**F +31 20 67 52 231**  
**E [ceebp@ceebp.org](mailto:ceebp@ceebp.org)**  
**[www.ceebp.org](http://www.ceebp.org)**

## Guild of Translators

The guild provides the Hana Žantovská Scholarship to support the translation of a poetry work into Czech.

**Pod Nuselskými schody 3**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
**T +420 222 564 082**  
**E [info@obecprekladatelu.cz](mailto:info@obecprekladatelu.cz)**  
**[www.obecprekladatelu.cz](http://www.obecprekladatelu.cz)**

## Prague's Literary House of German Speaking Authors

The house offers residencies for Czech writers, poets and playwrights in Germany.

Ječná 11  
120 00 Praha 2  
T +420 222 540 536  
F +420 221 610 244  
E [info@prager-literaturhaus.com](mailto:info@prager-literaturhaus.com)  
[www.prager-literaturhaus.com](http://www.prager-literaturhaus.com)

## Institute for Czech Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

The institute offers short-term (usually one-month) scholarships for foreign scholars.

Na Florenci 3/1420  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 234 612 111  
E [literatura@ucl.cas.cz](mailto:literatura@ucl.cas.cz)  
[www.ucl.cas.cz](http://www.ucl.cas.cz)

## Czech Talent Fund (Český talent)

For example in 2010 the Fund issued a call for proposals designed for those wanting to write a literary theory publication focusing on Czech literature after WWII.

Washingtonova 1760/3  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 224 248 661  
F +420 224 248 599  
E [helena.stupkova@ceskytalent.cz](mailto:helena.stupkova@ceskytalent.cz)  
E [irena.fabianova@ceskytalent.cz](mailto:irena.fabianova@ceskytalent.cz)  
[www.ceskytalent.cz](http://www.ceskytalent.cz)

## LITERARY CAFÉS AND TEA-ROOMS

### Prague (capital)

#### Café Fra

Šafaříkova 15  
120 00 Praha 2  
[www.fra.cz](http://www.fra.cz)

#### Café NONA – kavárna Nové scény Národního divadla

Národní třída 4  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.cafenona.cz](http://www.cafenona.cz)

#### Café Rybka

Opatovická 7  
110 00 Praha 1

#### Česko-německá kavárna - sdružení přátel české a německé kultury

Dvořižská 966  
198 00 Praha - Kyje  
E [dtcafe@volny.cz](mailto:dtcafe@volny.cz)

#### Čítárna Unijazzu

Jindřižská 5  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.unijazz.cz](http://www.unijazz.cz)

#### Kavárna Jericho

Opatovická 26  
110 00 Praha 1

#### Kavárna Krásný ztráty

Náprstkova 10  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.krasnyztraty.cz](http://www.krasnyztraty.cz)

#### Kavárna Ouky Douky

Janovského 1118/14  
170 00 Praha 7  
[www.oukydouky.cz](http://www.oukydouky.cz)

### Kavárna a vinárna Symbiosa

Jindřicha Plachty 28  
150 00 Praha 5 – Smíchov  
[www.symbiosa.eu](http://www.symbiosa.eu)

### Kavárna v paláci knih Luxor

Václavské nám. 41  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.neoluxor.cz](http://www.neoluxor.cz)

### Knihkupectví a kavárna Rehoře Samsy

Vodičkova 30 (pasáž U Nováků)  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.samsa.psomart.cz](http://www.samsa.psomart.cz)

### Literární kavárna H+H

Vyšehradská 53  
120 00 Praha 2  
[www.nakladatelstvihh.cz/kavarna](http://www.nakladatelstvihh.cz/kavarna)

### Literární kavárna Řetězová

Řetězová 10  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.knihytynska.cz/retezova.html](http://www.knihytynska.cz/retezova.html)

### Literární kavárna Švandova divadla na Smíchově

Štefánikova 57  
150 00 Praha 5  
[www.svandovodivadlo.cz](http://www.svandovodivadlo.cz)

### Literární kavárna knihkupectví Academia

Václavské nám. 34  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.academia.cz](http://www.academia.cz)

### Literární kavárna Muzea Karlova mostu

Křižovnické nám. 3  
110 00 Praha 1 – Staré Město  
[www.muzeumkarlovamostu.cz/kavarna](http://www.muzeumkarlovamostu.cz/kavarna)

### Literární klub Továrna

Svatoslavova 33  
140 00 Praha 4 – Nusle

### Potrva

Srbská 2  
160 00 Praha 6 – Dejvice  
[www.potrva.cz](http://www.potrva.cz)

### Rybanaruby

Mánesova 87  
120 00 Praha 2  
<http://rybanaruby.net/>

### Salmovská literární kavárna

Salmovská 16  
120 00 Praha 2  
[www.salmovska.cz](http://www.salmovska.cz)

### Týnská literární kavárna

Týnská 6  
110 00 Praha 1  
[www.knihytynska.cz/kavarna.html](http://www.knihytynska.cz/kavarna.html)

### Boskovice

### Literární čajovna Hermannův Újezd

Zborovská 9  
680 01 Boskovice  
[www.cajovna.cz/cz/literarni-cajovna/](http://www.cajovna.cz/cz/literarni-cajovna/)

### Brno

### Kavárna Švandova

Poštovská 8  
602 00 Brno  
[www.alfapassage.cz](http://www.alfapassage.cz)

### Klub Leitnerova

Leitnerova 434/2  
602 00 Brno – Staré Brno  
[www.leitnerka.cz](http://www.leitnerka.cz)

### Literární kavárna knihkupectví Academia

Nám. Svobody 13  
602 00 Brno  
[www.academia.cz](http://www.academia.cz)

### Literární kavárna knihkupectví Dobrovský

Joštova 6  
602 00 Brno  
[www.knihydobrovsky.cz](http://www.knihydobrovsky.cz)

### Literární čajovna Skleněná louka

Kounicova 23  
602 00 Brno  
[www.cajovna-sklenenka.com](http://www.cajovna-sklenenka.com)  
[www.sklenenalouka.cz](http://www.sklenenalouka.cz)

### České Budějovice

### Literární kavárna Měsíc ve dne

Nová 3  
370 01 České Budějovice  
[www.mesicvedne.cz](http://www.mesicvedne.cz)

### Český Těšín

### Čítárna a literární kavárna Noiva

Hlavní 2061  
737 01 Český Těšín  
E [noiva@noiva-tesin.cz](mailto:noiva@noiva-tesin.cz)

### Havlíčkův Brod

### Literární čajovna Suzanne Renaud

Havlíčkovo nám. 180  
580 01 Havlíčkův Brod  
[www.knihyhb.cz/cajovna/uvod.html](http://www.knihyhb.cz/cajovna/uvod.html)

### Kavárna U Notáře

Sázavská 430/1  
580 01 Havlíčkův Brod

### Hradec Králové

### Literární kavárna při studijní a vědecké knihovně

Hradecká 1250/2  
500 03 Hradec Králové

### Hustopeče

### Kavárna Romance

Kosmákova 4  
693 01 Hustopeče  
[www.kavarna-romance.cz](http://www.kavarna-romance.cz)

### Chomutov

### Literární kavárna SKKS

Palackého 85  
430 01 Chomutov  
[www.skks.cz/cs/sluzby/67-literarni-kavarna](http://www.skks.cz/cs/sluzby/67-literarni-kavarna)

### Jihlava

### Café Etage

Masarykovo nám. 39  
586 01 Jihlava  
[www.etaze.cz](http://www.etaze.cz)

### Olomouc

### Literární kafírna/ čajírna Kratochvíle

Sokolská 544/36  
779 00 Olomouc  
[www.kratochvile.com](http://www.kratochvile.com)

### Ponorka

Tř. 1. Máje 8  
779 00 Olomouc  
[www.ponorka.com](http://www.ponorka.com)

### Opava

### Café Evžen

Beethovenova 179/2  
746 01 Opava-Město  
[www.cafe-evzen.cz](http://www.cafe-evzen.cz)

### Ostrava

### Kavárna Daniel

Žerotínova 1230/1  
702 00 Ostrava - Moravská Ostrava  
[www.kavarnadaniel.com](http://www.kavarnadaniel.com)

## Literární kavárna knihkupectví

### Academia

Zámecká 2  
702 00 Ostrava  
[www.academia.cz](http://www.academia.cz)

### Písek

## Literární kavárna R-W Café

Tř. Národní svobody 32  
397 01 Písek

### Plzeň

## Kulturní kavárna Jablůň

Krátká 1003/2  
301 17 Plzeň - Jižní předměstí  
[www.jabloun.eu](http://www.jabloun.eu)

### Teplice

## Jazz klub

28. října 12  
415 01 Teplice  
[www.jazzteplice.cz](http://www.jazzteplice.cz)

### Ústí nad Labem

## Café Max

Pivovarská 1938/3  
400 01 Ústí nad Labem  
[www.cafemax.cz](http://www.cafemax.cz)

## Experimentální prostor Mumie

Velká Hradební 50  
400 01 Ústí nad Labem  
[www.prostormumie.cz](http://www.prostormumie.cz)

## Foyer Činoherního studia

Varšavská 767  
400 03 Ústí nad Labem  
[www.cinoherak.cz](http://www.cinoherak.cz)

### Zlín

## Kavárna Archa

Nám. Míru 12  
760 01 Zlín

## ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSHOPS

Books have been sold in many ways for centuries. Antiquarian bookshops in their present guise were created at the turn of the 20th century when the retail of old books was separated from regular bookshops and subsequently became a fully-fledged business venture. In the wake of the Communist coup d'état of 1948, private businesses were prohibited and antiquarian bookshops became part of a unified network – the national company Kniha. Around the same time, books stemming from church and castle funds were dispatched to waste dumps and destroyed en masse. This reflects the transformation of the function of antiquarian bookshops which now served as havens for books from the private realm that were inconvenient for the regime.

Even though such books were commissioned, they couldn't be resold and ended up in so-called preservation deposits. As a result, prices of these books sky-rocketed – a novel by a banned author would be sold for the price of old prints on the black market. Things went back to normal after 1989. Nevertheless, it would be naive to assume that antiquarian booksellers are philanthropists who strive to save the cultural heritage. They are, first and foremost, businessmen.

The most lucrative are incunabulas, old Czech, German and Latin prints, alchemistic documents, mysticism, military, Judaism, Masonic literature and bibliophilia. Furthermore, there has been a growing demand for titles labelled under topography, ethnography and craftsmanship published during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Aside from books, antiquarian bookshops also stock magazines, sheet music, posters, ex libris, maps or photographs, with postcards becoming a sought-after collector's item. A large portion of the income of these stores is generated from the sale of prints.

Fiction writing more or less fails to elicit interest from the biggest players on the antiquarian market. For instance: *Arcana Maiora* by Johann Otto von Hellwig, published in 1712, was sold for 50,000 Czech crowns (2,170 euros), while Kundera's *Joke* might fetch 80 crowns (3.5 euros).

On the other hand, antiquarian bookshops in the mid to low price range are often involuntarily flooded with fiction from purchases of comprehensive private libraries (when the estate of the deceased stipulates that everything has to be bought at once).

Contemporary literature is rarely stocked. The most plausible explanation for this is that it is published in small print runs and, encouragingly, that readers do not dispense with books by their favourite writers. Hence, it is almost impossible to find titles by Krchovský, Balabán, Kahuda, Denemarková, Jirous or Kremlička in these shops.

The following list includes established antiquarian bookshops in the Czech Republic.

## Prague

### 1. podzemní antikvariát

**Hybernská 22**  
**Praha 1**  
[www.podzemni-antikvariati.cz](http://www.podzemni-antikvariati.cz)

Currently perhaps the most progressive antiquarian bookshop that boasts an incredibly diverse selection ranging from old prints to bargains. Notification about new additions is published online immediately.

### AD Plus

**Dlážděná 7**  
**Praha 1**  
[www.adplus.cz](http://www.adplus.cz)

Antiquarian bookshop with an illustrious tradition – the legendary ‘Dlážděnka’. In the past, artists who were inconvenient for the Communist regime, such as the poet Zbyněk Hejda, writer Vladislav Zdobílek aka D. Ž. Bor or the singer-songwriter Vlastimil Třešňák all found solace here as employees. The shelves are heaving with books and the enormous table in the frontroom brims with literary objects – of a more run-of-the-mill quality. The more interesting titles are only offered online. Alas, even antiquarian bookshops are finally moving into the virtual world.

### Antikvariáty.cz

**Arco – Dlážděná 4**  
**Praha 1**

**Dobrá kniha – Dlážděná 4**  
**Praha 1**

**Antikvariát Bělehradská – Bělehradská 96**  
**Praha 2**  
[www.antikvariati.cz](http://www.antikvariati.cz)

These three mutually interconnected stores make up the empire of the antiquarian bookseller Tomáš Maděra. In spite of the fact that these are all physical shops, their collective name, which contains the suffix .cz, alludes to the internet. When it comes to the number of titles on offer, Antikvariáty.cz is hard to beat.

### Aurora

**Opletalova 8 & Spálená 53**  
**Praha 1**  
[www.eaurora.cz](http://www.eaurora.cz)  
[www.gramofonove-desky.cz](http://www.gramofonove-desky.cz)

Exceptionally charming place. Half of the space is filled with records with the likes of Yes or Pink Floyd emanating from the speakers. From time to time, extremely interesting books at favourable prices (a few euros) can be found in the shop window.

At the beginning of 2011, a new branch of the shop was opened in Spálená Street, closely connected to the adjoining bookstore and publisher Aurora.

### Antikvariát Brettschneider

**Bělehradská 3**  
**Praha 4**  
[www.antikvariati-ungelt.cz](http://www.antikvariati-ungelt.cz)

Jindřich Brettschneider started his antique business in the Little Quarter’s Vlašská Street and subsequently moved to Ungelt. In 2009, he terminated his business and nowadays sells his goods exclusively through the internet only running a purchasing office on Bělehradská 3 with limited opening hours. His choice encompasses exclusive items in the price range of several hundred to tens of thousands of crowns: old Bohemian and foreign language prints, maps, vedutas, bibliophile books, artistic bookbinding, etc.

### Jihočeské antikvariáty

**Klapkova 47**  
**Praha 8**  
[www.melcer.cz](http://www.melcer.cz)

Husband and wife owners Vratislav and Miroslava Melcer started their entrepreneurial activities as bookbinders and printers. These days they have branches in České Budejovice, Třeboň and Lomnice nad Lužnicí, covering a large portion of Southern Bohemia. Thus, it is understandable that their stock ranges from architecture to

autobiographies. The distribution point for their e-shop is located in Klapkova Street in the vicinity of the Kobylisy metro stop in Prague.

### Antikvariát Jiří Hrách

Na Šachtě 9  
Praha 7  
[www.antikvariát-hrach.cz](http://www.antikvariát-hrach.cz)

### Antikvariát Josef Počta

Kopečná 24  
Praha 9  
[www.antikvariát-pocta.cz](http://www.antikvariát-pocta.cz)

### Antikvariát Judaica

Široká 7  
Praha 1  
[www.antikvariát-judaica.cz](http://www.antikvariát-judaica.cz)

Antikvariát Judaica can be found in Prague's Jewish Quarter, nestling between a plethora of historical sights. It therefore specializes in Jewish literature, encompassing a wide range of items from old prints to recently published books.

### Kant

Opatovická 26  
Praha 1  
[www.antik-kant.cz](http://www.antik-kant.cz)

Kant is located in Opatovická Street right next to the Jericho and Velryba cafés. Its owner, Miloš Burdátš, can be usually found leaning against the counter knowledgeably talking to his customers. The way he sets his prices is fairly peculiar though – while elsewhere prices are usually rounded to tens or hundreds of crowns, here you can buy a book for 72 Czech crowns, for instance.

### Antikvariát Eva Kozáková

Myslíkova 10  
Praha 2  
[www.antikvariát-ucebnice.cz](http://www.antikvariát-ucebnice.cz)

Antiquarian bookshop specializing in textbooks and lecture notes.

### Ex libris

Veslavínova 3  
Praha 1  
[www.exlibris.cz](http://www.exlibris.cz)

### Antikvariát Karel Křenek

Národní 20  
Praha 1  
[www.karelkrenek.com](http://www.karelkrenek.com)

The original location of this antiquarian bookshop was in Celetná Street before relocating a few blocks away to U Obecního domu Street. Since 2008 it has been located in Národní třída. "Aside from beautiful, old or rare books, we also offer a large collection of old maps, decorative prints, posters and etchings that will satisfy the needs of both collectors and interior designers. We only sell originals from the 16th to 20th centuries. Passe-Partout and framing upon demand."

### Antikvariát Dana Kurovce

Boleslavská 1 & Jičínská 6  
Praha 3  
[www.dantikvariát.cz](http://www.dantikvariát.cz)

Online antiquarian bookshop. The aforementioned locations only provide commissioning services.

### Antikvariát Lužiny

Mukařovského 1986  
Praha 13  
[www.antikvariát-luziny.cz](http://www.antikvariát-luziny.cz)

### Antikvariát Malá sova

[www.antikvariátmotyl.cz](http://www.antikvariátmotyl.cz)

Originally located in Jugoslávských partizánů Street. Since spring 2011 the shop has solely been internet-based. The books purchased online can be picked up in Karlín – in Antikvariát Ve Dvoře (Sokolovská 76).

## Antikvariát Můstek

Národní 40  
Praha 1

A small shop, whose size doesn't exceed a few square metres, boasts the perfect location in Palác Adria on the corner of Národní Street and Jungmann Square. Můstek stands out because ninety percent of its sales are made from its window display. Within the confines of the shop, one can come across predominantly German and Latin prints, maps, vedutas as well as booklets brought out by Josef Florian's publishing company in Stará Říše. Můstek is an antiquarian bookshop with a refined taste.

## Antikvariát Nerudova

Nerudova 16  
Praha 1

[www.antikvariaterudova.cz/index.php?s=kontakt](http://www.antikvariaterudova.cz/index.php?s=kontakt)

One would expect an overpriced shop in this touristy area and, as a consequence, many tend to avoid it, which is a mistake. Antikvariát Nerudova is a cosy antiquarian bookshop with friendly staff. Because of its relatively small premises, it does not offer a large selection of books - fiction has been reduced to a single bookshelf. The majority of the stock is composed of pragensia (books about Prague), military and history books.

## Aukční agentura a antikvariát Prošek

Na Zlatnici 28  
Praha 4

[www.prosekant.wdr.cz/index\\_.php](http://www.prosekant.wdr.cz/index_.php)

Václav Prošek is a trailblazer in non-traditional bookselling. Auction-sale catalogues can be downloaded online. Auctions take place online as well as at an auction hall.

## Pražský almanach

Újezd 26  
Praha 1

[www.artbook.cz](http://www.artbook.cz)

## Antikvariát Smíchov

Kotevní 11  
Praha 5

[www.antikvariát-smichov.cz](http://www.antikvariát-smichov.cz)

Situated around the corner from the train station in one of Smíchov's off-the-beaten-track streets with an assortment of titles that perfectly blend into the shop's surroundings. Antikvariát Smíchov is a traditional hodge-podge with goods placed in banana boxes - one of the few remaining antiquarian bookshops of this kind.

## Antikvariát Synagoga

Stroupežnického 32  
Praha 5

[www.korous.cz](http://www.korous.cz)

Antikvariát Synagoga, as its name suggests, is situated in the Smíchov Synagogue near Anděl. It belongs to the same owner as the antiquarian bookshop in Karmelitská Street in the Little Quarter. Its counters and shelves are stacked with books that can easily be found elsewhere too. The most interesting titles are displayed in the glass case and shouldn't be missed: not only because the pricing of this store is largely unfathomable - an underrated gem may occasionally appear among all the overpriced books.

## Valentinská

Valentinská 8  
Praha 1

[www.valentinska.cz](http://www.valentinska.cz)

This shop, located in Valentinská Street, cannot be omitted from this list. Frequented by tourists who pass by on their way from Charles Bridge to the Jewish Quarter, Valentinská also has its regulars - students and teachers from the nearby Faculty of Arts at Charles University. Due to its relatively small premises, the most interesting titles tend to be placed in the window display, with thousands of other items sold online. Twice a year, the shop organizes auctions in cooperation with the auction agency Prošek.

## Antikvariát Ve Dvoře

Sokolovská 76  
Praha 8  
[www.t-antik.com](http://www.t-antik.com)

Antikvariát Ve Dvoře is situated in the formerly industrial Prague quarter of Karlín. The shop is located in a small working-class house in a courtyard near a factory chimney, which conjures up a unique atmosphere.

## Ztichlá klika

Betlémská 10-14  
Praha 1  
[www.ztichlaklika.cz](http://www.ztichlaklika.cz)

This antiquarian bookshop is directed at a more affluent clientele, stocking rare prints, incunabulas, old Bohemica, alchemy, avant-garde, architecture, painting, graphic art. It is spread over three buildings in Betlémská Street, one of which also encompasses a gallery.

## Brno

### AB antikvariát

Kounicova 15  
<http://boudapetr.web.cz>

### Alfa

Jánská 11  
[www.antikalfa.cz](http://www.antikalfa.cz)

## Antikvariát Františka Samoty

Třída kpt. Jaroše 19  
[www.samota.cz](http://www.samota.cz)

## Antikvariát Petržilka

Kopečná 72

## Antikvariát Janoš

Kotlářská 34  
[www.antikvariát-janos.cz](http://www.antikvariát-janos.cz)

## U Jakubské věže

Rašínova 1

## Antikvariát u Semilassa

Palackého 95

### Petr Vintrlík

Kapucínské nám. 11  
[www.antikvariát-vintrlik.cz](http://www.antikvariát-vintrlik.cz)

## České Budějovice

## Antikvariáty Zdeňky Täuberové

Antikvariát Za Věží  
Kněžská 18 & Dům umění  
Náměstí Přemysla Otakara II. 38  
<http://antikvariát.najihu.cz/>

## Havlíčkův Brod

### Štáflova chalupa

Kobzinové 2015  
[www.antikhb.cz](http://www.antikhb.cz)

The allure of this antiquarian bookshop can be largely attributed to its premises. Štáfl Cottage is a late medieval edifice built in a rural style. It is one of the oldest preserved examples of these traditional buildings in the Czech Republic. The skeleton of the building is grafted. A smoke-house area with a ventilation opening was discovered during renovation works. What is more, there is also a black range kitchen and a well-preserved ceiling there.

## Karlovy Vary

### Antikvariát Jiří Holub

T. G. Masaryka 51

## Liberec

### Knihkupectví a antikvariát Jaroslava Fryče

Pražská 14  
[www.antik-fryc.cz](http://www.antik-fryc.cz)

Knihkupectví a antikvariát Jaroslava Fryče is located right in the heart of Liberec, just a stone's throw from the square, in a large store with the antiquarian bookshop situated in the back room behind the bookshop. One can discover interesting finds – as is often the case in these types of shops – but with a minimum of old prints. It is the best online store with efficient distribution with the order often arriving within a day after the purchase.

## Ostrava

### Fiducia

Nádražní 30  
[www.antikfiducia.com](http://www.antikfiducia.com)

## Plzeň

### Antikvariát Beneš

Divadelní 2  
[www.antikvariát-benes.cz](http://www.antikvariát-benes.cz)

### U Soudu

Veleslavínova 14  
[www.antikusoudu.wbs.cz](http://www.antikusoudu.wbs.cz)

### Ve Dvoře

Pražská 5  
[www.vedvore.cz](http://www.vedvore.cz)

## Tábor

### Bastion

Žižkova 2  
[www.antikvariaticz.com](http://www.antikvariaticz.com)

The antiquarian bookshop Bastion is run by the open-minded Miroslav Nimrichtr who scans publications about the Tábor region prior to selling them and subsequently puts them online as PDF files, where they can be downloaded for free. An unparalleled deed in the Czech Republic, especially for those interested in the history of this region.

## Třebíč

### Arcanum

Hasskova 4  
[www.knihy-arcanum.cz/knihy-arcanum/eshop/1-1-antikvariát](http://www.knihy-arcanum.cz/knihy-arcanum/eshop/1-1-antikvariát)

## Zlatá Koruna

### Antikvariát Jindřich Špinar

Zlatá Koruna 1

Zlatá Koruna is situated in the premises of a Cistercian cloister. In summer this South Bohemian village attracts a large number of visitors and paddlers on the river Vltava. This is the crux of the bookstore's strategy. Among the more usual titles, one can unearth interesting books concerning regional topography.

## MEDIA

### LITERARY PERIODICALS

#### A2

Cultural biweekly

Periodicity: 21x per year (52x until 2009)

Description: 40 pp., 385 x 285 mm

Founded: 2005

ISSN: 1801-4542

**Americká 2**

**120 00 Praha 2**

**T +420 222 510 205,**

**+420 222 510 151**

**E [redakce@advojka.cz](mailto:redakce@advojka.cz)**

**[www.advojka.cz](http://www.advojka.cz)**

#### Analogon

Surrealism – psychoanalysis – anthropology – transversal sciences

Periodicity: 4x per year

Description: app. 120 pp., 200 x 275 mm

Founded: 1969 (reestablished in 1990)

ISSN: 0862-7630

**František Dryje**

**Mezivrší 31**

**147 00 Praha 4**

**T +420 244 460 258**

**E [info@analogon.cz](mailto:info@analogon.cz)**

**[www.analogon.cz](http://www.analogon.cz)**

#### Babylon

Student gazette for seniors

Periodicity: 10x per year

Description: 16 pp., 284 x 446 mm

Founded: 1992

ISSN: 1211-4332

**Moravská 35**

**120 00 Praha 2**

**T +420 606 618 153**

**E [ibabylon@seznam.cz](mailto:ibabylon@seznam.cz)**

**[www.ibabylon.cz](http://www.ibabylon.cz)**

## Česká literatura

Magazine for literary science

Periodicity: 6x per year  
Description: 112 pp., A5  
Founded: 1953  
ISSN: 0009-0468

**Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR**  
**Na Florenci 3**  
**110 00 Praha 1**  
**T +420 224 818 437**  
**E [ceslit@cas.cz](mailto:ceslit@cas.cz)**  
**[www.ucl.cas.cz/ceslit](http://www.ucl.cas.cz/ceslit)**

Volumes from 1953–2000 are available at  
Kramerius (<http://kramerius.lib.cas.cz>)  
Volumes from 1953–98 are available at  
<http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz>

## Český jazyk a literatura

Periodicity: 5x per year  
Description: approx. 50 pp., A5  
Founded: 1950  
ISSN: 0009-0786

**SPN**  
**Ostrovní 30**  
**110 00 Praha 1**  
**T +420 224 931 448**  
**E [buriankova@spn.cz](mailto:buriankova@spn.cz)**  
**<http://spn.cz/casopiscjl>**

## Grasp

English magazine from Prague, launched in  
September 2009 under the auspices of Charles  
University, dedicated to contemporary original  
publications and reviews

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Founded: 2009

**Andreas Patenidis**  
**K Chaloupkám 3170/2**  
**106 00 Praha 10**  
**T +420 776 327 140**  
**E [patenidis@gmail.com](mailto:patenidis@gmail.com)**  
**[www.grasp-journal.com](http://www.grasp-journal.com)**

## H\_aluze

Literary and cultural magazine

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: app. 50 pp., A5  
Founded: 2007  
ISSN: 1803-8077

**H\_aluze, o. s.**  
**Katedra bohemistiky**  
**Pedagogická fakulta UJEP**  
**České mládeže 8**  
**400 96 Ústí nad Labem**  
**E [redakce@h-aluze.cz](mailto:redakce@h-aluze.cz)**  
**[www.h-aluze.cz](http://www.h-aluze.cz)**

## Host

Monthly for literature and readers

Periodicity: 10x per year (since 1995)  
Description: 116 pp., 196 x 256 mm  
Founded: 1990 (since 1985 samizdat)  
ISSN: 1211-9938

**Spolek přátel vydávání časopisu Host**  
**Radlas 5**  
**602 00 Brno**  
**T +420 545 214 468, +420 539 085 009**  
**F +420 545 212 747**  
**E [redakce@hostbrno.cz](mailto:redakce@hostbrno.cz)**  
**[www.casopis.hostbrno.cz](http://www.casopis.hostbrno.cz)**

## Knihy

Weekly mapping new books on the market

Periodicity: 52x per year  
Description: 32 pp., A4  
Founded: 1991  
ISSN: 1211-0620

**Záhřebská 11**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
**T +420 222 517 922**  
**E [vladimir.suva@tydenikknihy.cz](mailto:vladimir.suva@tydenikknihy.cz)**  
**[www.tydenik-knihy.cz](http://www.tydenik-knihy.cz)**

## Knižní novinky

Magazine for booksellers, libraries, publishers and readers

Periodicity: 26x per year  
Description: 32 pp., A4  
Founded: 2002  
ISSN: 1213-7073

**Klementinum 190**  
110 00 Praha 1  
P. O. Box 117  
110 01 Praha 1  
T +420 224 219 942  
E [knizni.novinky@volny.cz](mailto:knizni.novinky@volny.cz)  
[www.sckn.cz](http://www.sckn.cz)

## Kontexty

Magazine about culture and society

Periodicity: 6x per year  
Description: 100 pp., B5  
Founded: 2009  
ISSN: 1803-6988

**Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury (CDK)**  
Venhudova 17  
614 00 Brno  
T/F +420 545 213 862  
E [cdk@cdk.cz](mailto:cdk@cdk.cz)  
[www.cdk.cz/kontexty](http://www.cdk.cz/kontexty)

## Labyrint revue

Cultural magazine

Periodicity: 1x per year (double issue)  
Description: 280 pp., A4  
Founded: 1990  
ISSN: 1210-6887

**Dittrichova 5**  
120 00 Praha 2 - Nové Město  
P. O. Box 52  
Jablonecká 715,  
190 00 Praha 9  
T/F +420 224 922 422  
E [labyrint@wo.cz](mailto:labyrint@wo.cz)  
<http://labyrint.net>

## Ladění

Magazine for theory and criticism of children's literature

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: app. 40 pp., A5  
Founded: 1996  
ISSN: 1211-3484

**Katedra české literatury PdF MU**  
Poříčí 7  
603 00 Brno  
T +420 543 129 264  
E [ladeni@jumbo.ped.muni.cz](mailto:ladeni@jumbo.ped.muni.cz)  
[www.ped.muni.cz](http://www.ped.muni.cz)

## Litteraria pragensia

Studies in Literature & Culture

Periodicity: 2x per year  
Founded: 1990/1991

**Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur**  
**Filozofická fakulta UK**  
Nám. Jana Palacha 2  
116 38 Praha 1  
E [info@litterariapragensia.com](mailto:info@litterariapragensia.com)  
<http://litteraria.ff.cuni.cz/>  
[www.litterariapragensia.com](http://www.litterariapragensia.com)

## Listy

Bi-monthly magazine for culture and discourse

Periodicity: 6x per year  
Description: app. 100 pp., A5  
Founded: 1971 (in exile, Rome), 2003  
ISSN: 1210-1222

**Komenského 10**  
772 00 Olomouc  
T +420 585 232 889, +420 608 454 981  
E [redakce@listy.cz](mailto:redakce@listy.cz)  
[www.listy.cz](http://www.listy.cz)

## Literární noviny

Cultural and political weekly

Periodicity: 52x per year  
Description: 16 app., 315 x 470 mm  
Founded: 1927 (reestablished in 1990)  
ISSN: 1210-0021

**Litmedia a. s.**  
c/o Korunní dvůr – Building D  
Korunní 104  
101 00 Praha 2  
T +420 272 107 122  
E [redakce@literarky.cz](mailto:redakce@literarky.cz)  
[www.literarky.cz](http://www.literarky.cz)

Volumes until 2006 available  
at <http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz>

## Pandora

Cultural and literary review

Periodicity: 2x per year  
Description: 150–200 pp., 195 x 210 mm  
Founded: 1998  
(since 2006 under official registration)  
ISSN: 1801-6782

**Kateřina Tošková**  
Nad Labem, o. s.  
Pasteurova 18  
400 01 Ústí nad Labem  
T +420 775 306 995  
E [redakce@revuepandora.cz](mailto:redakce@revuepandora.cz)  
[www.revuepandora.cz](http://www.revuepandora.cz)

## Plav

Monthly for world literature

Periodicity: 12x per year  
Founded: 2005  
ISSN: 1802-4734

**Splav, o. s.**  
Míladý Horákové 123  
160 00 Praha 6  
E [redakce@svetovka.cz](mailto:redakce@svetovka.cz)  
[www.svetovka.cz](http://www.svetovka.cz)

## Prostor

Society and cultural quarterly with a conservative slant

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: cca 180 pp., A5  
Founded: 1982 (samizdat), 1990 (official)  
Reg. no.: MK ČR E 11244

**Politických vězňů 15**  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 222 248 052  
E [revue.prostor@atlas.cz](mailto:revue.prostor@atlas.cz)  
[www.revueprostor.cz](http://www.revueprostor.cz)

## Psí víno

Magazine for contemporary poetry

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: approx. 40 pp., 200 x 260 mm  
Founded: 1997  
ISSN: 1801-0202

E [psivino@gmail.com](mailto:psivino@gmail.com)  
[www.psivino.cz](http://www.psivino.cz)

## Protimluv

Cultural review

Periodicity: irregular  
Description: approx. 60 pp., 210 x 297 mm  
Founded: 2002  
ISSN: 1802-0321

**Zengrova 7**  
703 00 Ostrava-Vítkovice  
T +420 777 570 536  
E [protimluv@protimluv.net](mailto:protimluv@protimluv.net)  
E [protimluv@seznam.cz](mailto:protimluv@seznam.cz)  
<http://protimluv.net>

## Revolver Revue

Review for literature and visual arts

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: approx. 330 pp., 165 x 240 mm  
Founded: 1990 (since 1985 samizdat)  
ISSN: 1210-2881

**Sdružení pro Revolver Revue**  
Jindřišská 5  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 222 245 801  
E [info@revolverrevue.cz](mailto:info@revolverrevue.cz)  
[www.revolverrevue.cz](http://www.revolverrevue.cz)

## Rozrazil

Cultural and social monthly

Periodicity: 10x per year  
Description: approx. 130 pp., 210 x 250 mm  
Founded: 2006  
ISSN: 1801-4755

**Větrné mlýny**  
Radlas 5  
602 00 Brno  
T +420 545 212 487  
E rozrazil@vetrnemlyny.cz  
www.vetrnemlyny.cz/rozrazil  
www.rozrazilonline.cz

## Salon

Weekly literary supplement of Právo daily

Periodicity: 52x per year  
Description: 4 pp., 315 x 470 mm  
Founded: 1996  
ISSN: 1211-2119 (Právo daily)

**Právo**  
Slezská 13  
121 50 Praha 2  
T +420 221 001 375  
E salon@pravo.cz  
www.novinky.cz/kultura/salon

## Slovo a smysl/Word & Sense

Magazine for Czech studies

Periodicity: 2x per year  
Founded: 2004  
ISSN: 1214-7915

**Katedra české literatury a literární vědy FF UK**  
Nám. Jana Palacha 2  
116 38 Praha 1  
T +420 221 619 259/232  
E slovoasmysl@ff.cuni.cz  
http://slovoasmysl.ff.cuni.cz  
http://cl.ff.cuni.cz/slovoasmysl

## Souvislosti

Cultural and literary review

Periodicity: 4x per year  
Description: approx. 250 pp., A5  
Founded: 1990  
ISSN: 0862-6928

**Sdružení pro Souvislosti**  
Pod Strojírny 10  
190 00 Praha 9  
E souvislosti@seznam.cz  
www.souvislosti.cz

## Tvar

Literary biweekly

Periodicity: 21x per year  
Description: 24 pp., A3

Founded: 1990  
ISSN: 0862-657X

**Klub přátel Tvaru**  
c/o Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR  
Na Florenci 3  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 234 612 399  
E tvar@ucl.cas.cz  
www.itvar.cz

Volumes until 2007 available  
at <http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz>

## UNI

Cultural magazine

Periodicity: 12x per year  
Description: 40–44 pp.  
Founded: 1991  
ISSN: 1214-4169

**Unijazz, sdružení pro podporu kulturních aktivit**  
Jindřišská 5  
110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 222 240 901  
F +420 222 247 473  
E unijazz@unijazz.cz  
http://magazinuni.cz

## VLAK

Contemporary poetics & the arts

Published in Prague, London and New York  
 Periodicity: 2x per year  
 Description: 250 pp., 21 x 21 cm  
 Founded: 2010

E [vlakmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:vlakmagazine@gmail.com)  
<http://vlakmagazine.blogspot.com>

## Weles

Literary review

Periodicity: 4x per year  
 Description: 130–140 pp., B5  
 Fouded: 1996  
 ISSN: 1214-2948

**Weles, o. s.**  
**Ondřej Slabý**  
**Polívkova 2**  
**621 00 Brno**  
 E [redakce.weles@centrum.cz](mailto:redakce.weles@centrum.cz)  
[www.welesrevue.cz](http://www.welesrevue.cz)

## Živel

Overground against monoculture

Periodicity: 4x per year  
 Description: app. 200 pp., A4  
 Founded: 1995  
 ISSN: 1210-1222

**Živel House**  
**Máchova 21**  
**120 00 Praha 2**  
 E [drycofounders@gmail.com](mailto:drycofounders@gmail.com)  
[www.zivel.cz](http://www.zivel.cz)

## CZECH LITERATURE ON THE WEB

### Almanach Labyrint

The most comprehensive information source on the Czech book trade.

[www.almanachlabyrint.cz](http://www.almanachlabyrint.cz)

### Aluze

The magazine features critical essays on literature and philosophy, as well as original and translated poetry and prose; reviews, comments and various literary documents and curiosities in its Archiválie section.

[www.aluze.cz](http://www.aluze.cz)

### iLiteratura

Informs about literature in various countries; children's literature and provides a list of publishers and translators, reviews and competitions.

[www.iliteratura.cz](http://www.iliteratura.cz)

### Portál české literatury

A multilingual website, established 2004, primarily focused on the promotion of Czech literature abroad.

[www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)

### Wagon

Online literary almanac. Published quarterly since 2004. Focused on prose and poetry.

[www.almanachwagon.cz](http://www.almanachwagon.cz)

### Totem

ToTal E Magazine (Totem) is an online cultural journal, which simultaneously provides a platform for presenting works from various artistic fields. Established in 1999 and published by the cultural association Loreta. Its sections include: Editor's Note, Magazine, Submissions, Literature, Culture, Gallery, Competitions, Discussions, Chat, Games, Books, Links, Events.

[www.totem.cz](http://www.totem.cz)

## LITERARY PROGRAMMES ON TV

Literary programmes on the public broadcaster Česká televize (Czech Television) include *Televizní čítanka české literatury (TV Textbook of Czech Literature)* or *Knížka do batůžku (A Book for the Backpack)* which usually contain older shows from the TV's archive. Literature occasionally features in news programmes in the culture sections for instance as interviews with contemporary literary figures or editors of new periodicals. On rare occasions, writers are invited to entertainment shows such as *Uvolněte se, prosím (Relax, Please)* or *Hyde park*.

On the occasion of the Magnesia Litera award ceremony, which is broadcast on TV, several short features of nominated authors are produced and broadcast in prime time. Likewise, the TV also covers the State Award for Literature. Another literary-TV opportunity is the project *Knihy mého srdce (The Book of My Heart)* inspired by the British show *The Big Read*. Most of the programmes can be viewed for free via Czech TV's i-broadcast ([www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani](http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ivysilani)).

### Major shows

#### Čtenářský deník (Readers' Diary)

Brief, thirteen-minute documentary feature where an important literary or cultural figure recommends one book by a contemporary Czech author. Prepared by the agency and publishing house Větrné mlýny since 2009 (and featuring the actual author).

#### Česko jedna báseň (Czechia: One Poem)

Contemporary Czech poets read their own and their favourite authors' poems (Master, young hopeful). The eight-minute show is produced by Větrné mlýny. "The show aims to create a freewheeling TV encyclopedia of contemporary Czech poetry," explains Petr Minařík of Větrné mlýny.

#### Knihní svět (Book World)

Thirty-minute show featuring book news. Prepared by the Centre for Music and Theatre Production.

#### Třistatřicetři (Three Hundred and Thirty Three)

An hour-long entertainment programme about literature presented by Jan Lukeš and Jan Schmid. Produced by the Centre for News and Documentaries.

#### Evropa jedna báseň (Europe: One Poem)

*Evropa jedna báseň (Europe - One Poem)* is a new (2011) co-production by Větrné mlýny and Czech TV. The TV series consists of 27 episodes focusing on poets from 27 EU countries (one author per country). The series was directed by leading Czech and Slovak documentary makers including Gogola, Kerekes, Králová, Pitínský, Morávek and Rychlík.

## LITERARY PROGRAMMES ON RADIO

### Literature on Vltava

The tradition of Czech literary programmes on the radio spans more than 85 years. From the start, it has been in the form of broadcasting samples of manuscripts or published - either in magazines or as books - literary works; original works specially created for the radio as well as programmes providing information on literature. This was the case with the Prague Radiojournal but also with the Brno and Ostrava branches where literature was broadcast in the stations' own productions. Radio adaptations of literary works were produced by E. F. Burian, Jindřich Honzl or František Kožík, for instance.

The number and variety of literary programmes on the radio is considerable. For these - cultural - tasks, the national radio has designated a specialized station - Czech Radio 3 - Vltava. This so-called 3rd programme, broadcasting on VHF for the more intellectually inclined listeners, was established in 1960 and four years later - in January 1964 - received its own newsroom. Among its contributors were Antonín Přidal, who collaborated with the Brno station from its inception, as well as Suchý and Šlitr, Miroslav Horníček, Jan Werich, Ivan Vyskočil and Emanuel Frynta. Following the separation of the Slovak Devín station in 1972, the station was named Vltava. To this day, it has remained faithful to a cultural

and artistic programming, even founding the Klub Vltava for its listeners.

Among the objectives of the station is not only to inform about and broadcast Czech literature, but also to foster the development of national culture and encourage creative experimentation through its productions. The programmes that remain faithful to this formula on Czech Radio 3 - Vltava include: the popular *Četba na pokračování* (Serial Reading, daily at 6.30 pm), the half-an-hour *Moderní (Klasická) povídka* (Modern or Classical Short Story - Thursdays at 4 pm, Sundays at 11.30 am), *Noční bibliotéka* (Nocturnal Bibliothèque, Sundays at 1:30 am), *Stránky na dobrou noc* (Good-Night Pages, daily at 11 pm) or *Pokračování za pět minut* (To Be Continued in Five Minutes during holidays).

The 15-minute *Svět poezie* (World of Poetry, Saturdays at 10.45 pm) features poems which are sometimes accompanied by reviews, essays or interviews, whereas *Nedělní verše* (Sunday Verses, 12.05 pm) airs a single poem. The ten-minute slot *Poezie* (Poetry, Monday to Friday at 1.30 pm) follows in a monothematic vein, whilst in *Sladké je žít* (Life is Sweet, jazz, Saturdays 5.45 pm) and *Souzvuk* (Harmony, classical, Sundays 9 am) poetry is complemented with music. Bordering on arts and reporting is *Víkendová příloha* (Weekend Supplement, Saturdays, 8 am) or a series of essays and reflections called *Psáno kurzívou* (Written In Italics, Monday to Friday 10 am). Culture news features on *Mozaika* (Mosaic, Monday to Friday 7-9 am, 3-4 pm) and discussions are prominent in *Kritický klub* (Critics' Club, Mondays 4 pm).

Among the programmes with ample airtime is the two-hour - previously five-hour - show *Páteční večer* (Friday Night, 8 pm) which combines literature, music and reporting into one, mostly monothematic whole. Not to be omitted is drama - radio dramatization of crime and humour books is offered by *Hra pro tento večer* (A Play for This Evening, Thursdays at 8 pm) as well as the minutiae *Mikrohra* (Microplay) which is aired on Saturdays before noon. The cream of the crop of Czech and foreign original radio plays can be found in *Klub rozhlasové hry* (The Radio Play Club, Tuesdays at 9.30 pm) which boasts authors like Ludvík Aškenazy, Václav Havel, Milan Uhde and Ivan Vyskočil.

An idiosyncratic radio show - and the 'paragon' of literature on radio - is the series *Schůzky s literaturou* (Literary Encounters, Sundays 8 pm). Among its ambitions, professed online here ([www.rozhlas.cz/vltava/porady](http://www.rozhlas.cz/vltava/porady)), is to present a special radio slot in this airtime. This synthetic monothematic segment is created from various smaller parts (genres) utilizing montage in order to evoke drama through its dynamic composition. This slot employs various journalistic and artistic genres even though its basic intentions and execution are documentary and not fictional.

In the past, even poets (Dalibor Chalupa) and reporters (František Gel) would produce these special radio slots on various topics. Nowadays, this genre is primarily used for presenting literary monographs - profiles of writers complemented with samples of their work, often made on a special occasion. This should not, however, be a mere succession of information and quotes. The constitutive discontinuity - the alternation of genres and voices - is not without a purpose in the these types of radio slots.

Its intention is to instill a confrontation of perspectives, opinions and a thoroughly authentic yet artistically compelling portrayal of life and work with all its discrepancies, conflicts and drama. The programme is co-produced by staff and contributors; writers, translators, literary theorists and university students. The cooperation of actors and radio directors is self-evident. Interviews and reports are often included in the programme. In the last few years, the individual programmes were devoted to the following personalities from contemporary Czech literature: Jiří Kuběna, Pavel Švanda, Jan Skácel, Karel Křepelka, Václav Vokolek, Petr Holman, Josef Jedlička, Miloš Vodička, Bohumil Nuska, Zdeněk Volf, Lenka Reinerová, Jiřina Hauková, Věroslav Mertl, Milan Kundera, Jan Trefulka, Ivan Blatný, Zbyněk Hejda, Ludvík Kundera, Věra Linhartová, Vladimír Macura, Josef Škvorecký, Josef Hiršal, Bohumila Grögerová, Zdeněk Rotrekl, Markéta Pilátová, Radim Vašínska, Pavel Zajíček, Jan Balačán and others.

As in 1926, Czech Radio also instigates the production of original radio plays. Aside from radio makers, established writers also participate on these calls and competitions. As part of the project Hra pro třetí tisíciletí (A Play for the Third Millennium) radio pieces including Pavel Pavel by Arnošt Goldflam, Milan Uhde's *Zjasněná noc* (*Bright Night*), *Prodám ucho, prodám hrob* (*Selling My Ear/Selling My Grave*) by Antonín Přidal, *Cesta k pólu* (*Journey to the Pole*) by Daniela Fischerová, *Cesta do Lo* (*Journey to Lo*) by Ignat Hana Slavíková or *Vykřičené domy* (*Houses of Ill Repute*) by David Drábek were all broadcast.

A recent project Vinohradská 12 encompasses twelve original plays which are broadcast at the time of Klub rozhlasové hry (Radio Play Club) – the last Tuesday of the month. The authors contributing to this project include: David Drábek, Pavel Brycz, Marek Epstein, Petr Kolečko, Lenka Lagronová, Marek Horoščák, Magdalena Frydrychová, Jaroslav Rudiš, Tomáš Zmeškal, Martin Františák, Bogdan Trojak and Emil Hakl.

Radio plays by young Czech authors are heavily featured in the series Hry a dokumenty nové generace (Plays and Documentaries of the New Generation) as part of the Čajovna programme broadcast every fourth Sunday. The cycle commenced in January 2007 as an initiative of the playwrights and radio teachers Jan Vedral and Antonín Přidal in an effort to encourage fledgling authors. Nevertheless, the cycle also features works by more established writers such as Jáchym Topol and his play *Cesta do Bugulmy* (*A Journey to Bugulma*). Additionally, writers primarily renowned for their work – Kateřina Rudčenková (*Niekur; Čas třešňového dýmu* – *Time of Cherry Smoke*) or Jaroslav Rudiš (*Léto v Laponsku* – *Summer in Lapland*, with Petr Pýcha) – in other literary genres aired their drama works in Čajovna too. Radek Malý's *Pocit nočního vlaku* (*A Night Train Feeling*) was also produced for the same slot, but outside of the cycle itself.

The particular programme series have their own websites (on [www.rozhlas.cz/vltava](http://www.rozhlas.cz/vltava)) with articles and audio archive from past shows. In the Plays and Literature section, selected literary and drama programmes can be streamed online ([www.rozhlas.cz/vltava/stream](http://www.rozhlas.cz/vltava/stream)) for up to one week after their initial broadcast.

Contemporary, particularly young authors, are also invited to talk about their new books often more than once a month by Čajovna presenters Jaroslav Rudiš, Jaroslava Haladová, Kateřina Rathouská and Igor Malijevský.

## Literature on other Czech Radio stations and on privateradio stations

Czech Radio is not only Vltava, even though this station does hold a unique place in the realm of literary adaptations. Serial readings are broadcast from Monday to Saturday at 10.05 pm by Czech Radio Two (formerly Praha) which favours the more popular genres of literature, currently especially memoirs. Poetry features on Poetické noční (Poetic Nocturno, Sundays 10.05 pm) presented by the literary critic, editor and idiosyncratic reciter Mirek Kovářík, who previously presented a show called Zelené peří (Green Feathers) there. Nedělní pohádka (Sunday Story, 1.05 pm) and Saturday's Hra pro děti a jejich rodiče (A Play for Children and Their Parents, 1.05 pm) count among the proverbial on this station. Radio Two also broadcasts plays for adults as well as the bi-monthly magazine devoted to 'books and life' called Lenoška Iva Šmoldase.

On Thursdays, Czech Radio 6 broadcasts a chat show entitled Kritický klub Jana Rejžka (Jan Rejžek's Critical Club, Thursdays at 8.10 pm) with news from Czech and foreign culture. The Sunday series Portréty (Profiles) may also feature artists.

Rádio Česko (Czech Republic), like Czech Radio 1 - Radiojournal, broadcasts a magazine that reflects news and past events in Týden v kultuře (A Week in Culture), while on Wednesdays Radio Wave airs a 'programme about literature, books, reading and writing' called Liberatura 'Liberating literature from everything that need be'.

Czech Radio's regional stations likewise provide a fairly diverse selection of programmes on literature or literary shows per se. Plzeň (Pilsen) broadcasts a show called Literární doteky (Literary Encounters, Monday through Friday, before noon) - readings of short literary texts primarily related to the West Bohemian region. Aside from this, its schedule also encompasses the 30-minute Víkendové čtení (Weekend Reading) aired each Saturday and Sunday.

České Budějovice play it safe with the time-proven Četba na pokračování (Serial Reading, thirty minutes each working day) with the first-run Rozhlasová povídka (Radio Short Story) scheduled once a week. Apart from the Kulturní revue (Cultural Revue), the now defunct Putnův jihočeský literární místopis (Putna's South Bohemian Literary Topography) had the literary historian Martin C. Putna introducing authors inspired by South Bohemia or in some way connected to the region.

Ostrava broadcasts two Saturday shows with a name that alludes to literature: Čítárna (Reading Room) which introduces new books and Podvečerní čtení (Evening Reading) where primarily Silesian-Moravian authors read.

Olomouc broadcasts a programme Knižní kurýr (Heralding Books) produced by literary theorist Petr Hanuška; the series Počteníčko (Good Read) is renowned for having young authors - mostly students of radio, TV dramaturgy and scriptwriting at the Theatre Faculty at Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts - as guests. Hanuška also participates on the selection process of titles for the series Setkání s literaturou (Literary Encounters) which is centred on news from Czech prose.

The Brno studio has a literary slot on the Saturday's literary-journalistic magazine Zelný rynek as well as the series Sobotní listování (Saturday Browsing), an overview of newly published titles. A literary guest might appear on the Sunday show Sedmé nástupiště (7th Platform), while Račte vstoupit k Josefu Veselému (Please Come In), broadcast on Sundays, is also open to readings and literature.

Outside of the Czech Radio airwaves, literature appears sparsely. It comes as a great surprise then that the private Radio 1 broadcasts a ten-minute show Knižní servis (Book Service, Tuesdays at 5pm) about new books with interviews and readings. Online radios - such as Black Box, a radio project of students from the Theatre Faculty at Janáček Academy and Masaryk University's Radio R, both based in Brno - sporadically dedicate their airtime to literature.

# CZECH LITERATURE ABROAD

## VARIOUS LINKS

Bohemistika, a literary portal, provides a directory of Czech studies abroad as well as Czech studies in the Czech Republic.

[www.bohemistika.cz](http://www.bohemistika.cz)

The Dictionary of the Czech Linguistic Studies Scholars offers more than 550 entries.

[http://kcjl.modry.cz/studenti/sl\\_index.htm](http://kcjl.modry.cz/studenti/sl_index.htm)

Bio-bibliographical profiles of Czech linguists provide information on Czech scholars in the field of Czech and Slav studies.

[www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/medailonky](http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/medailonky)

Who is who in Czech Slav studies is a biographical database of scholars dealing with questions of culture, language, literature, arts, history, etc. of different Slav nations.

[www.slaviste.cz](http://www.slaviste.cz)

List of lectorates of Czech language and literature at foreign universities is provided by the House of Foreign Services of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic.

[www.dzs.cz/index.php?a=view-project-folder&project\\_folder\\_id=319&](http://www.dzs.cz/index.php?a=view-project-folder&project_folder_id=319&)

The mission of Res Bohemica is the support for Czech studies in all fields of cultural life in Germany, other German speaking countries and in the Czech Republic.

[www.resbohemica.org](http://www.resbohemica.org)

## OVERVIEW OF FOREIGN CZECH STUDIES SCHOLARS, TRANSLATORS AND FRIENDS OF CZECH CULTURE

Editor's note: This is a select list. For further entries of scholars in the field of Czech studies, translators and literature friends, go to

[www.czechlit.cz/ceska-literatura-v-zahranici/bohemistika-v-zahranici](http://www.czechlit.cz/ceska-literatura-v-zahranici/bohemistika-v-zahranici)

## Austria

### Christa Rothmeier

Christa Rothmeier is a translator and Bohemist based in Kloestenburg. During the years 1976–2008 she was a lecturer at the Department of Slavonic Studies at the University of Vienna. She has translated a number of Czech authors including I. Blatný, P. Borkovec, J. Deml, B. Grögerová or Z. Hejda. In 2004 she acted as the editor

on *Entzauberte Idylle. 160 Jahre Wien in der tschechischen Literatur (A Disenchanted Idyll. 160 Years of Vienna in Czech Literature)*. She was awarded a number of prizes, i. a. the Gratias Agit Prize of the Czech Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

[christa.rothmeier@univie.ac.at](mailto:christa.rothmeier@univie.ac.at)

### Michael Stavarič

The Czech-Austrian writer and translator Michael Stavarič was born in 1972 in Brno. He studied Czech studies and journalism at university in Vienna (his thesis dealt with the language structures of Czech newspaper headlines, focusing on *Mladá fronta Dnes* and *Blesk*). After graduating, he wrote reviews for the Austrian daily *Die Presse (Spektrum)*, the Viennese magazine *Falter* as well as reviewing Czech literature for various publishing houses. He has also worked as an assistant to the president of the International PEN club and as the secretary to the former Czech ambassador and writer Jiří Gruša. His translation portfolio encompasses Patrik Ouředník, Petra Hůlová and Jiří Gruša.

[autobiography\\_of\\_red@gmx.net](mailto:autobiography_of_red@gmx.net)

## Belgium

### Jan Rubeš

Bohemist and translator Jan Rubeš was born in 1946. He is the Head of the Department of Czech Studies at Université libre de Bruxelles and founder of Archives des écrivains en exil (as part of Archives et Musée de la littérature, Bibliothèque royale Albert 1er). His published works include (e. g. *Václav Havel, un révolutionnaire de velours*, 1999; *Les Passants de Prague*, 2002) and translations (e. g. Jaroslav Seifert, Ludvík Vaculík, Václav Havel, Jan Skácel).

[jrubes@ulb.ac.be](mailto:jrubes@ulb.ac.be)

## Bulgaria

### Margarita Kyurkchieva

Translator and interpreter Margarita Kyurkchieva has translated a number of Czech authors (i. a. K. Čapek, E. Kantůrková, J. Deml, J. Škvorecký, A. Berková, J. Kroutvor, L. Klíma, F. Hrubín, J. Šotola, R. Weiner, D. Hodrová, I. Binar, P. Zelenka). In 2010, she translated J. Jandourek's novel *Když do pekla, tak na pořádné kobyle (To Hell on a Proper Mare)*. Awards: Association of Bulgarian Translators and Premia Bohemica bestowed by the Czech Association of Writers (2006). Among her recent translations is the *Cesta na jih (Journey to the South, ERGO, 2011)* by Michal Ajvaz. She is currently

working on the project *Soudobá česká esejistika (Contemporary Czech Essay)*.

[mck@bgcell.net](mailto:mck@bgcell.net), [mck@lion-bg.com](mailto:mck@lion-bg.com)

## China

### Xu Weizhu

Bohemist and translator. Graduated from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague (in Czech language and literature) in 1990, she currently teaches at the Department of Czech Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University where she specializes in literary translation.

[perlaxu@hotmail.com](mailto:perlaxu@hotmail.com)

## Egypt

### Khalid El Biltagi

He was born in 1965 in Egypt and studied in Cairo and at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague (Czech language; thesis title *Slovesný vid v češtině a arabštině: Konfrontační studie/Aspect in Czech and Arabic: A Confrontational Study*). Since 2008, he has been working as a Czech language assistant professor at the Faculty of Al Alsun at Ains Shams University. His Arabic translations of Czech literature include – Milan Kundera's *Immortality* (2002), Miroslav Verner's *Pyramidy, tajemství minulosti (Pyramids, Secrets of the Past, 2004)* and the anthology *Stories from the Heart of Europe* (2008). He also produced the five-part radio series *Mezi dvěma jazyky (Between Two Languages)* about Czech and Slovak literature (2009 for Egypt radio).

[kbiltagi@yahoo.com](mailto:kbiltagi@yahoo.com)

## Finland

### Eero Balk

Translator and external lecturer at the Alexandrov Institute and Department of Modern Languages at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Helsinki. Among his most notable translations of Czech literature older than five years include: Jaroslav Hašek: *Osudy dobrého vojáka Švejka za světové války (The Good Soldier Švejk)*, Eda Kriseová: *Václav Havel – životopis (Václav Havel – A Biography)*, Alexandra Berková: *Magorie; Utrpení oddaného Všiváka (The Sufferings of a Devoted Scoundrel)*, Vladimír Macura: *Občan Monte Christo (Citizen Monte Christo)*, Jiří Weil: *Život s hvězdou (Life with a Star)*, Jiří Langer: *Devět bran (Nine Gates)*, Karel Čapek: *Zahradníkův rok (Gardener's Year)*; transla-

tions of Czech literature over the last five years: Jiří Kolář: *Jako sklenka čisté vody (Like a Glass of Pure Water, an anthology of early poetry)*, Bohumil Hrabal: *Příliš hlučná samota (Too Loud a Solitude)*, Marek Toman: *Dobytí ostrova Saaremaa (Seizing the Saaremaa Island, children's book)*, Karel Čapek: *R. U. R.*, Ladislav Fuks: *Spalovač mrtvol (The Cremator)*. His next plan is to promote the works of Jan Balabán.  
[eero.balk@kolumbus.fi](mailto:eero.balk@kolumbus.fi)

## France

### Xavier Galmiche

Bohemist and translator Xavier Galmiche teaches Czech literature and Central European cultures and is a member of the Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches Centre-Européennes, Centre de recherches sur les cultures et littératures d'Europe centrale, orientale et balkanique and the editor-in-chief of the magazine Cultures d'Europe centrale. He has authored a wide array of publications (eg. Vladimír Holan. Le bibliothécaire de Dieu: Prague 1905–1980, 2009), contributions and translations (Josef Čapek: *Histoires du chien et du chat*, 2008, for instance). He was awarded the Gratias agit prize in 2006 by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic abroad.  
[xavier.galmiche@paris4.sorbonne.fr](mailto:xavier.galmiche@paris4.sorbonne.fr)

### Benoit Meunier

French teacher and translator Benoit Meunier was born in 1977 in Lyon. He studied Russian and Czech studies at Sorbonne in Paris. His professional experience includes an editorial post at *Revue Culture d'Europe Centrale* (Sorbonne, Paris, 2002–2004) and several translations: Karel Čapek: *Cesta na sever (Journey to the North, 2010)*, Patrik Ouředník: *Dům bosého (House of a Barefoot Man, 2010)*, Bohumil Hrabal: *Jarmilka* (2004) as well as the Czech Literature Portal.  
[benomeunier@yahoo.fr](mailto:benomeunier@yahoo.fr)

## Germany

### Mirko Kraetsch

Mirko Kraetsch is a freelance translator. He collaborates with the Czech Ministry of Culture and the Czech Literature Portal.  
[info@worte-und-orte.de](mailto:info@worte-und-orte.de)

### Eva Profousová

Translator (e. g. Michal Viewegh, Jaroslav Rudiš, Tereza Boučková, Václav Havel, Jáchym Topol, Miloš Urban).  
[eva.profousova@hamburg.de](mailto:eva.profousova@hamburg.de)

## Italy

### Laura Angeloni

Translator Laura Angeloni was born in 1970. She studied Czech language and Czech studies in Rome. Among her translations are Jáchym Topol's *Anděl (Angel)*, *Noční práce (Night Work)* and *Kloktat dehet (Gargling Tar)*; Petra Hůlová's *Přes matný sklo (Through a Matted Glass)* or Emil Hakl's *O rodičích a dětech (On Parents and Children)*. She has also written a book: *Il viaggio di Anna* (Edizioni Azimut).  
[laura\\_angeloni@tiscali.it](mailto:laura_angeloni@tiscali.it)

### Alessandro Catalano

Bohemist and translator Alessandro Catalano was born in 1970 in Rome. He graduated in Czech studies and history from the University La Sapienza in Rome and has given lectures on Czech literature in Florence and Pisa. He is currently professor of Czech literature at Padua University. He is the author of a variety of studies on the early modern period, Czech-Italian relations and modern Czech literature. He has translated several Czech authors (Hrabal, Kolář, Nezval, Ouředník, Viewegh among others). His treatise *Zápas o svědomí: Kardinál Arnošt Vojtěch z Harrachu (1598-1667) a protireformace v Čechách (2008) (Fighting for a Conscience: Cardinal Arnošt Vojtěch of Harrach and Counter-Reformation in Bohemia (1598-1667))* was published in a Czech translation. In 2010 he co-published a seven-volume edition *Die Diarien und Tagzettel des Kardinals Ernst Adalbert von Harrach (1598-1667)* together with Katrin Keller. He is a member of the editorial board of the *Souvislosti* magazine as well as *Český časopis historický*. Since 2003, he has run an online Italian Slavonic magazine *eSamizdat* ([www.samizdat.it](http://www.samizdat.it)) together with Simone Guagnelli.  
[alekat@gmx.at](mailto:alekat@gmx.at)

**Sergio Corduas**

Bohemist and translator Sergio Corduas was born in 1943 in Viterb. He studied Czech language in Rome. His graduation class was led by the leading Italian Bohemist Angelo Maria Ripellino. Between 1967 and 1971 Corduas taught Italian at Komenský University in Bratislava and Charles University in Prague. Overall, he spent seven years in the former Czechoslovakia where he remained even during and after the Prague Spring (1968). Since 1971, he has acted as a professor of Czech language and literature at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Ca' Foscari University in Venice. He has translated several Czech authors (theoreticians, novelists, poets) to whom he devoted academic studies and theoretical works: from 1971 to 1982 these were: Jan Mukařovský, Josef Ludvík Fischer, Karel Teige, Jaroslav Hašek, Ladislav Klíma, Bohumil Hrabal, Richard Weiner, Jakub Deml, Vladimír Holan, Jaroslav Seifert, Jiří Kolář.

[sercord@unive.it](mailto:sercord@unive.it)

**Japan****Tatsuo Ishikawa**

Tatsuo Ishikawa is a Bohemist and translator. Since 1977 he has been based at the Faculty of Intercultural Studies at Kobe University where he has lead a Czech language course as well as Slavonic and Czech studies seminars. His area of interest includes Czech literature and thinking and Czech cultural history. He is the author of several textbooks, publications and translations (e. g. Karel Čapek, Tomáš G. Masaryk, Bohumil Hrabal, Josef Škvorecký and Jan Patočka). He has published a study entitled *České národní obrození: Obrana rozmanitosti aneb ontologie malého národa (Czech National Renaissance: In Defense of Variety or Ontology of a Small Nation, 2010)*.

[ti@kobe-u.ac.jp](mailto:ti@kobe-u.ac.jp)

**Netherlands****Edgar de Bruin**

Together with his wife, Magda de Bruin, translator Edgar de Bruin established (in 2003) the literary agency Pluh which represents several Czech writers abroad.

[ejdb@planet.nl](http://ejdb@planet.nl)

**Kees Mercks**

Kees Mercks is a Bohemist and translator. He worked at the University of Amsterdam for many

years and is now retired. Among his translations are works by Ludvík Vaculík, Ivan Klíma, Jiří Weil, Václav Havel, Bohumil Hrabal, Ladislav Klíma and others.

[k.mercks@let.uva.nl](mailto:k.mercks@let.uva.nl)

**Norway****Kristin S. Kilsti**

Kristin S. Kilsti is a Bohemist, translator and interpreter. Born in 1967, she studied political science and international relations in the US and has a Master's degree in Czech language and literature from University of Oslo. Since 2006 she has been working full time on translations of fiction (e. g. the works of Jáchym Topol, Emil Hakl, Michal Ajvaz, Viola Fischerová).

[kristinkilsti@hotmail.com](mailto:kristinkilsti@hotmail.com)

**Poland****Leszek Engelking**

His doctoral thesis was entitled *The Everyday and the Myth. The Poetics, History and Programme of Group 42 on the Backdrop of 20th Century Avant Garde and Post-Avant Garde*. Between 1997 and 1998, he lectured on the history of Czech literature and Czech and Slovak cinema at university in Warsaw as well as history of the Polish poetry at Palacky University in Olomouc. Engelking was awarded the Premia Bohemica prize for promoting Czech literature abroad in 2003. His translations from the Czech include Jáchym Topol's *Sestra (Sister)*, *Noční práce (Night Work)* and *Kloktat dehet (Gargling Tar)* alongside his play *Cesta do Bugulmy (Journey to Bugulma)* and prose work *Supermarket sovětských hrdinů (Supermarket for Soviet Heroes)*; Daniela Hodrová's *Podobojí (Utraquism)*; Miroslav Holub's essay collections *Problémy na kosmické lodi (The Issues on a Spacecraft)*; Ladislav Klíma's short story anthology; Michal Ajvaz's poems, short stories and novel; Milena Jesenská's journalistic works; Jiří Staněk's poetry collection and selected poems by Petr Mikeš, Ivan Wernisch, Ivan Blatný, Oldřich Wenzl, Miroslav Holub, Václav Burian, Egon Bondy and Jiří Kolář.

[engelking@post.pl](mailto:engelking@post.pl)

**Joanna Derdowska**

Joanna Derdowska is a translator and journalist. She holds a Master's degree in philology and sociology (Toruń, Poland) and a PhD from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague.

Among her translations are: Jaroslav Rudiš: *Nebe pod Berlínem* (*The Sky Under Berlin*, 2007), Stanislav Komárek: *Černý domeček* (*Little Black House*, 2007), Michal Viewegh: *Zapisovatelé otcovský lásky* (*Notes on Fatherly Love*, 2007) and Irena Dousková: *Hrdý budžes* (2007). She has written a book called *Praskie przemiany: Sacrum i desakralizacja przestrzeni mieskiej Pragi* (2006) as well as a number of articles (reviews, essays, etc.) for Czech cultural and literary magazines (e. g. A2).

[derdus@gmail.com](mailto:derdus@gmail.com)

### Dorota Dobrew

Dorota Dobrew is a translator. Among her works are translations of selected poems of Viola Fisherová and J. Karafiát's *Broučci* (*Fireflies*); Jiří Kratochvíl, Petr Borkovec, Pavel Švanda, Radek Fridrich, Patrik Linhart, Pavel Růt, Tomáš Přidal, Karel Michal, Květa Legátová, Egon Bondy, Jáchym Topol, Pavel Zajíček, Pavel Landovský, Petra Hůlová, Vratislav Effenberger, Emil Hakl and many others. She is currently working on a translation of Josef Jedlička's novel *Kde život nás je v půli se svou poutí* (*In the Midway of This Our Mortal Life*), Tomáš Zmeškal's *Milostný dopis klínovým písmem* (*Love Letter in Cuneiform Script*), Josef Kroutvor's essays and Zdeněk Svěrák's *Radovanovy radovánky*. She is currently looking for a publisher for her translations of Ludvík Aškenazy and Petr Rákos.

[dorota\\_dobrew@poczta.fm](mailto:dorota_dobrew@poczta.fm)

### Jan Stachowski

Jan Stachowski was born in 1951 in Szczecin. From 1969 to 1974 he studied at Jagellon University in Krakow (Slavonic philology - Czech language specialization). He has translated the works of Škvorecký, Hrabal, Klíma, Lustig, Kroutvor, Ouředník and others.

[janstachowski@yahoo.com](mailto:janstachowski@yahoo.com)

## Russia

### Oleg M. Malevich

Born in 1928 in Leningrad, Oleg M. Malevich focuses on the history of Czech and Slovak literature spanning the 19th–21st centuries. He has several monographs under his belt on such personalities as K. Čapek, V. Vančura as well as the publication *Osobitost české literatury, (Idiosyncracies of Czech Literature, 2009)*; dozens of translations (O. Březina, K. Poláček, K. Světlá, I. Olbracht, T. G. Masaryk) and editorial endeavours.

[hcivelam@yandex.ru](mailto:hcivelam@yandex.ru)

### Sergej S. Skorwid

Sergej S Skorwid is a translator and Bohemist (based at the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow - the Historical and Philological Faculty, Department of Slavonic and Central European Studies). His most notable translations include: John Amos Comenius: *Labyrint světa a ráj srdce, Kšaft umírající matky Jednoty bratrské, Listové do nebe* (*Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart; The Bequest of the Dying Mother, the Unity of Brethren; Letters to Heaven* - excerpts), Hrabal: *Příliš hlučná samota* (*Too Loud a Solitude*), Skácel: *Básně* (*Poems*), Urban: *Sedmikostelí* (*The Seven Churches*, together with I. Bezrukova). His translations in the last five years include: Jaroslav Durych: *Sedmikráska a jiné prózy* (*The Daisy and Other Prose Works*), Ivan M. Jirous: *Básně* (*Poems*), Václav Klaus: *Modrá, nikoli zelená planeta* (*Blue Planet in Green Shackles: What Is Endangered: Climate or Freedom?*, together with I. Bezrukova, N. Falkovska and N. Tamarchina), Zbyněk Hejda: *Básně* (*Poems*, together with T. Milova), Petr Borkovec: *Básně* (*Poems*). Currently he has been working on Jáchym Topol's *Chladnou zemí* (*Cold Land*). His professional interests include: comparative Slavonic linguistics, historical grammar of Czech language, contemporary Czech language, history of Czech literature (especially older).

[skorwid@orc.ru](mailto:skorwid@orc.ru)

### Inna G. Bezrukova-Skorwidova

Bohemist and translator Inna G. Bezrukova-Skorwidova was born in 1957. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Moscow State University in 1980 with a degree in Slavonic philology and Czech language. From 1980 she worked as an editor at the Moscow-based publisher Progress, later Raduga. She has worked as a freelance translator from Czech, Slovak and Polish since 1990. Bezrukova-Skorwidova has collaborated with several publishing houses including *Chudožstvennaja literatura, Planeta, Slovo, Tekst, Eksmo, MIK*; magazines *Inostrannaja literatura, Junost', Novaja junost', Kinoscenarii*; weeklies *Moskovskije novosti* a *Literaturnaja gazeta* and film agencies such as Mosfilm TV Media. Since 2000 she has also been a member of the translators' section of the Moscow department of the Russian Writers' Union and the creative association Masters of Literary Translation Union since 2006. The writings of Havel, Svěrák, Fuks, Seifert, Urban and Kratochvíl are among her translated works.

[skorwid@orc.ru](mailto:skorwid@orc.ru)

## Slovenia

### Tatjana Jamnik

The translator Tatjana Jamnik was born in 1976 in Ljubljana. She graduated with a degree in Slavo-  
nic philology from the University of Ljubljana. Between 2002 and 2004 she taught Slovenian at Masaryk University in Brno. She translates from Polish and Czech. She was awarded the Young Translator's Prize in 2009 for her translation of Ladislav Fuks' *Spalovač mrtvol* (*The Cremator*). She cooperates with Bohemist circles in Ljubljana as a member of the commission of a translation competition for students focusing on Czech translations. Jamnik also supervises the Czech section of a translation workshop organized by Javni sklad za kulturne dejavnosti. She is the author of the following translations: Alexandra Berková: *Utrpení oddaného všiváka* (*Trpjenje vdanega zmeneta, The Sufferings of a Devoted Scoundrel*, 2004), Miloš Urban *Sedmikostelí* (*Se-dem cerkva, The Seven Churches*, 2006), Pavel Brycz *Patriarchátu dávno zašla sláva* (*Patriarhata davno minula slava, The Patriarchy Lost its Glory Long Ago*, 2008) a Ladislav Fuks *Spalovač mrtvol* (*Sežigalec trupel, The Cremator*, 2008).

[tatjana.jamnik@gmail.com](mailto:tatjana.jamnik@gmail.com)

### Nives Vidrih

Born in 1958 in Ljubljana, Nives Vidrih is a translator who graduated with a degree in Slovenian and comparative literature (1981). She taught Slovenian at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague for four years. Since 1995 she has been a freelance translator specializing in Czech literature. Vidrih is on the managing board of the translators' union *Društvo slovenskih književnih prevajalcev*. In 2009 she was awarded the *Sovretova nagrada* translation prize. She has translated around thirty Czech titles (fiction) and has published works in magazines (e. g. Škvorecký, Hrabal, Viewegh, Havel). Aside from fiction, she has also translated theatre and radio plays and produced radio programmes on Czech literature and subtitles for Czech films, and she has written book reviews and articles about Czech literature.

[nives.vidrih@siol.net](mailto:nives.vidrih@siol.net)

## Syria

### Charif Bahbouh

Writer, of both fiction and non-fiction, poet and translator, Charif Bahbouh was born in Nabek, Syria in 1941. Currently, he resides in the Czech Republic. He graduated from Charles University in Prague (in Czech, Arabic and Russian) and Moscow's Lomonosov University. He has worked at the Language School in Prague since 1975. Bahbouh is the chair of Opus Arabicum, an organization which examines the cultural impact of the Middle East and Northern Africa, and a publisher (Dar Ibn Rushd, est. in 1990). He has written several publications, dictionaries and textbooks. Among his translations into Arabic are Karel Čapek: *Matka* (*Mother*) and *Bílá nemoc* (*The White Plague*) as well as short stories by the likes of Jaroslav Hašek, Jan Werich, Ota Pavel, Jiří Marek, Jan Drda and Božena Němcová (this series of translations can be found in *České povídky a pohádky, Czech Short Stories and Fairytales*, 2009, in Arabic).

[opus\\_arabicum@centrum.cz](mailto:opus_arabicum@centrum.cz)

## Spain and Latin America

### Eduardo Fernández Couceiro

Translator Eduardo Fernández Couceiro was born in 1967 in Bilbao. He studied Spanish philology at Universidad de Deusto in Bilbao between 1985 and 1990 (Master's degree), and Czech philology at Charles University (2004–2009, Master's degree). He currently works at Instituto Cervantes in Prague. Couceiro's translations include works by Jan Balabán, Anna Zonová, Lucie Seifertová, Markéta Pílátová, Jaroslav Rudiš, Jiří Weil and Zdeněk Jirotka.

[eduardo.cervantes@cuni.cz](mailto:eduardo.cervantes@cuni.cz)

### Fernando de Valenzuela Villaverde

Journalist and translator Fernando de Valenzuela Villaverde was born in 1947. He graduated from Charles University in Prague and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. He has translated a number of authors including Jan Zábřana, Milan Kundera, Pavel Kohout, Michael Viewegh and Tomáš Halík. Villaverde is a laureate of the Gratias Agit prize, awarded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for promoting the good name of Czech Republic abroad.

## Great Britain, United States, Canada and Australia

Czechlist – mailing-list for translators from Czech into English and vice versa. With up to 440 members and more than 41,000 archived entries. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/czechlist/>

### Jonathan Bolton

Jonathan Bolton is a Bohemist (Harvard University, University of Texas, University of Michigan). He specializes in Czech literature and Central European culture in general. Currently based at the Department of Slavonic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University.

[jbolton@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:jbolton@fas.harvard.edu)

### Alexandra Büchler

Translator and organizer Alexandra Büchler was born in 1955 in Prague. She has lived in Greece, Australia, Scotland and England (since 1989). She translates novels, short stories, poetry, theatre plays and has edited several prose anthologies – e. g. *Za hranicemi skutečnosti: moderní česká próza (Beyond the Borders of Reality: Modern Czech Fiction)* and *Všeckožka a jiné příběhy současných českých spisovatelek (Allskin and Other Stories of Contemporary Czech Female Writers)*. She lives in Manchester and runs the organization Literature Across Frontiers ([www.lit-across-frontiers.org](http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org)) focused on promoting national literatures – including Czech literature – in a foreign language context.

[alexandra@lit-across-frontiers.org](mailto:alexandra@lit-across-frontiers.org)

### Graeme Dibble

Graeme Dibble is a translator who lives in the Czech Republic. He cooperates with the Czech Ministry of Culture as well as the Czech Literature Portal.

[graeme.dibble@gmail.com](mailto:graeme.dibble@gmail.com)

### Alex Zucker

Translator and journalist Alex Zucker was born in 1964 in New Jersey. He graduated from Columbia University with a degree in international politics (1990). In the first half of the nineties he lived in Prague where he worked for the Czech News Agency as well as a freelance translator. He pursued editing in various society and literary magazines (e. g. *Bookforum*, *Vanity Fair*). He has run a blog *StickFinger* since 2003. Zucker is the author of various translations (e. g. Jáchym Topol: *City Sister Silver*, 2000; Petra Hůlová: *All This Belongs to Me*, 2009, and Patrik Ouředník: *Case Closed*, 2010).

[alexz.nyc@gmail.com](mailto:alexz.nyc@gmail.com)



THE ARTS INSTITUTE WAS FOUNDED AS AN AUTONOMOUS DEPARTMENT OF THE THEATRE INSTITUTE IN 2005 AND ITS MISSION IS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND RAISING OF SOCIAL PRESTIGE OF THE ARTS. THE ARTS INSTITUTE SUPPORTS EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE AMONG VARIOUS ART DISCIPLINES, OFFERS INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION SERVICES, ORGANIZES EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PRESENTS AND PROMOTES CZECH ART ABROAD.



#### THE ARTS INSTITUTE:

Provides information and consultation services about possibilities of financial support for artistic and cultural projects from Czech and foreign sources (with the emphasis on the resources from the European Union).

Runs the Artists in Residency Programme dealing with coordination of reciprocal residencies of artists and a residency programme in the Egon Schiele Art Centre in Český Krumlov for young artists working in the Czech Republic.

Works on projects from the field of cultural policy – e. g. *The Concept for More Efficient Support for the Arts 2007–2013* (2006), *The Input Analysis of Current Relations of Labour Market with the Cultural Sector* (2008), *Study of the State, Structure, Conditions and Financing of Arts in the Czech Republic* (2011), *Social-Economic Potential of Cultural, resp. Creative Industries in the Czech Republic* (2011) and *Czech Cultural and Creative Industries Mapping* (2011).

Organizes educational activities, i. e. organization of seminars, publishing activities, especially from the field of arts management and cultural policy. Promotes and presents Czech art abroad.

#### THE ARTS INSTITUTE RUNS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WEBSITES:

The cultural portal ([www.culturenet.cz](http://www.culturenet.cz)) offers up-to-date information from the field of culture and the arts, informs about grants and job opportunities in the field of culture, refers to materials about cultural policy and possibilities of financial support for projects and Czech-English database of cultural stakeholders.

The music portal ([www.czechmusic.org](http://www.czechmusic.org)) provides information about people, organizations and music life in the Czech Republic in Czech and English.

The literature portal ([www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)) promotes Czech literature abroad and in the Czech Republic.

#### Contact:

Arts and Theatre Institute  
Celetná 17  
CZ-110 00 Prague 1  
T +420 224 809 134  
[www.idu.cz](http://www.idu.cz)

**THE LITERARY SECTION OF THE ARTS INSTITUTE WAS FOUNDED IN 2009 AS AN INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION CENTRE FOR THE FIELD OF LITERATURE. ITS CURRENT ACTIVITIES CONSIST IN THE:**

Promotion of Czech literature abroad and in the Czech Republic, information activities – the section manages the multilingual Czech Literature Portal ([www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)) designed primarily to promote Czech literature abroad. The portal provides information about contemporary writers (novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists, children book authors) and about their works; further it provides on a daily basis news from the field of Czech literature in the Czech Republic as well as abroad. The principal purpose of the website is to serve as a central and modern source of regularly updated information for foreign professionals (people dealing with Czech language and literature including scholars, students, translators, editors, literary centres), organizers of literature events (festivals, fairs, readings, exhibitions), journalists, compatriots or common readers and people interested in Czech literature.

Artists in residencies and international cooperation – the section administers the membership of the Arts Institute in the European network of literary centres Halma ([www.halma-network.eu](http://www.halma-network.eu)) that organizes residencies and other projects. The section also collaborates with the Prague Literary House of Authors of the German Language on residencies of Czech poets, novelists and playwrights in Germany.

National cooperation – the section takes part in organization of projects focused on current topics in the field of literature.

**Contact:**

**T** +420 224 809 119

**E** [literatura@institutumeni.cz](mailto:literatura@institutumeni.cz)

**CZECH LITERATURE PORTAL**

The multilingual Czech Literature Portal (Portál české literatury) is intended mainly for the promotion of Czech literature abroad. The aim of the Portal is to provide information on contemporary Czech authors and their works (novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists including authors of literature for children). It is not the purpose of the Portal to stand in for the comprehensive range of academic sources available in this area. The service we seek to provide is that of a modern, centralized source which is regularly updated, comprising information on the literary life of the Czech Republic in its broadest sense. The information is intended to reach abroad: scholars (including students), translators, editors, literary centres, organizers of literary events (festivals, fairs, readings, exhibitions), journalists, compatriots and general public interested in Czech literature.

**Contact:**

**Czech Literature Portal  
Arts and Theatre Institute  
Celetná 17**

**CZ-110 00 Prague 1**

**E** [jaroslav.balvin@czechlit.cz](mailto:jaroslav.balvin@czechlit.cz)

**E** [info@czechlit.cz](mailto:info@czechlit.cz)

**[www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)**

czech  
literature  
portal

# SUBSIDIES

## FOR THE TRANSLATION OF CZECH LITERATURE

The Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic  
Maltézské náměstí 471/1  
118 01 Praha 1 – Malá Strana  
[www.mkcr.cz](http://www.mkcr.cz)



---

### CONDITIONS

- the aim of the subsidies is to encourage the translation and publication of Czech literature abroad
- all types of prose fiction and poetry may be considered, including plays and children's books. Picture-books, non-fiction and scientific books, and extracts or parts of translations are not eligible
- priority will be given to contemporary writing
- there are no restrictions regarding target language
- grants can only be awarded to foreign publishers (i. e. ones registered outside the Czech Republic)
- grants will be used solely to cover, or partly cover, the cost of translation, i. e. translator's fees
- if the book is not published within one year of an award being made, the grant is automatically annulled (an extension can be considered only in exceptional cases, supported by a written plea)
- the grant-awarding body and final arbiter is the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, acting on the recommendations of a select committee of the Department of Literature and Libraries consisting of writers, translators, publishers, academics and civil servants
- the committee may call upon external specialists to assist in assessment
- applicants should submit the completed application form and all the documents listed in the form
- application may be made to the Ministry of Culture once yearly, on 15th November
- if an application is submitted incomplete, the applicant must provide the missing information by return. Failure to do so will result in the rejection of the application
- in the event of any changes occurring in the terms or circumstances stated by the publisher at the time of application, the publisher is required to notify the Ministry of Culture of such changes without delay

czech  
literature  
portal

[www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)



# A NEW WAY TO NAVIGATE THROUGH THE CZECH ARTS

TRYING TO NAVIGATE THE TERRAIN OF CONTEMPORARY CZECH ARTS? SET OFF ON YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE TRUSTY NEW GUIDES THAT THE ARTS AND THEATRE INSTITUTE PREPARED FOR YOU

## CZECH DANCE / THEATRE / LITERATURE / MUSIC GUIDE

### IN EACH GUIDE YOU'LL FIND:

- A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FIELD
- INFORMATION ON CURRENT EVENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS
- A DIRECTORY OF PEOPLE, INSTITUTIONS, SCHOOLS, ORGANISATIONS, AND ARTS BODIES
- EVENTS AND FESTIVALS
- AWARDS
- ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

### THE GUIDES CAN BE ORDERED FROM:

E-SHOP PROSPERO  
[HTTP://PROSPERO.DIVADLO.CZ](http://prospero.divadlo.cz)

ARTS AND THEATRE INSTITUTE  
BARBORA PEROUTKOVA  
CELETNÁ 17  
PRAGUE 1  
T: 224 809 137  
E: [BARBORA.PEROUTKOVA@DIVADLO.CZ](mailto:BARBORA.PEROUTKOVA@DIVADLO.CZ)

### FOLLOW US ALSO ON OUR INFORMATION PORTALS:

THE WEBSITE OF THE ARTS AND THEATRE INSTITUTE [WWW.IDU.CZ](http://WWW.IDU.CZ)

THE CZECH THEATRE PORTAL [WWW.THEATRE.CZ](http://WWW.THEATRE.CZ)

THE CZECH LITERATURE PORTAL [WWW.CZECHLIT.CZ](http://WWW.CZECHLIT.CZ)

THE CZECH MUSIC PORTAL [WWW.CZECHMUSIC.ORG](http://WWW.CZECHMUSIC.ORG)

Arts and  
Theatre  
Institute

Institut  
umění  
Divadelní  
ústav





## **CZECH LITERATURE GUIDE**

**Editors:** Jaroslav Balvín  
Viktor Debnár

**Texts:** Petr A. Bílek  
*(Literature after 1945)*  
Radim Kopáč  
*(Poetry)*  
Milena Šubrtová  
*(Literature for Children and Young People)*  
Jaroslav Císař  
*(The Book Market)*  
Alena Blažejovská  
*(Radio, Education & The Teaching of Writing in the Czech Republic)*  
Michal Šanda  
*(Antiquarian Bookshops)*  
Czech Literature Portal Team  
*(Other texts)*

**Copy editor:** Radim Kopáč  
*(Poetry, Prose, Essay & Literature for Children and Young People)*

**Translation:** Graeme Dibble, Lucia Udvardyová

**Assistance:** Dana Blatná, Lubomír Machala, Marta Ljubková, Jan Suk

**Design:** Studio Colmo

**Photo:** Archive of the Czech Literature Portal & the authors

**Printed by:** EKON Jihlava

Published by the Arts and Theatre Institute in Prague, Czech Republic as its 628th publication; with financial support from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, 2011.

© 2011 Arts & Theatre Institute  
Celetná 17  
CZ-110 00 Praha 1  
T +420 224 809 134  
E [info@institutumeni.cz](mailto:info@institutumeni.cz)  
[www.idu.cz](http://www.idu.cz)  
[www.czechlit.cz](http://www.czechlit.cz)

ISBN 978-80-7008-272-0