

Sincerity in Czech literature: Notes toward a rhetoric of lamentation

GERTRAUDE ZAND

DOI: [10.31577/WLS.2026.18.2.1](https://doi.org/10.31577/WLS.2026.18.2.1)

© Institute of World Literature

Slovak Academy of Sciences

© Gertraude Zand 2026

Licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Sincerity in Czech literature: Notes toward a rhetoric of lamentation

Lamentation. Rhetoric. Sincerity. Subjective narrator. Expression. Czech literature.

Roman Jakobson considers the anonymous Czech prose dispute *Tkadleček* (The weaver, beginning of the 15th century), the last letters of Božena Němcová (1861) and Jakub Deml's *Zapomenuté světlo* (The forgotten light, 1934) to be the most tragic works of Czech literature. This article shows that the three texts share some characteristic elements: they are written in the first person, they appeal to an imaginary or real counterpart and they are set in the present tense. They emphasize a rhetoric of lamentation, which guarantees the sincerity of the author's statement. Some other factors like repetition and expressive language also contribute to the reader's feeling of being immediately addressed and deeply affected.

Gertraude Zand
Institut für Slawistik
Universität Wien
Austria
gertraude.zand@univie.ac.at
ORCID: 0009-0001-5456-4755

In academic research the question of “sincerity” in literature was primarily approached through poetry, first-person autobiographical narratives, and (intimate) diaries of the 19th and 20th centuries (Peyre [1963] 1969). In more recent scholarship, under the subject of “new sincerity”, attention has also turned to fictional texts produced since the late 20th century.¹ The concept of sincerity in literature has been defined in different ways. Lionel Trilling (1972) understands it as the congruence between an utterance and the actual feeling of the speaker, while Ellen Rutten (2017) characterizes it more broadly as truthful speech about personal, private, or intimate feelings. Both definitions presuppose a correspondence between what is said and what is felt – that is, they treat sincerity as an attribute of the speaking subject. In the context of the present study, however, sincerity is understood primarily as a *rhetorical* effect: It denotes the impression of truthfulness and emotional immediacy that a text produces in its reader by means of specific formal and stylistic devices. The question, in other words, is not whether an author *is* sincere, but how a text *persuades* us of its sincerity. As Henri Peyre (1969, 79–110) has shown, literature’s claim to sincerity is always mediated by conventions and rhetorical strategies; the more recent debate on “new sincerity” similarly acknowledges that the effect of sincere expression is inseparable from the formal means by which it is achieved (Kelly 2024). The present study adopts this perspective and asks which rhetorical devices – specifically those associated with the tradition of lamentation – generate the impression of sincere, unmediated speech across different periods and genres of Czech literature.

The well-known philologist Roman Jakobson declared the following three works to be the most tragic in Czech literature: the Old Czech prose dispute *Tkadleček* (The weaver, beginning of the 15th century), the oeuvre of the novelist Božena Němcová, and the prose text *Zapomenuté světlo* (The forgotten light, 1934) by Jakub Deml.² In all three cases, we are dealing with the subjective, immediate and truthful utterance of an individual in crisis: *Tkadleček*, abandoned by his beloved, voices his distress by challenging a personification of Misfortune. In her stories, Němcová takes refuge in an ideal world; the quality of her life, however, is marked by deprivation and conflict. These she addresses and deplores, bearing authentic witness – especially in her last three draft letters. And Jakub Deml’s *Zapomenuté světlo* is an outcry of abject misery by someone in an existential crisis. The adage of the Czech romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha, “that pain is the mother of true poetry” (“že je toliko bolest matka pravé poezie”); quoted in Jakobson [1934] 1995, 28) applies to all three authors in equal measure.

LAMENTING TO AN ALLEGORY: *TKADLEČEK*

The Old Czech prose dispute *Tkadleček* dates back to the beginning of the 15th century. Its author is unknown, but he must have been very well-educated and fluent in Latin rhetoric as well as in the art of philosophical and theological reasoning. The dispute between the Weaver and personified Misfortune shares many similarities with the far more widely known work by Johannes von Saaz (aka Johannes von Tepl), *Der Ackermann und der Tod*, also known as *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* (written around 1400, printed 1460; Eng. trans. *Death and the Plowman or, The Bohemian*

Plowman, 1958). Having lost his wife and mother of his children, he denounces personified Death. Just as in this controversy between the plowman and death, the helpless Czech Weaver starts his plaint with rude invectives against his adversary – Misfortune: “Alas, alas, help! Alas, alas, misery, alas, alas for violence! Alas for thee, thou cruel and fierce destroyer of all lands, harmful injurer of all the world, brazen murderer of all good men! Oh, you misfortune, oh be cursed by all creation! God himself hates you!”⁴ (quoted in Dinzl-Rybářová 2006, 237). Like a litany, the lamentation is repeated in many variants.

In everyday language, a “litany” denotes the monotonously intoned repetition of a statement, often in connection with dissatisfaction or lament. In a stricter sense, a litany designates a Christian prayer characterized by specific features that also appear, although modified, in *Tkadleček*. In the religious context, the address is directed to God – typically through repeated supplicatory formulas such as “Lord, have mercy” or “Lord, hear us”; in *Tkadleček*, by contrast, the Weaver appeals to personified Misfortune. Instead of the antiphonal exchange between cantor and congregation customary in the litany, the discourse in *Tkadleček* alternates between the lamenting Weaver and the arraigned Misfortune. Whereas the Christian litany relies upon the mercy of God, Misfortune proves merciless. As in the litany, enumeration (enumeratio) and repetition (repetitio) are of central importance in *Tkadleček*, above all anaphoric repetition, as in the exclamation “Alas!” (“Ach!”). In the course of the dispute, the initially doleful tone of voice gradually changes and the Weaver – like in a case before the Court – proceeds by bringing forward arguments in his defence. The outcome, however, is inescapable: in the end, Misfortune prevails.

In Jakobson’s opinion, literary texts and life testimonies are inherently of equal value. According to him, the relationship between the two forms does not represent a link between “poetry and truth”, as implied in the subtitle of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s famous autobiography *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (From my life: Poetry and truth, 1811–1831; Eng. trans. *The Auto-biography of Goethe: Truth and Poetry* 1848 [vol. 1], 1882 [vol. 2]). Instead we are simply dealing with two different semantic propositions for one and the same experience. Furthermore, Jakobson posits that Mácha would much rather publish his diaries than his poetry, were he alive today (1995, 24–26). Owing to social circumstances, however, it had been unimaginable for Mácha to think of publishing private notes during his lifetime, and even posterity hesitated for a long time before releasing his uncensored diaries.

While Michel de Montaigne had already begun to blur the boundary between literature and personal testimony in his *Essais* (1580; Eng. trans. *Essays*, 1603 – 1991), it was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who radicalized this move in his autobiographic *Les Confessions* (1782–1789; Eng. trans. *The Confessions*, 1790), placing the author’s own life – with all its positive and negative aspects – at the very center of the literary work.⁵ Rousseau’s title obviously refers to Saint Augustine’s *Confessiones* (397–400). But whereas Augustine uses his life’s journey as an example to describe a path to God, Rousseau’s candid portrayal and merciless reckoning with his own life forms the chief subject of his book. The author as literary subject stands for himself, with all his positive and negative aspects. In his confessions, Rousseau employs a hith-

erto unprecedented degree of candour and self-criticism. Since Rousseau, sincerity has been associated with an existential pathos that decisively shaped Romantic literature. The paradigm that only an unmediated effusion of the heart is truthful admits neither irony nor cynicism and is accompanied by a general distrust of logic. It remains an open question whether the pursuit of an authentic artistic expression may not itself be insincere, whether it does not endanger the immediacy – and thus the truth – of the utterance (Peyre 1969, 79–110). Whether Rousseau is sincere in *Les Confessions*, that is, whether his testimony matches actual events and affective states,⁶ thereby eludes the control of the reading public.⁷ This, however, only underscores the central insight of the present study: that sincerity in literature is secured not only by verifiable truthfulness, but by rhetorical means.

UNSENT LETTERS TO AN ABSENT FRIEND: BOŽENA NĚMCOVÁ

The work of Božena Němcová, the great Czech novelist of the mid-19th century, can be interpreted in the spirit of the pre-Romantic period. But it cannot be expected that Němcová, in the texts that she intended for publication, drew on the tradition established by Rousseau. Czech culture, which had only just awakened to a sense of national identity, did not provide a sufficiently fertile ground for such an individualistic concept of literature. The opposite applies to Němcová's private letters. Originally, they had not been intended for publication; but today – following Jakobson's dictum – these authentic testimonies can be incorporated into her collected works. In order to gain a better understanding of this oeuvre, an approach which also takes the author's biographical background into account can only be of advantage: With the added awareness of Němcová's personality, her work becomes more accessible. According to literary critic František Xaver Šalda, Němcová's writing is but a surrogate, a corrective, and a postulate for a life which, he declares, was "difficult, distressing, painful, mortifying" ("trudný, strastný, bolestný, pokořující"; 1959, 72–73): "this work is a direct expression of remembrance, dream and longing; it is the poet's refuge and solace from the empirical life over which she creates a beautiful and perfect new world"⁸ (Černý [1963] 1982, 205).

What such a path leading from reality into an idyllic world might look like is demonstrated in exemplary fashion by her last three drafts of letters that were never sent. They were first published in an abridged version in 1920, later in their entirety in the magazine *Literární noviny* (Literary newspaper) in 1995, and also in a volume of Němcová's selected correspondence under the title *Lamentace* (The lamentations). "Lamentace", which derives from Latin, denotes a fierce and persistent lamentation. Němcová's last letters are one single cry of despair, addressed to almost the last of her remaining friends, Vojtěch Náprstek. These letters were written in Litomyšl, where Němcová (then destitute and unsuccessful) tried to prepare her stories for a new edition. Having suffered for a long time from a disease of the lower abdomen, she eventually had to be brought from Litomyšl back to Prague, where she died shortly afterwards.⁹

The first draft is a desperate plaint which erupts from Němcová in an unchecked flow. First she describes the last disastrous evening in Prague before her departure

to Litomyšl, and a violent disagreement with her husband. Then she deplores her poverty and painful memories, for instance recalling some letters from her friend Karel Havlíček, which in times of persecution she had had to burn as a precaution. She also candidly describes her illness and the measures taken by her against the bleeding it caused. In favor of some more positive experiences, these passages are relegated to the margins in the second draft; and in the third, happy memories of recent encounters predominate – in particular, the cordial and deferential welcome she received on the part of friends as she was passing through on her way to Litomyšl. As soon as her thoughts return to the fight with her husband, the letter ends abruptly: the author has come back at the point which she had tried to exorcise by means of her writing. Thus, these last letters afford a unique insight into Němcová's literary working method.¹⁰ They trace the path from subjective, sincere grief to an idyllic narrative and thus confirm Jakobson's theory that life and work form an indivisible whole – they are but two sides of the same coin.¹¹

THE AUTHOR'S ALTER EGO, ADDRESSING A STRANGER: JAKUB DEML

Unlike Němcová, Jakub Deml – at the beginning of the 20th century, the “age of sincerity”¹² – was able to draw on the tradition established by Rousseau, casting himself in the role of the central character of texts which were intended for publication. Inspired by the Czech edition of journals written by the French author and philosopher Léon Bloy, Deml wrote a continuous diary from 1917 to 1941 which he published under the title of *Šlépěje* (The traces, 1917–1941). As primary narrative method, Deml increasingly employed persistent, explicit references to himself as a real person – not just here, but in his whole oeuvre. The distance between author and first-person narrator customarily observed in a text is eliminated in favor of a complete identification of the two. In the words of the French theorist Philippe Lejeune ([1975] 1998), Deml enters into an autobiographical pact with his readers, prompting them to cease differentiating between author and narrator.

We can find a similar pact in the prose of *Zapomenuté světlo* (1934), the experimental text published by the author himself, which Jakobson counts among the most tragic works of Czech literature. It is in the form of a montage of letters, newspaper articles, essays, biblical texts and their exegesis, reminiscences, citations, aphorisms and meditations on God, friends and foes, as well as on the author's situation in life (Wöll and Jiroušek 2020). Formally, the text is conceived as an answer to a letter from a certain Bohumil Malina Ptáček. This man had heard Deml speak in a radio feature and had thanked him for his beautiful and comforting words. Nonetheless, Deml avails himself of this figure by making him the addressee of his fury and lamentation. Like in a litany, he repeatedly invokes Bohumil Ptáček's name in a number of variants, also abbreviated to just his initials: “Mister B. M. P.”; “You, dear Mister B. M. P.”; “You Mister Bohumil Ptáček”; “Friend Bohumil Ptáček” (“Pane B. M. P.”, “Vy milý pane B. M. P.”, “Vy pane Bohumile Ptáčku”, “Příteli Bohumile Ptáčku”; [1934] 1998), and so forth. The formal features of the litany were thoroughly familiar to the theologian, priest, and Baroque enthusiast Jakub Deml. However, he adopts the litany

in a modified, secularized form, invoking not God but a highly indeterminate Mister B. M. P. Here, too, insistent, accumulative discourse serves to intensify affect; it is essentially infinite and, in the concrete instance, comes to a halt only in exhaustion.

Allegedly, Deml wrote the book in a single night in a state of utter desperation, after the death of a woman from the village whom he, a Catholic priest, had accompanied in her last moments. At this time, he had arrived at an emotional low point: He had broken with his best friends, many of his patrons had turned away, his long-standing companion had died, and he had been brusquely spurned by his new love. Deml found himself in a state of absolute desolation and hopelessness. He felt on earth like a light that someone had forgotten to extinguish (hence the title of this text). Finally, Deml also lost his trust in God: “My God, my God”, he laments like Jesus, “why hast Thou forsaken me, my God?” (“Bože můj, Bože můj”, “proč jsi mně opustil, Bože můj?”; 10, 12). In the end, Deml addresses the deceased countrywoman’s dog, who had followed him all the way through the village: “At least you have me, but I suffer infinitely more than you and I have no one at all” (“Ty máš aspoň mne, ale já trpím neskonale víc než Ty a nemám vůbec nikoho”; 115).

Deml’s is a position at the most advanced point in a process of subjectivizing the narrative, which has gained currency in European literature since the Romantic era. This process is described in an exemplary fashion by Lubomír Doležel as the development from an “objective” via a “rhetorical” to a “subjective, personal” form of first- or third-person narrative (1993, 43–54). With her stories, Božena Němcová stands at the first level of this scale; at its other end we find Jakub Deml. In her published work, Němcová is no longer “objective”, but has already moved on to a “rhetorical third-person form”: her narrator not only constructs and controls, but also interprets the narrative – but still remains completely outside the fictitious world. Jakub Deml’s is a narrator who employs the “subjective, personal first-person” form: he makes a subjective statement about himself.

In this context, René Wellek (Wellek and Warren [1949] 2019) applies a simpler terminology than Doležel: He distinguishes between “objective” and “subjective” authors. The type of “objective” poet who had been prevalent far into the Romantic era, disappears as a concrete person behind his work, just like the anonymous author of *Tkadleček*. On the other hand, the so-called “subjective” author “imports” his personality into his writing, wants to express himself and to bear witness. Hence Wellek concludes that, in the case of an “objective” author, it is not considered legitimate to take their personality into account when interpreting a literary text. However – in dealing with a “subjective” author like Lord Byron, who “carries the ‘pageant of his bleeding heart’ around Europe” (59),¹³ such an approach is not just legitimate, but obligatory – even for someone like Wellek who, as a representative of structuralism and new criticism, essentially proclaims the artwork’s autonomy. The “subjective” author must not be ignored in scientific pursuits.

CONCLUSION: SINCERITY AS A RHETORICAL EFFECT

All three texts mentioned above use a rhetoric of lamentation which is characterized by the following typical traits:

1. The narrator is a profoundly shocked and emotionally disturbed subject caught up in a desperate or tragic, seemingly hopeless situation.¹⁴
2. The lamentation needs an addressee,¹⁵ real or fictitious, close or distant, alive or inanimate.¹⁶
3. The instance that serves as the addressee of the lament is invoked in a litany-like manner. The object of the lament is named over and over again. Invocation, enumeration, and repetition function as rhetorical means of intensifying the utterance and lending it credibility.
4. The lamentation takes place in the here and now; it is written in the present tense.
5. The lamentation – the direct speech of a specific subject – is conceived as a verbal utterance.
6. The lamentation is couched in an expressive language; employing empathy and impassioned speech as rhetorical devices.¹⁷

Such rhetorical means lend the plaint an air of authenticity, a sincere expression of the suffering endured by the author-subject. In the current secondary literature, however, the *Tkadleček* is no longer understood in this sense. It is rather regarded as a study and masterpiece conceived by an academically educated author who demonstrates his proficiency in the art of philosophic-theological disputation. A real occasion for the dispute between the Weaver and Misfortune cannot be assumed. As can be demonstrated by the example of Roman Jakobson and the *Tkadleček*, the rhetoric of lamentation nonetheless exerts an enormously strong and powerful influence. The subject matter of the literary lamentation is, after all, of existential urgency: We are dealing with death, illness, mourning, exile or loneliness. By way of an extrinsic lamentation, the reader can – in the sense of an Aristotelian catharsis – vicariously free himself from his own experience of suffering.

The three texts examined in this study share a common rhetorical gesture: a first-person subject, visibly present and emotionally exposed, appeals to an addressee in the here and now. Across five centuries and three genres, then, sincerity reveals itself less as a property of the suffering subject than as an effect achieved by the lamenting voice: these texts do not merely record sincere feeling – they persuade us of it. And it is this rhetorical art, not any provable correspondence between word and feeling, that lends these texts their enduring power to move us.

NOTES

¹ See the latest publications on this topic, Rutten 2017 and Kelly 2024, which deals with fictional texts that have appeared since the end of modernism and postmodernism, i.e. after 1989.

² Jakobson in a letter to Jakub Deml on the occasion of the publication of *Zapomenuté světlo* (cf. Olič 1993, 109; and Deml [1934] 1998, book cover).

³ Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Czech are made by the present author.

⁴ “Ach, ach, nastojte! Ach, ach, běda! Ach na násilí! Ach na tě, ukrutný a vrucí shladiteli všech zemí, škodlivý škudce všeho světa, smělý morděři všech dobrých lidí! Aj, ty Neščestie, aj, buď proklato vším stvořením! Buoh sám, ten tě nenavid!” *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* starts in a similar fashion: “Grimmiger Tilger aller Leute, schändlicher Ächter aller Wesen, schrecklicher Mörder aller Men-

schen, Ihr, Tod, Euch sei geflucht! Gott, Euer Schöpfer, hasse Euch, wachsendes Unheil haue bei Euch, Mißgeschick suche gewaltig Euch heim, gänzlich geschändet seid immer!” (Tepl [1963] 1997, 5) In English translation: “Grim Destroyer of mankind, vengeful Persecutor of the whole world, frightful Murderer of all men, Thou, Death, be cursed! May the God who created Thee hate Thee; may harm a thousand-fold meet up with Thee; may misfortune dwell mightily with Thee: Mayst remain dishonored for ever!” (Saaz 1958, 1)

- ⁵ Montaigne’s mode is philosophical self-examination; Rousseau’s is confessional self-revelation, which is what makes it the more direct precursor to the rhetoric of sincerity the study investigates.
- ⁶ See the definition of sincerity as the congruence between an utterance and the actual feeling (Trilling 1972, 2), or as truthful speech about personal, private, or intimate feelings (Rutten 2017, 19–22).
- ⁷ This has been true not only in the neoliberal era, in which market mechanisms shape what one says or feels and how one names and avows it (see Kelly 2024, 1–14).
- ⁸ “toto dílo je přímým výrazem vzpomínky, snu a touhy; je básnířce útočištěm a útěchou z empirického života, nad nímž vytváří krásný a dokonalý svět nový”
- ⁹ The German film director Dagmar Knöpfel based her movie *Durch diese Nacht sehe ich keinen einzigen Stern* (In this night I cannot see a single star, 2005) on the three draft letters (see Němcová 1995).
- ¹⁰ In a detailed study, Jaroslava Janáčková and Alena Macurová (2002) demonstrated how Němcová was able to distance herself from her depressing reality by means of story telling.
- ¹¹ In analogy with Jakobson, one might assume that an author of the 20th or 21st century would have retained the letter in its original version and might even have published it, since an ideal world no longer represents a productive paradigm; the 20th and 21st centuries must dispense with the foil of an ideal world.
- ¹² Peyre points to the exploration of the human psyche and the emerging interest in authenticity in literature since the turn from the 19th to the 20th century (1969, chap. 8).
- ¹³ “The biographical approach now seems easy, for we can check life and work against each other. Indeed, the approach is even invited and demanded by the poet, especially the Romantic poet, who writes about himself and his innermost feelings or even, like Byron, carries the ‘pageant of his bleeding heart’ around Europe. These poets spoke of themselves not only in private letters, diaries, and autobiographies, but also in their most formal pronouncements” (Wellek and Warren 2019, 59).
- ¹⁴ The Weaver has been abandoned by his beloved; Němcová is at the end of her strength; and Deml has lost his trust in people and his faith in God.
- ¹⁵ In *Tkadleček*, this figure appears in the guise of personified Misfortune; in Němcová’s texts, she addresses her last remaining friend, Vojtěch Náprstek, and Deml speaks to an arbitrarily chosen stranger called Bohumil Malina Ptáček, with whom there exists no relationship in real life. In the contemporary debate on “new sincerity”, a similar pattern is observed; however, what is invoked here is the extratextual instance of the reader (see Kelly 2024, 11–12).
- ¹⁶ Inanimate, for example, is the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem which, since the destruction of their temple in 70 CE, serves the Jewish community as a site of mourning and prayer. Incidentally, one of the oldest known lamentations, the Jeremiade, dating back to the 6th century BCE, also refers to the destruction of the Jewish temple.
- ¹⁷ These rhetorical devices range from harmless interjections such as “Alas”, “Misery”, “ei”, “My God!” (“ach”, “běda”, “aj”, “Bože můj!”) all the way to fierce invectives against the perpetrator of their suffering, such as “oh be cursed by all creation! God himself hates you!” (“bud’ proklato vším stvořením! Buoh sám, ten tě nenavid!”).

REFERENCES

- Černý, Václav. [1963] 1982. *Knížka o babičce*. Toronto: Sixty-Eight Publishers.
- Deml, Jakub. [1934] 1998. *Zapomenuté světlo*. Praha: Hynek.
- Dinzl-Rybářová, Agáta. 2006. *Der “Ackermann aus Böhmen” und der alttschechische “Tkadleček”*. Göttingen: Kümmerle.

- Doležel, Lubomír. 1993. *Narativní způsoby v české literatuře*. Praha: Český spisovatel.
- Jakobson, Roman. [1934] 1995. "Co je poezie?" In *Poetická funkce*, Roman Jakobson, ed. by Miroslav Červenka, trans. by Miroslav Červenka, Milada Chlěbová, and Terezie Pokorná, 23–33. Jinočany: H&H.
- Janáčková, Jaroslava, and Alena Macurová. "Poslední slovesný výkon." In *Řeč dopisů, řeč v dopisech Boženy Němcové*, ed. by Jaroslava Janáčková, Alena Macurová, Lucie Římalová, Stanislav Wimmer, and Helena Baková, 153–163. Praha: ISV.
- Kelly, Adam. 2024. *New Sincerity: American Fiction in the Neoliberal Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lejeune, Philippe. [1975] 1998. "Der autobiographische Pakt." Trans. by Wolfram Bayer and Dieter Hornig. In *Die Autobiographie. Zu Form und Geschichte einer literarischen Gattung*, 2nd ed., ed. by Günter Niggel, 214–257. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Němcová, Božena. 1995. *Lamentace: Dopisy mužům*. Ed. by Jaroslava Janáčková. Praha: Český spisovatel.
- Olič, Jiří. 1993. *Čtení o Jakubu Demlovi*. Olomouc: Votobia.
- Peyre, Henri. [1963] 1969. *Literature and Sincerity*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Rutten, Ellen. 2017. *Sincerity after Communism: A Cultural History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Saaz, Johannes von. 1958. *Death and the Plowman or, The Bohemian Plowman: A Disputatious and Consolatory Dialogue about Death from the Year 1400*. Trans. by Alois Brent and Ernest N. Kirrmann. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Šalda, František Xaver. 1959. "Božena Němcová." In *České medailóny*, František Xaver Šalda, 71–85. Praha: Státní nakladatelství krásné literatury.
- Tepl, Johannes von. [1963] 1997. *Der Ackermann und der Tod*. Stuttgart: Reclam.
- Trilling, Lionel. 1972. *Sincerity and Authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wellek, René, and Austin Warren. [1949] 2019. *Theory of Literature*. New York: Nova.
- Wöll, Alexander, and Jan Jiroušek. 2020. "Deml, Jakub, Zapomenuté světlo." In *Kindler's Literatur Lexikon*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold, 1–2. Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05728-0_10590-1.