

DO PISNICE.

# Kundera, Kafka and who was the Real inventor of Robotics

5HD280 From Kafka to Havel

Lecture 13



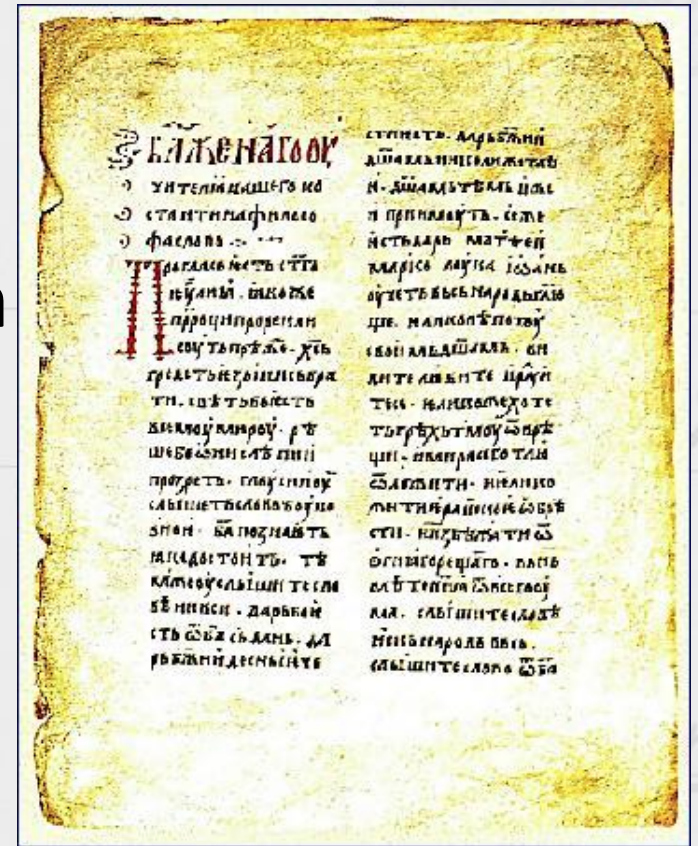
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MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,  
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY

# The beginnings

- The oldest literature at the territory of Czech lands comes from Great Moravian Empire
- Written in old slavic language



# The beginnings

- Latin period
  - Mostly of religious nature and Chronicles
    - Kosmas Czech chronicle
- First literature in Czech
  - At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century



Kosmas



Czech Chronicle

# Late medieval and renaissance era

- Since 14<sup>th</sup> century
  - Spreading literature among other social classes than clergy
  - New genres
- Humanism and Renaissance
  - Shaping Czech language according to Latin
  - First translation of the Bible from original sources
  - John Amos Comenius



*Pau*

*Jaroslav Seifert*

*Přehled - Žitko*

*Jeromínova*

# Literature in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century

- Mostly philosophic and historical works
  - Many of them written in Latin
  - Bohuslav Balbín
- Poetry connected with music
  - Václav Michna z Otradovic
- Travelogues, diaries and memories
  - As among aristocracy as among ordinary people



# Birth of modern Czech literature

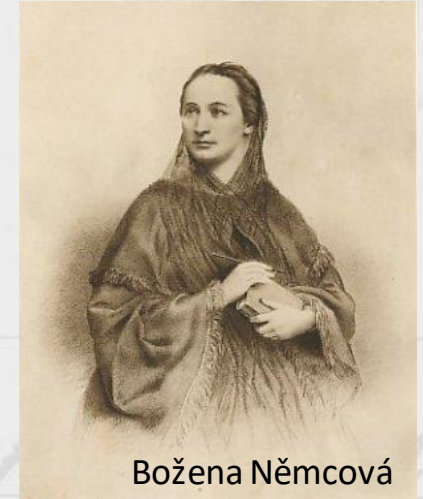
- Connected with national revival
- Mostly orientated toward establishing modern Czech language and preserving folk tradition and establishing new view on Czech history
- Only a few works achieved recognition crossing Czech borders

# Birth of modern Czech literature

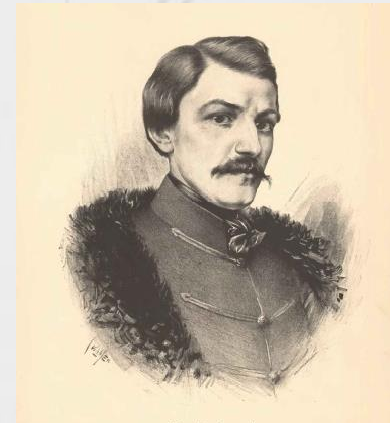
- Important writers of the national revival
  - Karel Hynek Mácha
  - Božena Němcová
  - Karel Havlíček Borovský
  - Karel Jaromír Erben



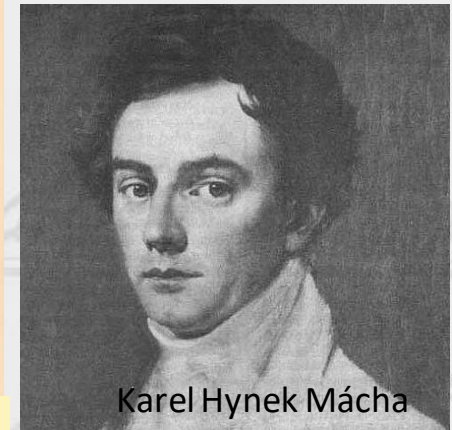
Karel Jaromír Erben



Božena Němcová



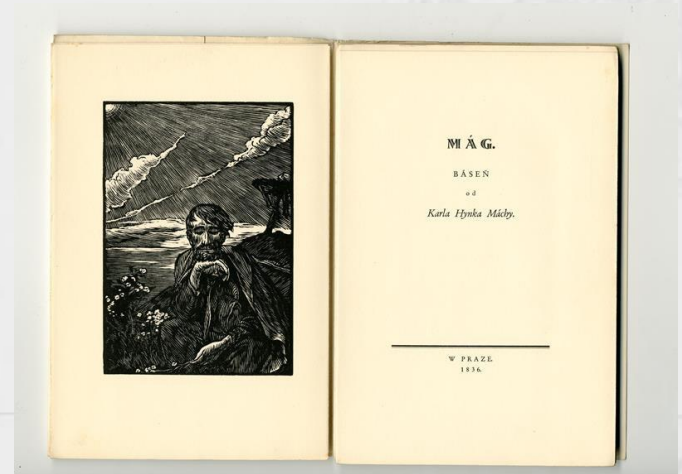
Karel Havlíček Borovský



Karel Hynek Mácha

# Karel Hynek Mácha

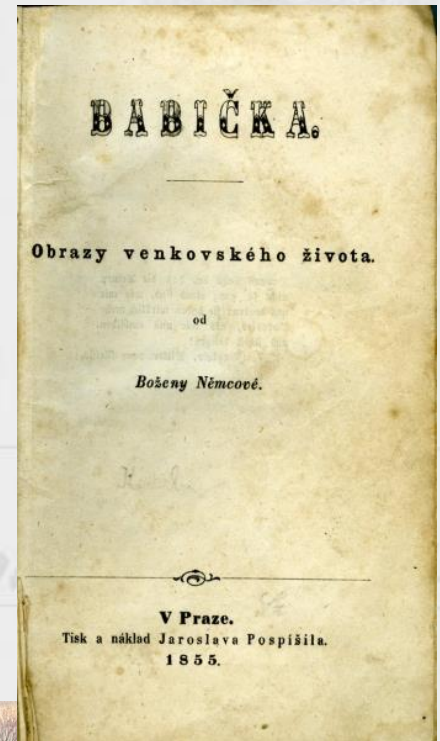
- 1810–1836
- Romantism
- Máj
  - Romantic poem,
  - Different from other contemporary literary production
  - Different relation to the country
  - Refusing of contemporary patriotism





# Božena Němcová

- 1820–1862
- Collector of folks tales
- Novel Grandmother (1855)
  - Idealized life in the village
  - With a respect to a cyclic nature of a year
- Aim of the book
  - To get over the death of her child



Adolf Kašpar's illustrations to Grandmother

# From patriotism to general topics

## 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

- First efforts to leave strict patriotism in literature
- Orientation toward realism (Neruda)
  - Rural realism
- Patriotism was present in dramatic work
  - Historic plays and novels (Jirásek)

# From patriotism to general topics

## At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Efforts to catch contemporary world currents in literature, mostly in poetry (symbolism, decadence) and leaving pathetic ways of expression
  - Machar, Gellner, Dyk

# Literature of 20<sup>th</sup> century

## 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

- Mature phase of the previous development
- Some works achieved the world recognition
- Literature is very differentiated
  - Avant-garde (connected with left wing writers and poets)
  - Modern catholic
  - German literature

# The 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

## Most important names

- Novelists
  - Jaroslav Hašek
  - Franz Kafka
  - Karel Čapek
  - Vladislav Vančura
- Poets
  - Vítězslav Nezval
  - Jaroslav Seifert
  - Jiří Wolker
  - Rainer Maria Rilke



# Jaroslav Hašek

- 1883–1923
- Bohemian way of life
- Participated in WWI
- He spent some time in Russian captivity
- Key novel
  - The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk



Jaroslav Hašek

# Jaroslav Hašek

## The Fateful Adventures of the Good Soldier Švejk

- The most translated work of Czech literature
- Specific way of thinking of the main hero
  - On one side it should demonstrate the absurdity of a war on the other side it is often taken as an description of Czech nature and character

# The Good Soldier Švejk



The Good Soldier Švejk by Jiří Trnka (1954)

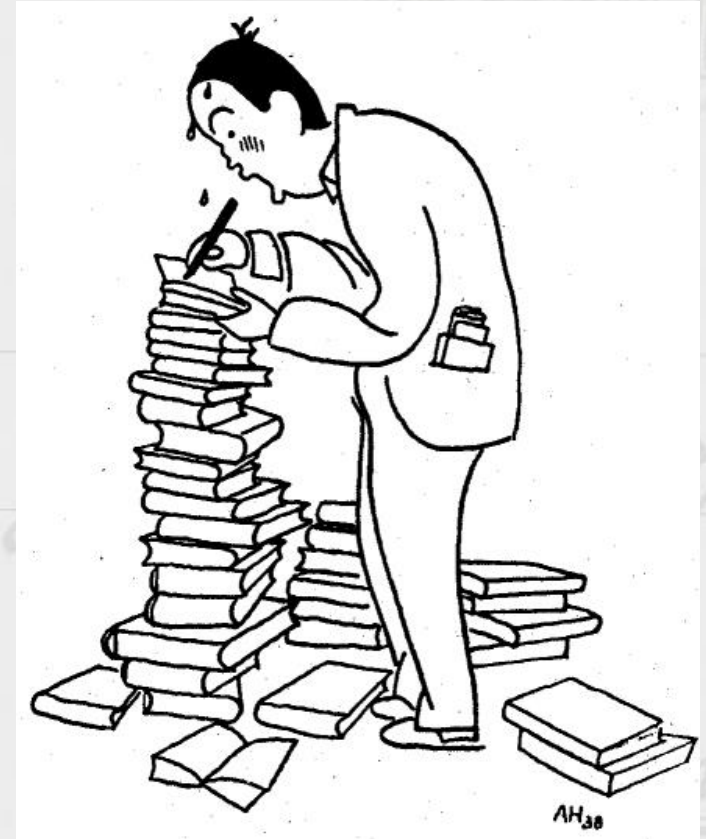


I Obediently Report, film by Karel Steklý (1957)



# Karel Čapek

- 1890–1938
- Embodiment of the spirit of the first Czechoslovak republic
- Novelist, playwright and public intellectual
- Many works he did with his brother Josef, famous Czech painter



Karel Čapek by Adolf Hoffmeister

# Karel Čapek

- Philosophically he was influenced by pragmatism and expressionism
- His work is filled with humanism and pacifism too
- In his writings he applied features of sci fi
  - He, respectively his brother, invented the word robot in his play R.U.R (Rossum's Universal Robots)

# Karel Čapek



# Karel Čapek

- He took important part in Czechoslovak social, intellectual and artistic life
- He had close relationship with president Masaryk and organized regular intellectual meetings of important persons from the area of art, science and politics – Pátečníci (Fridayers)

# Karel Čapek



Karel Čapek with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk

# Karel Čapek

- Important works:
  - The Absolute at Large
  - R.U.R
  - „Noetic Trilogy“: Hordubal, The Meteor, Ordinary Life
  - Stories from a pocket and from another pocket
  - Tales and stories for children (Dášeňka or a life of a Puppy)
  - Important is also his essayist and journalist work

# Franz Kafka

- 1883–1924
- German writing author
- Today the most world known writer from the Czech lands
- Most of his life he spent in Prague but his last two years
- He spoke German, Czech and French
- His fame came after World war II



Franz Kafka

# Franz Kafka

- Until his death his works were unnoticed
- Only a few stories were published during his life
- Concerning novel he is placed among modernists as Marcel Proust or Virginia Woolf
- His novels are open to different interpretations



# Franz Kafka

- The main topics in his writings are the position in modern society, alienation and uncertainty and individual and power, violence and questions of selfblaming
- Main works:
  - Metamorphosis
  - In the Pennal Colony
  - The Trial
  - Amerika (or Missing)
  - The Castle



# Poetry

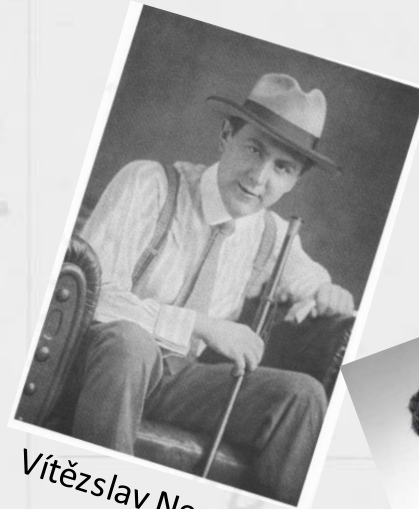
- Most innovative and appreciated was the poetry of left wing orientated poets
- Poetism
  - orientation towards optimism and feels of happiness and joy. Focus on emotions
- Proletarian Poetry
  - Dream of revolutionary change of the world. Focus on living condition of the working class



# Poetry

## Representative authors

- Vítězslav Nezval (Poetism and Surrealism)
- Jaroslav Seifert (Poetism and proletarian poetry)
- Jiří Wolker (proletarian and civilian poetry)



Vítězslav Nezval



Jaroslav Seifert

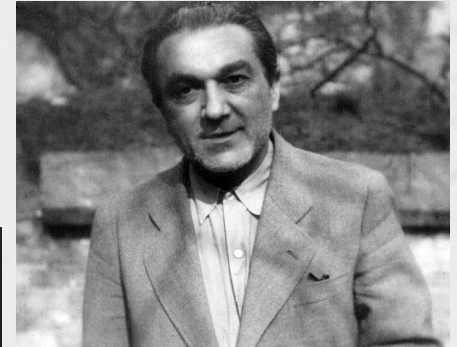


Jiří Wolker

# Poetry

## Other currents:

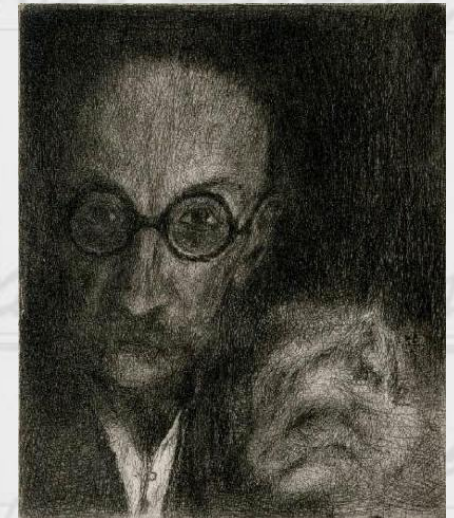
- Spiritual
  - František Halas
  - Vladimír Holan
- Catholic
  - Bohuslav Reynek



Vladimír Holan



František Halas



Bohuslav Reynek

# Czech Literature after 1945

- Two sub periods
  - 1945–1970
  - 1970–1990
- Three main circles
  - Official
  - Unofficial
  - exile



# Czech Literature after 1945

## Official

- In the 1950s orientated towards socialist realism
  - Aim to promote communist regime
- In the 1960s room was slowly opened also for authors previously not allowed to publish
  - Getting over the development of society in 1950s
  - Opened to the world development in art and literature
  - Turn to more personal and intimate topics

# Czech Literature after 1945

## Official

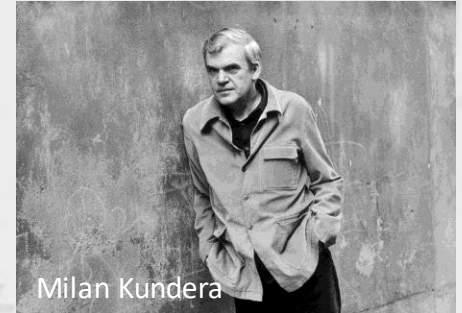
- During the 1970s and the 1980s many topics that appeared in the 1960s persisted, as for example relations between men and women
- Generally it turned more to reflections of daily life
- Critical writing on affairs of politics and communist regime was forbidden

# Czech Literature after 1945

- Most important official authors of the 1950s and 1960s
  - Jan Drda
  - Milan Kundera
  - Ludvík Vaculík
  - Pavel Kohout
  - Bohumil Hrabal (since 1960)
  - Josef Škvorecký
  - Josef Kainar



Josef Škvorecký



Milan Kundera



Ludvík Vaculík



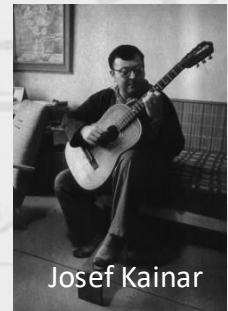
Jan Drda



Bohumil Hrabal



Pavel Kohout



Josef Kainar



# Czech literature after 1945

## Most important official authors of the 1970s and 1980s

- Bohumil Hrabal
- Vladimír Páral
- Ladislav Fuks



Bohumil Hrabal



Ladislav Fuks



Vladimír Páral

# Czech Literature after 1945

## Unofficial

- Authors that were not allowed to publish and/or not allowed to be professional writers
  - Big difference between the period up to 1970 and the period after
  - Many previously official authors were forbidden or went in exile

# Czech Literature after 1945

## Unofficial and banned writers and poets in the 1950s

- Reasons
  - Imprisonment (Jan Zahradníček)
  - Ban (Holan, Kolář, Zábřana)
  - Voluntary decision (Bondy, Hrabal, Vodsedálek)



Egon Bondy and Jana Krejcarová

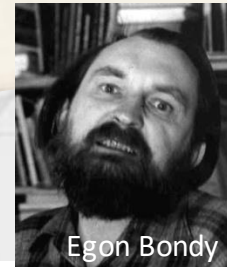
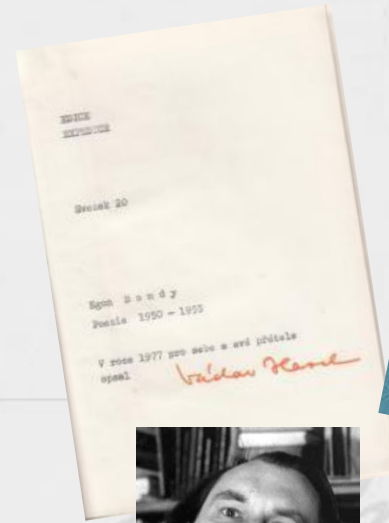


Jan Zábřana

# Czech Literature after 1945

## Unofficial authors after 1970

- Banned authors previously official (Havel, Vaculík)
- New ban on authors banned during the 1950s (Zábrana)
- Underground authors (Bondy, Jirous)
- Relying on:
  - home made editions (samizdat)
    - Edice Petlice
  - exile or foreign publishers (68 publishers, Index)



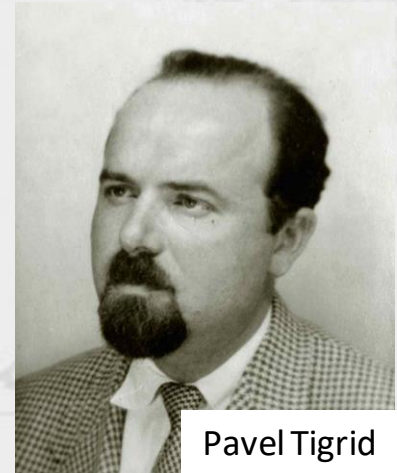
Egon Bondy



# Czech Literature after 1945

## Czech literature in exile

- Two waves
  - After 1948
    - Less known and there were less possibilities to publish
  - After 1968
    - Many previously official authors, often known in the West



Pavel Tigríd

# Czech Literature after 1945

## Important authors in exile

- After 1948
- Egon Hostovský
- After 1968
  - Josef Škvorecký
  - Jiří Kolář
  - Milan Kundera



Egon Hostovský



Josef Škvorecký



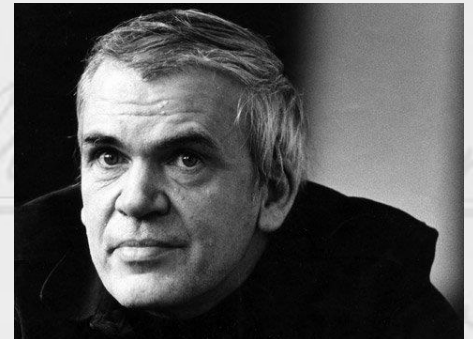
Jiří Kolář



Milan Kundera

# Milan Kundera

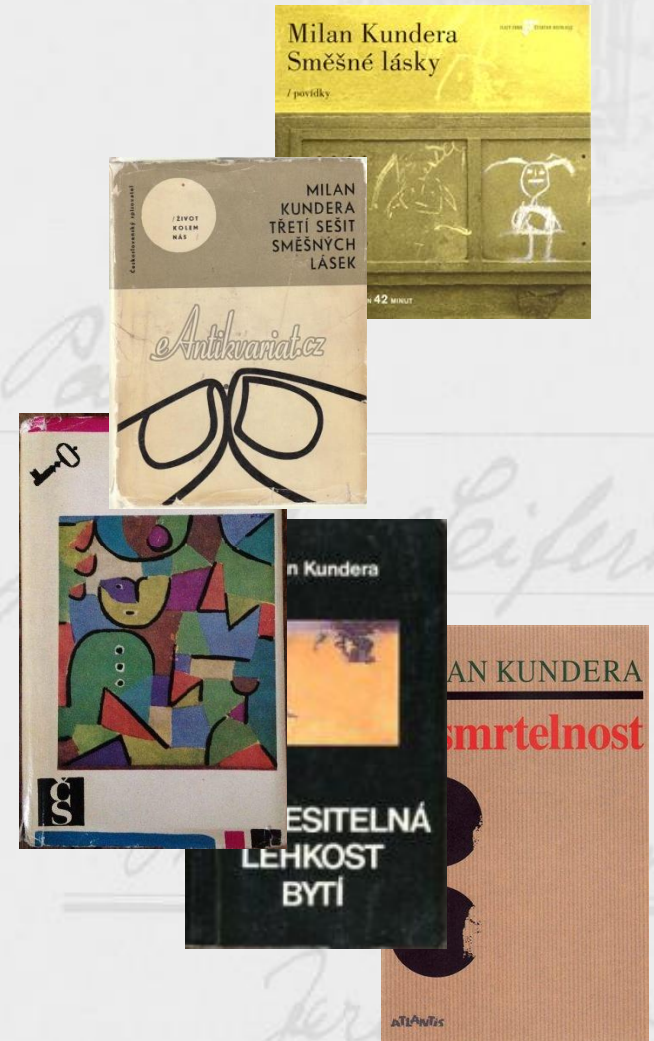
- \*1929
- During 1950s he wrote social realistic poems
- Since 1960s he was creating his own style and began to write novels integrating essays and philosophical reflections into the novels
- In the late 1960s he involved in intellectual and political discussions on a nature and position of Czech nation
- In 1975 he left Czechoslovakia and settled in Paris
- Since the 1990s he has been writing in French



# Milan Kundera

## Most important works

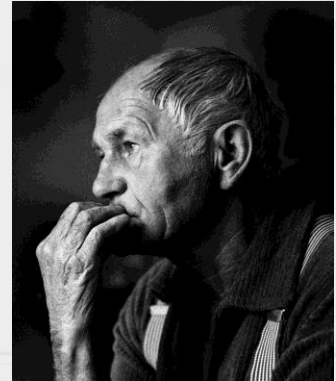
- The Joke (1967)
  - Coping with the development in the 1950s
- The book of Laughter and Forgetting
  - Critical to the development in the 1970s in Czechoslovakia
- Immortality
  - Here he left the „Czech theme and turned the attention to the western societies





# Bohumil Hrabal

- 1914–1997
- During the 1950s he worked at the workers positions
- As an official writer he set up in the 1960s
- Autobiographical features
  - Workers environment, village people, experiences from childhood
- Integration of common folks speech into the text
  - Visual and expressive style
- Many people in his writings were of wise foolish character (Palaverers)
- Some of his works were also adapted for film



# Bohumil Hrabal

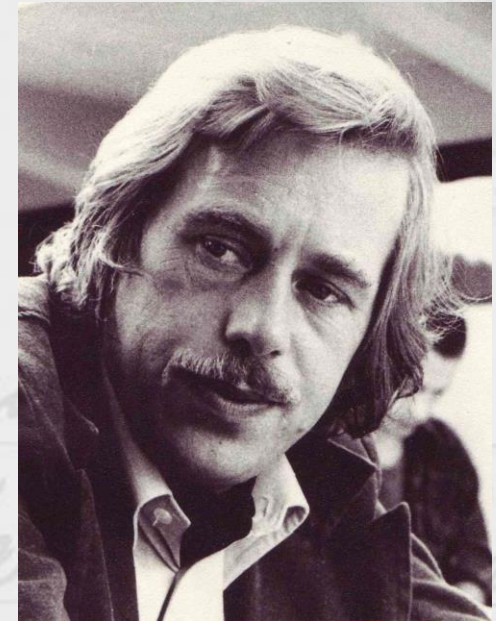
## Most important works

- Closely observed trains
- Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age
- An Advertisement for the House I Don't Want to Live in Anymore
- I Served the King of England
- Gentle Barbarian
- Snowdrop Festival



# Václav Havel

- 1936–2011
- Playwriter, essayist and politician
- He began to write in the 1960s
- In the second half of the 1960s he disputes with Milan Kundera on the fate and nature of Czech nation and Czech socialism
- In the 1970 he was organizer of unofficial cultural life and political activities against regime
- After Velvet revolution he became Czechoslovak and later Czech president



# Václav Havel

- As a playwright he continued in the tradition of the theatre of absurd
- His main themes were the language and its alienation, power and moral responsibility of the individual
- Besides plays the important are also his essays reflecting politics and opposition activities in Eastern bloc and also general questions of life
- He wrote also several collections of poems

# Václav Havel

## Most important works:

- Anticodes
- The Garden Party
- Audience
- Leaving
- Letters to Olga
- Power of the Powerless



# Poetry

- In the 1950 partly followed prewar tradition but reflected the experience of war (surrealism, avant-garde)
- Part of the poets supported and promoted communist regime (socialistic realism)
- Since the 1960s it reflected the world development (beat generation for example)
- Very differentiated
- Singing poets (Kryl, Merta, Nohavica, Janota, Třešňák)

# Poetry

## Several important authors

- Vladimír Holan
- Jaroslav Seifert
- Jan Zábřana
- Egon Bondy
- Miroslav Holub
- Jan Skácel
- Václav Hrabě
- Jiří Kolář



# Jaroslav Seifert

- 1901–1986
- Active already before WWII  
(poetism and proletarian poetry)
- Nobel prize winner
- After world war two turn to patriotic  
and autobiographical motives
- Lyrical poetry



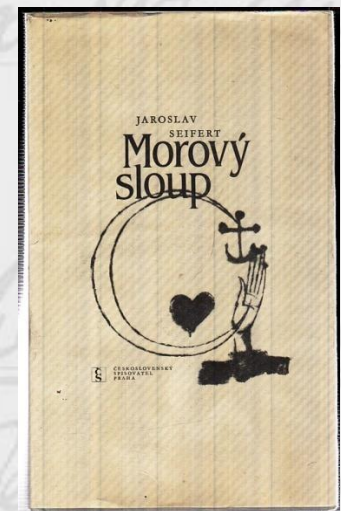
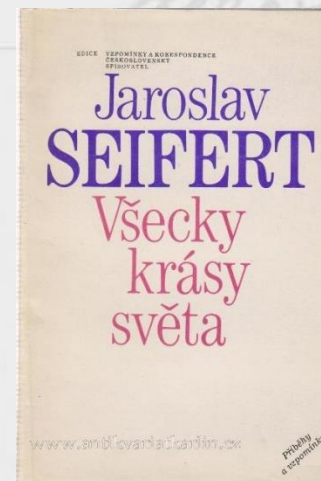
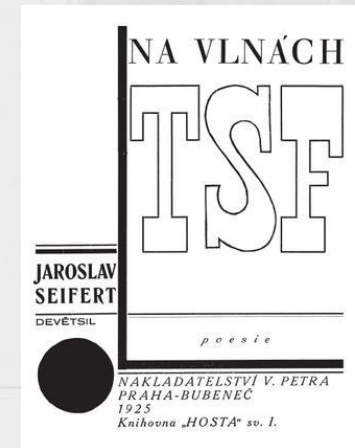
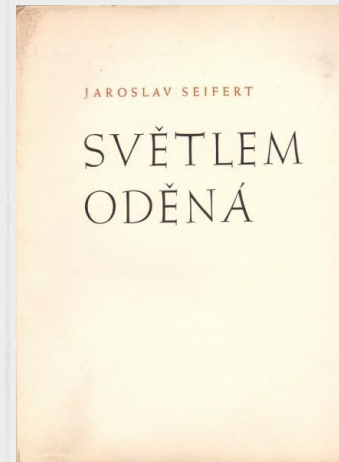
Jaroslav Seifert



# Jaroslav Seifert

## Most important works

- City in Tears
- On TSF Waves
- Dressed by the Light
- Song about Viktorka
- Plague Column
- To Be a Poet
- All the beauties of the World





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