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Edited by Andrew M. Drozd

Modern Czech Literature

Writing in Times of Political Trauma

SERIES IN LITERARY STUDIES

This compelling volume offers rich new studies of well-known and frequently-studied Czech dissident authors (Kundera, Hrabal, Havel) along with important, broad investigations of less-studied writers and cultural figures from the next generations. Scholars and students will find essential new perspectives, material, and avenues for investigation that are opened up by this volume, which demonstrates that Czech literary studies continue to thrive and innovate.

Dr. David L. Cooper

Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

About the editor

Andrew M. Drozd received his PhD in Russian literature with a minor in Czech studies from Indiana University. He is Associate Professor of Russian at the University of Alabama, where he has taught for 30 years. He is the author of 'Chernyshevskii's What Is to Be Done?: A Reevaluation' (Northwestern UP, 2001), and co-editor of 'Reading Darwin in Imperial Russia' (Lexington Books, 2023), and 'Revisiting Russian Radicals' (Lexington Books, 2024). In recent years, much of his research focus has been on Czech-Russian literary interrelations and he has been working on a monograph with the working title of 'The Russian Echo of František Ladislav Čelakovský.' For several years, he was the manager of the SEELangs discussion list and currently maintains the Czech Studies discussion list and the Russian Radicals discussion list.

Summary

Modern Czech culture has experienced a series of political traumas starting in the 1930s. Despite the difficult, shifting conditions, Czech writers have not only managed to contend with the situation, but have produced many fine literary efforts. This volume consists of seven articles by an international team of authors who are specialists in Czech literature. The first four chapters treat very well-known writers. There is one chapter on Karel Čapek and his play "The White Plague." There are three chapters on Milan Kundera, the internationally best-known Czech writer, with one of these chapters covering both Kundera and Bohumil Hrabal. The last three chapters deal with more recent and/or lesser-known writers. One chapter treats the Brothers Topol and the music underground, one chapter treats Czech literary responses to the period of the Normalization, and the final chapter treats Eda Kriseová.

This volume presents new perspectives on Czech literature and will be of interest to specialists in Czech literature and history, Central European literature and history, Nazism and Communism. For example, although much has been written about Kundera, the three articles provide further treatments of three different aspects of his work: his ties to Russian literature, his misogyny, and the philosophical content of his novels. Specialists interested in the period of the Normalization (and after) will find the last three chapters particularly useful. The chapters are suitable for classroom use in courses in both Czech literature and Czech (or Central European) history. All material from Czech-language sources presented in the chapters is given in English translation.

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