University of Glasgow

History of Art

MPhil Thesis

2007

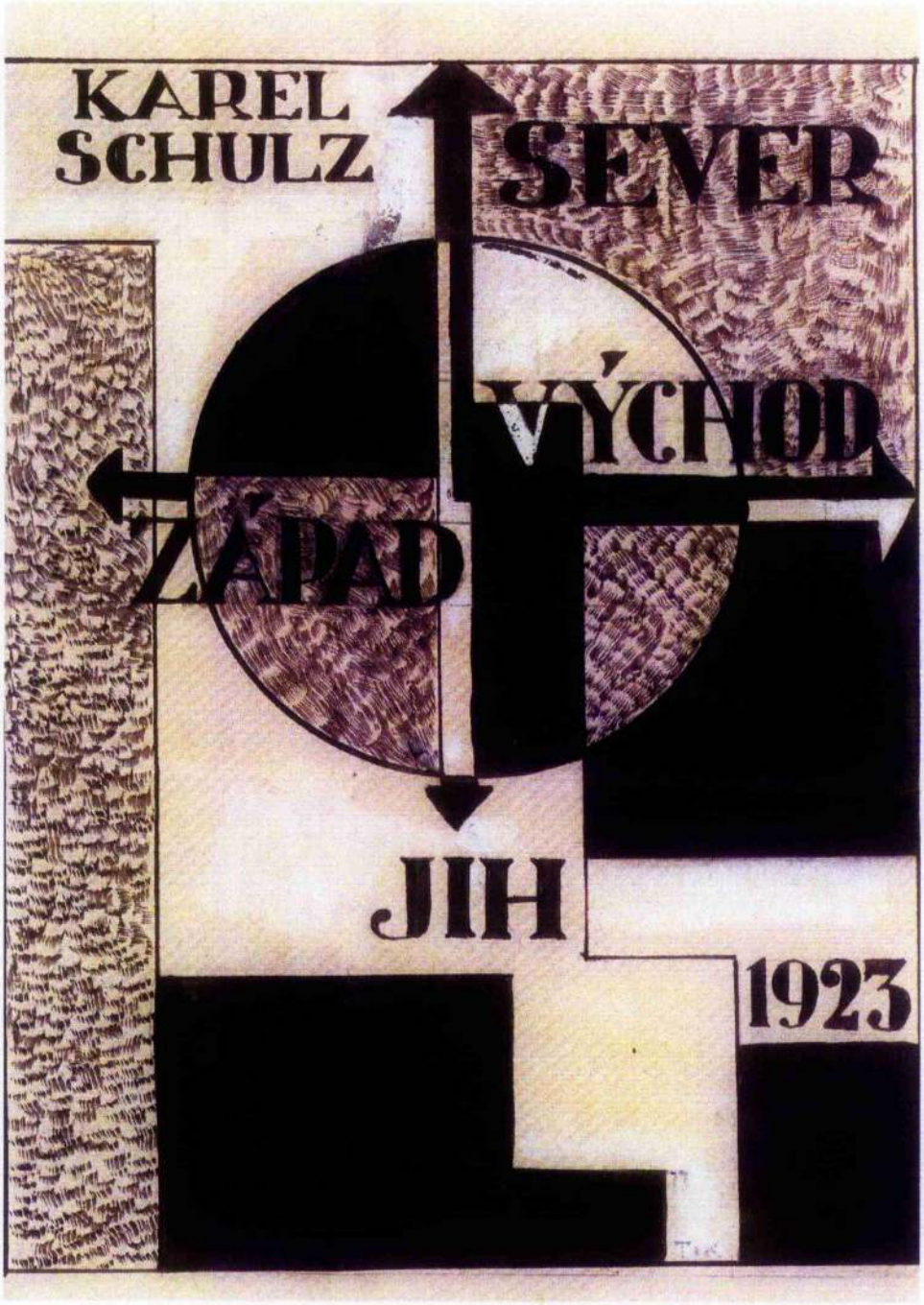
Twentieth-Century Reception and Representation of Czech Modernist Art within the UK and Anglo-American Writings

Rebecca Bell

9906339

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Juliet Kinchin and Paul Stirton for their supervision, considered advice and unerring support. Thanks to Keith Hartley, Jaroslav Anděl, Vojtěch Lahoda and Olga Pujmanová for their time and guidance. I also greatly appreciate the financial support of the AHRC, which facilitated this research. Finally, I am extremely grateful for the help and support of Connie Cullen and Steve Cole.



1. Karel Teige & Jaromir Krejčar *North, West, East and South* 1923

Contents

Synopsis

This thesis surveys the receptions and representation of Czech Modern and Modernist visual art within Anglo-American art historical texts and exhibition spaces from 1906 to the present day. It particularly focuses on the representation and understanding of Czech art within Britain, investigating a series of case studies in the form of exhibitions of Czech Modernism, and seminal texts published on the subject. Through studying the representation of Czech art within British exhibition spaces and institutions, I will question the dominant attitudes and definitions brought to Czech Modernism by Anglo-American writing and curatorial practice. Art historical texts will be supplemented by historical, political, and sociological texts, as well as press releases and journal articles, both by Czech and British authors, in an attempt to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the terms though which Czech Modernist art is represented and received within Britain.

Word Count: 41, 246

List of Illustrations

1. Karel Teige & Jaromir Krejčar
North, West, East and South
1923
Book cover for *North, West, East and South* by Karel Schulz
Decorative Arts Museum, Prague
Source: Jaroslav Anděl, *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*, IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia (Valencia, 1993)

2. Emil Filla
Child near a Forest
1907
Oil on canvas
96 x 138 cm
National Gallery Prague
Source: S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999)

3. Josef Gočar
The Black Madonna House
1911-1912
Prague
Source: *The Black Madonna House: Museum of Czech Cubism*, National Gallery in Prague, guide to the permanent exhibition (Prague, 2004)

4. Josef Mánes
Morning
1857
Oil
National Gallery Prague
Source: Jaroslav Novák and Vlastimil Válek (eds), *Josef Mánes Líbány na Hané* (Prague, 1982)

5. Otto Gutfreund
Němcová Memorial at Ratibořice
1921
Marble
Source: Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

6. Oskar Kokoschka
Portrait of T.G. Masaryk
1935-36
Oil on canvas
Carnegie Museum of Arts, Pittsburgh
Source: Carnegie Museum of Arts, Pittsburgh

7. Emil Kralíček
Nika pro sochu
Saint Jan Nepomucký
1912-13
Spálená, Prague
Source: Photograph by author

8. Zlín Family House
1930
Source: Malcolm Gee, Tim Kirk and Jill Steward (eds), *The City in Central Europe: Culture and Society from 1800 to the present* (Aldershot, c. 1999)

9. East Tilbury
Source: http://images.google.co.uk

10. Otto Gutfreund
Return of the Legionaries
1921
Frieze, Legiobanka, Prague
Source: Peter Cannon-Brookes in collaboration with Jiři Kotalík, Petr Hartmann and Václav Procházka, *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, National Gallery of Wales (London, 1986)

11. Josef Mánes
Month of March
1865
One of twelve calendar medallions for Prague Old Town Hall clock
Prague City Museum
Source: František Kovárna, "Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia", *The Studio*, Vol. 115, no. 542 (May 1938), pp. 236-249

12. Jan Preisler
The Daisy Chain or *Spring*
1906
Oil on canvas
National Gallery Prague
Source: Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

13. Bohumil Kubišta
Triple Portrait
1907
Oil on canvas
86 x 108 cm
National Gallery Prague
Source: S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999)

14. Bohumil Kubišta
Self-portrait with Overcoat
c. 1908
Oil on canvas
92 x 66 x 4 cm
Oblastní galerie výtvarného umění
Source: *Czech Modernism: 1900-1945* The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, 1989)

15. Ludo Fulla
A *Farmer's Wedding*
1957
Oil on canvas
Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava
Source: *Guide to the Slovak National Gallery, Bratislava* (Bratislava, 1995)

16. Henry Moore
UNESCO Reclining Figure
1957
Roman Travertine marble
508 cm
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
Source: http://www.henry-moore-fdn.co.uk/matrix_engine/content.php?page_id=500

17. Emil Filla
Bathers
1911-12
Oil on canvas
125 x 83.5 cm
National Gallery Prague
Source: S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999)

18. Otto Gutfreund
Anxiety
1911-12
Bronze
h. 148 cm
Museum Kampa, Prague
Source: *Otto Gutfreund* Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)

19. Otto Gutfreund
Morning Toilet
1911
Bronze
h. 43 cm
Museum Kampa, Prague
Source: *Otto Gutfreund,* Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)
Otto Gutfreund

20. *Hamlet*
1912-13
Bronze
h. 68 cm
Museum Kampa, Prague
Source: *Otto Gutfreund* Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)

21. Otto Gutfreund
Don Quixote
1911-12
Bronze
h. 38 cm
Museum Kampa, Prague
Source: *Otto Gutfreund* Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)

22. Stanislav Sucharda
Monument to František Palacký (Detail)
1898-1912
Prague
Source: Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

23. Ladislav Jan Šaloun
Monument to Jan Hus
1900-1915
Prague
Source: Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

24. Josef Zítek
National Theatre Prague
1867-1877
Source: Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

25. Otto Gutfreund
Industry
1923
Bronze
h. 36 cm
Museum Kampa, Prague
Source: *Otto Gutfreund* Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)

26. Hana Wichterlová
Composition
1929-1930
Bronze
424 x 560 cm

27. National Gallery Prague
Source: Peter Cannon-Brookes in collaboration with Jiři Kotalík, Petr Hartmann and Václav Procházka, *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, National Gallery of Wales (London, 1986)

28. Zdeněk Pešánek
Monument to the Pilots Killed during the War
1924-5
Model
10 x 18 x 18 cm
Benedict Rejt Gallery, Louny
Source: S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999)

29. Karel Teige
Travel Postcard
1923
Collage: halftone, letterpress, tempera, and ink
32.5 x 24.5 cm
Gallery of the City of Prague
Source: *Czech Modernism: 1900-1945* The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, 1989)

Introduction

Due to post-1989 archive accessibility and increased scholarly communication, Central European Modernist art is an area of increasing interest to Western research. The Arts and Humanities Research Council's ring-fenced funding for scholarship in this field is demonstrative of the subject's current status in Britain. This thesis analyses definitions of Czech Modern and Modernist art within Anglo-American writings and exhibitions from 1906 to 2006, comparing more recent scholarship and exhibitions to pre-1989 interpretations and descriptions.

European Modernism is often understood as a series of elaborations on models established in such artistic centres as Paris, Berlin and Vienna. British and Czech interpretations of Modernism have frequently assumed a peripheral role to European definitions. Considerable current interest in Central European Modernism makes the issues which arise in this thesis pertinent to contemporary scholarship: the V&A's exhibition *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939* (2006) is just one example of burgeoning interest in adjusting wider histories of European Modernism. Scholarly interest in this field provokes the question, how can an academic vocabulary be established that crosses borderlines without falling into ambivalent discussions of nationhood?

Definitions of Central Europe frequently employ a cultural map or geography to describe links and relationships to a wider European context, imposing a coherent identity that in reality is composed of diverse ethnic groups and histories. Czech art is often placed at the 'centre' or 'crossroads' of this map, and as a result is

recurrently described as a 'receptacle' of external influence: geographical terms are used as a means of locating and chartering Czech visual art, often through Western standards and landmarks. Karel Teige & Jaromir Krejčar *North, West, East and South,* 1923 (plate 1), is an illustration of how this notion of Czechoslovakia as the heart of a European crossroads also influenced visual art. The analysis of geographical vocabulary as a tool will be central to this thesis, and the origins of related terms will be explored. Czech authors writing for British audiences in the first fifty years of the twentieth-century are largely responsible for the notion of a 'cultural map', with Bohemia and Czechoslovakia at its heart, often using associated terms to indicate national independence from political centres like Vienna, whilst participating in the Modernist aim for internationalism.

Up until more recent publications, writers use a chronology of great events within Czech history, largely formulated during the Czech National Awakening of the nineteenth-century, to justify Czech Modernist art's inclusion in accepted European art historical chronologies. Due to the 'unknown' nature of Czech Modernism, writers throughout the twentieth-century feel obliged to include these historical contexts, which whilst often relevant to the aims of the artists discussed, participate in a repetitive vocabulary that is frequently generalised and restrictive, disallowing more nuanced socio-political readings. As the texts under survey will demonstrate, national, historical and geographical information on Bohemia and Czechoslovakia is used to compensate for a British lack of knowledge on the subject of Czech art.

Themes of national identity in relation to Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, the Czech

Republic, Moravia and Slovakia, are prominent within the texts discussed in this thesis. During the period under survey Czechoslovakia was created and dismantled, as was its relationship to Western and Eastern European nations and critical traditions. My thesis, like the texts under discussion, is part of a two-way process of modifying perceptions of Czech Modernism that has been continuous since the time the art was first produced. On the one hand, my study explores the impact of ideological and political change on the discipline of art history, whilst on the other, reveals a striking consistency in certain core concepts and approaches which arise in texts published from 1906 to 2006. The first part of this process can be seen in the inclusion of national symbols, and a participation in Czech historical constructs which are used as tools for illuminating Czech modern art in many of the texts under discussion. Communist ideology and restrictions on accessibility to information also impact the work shown and influence approaches to art history. The second part of the process relates to the use of geographical terminology and a 'mapping' methodology which is repeated in various forms within the publications surveyed. In conjunction with these issues, my central question is: how is the culture of this region understood and represented within gallery spaces and related Anglo-American writings, and who are responsible for the core concepts and definitions used?

These core concepts and definitions are in a constant relationship with the central notion of 'Czech Modernism' itself, which also requires definition. Throughout this introduction I capitalise this term, and in so doing I mean to indentify a specific critical tradition. Many of the post-1989 texts use this term to encompass a period of modern art, modernity, modernist activity and Czech avant-garde artists and groups.

For instance, this is seen in the title of key exhibition catalogue, *Czech Modernism: 1900-1945*, held at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, 1989). Whilst this phrase could appear to generalise Modernism and subsume all activity from 1900 to 1945 within this category, for my thesis the term Czech Modernism is intended to indicate a critical as well as artistic tradition, and I use it as such in this introduction. As a critical tradition it appears in various forms throughout the texts discussed in this thesis. I hope to understand the establishment of an English language critical vocabulary surrounding Czech Modernist and Modern art.

Throughout the thesis when I discuss specific avant-garde groups and modern artists, I will not capitalise modern or modernist. I use avant-garde to describe artists whose works were deliberately "experimental, who set out to discover new forms, techniques and subject matter in the arts".[1] Though avant-garde artists may often carry out modernist practice, or be described as modernists, Modernism itself is a wider reaching definition. I will frequently employ the term modern, by which I mean a work that breaks with previous styles, for instance the rejection of traditional Academy forms of art. A clear example of this is Cubism, which was clearly different to previous styles. I adhere to definitions outlined by Art Historian Charles Harrison. He states that whilst modern and modernist art can be seen as en expression of political and technological activity, this makes it a purely twentieth-century phenomenon, also implying it was a natural tendency rather than an option.[2] However, modern and modernist art was also about an aim for independence from social and political concerns. This is a key factor which can deem a work, artist or

[1] Martin Gray, A Dictionary of Literary Terms (York, 1992), p. 38
[2] Charles Harrison, Modernism (London, 1997), pp. 11-12

group modernist: "a critical self-consciousness... in the face of modernity".[3]

A critical awareness of this subject is seen in relation to an exhibition that will be discussed in chapter four: *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*, held in the IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, curated by Jaroslav Anděl. Anděl states in the introduction to this catalogue:

> "Modernism" and "the avant-garde" are terms that are often felt to be interchangeable. This exhibition, however, pursues a more specific notion of the avant-garde, one which reserves the term for those movements and works that questioned both the artist's role in society and the institution of art itself.[4]

Through highlighting key texts and exhibitions that punctuate this period I aim to demonstrate the role of key agencies, individuals, and organisations in the construction of, and participation in established notions of, art historical and national identities. Which writers and curators are responsible for constructing notions of 'Czechness' and definitions of Czech art for Anglo-American audiences, and what approaches do they use to communicate these notions to readers who may have little knowledge of the subject concerned? As I study these issues I will consider the impact of ideological and political change on the discipline of art history, with particular reference to the reception of Czech Modernism. I also aim to analyse the continuities and divergences between Western European, British and Czech perspectives, especially given the importance attached to internationalism in Modernist art – how internationalist was Czech Modernism? The majority of the pre-

[3] Ibid, p. 27
[4] Jaroslav Anděl, "Introduction", *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*, (Valencia, 1993), p.9

1989 texts discussed in this thesis display a tendency towards viewing Czech artists and groups as Francophile. The work of Czech artists indicates German and Russian influences as well as French. These issues are addressed in the pluralist readings of Czech modern art found in post-1989 texts.

The period under survey extends from 1906 to 2006. A lengthy period has been chosen for two reasons: firstly, due to the limited published resources and scarcity of exhibitions in the UK a wider framework allows a more comprehensive picture of the representation of Czech art in Britain, or lack thereof; and secondly to convey the striking consistency of vocabulary and concepts used in the exhibition catalogues and publications concerning Czech Modern and Modernist art throughout the twentieth-century. A gap between 1926 and 1938 is seen between chapters one and two as a period from which I did not locate any key texts to contribute to my discussion. Due to their prominent role as resources in English translation since 1989, I will also be consulting American publications. I have used Czech texts wherever possible for comparison.

A large part of my dissertation will concentrate on the problematic establishment of a vocabulary to describe and compare Central European definitions and ideologies to those of Western Europe since 1989. I will question whether new attitudes developed in Anglo-American writing since 1989 provide a better vantage point from which to view pre-1939 Czech art, which may have been distorted over the last fifty years.
I will focus on Czech Modernist painting and sculpture. Architecture will be referred to as a central expression of modernist criteria, as well as a mode of theoretical

exchange between Czechoslovakia and Britain. Design will also be briefly considered.

The majority of exhibitions on the subject deem Czech Modernism as extending from roughly 1900 to 1945. Whilst I attempt to cover exhibitions of art from throughout this period, the thesis largely concerns early Czech modern art and Modernism (1900 to the 1920s) as this is the main period represented in Britain. The representation therefore largely dictates which forms of Czech art are discussed in this thesis, an issue which in itself is demonstrative of how the decisions of key organisations have governed Anglo-American understandings of Czech Modernism.

Post-1989 exhibitions begin to alter this, and demonstrate a wider coverage of Czech Modernism. Texts published since then also offer a more nuanced and detailed understanding of the period under survey. These include *Czech Modernism: 1900-1945* The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, 1989), S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999) and the LA County Museum of Art *Between Worlds: a sourcebook of Central European avant-gardes 1910-1930* (2002). Whilst using these texts as sources of information, I mean to clarify problematic assumptions and uses of vocabulary used within the said texts, especially if relevant to the earlier articles and catalogues they are being used to illuminate. It would be impossible for me to write on this subject, with limited Czech, without the use of the above publications. However, they are loaded with specific methodologies and approaches, and often confer meaning that would not have been applicable to the periods under discussion. One of the central aims of this

thesis is to analyse these approaches and methodologies, and compare them to contemporary texts where available.

Chapter One (1900-1926)

Czech national identity: the exhibition as testament to the industrial and cultural success of Bohemia, and the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic

The term 'Bohemia' had specific connotations for the British public during the period considered in this chapter, namely the first twenty years of the twentieth-century. The term 'Bohemian' still connotes an alternative lifestyle, beyond the alleged conventions of the majority of a particular society.

In October 1907, Lloyd Williams of the *Weekly Sun* reviewed Arthur Ransome's recent publication *Bohemia in London*. Lloyd voices a query: where is Bohemia? This apparently geographical question, asked by other reviewers of the same publication, is in fact ideological. Lloyd provides Ransome's answer to the question:

> Where is Bohemia? Is it in London or Paris, in Chelsea or the Quartier? Must we look for it in Rome, or is its capital Soho? If Bloomsbury lies within the limits of its kingdom and Fleet Street is its metropolis, is Brixton a geographical constituent of the realm of Bohemia, or Islington?... Bohemia is like the Kingdom of Heaven; it is hidden in a man's heart; it is a mode of life, the life of the poor artist, actor, and writer; the man who has shaken off the trammels of conventional life and sings a more or less vagabond song in poverty.[5]

[5] Lloyd Williams "Our Book of the Week", *Weekly Sun*, 12th October 1907

The texts discussed in this chapter contain similar queries regarding the location of Bohemia. These, however, are queries regarding the term as a noun which refers to a nation, not an adjective for a certain branch of cultural endeavour. Despite the fact that the texts I will discuss refer to the Kingdom of Bohemia proper, the characteristics of mystery and charm ascribed to the country itself by many writings in English, resemble the characteristics assigned to Bohemianism as a fashion.

The appeal of Bohemia and Czechoslovakia to Anglo-American audiences and writers often stems from a sense of the unknown, which is only encouraged by the vocabulary used in Czech texts and by authors originating from Bohemia and Czechoslovakia. To avoid the vagueness which can result from writing on the 'unknown', and to make their descriptions place-specific, Czech and Anglo-American writers often use a geographical terminology, in order to locate Bohemia and Czechoslovakia on a both physical and cultural map. As the texts consulted in this chapter will show, writers for exhibitions of Bohemian (later Czechoslovakian) art frequently aimed to overcome this vagueness by educating their audiences, using art as a means of accessing wider discussions of their nation and history.

This chapter will discuss publications from 1900 to the early 1920s. In 1918, the Kingdom of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia were united as the Czechoslovak Republic. Multiple ethnicities constituted the Republic, and the plurality of the new state is often overlooked in twentieth-century publications on Bohemia and Czechoslovakia, even though it was acknowledged by founders of the Czechoslovakian Republic. Though this thesis concerns Czech art and 'Czechness',

co-habiting ethnic groups must be acknowledged. In some cases the term Czech is ambiguous, apparently encompassing other racial groups. Czech identity often subsumed Slovak national identity, which caused tensions after the initial agreement for the need of a Czechoslovak state in opposition to Austrian and Hungarian dominance. Whilst Czech national identity was being affirmed, parallel activities were taking place amongst Slovaks. Signifiers of national identity such as a Slovak literary language were overlooked by key Czech figures like T.G. Masaryk. It was not until the creation of the Czechoslovak Socialist Federal Republic in 1968 that both nations had their own government and legislative means. The two countries eventually separated in 1993.

The nineteenth-century was considered the period of Czech National Awakening, and 1918 was the year in which that nation, whose language and history had been venerated within the period of Awakening as symbols of the need for independence, found its protection within the structure of a state. Late professor of Anthropology, Ladislav Holy, points out in *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* that the term 'state', would later be associated with its connotations of Communist domination.[6]

The central texts to be discussed in this chapter are chosen to provide a range of viewpoints in English from this period, on Bohemia and its art, and the newly formed Czechoslovakia. The first of these is a catalogue which accompanied the Bohemian Section of the 1906 Austro-Hungarian Exhibition held at Earl's Court, London. The

[6] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 51

exhibition focused on industry and craft, but the stand for the show was designed by Czech Cubist, Josef Gočar. The second text to be discussed is a survey of Bohemia: Will S. Munroe's *Bohemia and the Čechs* [sic] of 1910. This can be described as travel writing, and demonstrates the exotic and romantic image assigned to Bohemia. A political account of the formation of Czechoslovakia published in 1918, *Independent Bohemia: an account of the Czecho-Slovak struggle for liberty*, by Vladimir Nosek, will also be consulted. Finally, I will refer to the early seminal text *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art* published by Routledge in 1924, London, written by Czech art historians Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth.

Will S. Munroe's *Bohemia and the Čechs* [sic] of 1910 provides a context for considering publications in Britain from this period. Munroe begins the book by informing the reader that his is the "first general work of travel and description on Bohemia in English".[7] He claims that his interest in Bohemia began with a book on the life of spiritual leader, John Amos Komensky, for the Great Educator Series, as requested by Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University. An elaboration on the title of this book reads "The history, people, institutions, and the geography of the Kingdom, together with accounts of Moravia and Silesia". [8] He thus separates the 'Čechs' from the geographical territories of Moravia and Silesia, locating 'Czechness' within the geographical boundaries of Bohemia. Munroe also emphasises the international image of Prague, considered central to Czech Modern art, the polycentric nature of which has only been fully considered in post-1989 publications.

---

[7] Ibid, p. v
[8] Will S. Munroe *Bohemia and the Cechs* [sic] (London, 1910), title page

Will S. Munroe introduces his book by stating that he aims to look at the "human side" of Bohemia.[9] He will consider Bohemian history, particularly the "Golden Age" of Charles IV "which witnessed the establishment of Čech [sic] as a literary language, the foundation of the university of Prague, and the development of a national school of art…".[10] Through mentioning of the University of Prague, the national school of art and Czech as a national language, Munroe positions himself as supporter of Czech identity as independent from German, topical in light of nineteenth-century National Awakening in Bohemia. Particular to this is the emphasis on Czech language as a means towards national identity. Munroe concludes the foreword is by stating that the author will not use the German spelling of geographic names, though he knows this is contrary to the "practice of most American and English writers", as he believes there is "no good reason for the use of German spellings".[11] Munroe thus participates in a Czech signifier of national independence, and uses it as a tool for establishing Czech cultural endeavour in a positive manner. This tool will be used by British and Czech authors throughout the texts discussed in this thesis.

Another method used by Anglo-American and Czech authors to communicate the high quality and independence of Czech cultural achievement is the frequent referral to the country's combined arts and industry. This is found in many early twentieth-century descriptions of Bohemia and Czechoslovakia, known for its domestic and

[9] Ibid, p. vii
[10] Ibid
[11] Ibid, p. x

home industries, its glass and needlework. The 1906 exhibition catalogue, to be discussed, provides a Czech perspective on this.

Industry denotes progress and modernity. Munroe begins Chapter XXI: "Modern Prague" by stating, "Not only is Prague one of the most interesting medieval cities of Europe…but it is also a handsome modern city"[12]. He quantifies the modern nature of Prague through the fact that over the previous one hundred years, the numerous institutions founded there "give evidence of the virility and artistry of the Bohemian people". [13] As one of the most prominent of these he describes the University of Prague (founded 1791), which marked a step in the Bohemian National Awakening. However, it was the Bohemian National Museum (1818) that "gave the movement its greatest impulse", serving as a "rallying point for the young patriots", mainly expressed through the museum journal which was started in 1827 (*Časopis musea kralovství českého*). [14] Thus a centre of culture becomes symbolic of national identity and achievement. Munroe declares the Rudolphinum "the modern temple of Bohemian art", and expresses admiration for the museum of industrial arts, and a modern gallery of Bohemian paintings.[15]

Munroe lists representative artists housed within the latter. Munroe's list is one that will reoccur in twentieth-century catalogues and articles. He writes that there are works by Joza Úprka, Josef Mánes and František Kupka, as well as sculptures by Josef Myslbek and František Bílek. In listing these artists Munroe chooses those he

[12] Ibid, p. 405
[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid, p. 406
[15] Ibid, pp.409 & 411

believes to be known for their particular 'Czechness', distinctive in their ties to either Czech identity (for example Myslbek and Bílek) or, in the instance of Úprka or Mánes, national associations. (Mánes was declared 'national artist' in the nineteenth-century.) The inclusion of Kupka as typically 'Czech' is characteristic of later lists, despite his lengthy residence in Paris.

Munroe supports the relationship between national identity and Czech, or Bohemian, art by writing that there are not enough public monuments to meet the numbers of great national heroes and spiritual leaders of Czech history. However, the country is "one vast forest of religious effigies, most of which belong to the debased Baroque period. Measured by artistic standards they are in the main veritable eye-sores".[16] He is apparently unaware of the influence of Baroque art on Czech Cubism, which will be indicated in many of the following texts. The unfashionable nature of the Baroque within (particularly British) art history is an issue that is beginning to be addressed today, and that is relevant to Czech Modernism.

Munroe completes Chapter XXI by mentioning the numerous public libraries, schools and societies to be found in Prague, as well as clubs, including an Anglo-American club. He emphasises the aforementioned international character of Prague by stating that the United States, England and Germany have consulates in Prague. There are also increasing numbers of tourists beginning to "discover Bohemia". But he concludes "...Prague is still altogether too little known by the great army of American and English tourists that visit Munich, Dresden and Carlsbad annually"[17].

[16] Ibid, p. 415
[17] Munroe, page 417

Even at this stage, Czech culture is seen as an example of modern achievement, to be visited and admired. Post-1989 texts will similarly promote Czech culture as a means of understanding both modernity and culture. The foreword for a catalogue accompanying 1990 exhibition *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s* held in the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford ends: "After forty years of enforced isolation, Czechoslovakia is once again at the heart of a debate about the role of culture in modern life."[18]

Munroe's dissatisfaction with the tourist's knowledge of modern Bohemia also compares to the comment of Peter Cannon-Brooks, in the catalogue produced to accompany an exhibition of Czech sculpture (1800-1938) in The National Museum of Wales in 1983:

> ...Even today mention of Prague immediately evokes a response normally associated with distant, exotic lands...Today the capital of both Bohemia (the Western province of modern Czechoslovakia) and of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Prague is one of the most unspoiled cities of Europe and the growing number of English-speaking visitors attest to its popularity[19].

Writers on this subject often simultaneously praise Prague for being "unspoiled" and historic, whilst admiring its modern traits. This binary will be recur throughout this thesis. Party to this is the concept of Bohemia, later Czechoslovakia, as ready for Western consumption. The striking consistency between the terminology of authors writing so many years apart demonstrates the ongoing lack of Anglo-American knowledge of Czech culture.

---

[18] Rees & Elliot, *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s*, (Oxford, 1990), p.7

[19] Peter Cannon-Brooks *Czech Sculpture 1800-1938* (London 1983), page 5

Munroe writes of Bohemia in a manner that parallels the sentiments and political atmosphere of the nation itself, which would rid itself of its position within the Austro-Hungarian Empire eight years after Munroe's work was published.
The Czechoslovak Republic was founded as a result of the 'peaceful' revolution of the 28th of October 1918. Definitions of the term 'revolution' in relation to the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic are often problematical in historical texts on the subject. Historian Harry Hanak states in his article "Czech Historians and the End of Austria-Hungary" (1988), that as early as 1926 the Marxist biographer of T.G. Masaryk, Zdenek Nejedly, critically analysed Masaryk's concept of revolution.[20] Nejedly claimed Masaryk "...Led the minority against the majority, and in a truly revolutionary manner gave preference to the better minority over the worse majority".[21] Masaryk, points out Hanak, was in favour of moral revolutions, "but then every revolutionary regarded his revolution as moral".[22]
The 'morality' of the new state was an idea that occupied Masaryk, and the issue of moral rights and worth is discussed by Vaclav Havel in his writings sixty years later.

On the 6th of November 1919, an article entitled "A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals" was published in *The Times*. In this article, Masaryk states that the new Republic would need a firm "moral basis" and "uprightness in all

[20] Harry Hanak & Denis Deletant (ed.s), *Historians as Nation Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, (London, 1988)
[21] Ibid, p.71
[22] Ibid, p.71

our activities".[23] He continues that the independent Republic was achieved because of a shared "burning faith in our national ideals".[24] Like the democratic Republic of America, the State and Church would be separated, though this would not mean any "loosening of moral bonds".[25]

Masaryk concludes with a call for plurality, namely the need to recognise the national and linguistic rights of the racial minorities within the republic.

> To meet all our tasks successfully we must get rid of the old disputes with regard to language and nationality, which so crippled Austria-Hungary. Our national policy will not be chauvinistic.[26]

The final sentence states that the main aim will be to bring about "national tolerance", so that racial minorities will be able to live in the Republic with their "national life undisturbed".[27] The latter implies that the nation and state are not co-dependent, as a racial group's national life can be separate to other national lives within a state. The Czech and Slovak nations had been subsumed within the Austrian-Hungarian state for so long that their sense of united nation came before state, though the latter was desired. Dr. Stránský, leader of the Moravian People's Party delivered a speech to the Reichstrat on June 12, 1917, stating, "If the interests of a state are not identical with the liberties of a nation, then *such a state has for that*

---

[23] T.G. Masaryk, "A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals", *The Times*, Nov 06 1919 [04/10/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl_TTDA
[24] Ibid
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid
[27] Ibid

nation no right to exist".[28] Such statements provide a basis of national significance on which many of the art historical texts to be discussed rely.

Masaryk's article in the British press promotes the moral and national values of Czechoslovak society and culture. In contrast to Munroe's writing, Masaryk emphasises plurality and multiple ethnicities, rather than devoting himself to all things Czech. However, the two texts are similar in their assurance that the Czech nation, or Czechoslovak nation in Masaryk's case, is one of great worth, history and modern achievement. This is a vocabulary which informs contemporary publications on art. Writing on art and politics from this period both convey the notion that Czechoslovakia is privileged by its geographical position. Minister of Interior to-be, Edvard Beneš, shared Masaryk's vision for the Czechoslovak Republic. Both men believed that Europe would benefit from a strong and democratic Russia, which could mainly be achieved through commercial links. According to the director of a bank in Prague in 1919, in this respect Czechoslovakia could act as a "bridge between East and West".[29] This is reiterated by historian Igor Lukes, "from the beginning, Masaryk and Beneš conceived of Czechoslovakia as a country that would be woven tightly into the fabric of Western Europe", whilst keeping an eye on the 'East'.[30] This could also be applied to Czech modern art, and will be many of the texts to be discussed.

---

[28] Cited by Vladimir Nosek, *Independent Bohemia: An Account of the Czecho-Slovak Struggle for Liberty*, (London, 1918), p. 117
[29] Cited by Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia Between Stalin and Hitler* (Oxford, 1996), p.12
[30] Ibid, p.6

Masaryk and Beneš were exiled abroad during World War One, so much of the negotiation with allies for the recognition of Czechoslovakia as a state took place outwith the nations concerned. However, groups promoting the union were active within Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia too. Linked to this is the controversy that arose from opinions on who was responsible for the forming of the state. Just as historians question the origin of the Czechoslovak State, art historians must question which writers have been responsible for defining Czech art for that non-specific region, the West. Hanak discusses what he calls the bourgeoisie question: who had contributed most to victory? Had the Czechoslovaks fought for independence, or was it a gift from the allies? Art historical documents and catalogues attempt to allot an inherently international character to Czech Modernism due to the geographical location of the country, and relevant to this aim, the very basis of the state calls into play issues of nation and relationships to international influence.

The debate in art history can be settled so some extent through a belief in continuous discourse and exchange. This is also applicable to historical writers. Czech historian Milada Paulová saw an organic link between Czechoslovakia and abroad, first writing during the 1920s and 1930s, and then significantly coming back to these ideas during the political and social upheaval of 1968. In 1968 she wrote that the struggle took place both abroad and at home but, "In reality the yearning for independence was born out of the will of the nation and its final historical decision to destroy Austria-Hungary."[31]

[31] Ibid, p.73

Opinions on Russia's involvement in the process also vary. *Hrad* historian Jaroslav Papousek argued that the Russians took interest in the Czechs only after the West had taken the lead. The West's involvement in the Czech question was highlighted for Russia by Masaryk's lecture of October 1915 at King's College in London, which inaugurated the first teaching post in Slavonic Studies at the University of London. The newly founded School of Slavonic Studies at King's College London was seen as a symbol of the importance of Slavonic culture in the West. In 1915 Masaryk was appointed lecturer there, and British Prime Minister Mr. Asquith sent a message to Masaryk's inaugural lecture welcoming this teacher whose "power and learning is felt throughout the Slav world".[32] He continues, "We believe that his presence here will be a link to strengthen the sympathy which unites the people of Russia and Great Britain."[33] Asquith's sentiments appear to support Czechoslovakia's aim to be a bridge between 'east' and 'west'.

This ambition could also be allotted to what Hugh Seton-Watson deems the optimism surrounding "the fate of small nations", which was large in the minds of the founders of the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies at the University of London, for whom Seton-Watson writes.[34]

> There was a widespread view in the age of Woodrow Wilson that in some sense small nations were more virtuous than big, and also new nations than old.[35]

---

[32] Ibid, p. 85
[33] Ibid
[34] Hugh Seton-Watson "On Trying to be a Historian of Eastern Europe", Harry Hanak & Denis Deletant (ed.s), *Historians as Nation Builders* (London,1988), p. 6
[35] Ibid

Similar hopes were placed in the League of Nations. This optimism is often voiced in the writings of Czech and British Modernist artists of the 1930s, as will be seen in the writing of Oskar Kokoschka in chapter two.

The role of educational institutions is vital within a national awakening, or as a symbol of a nation's establishment. Such is the case with the University of Prague. The education of Czechs is a recurring reason given within texts on the subject for national pride. Vladimir Nosek wrote in 1918 that one of the many reasons for which the Czecho-Slovaks should be given independence is their "high degree of civilisation", one of the most civilised and democratic in Europe, based upon their education, and talents in the arts.[36] In his opinion, the Czechs (read as encompassing Slovaks) are the most advanced of all Slavs. He provides statistical evidence, without disclosing a source, that 94.5% of Czechs can read and write compared to 92% of Austrians and Germans, and only 40% of Magyars.[37] Nosek does not specify to which language he refers in relation to the Magyars.

As discussed, the vocabulary established by political and historical texts of this period parallels that of exhibition catalogues in their promotion of the cultural wealth of Czech civilisation. One such parallel is the claim that Czechoslovakia is culturally advantaged by its position in the centre of Europe. Nosek claims that with the assistance of Poland, Italy, Yugoslavia and Rumania, Bohemia (he slips into old terminology) will "form the very centre of the anti-German barrier" to prevent

[36] Vladimir Nosek, *Independent Bohemia: An Account of the Czecho-Slovak Struggle for Liberty*. (London, 1918), p. 167
[37] Ibid

German penetration of the East, Near East and the Adriatic.[38] Central Europe can stop the expansionist 'Pan-German' plans of Mitteleuropa.

The Bohemian or Czech establishment of nationhood within Austria-Hungary incorporates both the 're-chartering' of nation within state and cultural territory, through the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic. Artists were also 're-chartering' aesthetic territory, and looking to external influence. Many art historians suggest that the interest in such movements was part of the "freshly liberated Czechs" bid to join European intellectual circles.[39] By this, they often mean French influence, frequently missing out German and Russian influences. The tension between the Czechs' social identity and Europeanism caused dynamic results as well as a polarity that, according to Petr Wittlich, had to be overcome by "creative synthesis".[40] This critical tension with surrounding culture allots a modernist character to early twentieth-century Czech art.

The influence of contemporary activity in French art is shown through the interest of early twentieth-century Czech modern artists in primitivism and the past, and stylistically by the 'new reality' or formal language of Cubism. Parallels can be found with artistic developments in Paris at this time. Czech Cubist painter Josef Čapek stated:

[38] Ibid, p. 159
[39] *Frantisek Bilek (1872-1941)*, City Gallery Prague, 2000, p.15
[40] Ibid

> Artists should employ their own ways and means to create something more than a replica of reality. They should create a different, new thing of their own, and not just a mirror image[41].

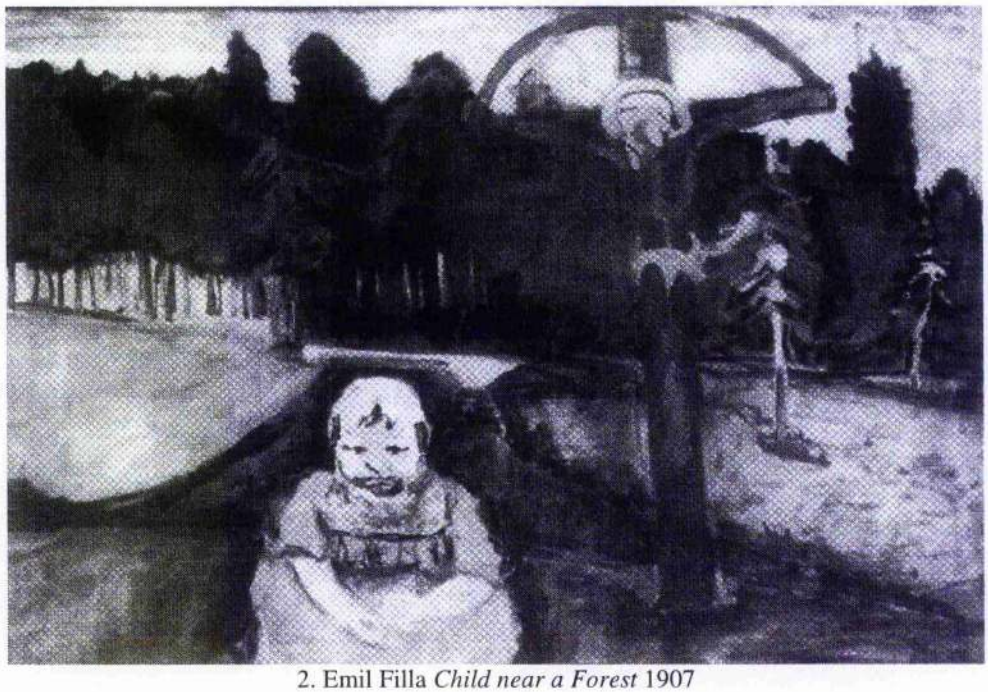
Čapek spent time in Paris from 1910-1911, and again in 1913. During this period Paris was an important cultural centre. One explanation is that Paris offered an alternative to Vienna and Berlin, though this is simplistic and partakes in the anti-German feeling that will be seen in Matějček's publication. For Čapek, primitive art was religious and mystic as well as simple and real, the concrete suffused with spirit. Interest in primitivism was triggered by Maurice Denis's article "On the Artlessness of the Primitives", which was published in art journal *Volné Směry* in 1911.

The influence of Denis's religious iconography can be seen in works such as Czech artist Emil Filla's *Child Near a Forest* (1907). Denis's work linked Symbolism and early abstract art in its expressive qualities, symbolic motifs and interest in the decorative nature of the canvas surface. Denis wrote in 1890, "It is through the canvas itself, a flat surface bathed in colour, that our emotions…are provoked.[42] Like Denis, Filla draws attention to the flat surface of the canvas, as seen through the flattened perspective of *Child Near a Forest* (plate 2). Another of Filla's main influences in the composition of his works was El Greco, an interest shared by artists Max Beckmann and Oskar Kokoschka. The expressive emphasis of his paintwork and colour was also influenced by artist Edvard Munch: a retrospective of Munch's work had been held in Prague in 1905.

---

[41] *Josef Capek: The Humblest Art*, Municipal House, Prague 2004, p.49
[42] Maurice Denis, "Definition of Neo-Traditionism" (1890), Harrison and Wood, Art in Theory 1815-1900 (Oxford, 1998) p. 867

A key difference between Denis and Filla is that Denis saw primitivism and classicism as opposites, Filla, saw primitive art as the initial stage of the artistic development that would finally lead to classicism ("The perfect mastery of reality through abstraction, through form"[43]). Filla articulated this in his article "On the Virtue of Neo-Primitivism", in which he described the parallels between the primitive art of Giotto and the primitivism of his era, via French Cubism.[44] Filla's theory again points to the notion of continuity between past and future. This parallels the modernist interest in the margin or periphery of art, away from accepted forms, into a region where new forms beyond the traditionally accepted can be explored.



2. Emil Filla *Child near a Forest* 1907

French Cubism and Primitivism place this discussion within the context of Western European art, specifically Paris where many of Czech artists went during this period.

---

[43] Ibid, p.42

[44] Emil Filla, "On the Virtue of Neo-Primitivism," Volné Směry (1912), Between Worlds (LA, 2002), pp. 95-98

However the influence of El Greco, Beckmann, Kokokoschka and Munch show a wider reaching understanding of European art and its history. This if often neglected in the texts discussed in this thesis, which tend towards a Francophile reading of Czech art.

One possible explanation for this is that whilst the avant-garde aimed for international cooperation, Official cultural policies often encouraged nationalism. According to art historian Akos Moravanszky, the nations that succeeded the Habsburg Empire found themselves confronted with the potential of old dreams finally fulfilled, whilst having to establish a sense of nationhood in areas populated by many different ethnic groups. Masaryk's aspirations towards united ethnic groups demonstrate the reality of this situation in the newly formed Czechoslovakia. Katherine David-Fox in her article 'The Hidden Geography of Czech Modernism' (*Slavic Review*, Vol.59, 2000) focuses on cultural cohesion, in which currents of influence and artistic production seem to well up from a loose sense of geographical place. This introduces the idea of 'hidden' influence, which Moravanszky unearths in his non-chronological reference of texts and figures to create a sense of the "unified infrastructure of the Habsburg Empire". [45] Similarly, David-Fox creates a linear cultural geography that links Vienna, Prague and Berlin, mainly via the interchange of journals and the movement of key figures via improved public transport, between the three cities.

[45] Akos Moravanszky, *Competing Visions* (MIT, 1998) preface, xi

David-Fox states: "...beneath the nationalist geographies of the region, stamped by obvious antagonisms, there arose alternative, hidden geographies that embodied the cultural possibilities of the future"[46]. She chooses Berlin, Vienna and Prague as the centres of these "alternative" links. Like Moravanszky, she throws a net of cross-references, using a loose sense of 'the new' as a means of choosing those references, across a geographical map, and attempts to build a cultural map. This approach to what James Elkins calls 'writing about the World's Art' connects a wide selection of often apparently disconnected facts, and encompasses them into a conceptual region.[47] Central Europe perhaps allows this more than other world sites as its definition remains vague.

Encompassing Czechoslovakia in a net of cross-references, both as a nation and in terms of the art produced there, is applicable to the period discussed in this chapter. In the earlier part of this period, Czech, or Bohemian, art was still introduced to the West as a branch of Austro-Hungarian creation. In 1906 an Austrian Exhibition was held at Earl's Court in London, the Bohemian section within which received no mention in contemporary press. The Bohemian section was divided into sectors representing the history and appearance of Bohemia and its industries. The exhibition aimed to introduce the British audience to a little-known territory. This purpose is seen even in present-day publications on the subject.

The catalogue for the Bohemian Section opens with an address to the visitors from the executive committee. It begins by stating that this exhibition is intended to

[46] David-Fox, p.760
[47] James Elkins *How is it Possible to Write about World's Art*, ARS 2/2003, pp.75-81 http://www.dejum.sav.sk/RES/elkins.htm

introduce the English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish visitor to the "*real Bohemian* and his work and to destroy thus the spurious Bohemian they have been deceived with".[48] Following this, the statement outlines all the wonderful things that could be displayed in order to do justice to the industry of Bohemia, but due to "circumstances" this was not permitted, and they have had to put together a modest display instead. They hope to remind the visitor of Bohemia's glorious past, "especially [that] associated with the ancient relations of Bohemia and Gt. Britain" [sic].[49]

'Part One', written by Francis Count Lützow begins by asserting that of all the realms ruled by the house of Habsburg, the Kingdom of Bohemia is least known by England. This, he claims, is largely due to the fact that it is only until quite recently that anyone has been able to acquire any knowledge of Bohemia through any sources other than German. Such a statement bears a striking resemblance to post-1989 exhibition catalogues that discuss the increased accessibility to Czech art and art historical resources, this time free from filtration by communist authorities. Lützow wrote three main texts in English on Czech subjects. These included *Bohemia: A Historical Sketch* (1907), *The Story of Prague* (1902), and *Life and Times of John Hus* (1909). All three concern the 'historic' as a term conferring positive status to the background of the Czech people. In relation to Jan Hus, this is particularly linked to values of moral fortitude and independence. Not only was this popular within Czech writing of the time, but its characteristics were co-opted into discussion surrounding

[48] Page 155
[49] Ibid

the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, as discussed in relation to Masaryk's 1919 article.

Lützow claims in the 1906 catalogue that modern research has proved that at least part of Bohemia (and a large part of adjacent Germany) had a Slavic population from almost its earliest historical period. The latter has long since been Germanised. Similar attempts for Germanisation have failed in Bohemia, which "is no doubt largely due to the geographical position of my country. As no less a man than Gothe [sic] wrote: Bohemia is a continent within the European continent. If the word may be used geographically, Bohemia has an individuality of its own".[50] Lützow thus uses geographical positioning to justify (through a German opinion), Bohemia's role as a nation. After this introduction, a history of Bohemia ensues, outlining events and figures, one of which is the great Hussite period. Sculptor František Bílek made a sculpture of Jan Hus in 1901, depicting him as an individual, rather than the group of Hussites requested by his commissioners. This relates to the notion of Czech art rooting itself in Bohemian history, a fundamental part of which is the promotion of individuality over collectivism. This theme will be discussed further in chapter three.

It is interesting that Modernist Gočar, who designed the 'Czech stand', was involved in this exhibition, which contained no examples of other similar artists, sculptors or architects. Gočar had spent the three previous years in London. At this time, architects like Gočar won prizes in Bohemia, but were rarely awarded commissions. Many went abroad for this reason. According to Antonín Matějček, this was largely

[50] Lützow, p. 6

due to the authorities' (who were nervous of the modernist style of younger architects) desire to maintain older buildings in Prague. Matějček writes that despite his 'modern' technique, Gočar was a champion of Prague antiquities, more so than the official architects, who often demolished "valuable relics of the past".[51] Gočar was amongst those architects who moved away from the Wagnerian style of his teacher Kotěra, towards a specifically 'Czech' style, which perhaps offers an explanation for his involvement in this exhibition of Bohemian, and therefore Czech, achievement. One example of Gočar's work is the Black Madonna House in Prague (plate 3). This building was originally built as a department store, and though in Cubist in style, was designed to harmonise with the surrounding Baroque buildings. The building now houses the Museum of Czech Cubism, made up of Czech Cubist works which date from 1910-1919, sourced from the National Gallery of Prague collection, and loans.

3. Josef Gočar *The Black Madonna House* 1911-1912

The House of the Black Madonna is admired as a great example of Czech Cubism. The Bohemian section of the 1906 exhibition was celebration of Prague as a great

[51] Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art* (London, 1924), p. 92

city and an assertion of Bohemia's industrial success - often overlooked in the dual-monarchy of Austria-Hungary. According to Orridge, Bohemia, "the heartland of nineteenth century Czechs", "was the most developed part of the Habsburg Empire'".[52]

Many of the texts consulted in this chapter emphasise the success of Czech industry. However, according to an article on Czech industry published in *The Journal of Political Economy* in 1900, the division of industry and agriculture in Bohemia was also significant of divisions between the Czech and German populations. Author Katherine Bement Davis states that this followed a "geographical line", the Germans in the Northern mountainous regions were iron and coal were found, in the lower lands where the cotton industries were located, and in the south where glass industries were situated.[53] German industry surrounded three sides of the kingdom. She admits that, at the time of writing, many of the operatives of industrial centres are now Czechs, but many are still in the hands of the Germans. The assertion of Bohemian industry in the 1906 exhibition must have challenged supposed German dominance over Bohemian productivity.

The language used in the 1906 catalogue emphasises three key features: firstly, the great history of the area and its people, secondly, its current prosperity and identity, and thirdly, its international links. These features are related to arts, multiple social and cultural institutions, and Prague as the capital of the Kingdom. Dr Luboš

[52] Cited by Umut Ozkirimli *Theories of Nationalism* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 92
[53] Katherine Bement Davies, "The Modern Condition of Agricultural Labour in Bohemia", The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Sep., 1900), p.491 JSTOR [15.09.06] http://links.jstor.org/

Jerabek, author of the second chapter of this exhibition publication, "The Royal Capital of Prague", begins with a quotation from Count Lützow: "When throwing a stone through a window in Prague you throw with it a morsel of history".[54] Through using this quotation, he implies that 'history' is an asset which is expressive of Prague's European status. He emphasises this though drawing an international line under the physical appearance of Prague through comparisons to Ravenna, Bruges, Avignon, Florence and Venice. Later in the chapter he compares the "highly original and characteristic" street Uvoz to those in Brussels, Genoa and Edinburgh.[55]

Jerabek's section also relates Czech language, a symbol of national independence, to the international aims of Bohemia. Prague is, the author claims, a city whose aforementioned language "proclaims the earnest endeavour of the Bohemian nation to win an honourable place on the large wrestling-field of civilised European nations"[56]. A place on the international map is now one focus within contemporary Czech production. In his lecture at the December Brighton Symposium on Czech design, Jiří Pelcl (Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague) discussed the small size of Czech companies, which restricts their production.[57] They used to focus towards Soviet and Eastern markets, and competition was low. Now, Czech companies, especially since accession to the EU, are back on the European and global "wrestling-field".

[54] 1906 catalogue, p. 14
[55] Ibid, p. 36
[56] Ibid
[57] Brighton Symposium on Czech design, Brighton 02-03 December 2005

The first section of the catalogue ends with an outline of events since the fall of Count Badeni's cabinet in 1897, after the latter issued a decree that government officials should have a knowledge of Bohemian language. During the subsequent governments, the author tells us, the Bohemians have generally opposed the central government of Vienna, "though they have sometimes taken up an opportunistic attitude, when this appeared to be in the interest of their country". [58] The exhibition which this publication accompanies, in which the Bohemian section is delineated within the umbrella title of the Austrian Exhibition, appears to be one instance of this "opportunistic attitude", which allows Bohemian work and art a separate identity to Austrian. This is an instance of political change impacting Czech art history, wherein texts and exhibitions on the subject demand the study of Czech art as distinctive to that of Austro-Hungary.

Mention of the exhibition in the "Court Circular", published in *The Times* in 1906, fails to mention any other nationality than Austrian. Indeed, press coverage of the show communicates the understanding that the exhibition is a demonstration of Austrian productivity only. A telegram from the British Correspondent in Vienna states, "No pains have been spared to make the exhibition thoroughly representative and in every way worthy of Austrian industry and art".[59]

A large section of the 1906 exhibition was devoted to home industries. An essay by Renata Tyrsová emphasises the early interest in rural arts within Bohemia and Moravia, which was perhaps greater, she claims, than anywhere else in Central

[58] Lützow, p. 13
[59] "Court Circular", *The Times*, May 8 1906, p. 10, Issue 38014, Col A [04/10/2006] http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

Europe. Its position in this exhibition demonstrates its status within Bohemian design. This relates to Lou Taylor's lecture "Czech Fashion, Dress and Issues of National Identity 1900-39", given at the Brighton symposium on Czech Design (Brighton University, 2-3 December 2005), which looked back to this period of Czech fashion history via Communist legislation and influence. Taylor discussed Milena Lamarová's publication of a Pictorial Encyclopaedia in 1966. Taylor allots much of the responsibility for the opening of cultural "sluice gates" since 1989 to Lamarová, via her curatorial practice. Lamarová's publication, Taylor argued, showed the difference between Czechoslovakia and other European nations in terms of their consideration of fashion as an important part of visual culture, particularly in relation to national history. Within Britain, the V&A was already taking fashion history seriously in a public sphere by 1966. Taylor emphasises Lamarová's important place in forwarding the recognition of fashion history in Prague through her curatorial practice.

Similarly, the 1906 exhibition took pride in applied arts and clothing as symbolic of national individuality, which Tyrsova points out, is not easy for a "small nation surrounded by strong alien civilization".[60] Such a statement has added resonance when one considers the exhibition's place within the larger Austrian exhibition. She concludes in a deploring tone, asking the visitor to acknowledge the Bohemian characteristics of the exhibition, a request that recalls Taylor's view of the curator and exhibition as an instigator of national knowledge:

[60] 1906 catalogue, p. 103

> Most intelligent visitors to exhibitions, as a rule take special interest in those things differing from the ordinary cosmopolitan stamps, and which preserve the marks of national peculiarities. Therefore it has been necessary to accentuate in this first Bohemian exhibition in London these signs of our old national art and its reflex [sic] in our modern efforts.[61]

The responsibility of the curator in promoting cultural exchange is an issue that will be discussed in chapter four in relation to post-1989 publications.

Both curators and art historians of Czech art are accountable for informing audiences of the Czech nation as well as its art. Published post-Czechoslovak independence, the preface to Matějček and Wirth's *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art* (London, 1924), outlines identical reasons to Lützow and Munroe for publication. It begins, "Contemporary Czech art is hardly known in the countries of Western Europe".[62] Due to Austrian and Hungarian domination, Czech art has been labelled as belonging to the latter nations. As well as this, Czech artists have been restricted in favour of German artists. Now that Czechoslovakia is an independent state, the present text is to give a "brief history of a subject which, for reasons indicated above, has been known abroad only in an intermittent and, consequently, imperfect manner."[63] This is to inform the English-speaking world of "Czechoslovak" activities, and its aim is only to stimulate interest in this area.

Key to the 1906 exhibition, and Munroe's text on Bohemia, is the rejection of all things German. This also marks Matějček's discussion of Czech painting. He

[61] Ibid, p. 103
[62] Matějček and Wirth, *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art* (London, 1924), p. vii
[63] Ibid

dismisses Romantic art in Bohemia as nothing to do with the revolutionary fervour of French Romanticism, but stemming from German Romanticism, "unadventurous to the core".[64] Due to their German sources, the artists were Czech only in name. Until the middle of the nineteenth-century, plastic art in Bohemia was only Czech in that subjects were taken from the "glorious past of the Czech country", but as German painters also drew from this subject matter, the works could hardly be called Czech.[65] The only great thing to come from Romanticism was the 'true Czech modern artist', Josef Mánes, whose work displays the influence of French Romanticism, as seen in the idealised figure and palette of *Morning* (plate 4).

4. Josef Mánes *Morning* 1857

Matějček associates the rejection of German art with contemporary political events. For instance, Kupka signifies three things in Matějček's text; 'acclimatisation' to Paris; a victor of the French fight against Germany, which though Matějček refers to

[64] Ibid, p.3
[65] Ibid, p. 4

the literal fight in World War One in which Kupka was a soldier, also implies the artistic battle against German influence; and thirdly, "Now that he has come back to us, we hail him with gratitude as one of the first Czechs who, at the call to arms, sped to the French standard".[66]

Through this discussion of Kupka, Matějček introduces two themes that will prove relevant to Czech modern art, which will be seen in other texts discussed in this thesis. Firstly, he expresses anti-German sentiment. Despite this, many will allot a German heritage to Czech art, mainly in the form of Expressionism. This is particularly applicable to Douglas Cooper, (discussed in chapter three). Matějček distinctly favours the French influence of David and Ingres on Mánes, through which the latter endows national art with "beauty of form".[67] He describes the contemporary trend for artists to look to French influences: "The pilgrimage to France now became the rule".[68] This tendency applied to many Czech modern and modernist artists, but also is one instance of Matějček's Francophile attitude. Secondly, Matějček uses the influence of the Baroque, seen in the work of Antonín Mánes, Josef's father, to illustrate Czech art's connection to their great past. The Baroque, writes Matějček, "...although unrecognised and almost dormant, nevertheless linked the present with the mighty past", offered an alternative to the "abstract idealism" of the Academy.[69] This Czech opinion contrasts to Munroe's description of baroque in Bohemia as "veritable eye-sores".

[66] Ibid, p. 29
[67] Ibid, p. 9
[68] Ibid, p. 11
[69] Ibid, p. 5

Matějček's claims that in a bid to 'catch up' with Europe, Czech artists turned to Impressionism. He thus associates the influence of French art with Czech Europeanism. The Mánes Association was founded in 1890, whose art review *Volné Směry* (Free Tendencies) was testament to the Czech interest in Impressionism. The magazine reproduced works by Manet, Degas, Puvis de Chevannes, and the Association put on exhibitions of artists such as Boudin, Manet, Monet, Pissaro, Renoir, Morisot, Bonnard, Vuillard, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin. Matějček emphasises, however, that Czech artists, whilst taking influence from these French artists who dominated the exhibition programme, also maintained a "regional note" in their work.[70] He cites Jože Úprka as an example of a purely national artist with no foreign model.

Despite his aim to educate, Matějček's descriptions of Czech Cubist painters do not offer much illumination for the English-speaking audience. He briefly describes Filla ("faithful to Cubism"), and laments the loss of the artist's earlier similarity to Daumier and El Greco; Čapek, who "continues his search" whilst being unafraid to "change the formula of his art", and Zrzavý, who "despite his former modernism, draws nearer to the old tradition".[71] He allots all the artists mentioned with a national meaning, stating that the war did not stifle Czech art, and "Now that our country is free, let us hope that the function of art will be more decisive, its evolution more rapid, its output more abundant".[72] In his anti-German sentiment, he fails to mention the internationalist aim of artist group Osma (founded in 1907), whose eight members were composed of four Czech artists, and four German.

[70] Ibid, p. 31
[71] Ibid, p. 46
[72] Ibid, p. 46

If a review of *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art* in *The Burlington Magazine* of 1926 is to be believed, Matějček's aim to encourage the English-speaker's interest in Czech art was not achieved. Reviewer 'W.G.C' begins:

> As the authors remark, contemporary Czech art is hardly known in the countries of Western Europe. Possibly, it were better for its reputation to have remained unknown; for closer acquaintance reveals the Czech painter as little more than the mirror of contemporary French and German movements, generally at the moment when they are passing out of fashion in the their countries of origin.[73]

W.G.C. admits there is some individuality shown in sculpture and architecture, but only in a 'spasmodic' form of the baroque tradition which found expression in both Prague and Vienna in the seventeenth-century. He also admits there is an effective combination of the "monumental and the fantastic" in the National Theatre.[74] Most of the artists were educated in Paris, Germany or Austria, and Czech artists "faithfully apply the lessons learnt there".[75] Though an "honest account of Czech activity", W.G.C. concludes, "As things are, the reader is not encouraged to travel beyond the plates".[76]

Matějček's descriptions are often less than thorough. Further entries on the combined Czech use of Cubist and Expressionism may have enabled a more nuanced discussion of distinctively Czech art. However, Matějček's text is useful in that it

---

[73] W.G.C. "Modern and Contemporary Czech Art", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 48, No, 275 (Feb., 1926), p. 111
[74] Ibid
[75] Ibid
[76] Ibid

shows the establishment of themes and notions, and a vocabulary to describe these which will be used in ensuing publications on the subject. One such instance of this is the tendency towards describing the relationship between Czech and French art. Other recurring approaches to the subject are the allotment of national meaning to Czech art, and the use of Czech Baroque as a means of connecting Czech modern art to a greater cultural heritage.

Matějček's chapter on Czech sculpture is equally nationalistic and biased towards French art. He does not discuss the sculpture of Cubist artists, but focuses on the National Theatre Generation. His only mention of Cubism is a reference to Gutfreund in the final paragraph. He praises the latter's ability to divine "the tendencies of modern architecture and [adapt] them to his own sculpture. Our generation is placing great hopes on this close collaboration between the sculptor and the architect."[77] The only illustration given is Gutfreund's Němcova Memorial at Ratibořice, an objective realist work that does not indicate his earlier interest in Cubism (plate 5). However, Matějček's reference to collaboration between architecture and sculpture shows his awareness of contemporary developments little shown elsewhere: during the early 1920s Gutfreund collaborated with architects such as Gočar.

[77] Ibid, p. 63

5. Otto Gutfreund *Němcová Memorial at Ratibořice* 1921

Matějček co-wrote the final chapter on architecture with Zdeněk Wirth. The chapter begins, "The Prague Baroque was the last manifestation of great art in Bohemia".[78] Since the great era of the Baroque, the authors continue, Prague ceased to be a city of European importance, and became "a sleepy little provincial town".[79] The nineteenth-century looked to the Renaissance for inspiration, until in the 1890s, the historic style ceased to be viewed as compulsory. "The Baroque once more came into favour, that style which the Renaissance school had so vigorously combated in theory and in practice". This was first manifested in interiors, and then in architecture.

Into this context arrived Jan Kotěra, a pupil of Wagner from Vienna, who began to teach at the Prague School of Decorative Arts. One of his main disciples was Gočár. Gočár entered the "great battle of modern architecture that had spread from England

[78] Ibid, p. 64
[79] Ibid

to Belgium and from there extended itself to us by way of Germany".[80] With his contemporaries, amongst whom Paul [sic] Janák was leader, Gočár set off in a new direction, wherein the façade became an independent organism, using "the symbolical expression of static forces, and the balance of thrust and weight."[81] The aforementioned House of the Black Madonna is one example of Gočár's facades. The chapter concludes with the conviction that the new generation will enlarge and beautify Prague, and endow their country "with such beauty and such opportunities for healthy and energetic life as its new-found freedom deserves."[82]

The main function of Matějček and Wirth's text appears to be the affirmation to Czech achievement in the context of the new State, and the information given is often subordinated to that purpose. In aiming to contextualise Czech art for the Western reader, author's can end up marginalising the subject through its role as 'receptacle' of external influences, as shown by W. G. C. This approach will continue up until post-1989 publications. But as Matějček's Francophile attitude demonstrates (in this instance according to the assertions of Czech identity as a new nation), Czech art was selective of its influences.

Perhaps W.G.C. would have appreciated a greater awareness of interaction between Britain and Bohemia and Czechoslovakia. This is omitted from Matějček and Wirth's text. During the early twentieth-century the interest in British garden cities was increasing in Bohemia. In 1910, M.H. Baillie-Scott's book *House and Garden* was published in Czech translation. During the 1920s, H. Chapman, secretary of the

[80] Ibid
[81] Ibid, p. 93
[82] Ibid, p. 94

International Garden City and Town Planning Federation held a lecture in Prague, as did Raymond Unwin. These events directly impacted construction within industrial regions. This reversed somewhat in the 1930s, when Czech architecture began to influence Britain (discussed in chapter two).

The texts discussed in chapter one set up various central terms and references which will recur throughout this thesis. These are manifested both in art historical and political texts, illustrating their relationship to one another. The emphasis on a Czech 'mighty past', the Baroque as an art historical foundation, international connections, anti-Germanism, and the moral ambitions of young Czechoslovakia are all factors that have been expressed by the authors discussed in this chapter. The publications show that the establishment of nation, and then state, were viewed as highly important, to the extent that discussion of 'Czech' art was often subordinated to the desire to communicate this to the British audience. Such an approach, in its frequent blurring of racial groups (despite their acknowledgement in the writings of state founders such as T.G. Masaryk), was regularly guilty of 'Czechoslovakism'. These themes all indicate that writers on Czech art from the beginning of the twentieth-century have influenced the vocabulary used by writers up to the present day.

Chapter Two (1938 to 1967)

Internationalism, historicism and Czech Modernist art as 'receptacle'

As cited in chapter one, according to Igor Lukes, "from the beginning, Masaryk and Beneš conceived of Czechoslovakia as a country that would be woven tightly into the fabric of Western Europe", whilst keeping an eye on the 'East'.[83] Whether this ambition was realised successfully or not is perhaps demonstrated through the well-known quotation from Chamberlain, twenty years later:

> How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.[84]

Chamberlain's sentiments signify the continuing British ignorance of Czech and 'Czechoslovak' culture, despite the momentous political changes which impacted directly on Britain. These originate from the 1938, the year of the Munich Agreement, to the late 1960s.

The Munich Agreement, signed at a conference in Munich in September 1938, surrendered much of the Sudetenland, an area with a large German population, to Nazi Germany. Czechoslovakia was not invited to the conference, but agreed to the terms. These were violated when Nazi armies invaded Czechoslovakia in 1939.

---

[83] Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia Between Stalin and Hitler* (Oxford, 1996), p.6
[84] Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938, [17.07.2006] http://www.historyguide.org/europe/munich.html

Chapter one described the intentions of the Czechoslovak Republic, formed in 1918. The British declaration of August 9th 1918, recognising the Czecho-Slovaks as an allied nation was one of momentous significance in Czech history. Britain encouraged and was supportive of this union. In this context, Chamberlain's words are particularly disturbing. His sentiments were echoed in a letter to the editor of *The Times*, written by Noel Buxton, in 1938. Buxton writes of the "fanatical supporters of Czech chauvinism", who claim that the Germans of Sudetenland should not be granted autonomy.[85] Buxton is supportive of the German wish, comparing it to the Northern Irish desire to be part of Britain.

Buxton believes that the Germans only desire their right, and the idea that there would be any aggressive intent is unthinkable. His use of the word "chauvinism" recalls Masaryk's article of the new Republic of twenty years before, though Masaryk applied it to the national policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In both instances, the authors use the term to position themselves in a better light, pitting nation against nation to prove their own national moral worth. Both are idealistic, Buxton tragically so as the events following his article will prove. He does not acknowledge the role that Czech armies played in the French legions of the First World War, for he concludes that Czechoslovakia wants to drag France into battle. He warns such an action can only lead to a world war.[86] This forms a distinct contrast to a telegram sent from Lloyd George to Masaryk on September 9th, 1918, congratulating him on the triumph of the Czecho-Slovak troops against the German and Austrian troops in Siberia: "Your nation has rendered inestimable service to

[85] Noel Buxton, "The Czech Problem", *The Times*, July 15 1938, Issue 48047, Col F [04/01/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark
[86] Ibid

Russia and to the Allies in their struggle to free the world from despotism. We shall never forget it."[87]

This chapter focuses on two published articles and two exhibitions, spanning the period between 1938 and 1967. The articles discussed are Oskar Kokoschka's "An Approach to the Art of Czechoslovakia" *The Burlington Magazine* (1942), and "Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia: a central European art in the cross currents of influence and thought", by František Kovárna, *The Studio* May (1938). I will look at exhibition catalogues for the British Council's *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art*, London, 1947 and a 1967 exhibition held at the Tate gallery entitled *Cubist Art from Czechoslovakia: An Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture by Czech and French Artists*, organised by the Arts Council.

The catalogues and articles discussed in chapter two continue to emphasise Czechoslovakia's position as a nation at a crossroads of European culture and influence, a continuation of the terms developed at Czechoslovakia's establishment. The language of the period discussed in chapter two bears a strong resemblance to that of the language seen in chapter one. I would like to recall the main approaches of the 1906 catalogue which emphasised three key features: firstly, the great history of the area and its people, secondly, its current prosperity and identity, and thirdly, its international links. These are applicable to the articles and catalogues that will be discussed in this chapter.

[87] Cited by Nosek, *Independent Bohemia*, (London, 1918), p. 101

Whilst chapter one concerned the discussion of Bohemia and its place within the Habsburg Empire and Europe, this chapter aims to analyse the critical debates surrounding art in Britain and Czechoslovakia. It is understood by the time these articles and catalogues were published that Czech and Slovak are established languages of communication and publication whilst the rejection of germanisation takes on a new role in the context of Nazi invasion.

In comparison to the 1906 exhibition and Munroe's text, the coverage of Czechoslovakian modern art during the period covered in chapter two employed a more detailed emphasis on the ideologies of the works and artists under discussion. However, in comparison to the texts published since 1989 on the subject, they seem basic and generalised. The majority of texts concerned originate from during and after World War Two. I write of the new Czechoslovakia and so confer an assumption of united national feeling, but this is a result of many of the texts published in English which reflect the often Czech view of Czechoslovakia. During the period outlined, many Slovaks began to feel that the State was subordinated to Prague, paralleling the subordination of Slovak leadership to Budapest under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A temporarily independent Slovak state was declared under Nazi guidance in 1939.[88]

Just as many Czech people expressed a sense of a Czech nation, Slovaks expressed an understanding of Slovak nationhood. This was often accompanied by the notion of a united Slavonic nation in the centuries leading up to the twentieth-century. An

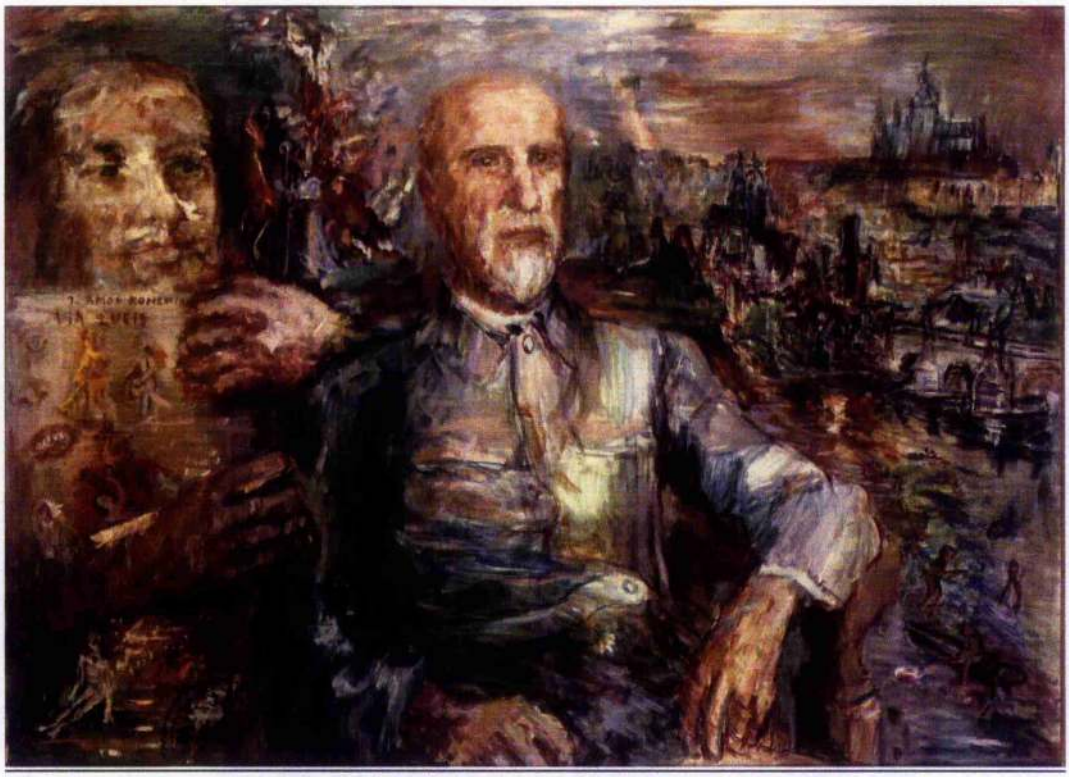
[88] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 6

example of this is seen when, in the nineteenth-century, Slovaks expressed a linguistic kinship to Czech, and a dual nationality: "We Slovaks, in our Slovak nationality, also have a Slavonic nationality, which is a world nationality".[89] This adherence to Pan-Slavic nationality links them to nations such as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later Yugoslavia, and Bohemia, members of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century *entente*, and provided a solidarity that would facilitate the formation of Czechoslovakia. The multiplicity of Slovak national feeling would cause tensions with Czech national identity and its manifestations during the twentieth-century.

Three key writers are considered in this chapter: Oskar Kokoschka, František Kovárna and Kamil Novotny. Kokoschka's article, written in 1938, demonstrates an interest in internationalism, especially in contrast to nationalism which he associates with fascism. This international emphasis is modernist in theme, but also parallels the international nature of Kokoschka's life. His life serves as a neat illustration of the relationship between nations key to this thesis: Austria, Czechoslovakia and Britain. Born in Austria but of Czech extraction, Kokoschka moved to Prague in 1934, where on the advice of President Masaryk whose portrait Kokoschka painted in 1935-36, he became a Czechoslovak citizen. His portrait (plate 6) shows Masaryk placed next to the city of Prague, with its great landmarks displayed. This recalls the praise of Prague as a great European city, seen in texts discussed so far. Kokoschka emigrated to London in 1938, and here he painted *What We Are Fighting for* (1943). The title of this work illustrates his anti-war attitude, which is elaborated in his 1938

[89] M.M. Hodža, *Dobrou slovo Slovákom*, (Bratislava, 1970) p. 43. cited by Alexander Maxwell, *Multiple Nationalism: National Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Hungary and Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities"*, (Routledge, 2005), p. 400

Burlington Magazine article, to be discussed. Kokoschka became a British citizen in 1947.[90]



6. Oskar Kokoschka *Portrait of T.G. Masaryk* 1935-36

In 1942 Oskar Kokoschka published an article in *The Burlington Magazine* entitled "An Approach to the Art of Czechoslovakia". This article engages with the art of a country that is beginning to retreat from the radius of Western European understanding, a process that will only increase in the following fifty years, and in terms of art, is only now being reintegrated. It is for contemporary understanding that Kokoschka hopes, recalling texts discussed in chapter one, but he uses little of the generalised vocabulary characteristic of the preceding documentation and

[90] Edwin Lachnit: "Kokoschka, Oskar" Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [13.07.06], http://www.groveart.com/

exhibitions, penetrating and illuminating a more contemporary context than many of his peers.

The article concerns Bohemian Baroque architecture and sculpture. Kokoschka uses Bohemian Baroque as a means of promoting both modernist international aims, and to emphasise Czech national heritage. His article is therefore an updated version of previous texts whose use of the Baroque has been discussed. Kokoschka states that Baroque art attempted to forestall the nationalist tendency of the church, "which sucks dry even now the best of men's minds"[91]. For, Kokoschka continues, nationalism leads to fascism. What is needed in art, he implies, in universalism and therefore internationalism. Here his internationalist aims reflect modernist intentions of both Western Europe and Britain. It is relevant that Kokoschka was a committee member of the A.I.A.

During World War II the Artists' International Association, a left-wing organization founded in London in 1933 as the Artists International, aimed to encourage united action among artists and designers on social and political issues. It was renamed the Artists' International Association in 1935, beginning with *1935 Exhibition (Artists Against Fascism & War)*, in London. The notion of art-for-all, with an international emphasis, underpins Kokoschka's *Studio* article of 1942 and the aims of the AIA. The AIA laboured to increase popular access to art through travelling exhibitions, public murals and a series of mass-produced lithographs entitled *Everyman Prints*, published in 1940.

[91] Oskar Kokoschka, "An Approach to the Art of Czechoslovakia" *The Burlington* (1942). P.264

Kokoschka discusses similarly egalitarian internationalist aims in relation to Bohemian Baroque church architecture, wherein man is given a reciprocal, rather than hierarchical, relationship with the deity, and thus placed on a "cosmic" scale.[92] Kokoschka points out that nations united to create a Baroque church, to make "the house of God a house of Man"[93], a statement that echoes the social utopian intentions of many modernist artists and architects, who believed that art could transcend national and class barriers. Kokoschka finishes the article with a call for understanding:

> May the lesson of the Baroque Art in Czechoslovakia help us to understand the extraordinary fortitude of the ordinary people in Bohemia in the midst of inert, apathetic and slavish nations.[94]

Using Bohemian Baroque as a metaphor for a united front in the face of fascism is an understandable theme for the time, half way through the Second World War. It becomes more pertinent when one considers the position of Czechoslovakia in relation to Britain at the beginning of the war. Czechoslovakia witnessed Chamberlain's misguided hopes that the appeasement of Hitler would save the day, ultimately helping to seal their fate in a manner that could be deemed "inert, apathetic" and perhaps "slavish". Besides this, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile was once more based in London. These facts may have been in the minds of Kokoschka's British readers.

---

[92] Ibid
[93] Ibid, p.267
[94] Ibid, p.268

Unusual as his article may be in comparison to many other contemporary British writings, Kokoschka's use of Bohemian Baroque as an example, and perhaps pinnacle, of Bohemian artistic achievement is intrinsic to early modernist art in Bohemia and the young Czechoslovakia. Both designer and architect Pavel Janák and sculptor Otto Gutfreund wrote on the relationship between contemporary art and the Baroque. In his 1912 essay "Surface and Space", Gutfreund wrote,

> The seeming similarity between Baroque sculpture and sculpture of today lies in the richness of movement and vitality of form. In Baroque art, this particular movement was given by a lack of balance of the forces struggling within; today we strive for a free development of action without signs of struggle.[95]

A physical illustration of the relationship between Czech modern art and Bohemian Baroque can be seen in Emil Kraliček's 1912-13 *Nika pro sochu* for the Baroque sculpture of Saint Jan Nepomucký. Nepomucký is a Czech martyr, drowned in 1393 because he opposed the king's plan to establish a bishopric in western Bohemia, and expressed loyalty to the Queen. He was made a saint in 1729. During the nineteenth-century when Hus became an important figure for protestant writers, Nepomucký was said to have been canonised because of a Catholic need to create a new Czech saint to reduce the significance of Hus. Thus Nepomucký was implicitly connected to the Catholic Habsburg monarchy, and many statues of him were destroyed. Situated on Spalena ulice in Prague, a Baroque sculpture of Nepomucký stands in a Cubist niche, which links to the buildings either side, creating a bridge between styles, and

[95] p.94 *Between Worlds: a sourcebook of Central European avant-gardes 1910-1930*

if the significance of Nepomucký is considered, between religions, national identity and the Habsburg monarchy (plate 7). This anticipates an appropriation of symbols within the new Czechoslovak state of 1918.

7. Emil Kraliček *Nika pro sochu Saint Jan Nepomucký* 1912-13

Both Gutfreund and Janák are mentioned as key figures in an article written four years before Kokoschka's article. This was published in *The Studio*, from May 1938, entitled "Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia: a central European art in the cross currents of influence and thought", written by Fr. [sic] Kovárna. Our second writer, František Kovárna (1905-1952) emphasises "national consciousness" in association within Czechoslovakian art.[96] František Kovárna (1905–1952), was an art critic and historian, and professor at Charles University.[97] One of his central publications was on typically Czech sculptor František Bílek (Prague, 1941). He

[96] p.239, *The Studio* May 1938 Vol.115
[97] "Frantisek Kovarna", Československé dokumentační středisko, o.p.s. [13.07.2005] http://www.csds.cz/

wrote on many Czech Modern artists, including subjects such as national art, and socialism and art. His interest in such subjects clarifies his nationalistic approach to Czechoslovakian art, and the inclusion of many works concerning a working class subject matter in his *Studio* article.

Kovárna is mentioned as leading theoretician in the New Zlín Salon catalogue of 2005.[98] Zlín, situated in South Moravia, is one of the main factory towns of the present-day Czech Republic. Built in the functionalist style, the majority of Zlín was the inspiration of Thomáš Baťa, shoe manufacturer, who planned and built the city where he had founded his company in 1894, with the aim of providing factory workers with good housing, schools and leisure facilities. Salons of art took place in Zlín between 1936 and 1948, showcasing contemporary Czechoslovak, and later (1939 to 1944) Czech visual art. The Zlín salons were revived in 1996 under the name of the aforementioned catalogue, the New Zlín Salon.

207 artists, and many authors, took part in the first Zlín Salon exhibition of 1936. The exhibitions were unique, facilitated by Zlín organisers who, according to the 2005 catalogue, "overcame frictions in the arts community between different groups and people that made it impossible to organise this type of showcase in larger cities".[99] The same catalogue informs the reader that as a result of the Salons, Zlín was not just an industrial and trade centre but a place of original cultural activities. Kovárna was one of the "leading personages of the Czech art theory scene" who was

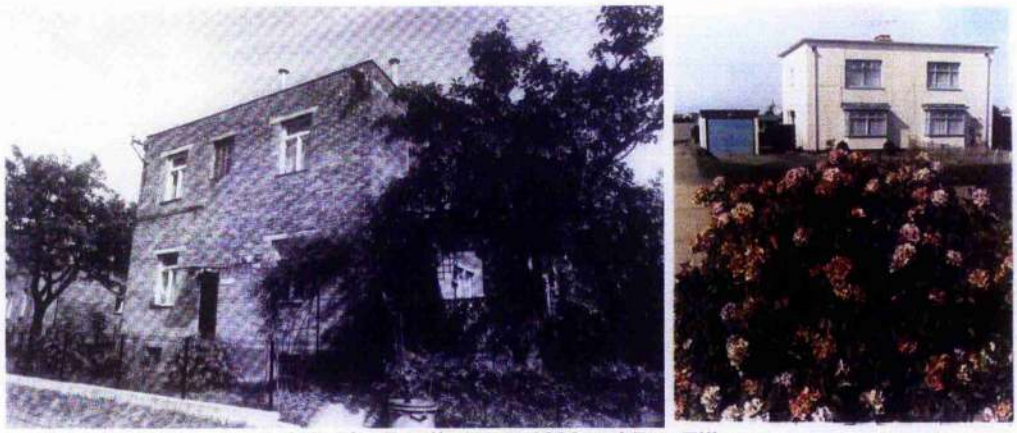
[98] *IV. New Zlín Salon 2005: The first review of contemporary Czech and Slovak visual art*, Krajská galerie výtvarného umění ve Zlíně (Zlín, 2005)
[99] Ibid, p. 10

asked to open one of the Salons.[100] The prominent position of these salons within Czech Modernist exhibitions demonstrates a characteristic of Czech Modernism – namely that there were many centre of artistic activity in Czechoslovakia. The international publications discussed so far emphasise Prague as a centre of Modernism. This issue is also addressed in post-1989 publications.

The socialist ideals of Zlín itself act as an appropriate backdrop to Kovárna's interests, as do the original Zlín salons who only showed artists considered representative of Czechoslovakian and Czech artistic developments. The national, international and anti-fascist emphasis of these selections coincides with some of Kovárna's opinions in the *Studio* article. It is a shame, however, that this rare writing of his in English should be so general and not include many of the contemporary artists he wrote about. It also does not allow for the aforementioned polycentric nature of Czech Modernism.

During the 1930s, Zlín had a reciprocal impact on British architecture. Originally based on garden cities such as Letchworth, Zlín's proto Modernist appearance was replicated in East Tilbury, Essex (plates 8 and 9). Baťa used Zlín as a blueprint, and work began on East Tilbury in 1932, employing a group of Czech architects. Zlín itself had employed architects such as Jan Kotéra and Vladimir Karfik. The isolation of East Tilbury is as marked as the isolation of Czech modern art from British art history. Whilst Zlín is cared for, with a museum, Salons, new buildings and a Thomáš Baťa University, East Tilbury has fallen into disrepair.

[100] Ibid



8 & 9. Zlín Family House1930 and East Tilbury

Kovárna stresses the utilitarian nature of Czech artists and architects, an approach to art that links to his involvement in the functionalist town of Zlín. Janák is introduced by Kovárna as one of the pupils of Kotéra, along with Gočar, and Kovárna describes them as following a "utilitarian path"[101]. Gutfreund however is classed as one of the artists who followed the "positive move" of "expressing what they felt rather than what they saw". In this he was influenced by Van Gogh and Munch, and affected by the "passing intervention of Italian Futurism", Fauvism and Cubism[102]. The theme of intervention reiterates the title of the article; Czechoslovakia is positioned in the "cross currents of influence and thought".

Kovárna's emphasis on subjective expression accompanied by the formal techniques of Cubism and Italian Futurism again recalls Gutfreund's statements in his 1912 article "Surface and Space". Here Gutfreund describes the artist's ability to accept the world as a reflection of the self, accompanied by the power of vision, which, in apparently Cubist terms, allows the artist to describe, perceive and evaluate an object

[101] František Kovárna, *The Studio* (1938), p.247
[102] Ibid, p.242

from all sides, simultaneously. Thus the sculptor must draw on both his mental state and ready-made motifs: "The sculptor realises an imaginary idea in real space in a material form, *stopping the flow of development by spatial materialisation*"[103]. Movement within form is important to this idea, as already demonstrated in Gutfreund's comments regarding the Baroque. Sixty-four years after Kovárna's article, in the LA County Museum of Art *Between Words: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910-1930* published in 2002, Karel Srp uses the notion articulated in Gutfreund's article, "imaginary idea in real space in a material form", to offer to an American audience a definition of Czechoslovak modern art.

> Their central interest became primarily the internal motion of form, granted by its personal, autonomous existence, which is limited according to the surrounding environment...out of this perspective a link was forged between the ideas of the Vienna Art History School and the impulses of Parisian Cubism[104].

Though these lines of influence cannot be denied, writers such as Karel Srp locate Czech art on a scale of external givens, and could be said to reduce the achievements and characteristics of Czech modern art to a series of variations between the activities of Vienna and Paris.

Kovárna's brief listing of influences in his *Studio* article perform a similar function. Like so many writers in English of this period, he lists the influences and concludes, "this period of unrest lasted until the outbreak of the Great War"[105]. Pre-war developments are seen as resulting only from a sense of unrest, which are clarified

[103] *Between Worlds: a sourcebook of Central European avant-gardes 1910-1930* p.93
[104] Ibid, p.82
[105] *The Studio* (1938), p.242

and, such terminology implies, amended after the war. He states, "The sculptor O. Gutfreund has turned from cubism to the objective study of form"[106], and provides Gutfreund's *Return of the Legionaries* as the artist's only illustration (plate 10). The latter description of Gutfreund seems to privilege "objective", and therefore 'clear' art, over the "subjective" techniques of Cubism. This again links to Kovárna's interest in the "utilitarian path".

10. Otto Gutfreund *Return of the Legionaries* 1921

As mentioned, both Srp and Kovárna aid the Western audience's understanding by pinning Czech art on a specific scale between influences from other countries, mostly France and Austria. The use of geography as a tool for understanding becomes repetitive as the texts discussed throughout this thesis will show. Using artistic movements and 'coordinates' recognisable to the often uninformed Western, English-speaking audience is a tool that is also used by Kokoschka, who chooses Bohemian Baroque as a metaphor that is likely to be known and understood by his readers. His explanation is largely rooted in historical rather than territorial comparison, but as previously mentioned, these issues are often connected, especially within the idea of 'nation'.

[106] Ibid

In his introduction the *Studio* article the editor calls Bohemia the "nucleus" of Czechoslovakia. As discussed, this remains problematic in light of the wealth of highly active avant-garde groups to be found throughout Czechoslovakia, in both urban and rural areas, at the time of publication. These groups, however, are not discussed at all. It will not be until the 1990 *Devetsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art* exhibition, held in the Modern Museum of Art Oxford, and the Design Museum London, that this will be revised. The reason for this ensuing neglect can be found again in the article publication date of 1938, after which the political climate would prohibit further exchange and critical reflection for many years.

Similarly to Kokoschka, Kovárna views the art of Czechoslovakia as trans-national, whilst still maintaining a strongly national character, like Bohemian Baroque. Such terminology is confusing and often contradictory, but its internationalist aims connote the period of war and division from which they originate. Kovárna's meaning seems to be reliant on the understanding that Central Europe is one region. He does not specify a period of homogeny to justify his reading of Central Europe as one region, but states: "It is important, however, to remember that the history of art in Central Europe is strongly territorial. The visual arts do not divide one nation from another as different languages do, and this survives external change, being preserved in a national consciousness rooted in the soil"[107]. Such a statement seems somewhat contradictory when he later describes Czechoslovakia as a recipient of external influences, providing few specifically Czechoslovak characteristics. It does,

[107] *The Studio* (1938), p.239

however, demonstrate his interest in themes of nationalism within modern and contemporary art.

Comparisons to more recent texts can be drawn. Akos Moravanszky begins his introduction to *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Invention and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture, 1867-1918* (MIT 1998), with the phrase "Imaginary places are invested with strong identities"[108]. Moravanszky points out that Central Europe has been described as an "imaginary region" by historian Peter Hanak, and that Central Europe is not outlined in any atlas. Such an area, Moravanszky states, needs not so much a geographical map but a cultural map, or cultural maps. He specifically refers to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, during which time the political entity of the Habsburg Empire remained "a relatively homogeneous field of cultural forces for nearly two hundred years", especially so between the 1814 and 1815 Treaties of Paris and the 1920 Treaty of Trianon.[109] Kovárna's attitude towards homogeneity is more ideological, communicating a utopian modernist sense of international connection through art, whilst Moravanszky uses a political definition to unite nations, associating political hegemony with cultural harmony. The latter seems inappropriate in light of early twentieth-century conflicting attitudes to the Habsburg Empire.

Kovárna's statement on the territorial nature of Central European art must be contextualised. It is taken from a section on the nineteenth-century entitled "The

[108] page 1
[109] page 1

National Spirit". Despite this, the statement still has an ulterior purpose; that of conveying art's ability to unite and cross barriers:

> Artistic solidarity between the two groups has overcome the divisions that might otherwise have existed. Thus the Czech and German impressionists lined up shoulder to shoulder. The sense of a common home and history, above all the deep-seated influence of soil has served to inspire the two nations with a culture in common. At the same time the union of Bohemia and Slovakia caused the creative artist to seek inspiration in the popular national sources[110].

To clarify the latter point, the influence of the work of Josef Mánes on Slovak art is given. Through stating this, Kovárna ignores the complications caused by multiple ethnic groups in one country, but uses the example of the united Czech-Slovak front as a means of communicating international cooperation, an idea made more controversial through his reminder in the previous sentences that "Czech and German impressionists lined up shoulder to shoulder". This offers a stark contrast to Matejček's Francophile description of Impressionism. In the political climate of 1938, when this article was published, this statement can be seen as veiled plea, the author surely well aware of Britain's crucial role in Czech-German and allied relations. The optimistic language of cultural harmony as a means towards internationalism again links Kovárna to Kokoschka.

Kovárna starts the article with an illustration called *The Month of March* by the well-known artist, Josef Mánes, favoured by Matejček as "one of the pillars of true Czech and true modern art"[111]. *The Month of March* (plate 11) offers an illustration of

---

[110] Ibid
[111] Matějček & Wirth, *Modern and Contemporary Czech Art*, (1924) p.4

Kovárna's description of the Czech artist as rooted in the soil of a national consciousness; the description of the work reads, "one of a series of panels inspired by the soil"[112]. The work depicts a farmer, classical in his elegant pose, driving a plough. Beyond him are fields and mountains, the latter providing two sharp peaks that contrast with the soft lines of the foreground. The idealised subject matter, chosen as typically Czech, links a national artist to an image of a typically Czech occupation in a region known for its large agricultural industry. Ideas of the nation and socialism are of interest to Kovárna, as demonstrated through his aforementioned biography and publications.

11. Josef Mánes *Month of March* 1865

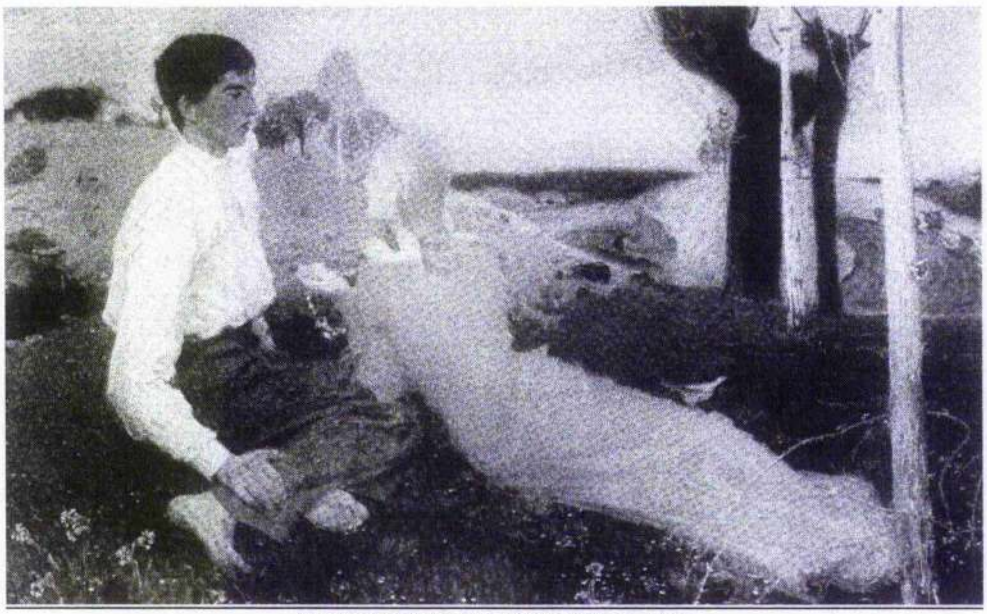
Kovárna continues the article with discussion of the National Theatre generation, and the influence of Paris. Such movements are largely described as "the opening up of communications with creative influences in other countries", culminating in the end

[112] *The Studio* (1938), p.236

of the nineteenth-century and continuing into the twentieth. He labels this period "The Melting Pot", which becomes a "real ferment, lasting until the present".[113] This includes the secession, functionalism, surrealism, and the discovery of "beauty latent in machine production"[114]. The latter is the only acknowledgement of more contemporary developments in art, but unfortunately no illustrations are provided. Such vocabulary again implies that Czechoslovakia is a receptacle, but the melting pot metaphor recalls Petr Wittlich's notion of "creative synthesis" (chapter one), whereby Czech modernist art created a dynamic tension between external and internal influences.

The next section of Kovarna's article is given the subtitle, "The influence of English pre-Raphaelites". The influence of Pre-Raphaelite art is another instance of a Czech-British crossover. This influence is only briefly elaborated upon in a description that accompanies *The Daisy Chain* by Jan Preisler (plate 12). The description claims that the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites is particularly marked, though this was later succeeded in part by the teachings of the younger German school. The subject matter is reminiscent of the Pre-Raphaelites, depicting a couple lying together on a grassy bank with the countryside in the background. In subject and composition, this could be compared to Millais's *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851), but in terms of style it is hard to see many similarities. The loose paintwork, blocks of colour and sinuous forms are more expressionist than Pre-Raphaelite, recalling Munch more than Millais. There is little of Millais's botanical detail, or Ruskin's "Truth to Nature".

[113] Ibid, p. 240
[114] Ibid



12. Jan Preisler *The Daisy Chain* 1906

One of the works used by Kovárna to illustrate a section entitled "The New Age" is Bohumíl Kubišta's *Portrait Trio* (plate 13). A description of the work reads, "The premature death of this artist put an untimely end to his experiments in combining colour with geometrization" [sic].[115] The painting shows Kubišta as artist, paintbrush in hand, fixing the viewer with a stern gaze. He is flanked by two fellow artists in dark hats, together creating a composition of three triangles, dark against a light background. They are a trinity, proud and confident. The work is reminiscent of Kubišta's *Self-Portrait with Overcoat* of 1908 (plate 14). In the latter work he is not positioned against the standards of his contemporaries as in *Portrait Trio*, but stands alone with thick rays of colour radiating behind him. The colour is expressionist whilst the heavy shadows of his face begin to display Cubist interest. The geometrical structure and use of colour to express deeper meaning clarifies

[115] Ibid, p. 244

Kovárna's undeveloped statement of "colour with geometrization", whilst recalling Srp's discussion of interplay between form and content.

13. Bohumil Kubišta *Portrait Trio* 1907

In the exhibition catalogue *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, Houston (1989), Jaroslav Anděl describes Kubišta's interest in dramatic notions such as power, will and violence. According to Anděl, Kubišta compared the interplay of these forces to gravitation and sought to create its equivalent in the internal rhythm of forms, and in a geometric structure relying on the symbolism of numbers. Anděl tells us that Kubišta also exploited the symbolism of colour and light, often juxtaposing complementary colours and lights and shadows. In so doing, continues Anděl, Kubišta wanted to penetrate further and further into the inner principle of modern life ('penetrisim'). The readers of 1938, however, are offered no such explanation by Kovárna.

Kovárna's restrictive references can be further illuminated by Kubišta's 1912-13 article entitled "The Intellectual Basis of Modern Time". In this essay Kubišta explains his notion of the "dramatic principle":

> The dramatic principle...resembles a hyperbole in which the centre of the curve - the artist - keeps moving back and the ratios between the focal points and points around the perimeter change incessantly, with both parts of the fork facing each other in a continuous relationship of action and reaction....Mysticism is a dramatic principle where one active component disappears into infinity and the unknown.[116]

This statement could be read as a description of *Self-Portrait with Overcoat*. The artist stands at the centre of the composition, "the centre of the curve", with the bands of radiating colour representing "a continuous relationship of action and reaction". The described "continuous relationship" is an example of Kubišta's notion of gravitational forces, as discussed by Anděl. It is connected to ideas of movement and balance restrained within form, imbued with spiritual or mystical meaning, which have been discussed in relation to Gutfreund and the Baroque.

[116] Kubišta, *Between Worlds*, p.102

14. Bohumil Kubišta *Self-portrait with Overcoat* c. 1908

For Kubišta, gravitational forces also concern the relationship of groups of people, whether within class systems, institutions or organisations. In the same essay, Kubišta describes the change in society after man rebelled against the hierarchical values apportioned by leaders sure of their divine right to authority. Once people stopped worshipping representatives of divine power, they were left as individuals who became centres of "active force".[117] To overcome the weakness of one voice, they formed organisations to gain strength "not just for the purpose of defence but also for the purpose of creation, how the power of individuals is concentrated in such

[117] Ibid, p. 101

organisations and gives rise to marvellous works of technology..."[118] This principle seems to potentially apply to the rhythmic composition of *Portrait Trio*, wherein a pattern of individuals is created, three triangles united in space. Yet at their centre Kubišta is highlighted, an "active force" within an organisation whose function is to create. This organisation can be assumed to be Osma, or the Group of Fine Artists, led by Kubišta and Filla. The rebellion of the individual against hierarchical values recalls Kokoschka's discussion of Baroque architecture.

Kubišta's works explore the self as central to art and expression; also a common ideology for many of his early twentieth-century contemporaries. He describes this as a particular attribute of the atheistic modern age; a departure from the divine rights of previous ages, expressed in the notion of individuals as placed at the centre of an "active force". The structuralist nature of Kubišta's argument is typical of his group, as is his implicit expression of notions of *Kunstwollen*. Kubišta begins "The Intellectual Basis of Modern Time" by explaining that all artistic personalities are like flowers blossoming from the same stem, who "share the roots of their era, and this plant transforms the sap differently than the organism of a renaissance or gothic flower".[119] Riegl was known to the group; his articles were published in *Volné Smery*. One is reminded of Kovárna's statements regarding the art of Czechoslovakia as rooted in a national consciousness, found in the soil of Bohemia. Kubišta's emphasis is also internationalist, whilst aiming for greater penetration ('penetrisim')

[118] Ibid
[119] Ibid, p.99

into a vague "inner intellectual essence", as problematic in its assumption of *a priori* trans-national readings of 'style' as the influential writings of Riegl.[120]

This reading of Kubišta is a suggested elaboration of Kovárna's "colour with geometrization". I am able to apply post-1989 texts. It seems that a more formalist reading would have been available to the 1938 British reader, who after finding limited explanations of Czechoslovakian modern art, would have been able to see Kubišta's *Portrait Trio* exhibited at the *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art*, London, in 1947. Here it was displayed under the title, *Three Portraits*. This work is again shown to the British public, whilst the now-considered seminal *Self-Portrait with Overcoat* has not, to my knowledge, been exhibited in Britain.

The vocabulary for the catalogue which accompanied the 1947 exhibition bears a strong resemblance to the 1938 *Studio* article. It begins with the introduction, "The purpose of this exhibition is to acquaint the British public with the art of a country whose history as an independent state is relatively short, but which can look back on a thousand-year-old cultural tradition and national tradition", recalling themes discussed in chapter one of this thesis.[121] Thus themes of national art and historical significance are introduced as the central principles of the exhibition. The author of the 1947 catalogue is Kamil Novotný.

According to Vacláv Podaný, "Kamil Novotný [1892 – 1959] was not famous for any outstanding works of research but he was a remarkable organizer and a good art

[120] Ibid
[121] *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art*, 1947 (no page numbers designated)

critic and he deserves no small credit for his presentation and promotion of Czech art".[122] This 'promotion of Czech art' extended to multiple exhibitions abroad. For many years Novotný worked as Commissioner for Czechoslovak Exhibitions abroad. As well as the 1947 exhibition in London, Novotný was involved in several exhibitions of Czechoslovak art at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, the exhibitions of Czechoslovak art in Vienna in 1934 and in Moscow and Leningrad in 1937. He also organised an exhibition of modern Czech sculpture opened in 1938 at the Trója chateau in Prague, mainly displaying the works of J. V. Myslbek and J. Štursa.

Novotný studied the history of art and Czech history in the Philosophy Faculty of the Czech University in Prague from1913 to1917. When the independent Czechoslovak state was created in 1918, Kamil Novotný joined the Ministry of Education and National Culture, where during the interwar period he worked in a division that looked after national heritage conservation, museum activities, archaeology, and archives. After World War II, Kamil Novotný worked as a departmental head at the Ministry of Education and National Culture, "but he was pensioned off in 1948…and stopped publishing entirely".[123]

Novotný's introduction to the 1947 catalogue discusses Czech and Slovak dualism and the resulting divergent political systems. He describes this relationship as a natural divergence, especially in the light of shared German and Hungarian oppression. Due to the two countries' "political and cultural maturity" and

[122] Vaclav Podany „Kamil Novotny", [14.07.06] http://www.archiv.cas.cz/english/pages/novotny.htm
[123] Ibid

"economic self-sufficiency", they "persuaded the world of the justice of their claim to political and national freedom, thus setting up independent Czechoslovakia". Novotný goes on to describe the rich history of the Czech Lands, which has "at certain periods" attracted the attention of Europe. (An example of this is Bohemian Baroque, which was referred to explicitly by Kokoschka, whilst Novotný only gently reminds the British audience that they will, or should know, some of the country's history.) Novotný continues in the same tone, reminding the reader that the dynamism and national revival of Czechoslovakia has "rarely been paralleled in the history of small nations", and within this was the "brotherhood and community" of Czechs and Slovaks: "nothing could prevent their ultimate union". One is reminded of Kovárna's claims of a similar nature, regarding the mutual national 'soil' of the two countries. Political hopes and ambitions originating from earlier in the twentieth-century are conveyed through the pride Novotný displays in Czechoslovakia's achievement, this time in aftermath of the Second World War.

The purpose of the 1947 exhibition to "...acquaint the British public with the art of a country whose history as an independent state is relatively short, but which can look back on a thousand-year-old cultural tradition and national tradition", recalls the aforementioned emphasis on the relationship between Czech modern art and history. It also shows a correspondence to Hugh Seton-Watson's notion of the existence of nation before state. The establishment of Czech nationhood is clearly referred to time and again in exhibition catalogues and articles on Czech modern art written in English, through the frequent concentration on the national awakening of the 1850s; often seen as culminating in the National Theatre generation. The association of the

activities of the nineteenth-century, grouped together under the title of national awakening, with the forming of a nation that would provide a basis for the state of Czechoslovakia, subscribes to the idea that nationalism is affiliated with the modernisation process. This is a common association within twentieth-century writings on nationalism.

According to Umut Ozkirimli, in his publication *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, during the 1980s, when Seton-Watson wrote on the aforementioned notions, theories of nationalism made a turning point in many respects.[124] The origin of nations and nationalism, and the order of their formation, were queried in such publications as John Armstrong's *Nations Before Nationalism* (1982), Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983). Rather than the idea of nation as organically connected to an inherent collective sense of history and tradition, with the national awakening as a resulting product, Marxist historian Eric J. Hobsbawm, in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) views the nation and nationalism as the result of "social engineering".[125] Hobsbawm sees nationalism as an outgrowth of the industrial revolution and the political upheavals of the last two centuries. What deserves particular attention in this process is the case of 'invented traditions' by which he means

> A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and

[124] Umut Ozkirimli *Theories of Nationalism* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 2
[125] Ibid, p. 116

norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.[126]

Hobsbawm argues that 'the nation' is one such invented tradition. Whereas Seton-Watson, and the 1947 exhibition catalogue convey a presumption that nation exists before state because of national traditions and history, Hobsbawn provides an alternative approach, namely that the nation itself is an invented tradition. Both positions provide an association between nation and past as the ultimate goal, and for the 1947 catalogue this is used to justify the integrity and worth of Czech modern art and its role within the state of Czechoslovakia.

Seton-Watson compares the establishment of nation before state in Bohemia to events in Brittany, Ireland, and the Basque Region. He uses this comparison to clarify that it is not a situation peculiar to Central and Eastern Europe as some historians may suggest: "Nationalism in search of a state has brought much trouble to the human race, but it cannot be ascribed to a specifically east European form of original sin"[127]. Few catalogues and articles, however concentrate on how this sense of nationhood was transferred into a sense of statehood, and whether this can be applied to readings of Czechoslovakian modernist art, though some clarify that nationalism was not so much a Modernist aim for Czech artists as internationalism. This is a neglected area for the English-speaking audience, leaving wide-open spaces for the Western, or British, Europeans to assume the nationalist readings applicable to surrounding countries.

---

[126] Eric J. Hobsbawm, in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), p. 1, cited by Umut Ozkirimli (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 116

[127] Hugh Seton-Watson "On Trying to be a Historian of Eastern Europe", Harry Hanak & Denis Deletant (ed.s), *Historians as Nation Builders* (London,1988), p. 6

The spaces that exist in Anglo-American coverage of Central Europe, specifically former Czechoslovakia, leave room for allocated meaning. This is as true today, though curators and scholars since 1989 work towards lessening the holes. In the 1947 exhibition catalogue, Novotný describes the concern of the 1890s generation in Bohemia regarding the subject of imposed provincialism, apparent in the vocabulary of the 1906 exhibition and the writings of Will S. Munroe discussed in Chapter One. Novotný claims that artists of the time revolted by "throwing wide the windows onto Europe, [they] breathed deeply of the fresh, invigorating air which flowed in from France", a revolt that was "an almost biological necessity".[128] This statement implies that the influence of Western Europe, or according to Novotný, mostly that of France, was essential to the survival of Czechoslovak art. This differs to Kovárna's approach in 1938, in which he places Czechoslovakia on an invisible thread of influence which it cannot avoid; Novotný uses the language of decision and choice, which takes control of the influences rather than the passive role often allocated by English-speaking writers.

As a tangible example of the revolt against provincialism, Novotný lists the exhibitions held in Prague: Rodin (1902), Munch (1905), French Impressionists and British Etchers (1908), French Fauvists, and the first international exhibition of Cubist and Italian Futurists (1914). The result "...in art was a sharp clash between the native tradition and outside influences mainly from the West"[129]. The danger of such a clash, Novotný notes, is conformity to fashion rather than "inherent value as

[128] Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art, 1947 (no page numbers designated, on opening page)
[129] Ibid, fourth page

art". This departs from the pro-Europeanism of texts seen in chapter one. The issue of the relationship between supposedly inherited styles and inherent characteristics, often weaken contemporary texts on this subject. Novotný felt that Czech art became distinctive. He cites Cubist architecture and handicrafts as examples of this, from around 1910. These are common forms given as examples of "inherent value as art" within Bohemia and Czechoslovakia, especially if one includes design within 'handicrafts'. By providing 1910 as an example of the beginning of 'distinctive' Czech art, Novotný draws what he calls a "dividing line" which marks the beginning of new development in art, which he believes is still progressing at the time of this exhibition[130]. It is a shame that the contents of the exhibition do not reflect the more recent 'development' of which he writes.

The artists that are represented are central figures of Czech Modern art, but they are the classic group always presented to the British public up until this date. This is clarfied through a comparison to such articles as the aforementioned *Studio* article by Kovárna. The list includes Vincenc Beneš, Otakar Kubín (listed also under his French name, Othon Coubine), Josef Čapek, Emil Filla, five works by the Slovak L'udo Fulla (neglected from Kovárna's article), Rudolf Kremlička, Bohumil Kubišta, Josef Láda, Antonín Procházka, Vlastimil Ráda, Josef Šíma, Václav Špála, Jindrích Štyrský, Jan Zrzavý, Otto Gutfreund and Josef Wagner. Novotný explains this more traditional selection as follows. The works that are included have been picked out as "representatives", but this does not include "young art" that may still be in its "formative stage"[131]. He continues:

[130] Ibid, fifth page
[131] Ibid

> Let it also be pointed out that, fortunately for our art, the revolutionary ferment of this time did not allow the facile impression of academic transcription to become an official hall-mark, and that it has fostered a feeling for purity in form even in those artists who have made no radical break-away from nature[132].

Novotný's emphasis in this statement is on the non-academic. He allots this to the revolutionary control of the artists, articulating purity in form as the highest form of art, even if associated with nature. For Kubišta, Filla, Kubín, Procházka, Špála ("most characteristically Czech" he states, without further explanation) and Čapek, this meant geometric abstraction, "autonomous compositional elements quite independent of the visual image"[133].

According to Kovárna, after the First World War, some pre-war "fashions" were maintained. These included Primitivism, Neo-Classicism and Purism, which, according to Novotný, were tools "with which a beggared Europe attempted to hide its intellectual and spiritual bankruptcy". [134] A new variant arose to help this, namely Surrealism, the key protagonists of which Novotný names as Šíma, Štryský and František Muzika. Novotny describes Czech Surrealism in the following terms:

> While seeking a new approach to reality, reality itself fled, so that, in the end, both reality and illusion are transfused into a kind of absolute transcendental reality which is automatically projected form the artist's subconscious on to the canvas, without reference to place, time or causality, in the form of associated

[132] Ibid, fifth to sixth pages
[133] Ibid, sixth page
[134] Ibid, eighth page

images generated in the depths of the sub-conscious by the interplay of spiritual and emotional forces.[135]

Novotný's description of Cubism as a break from previous visual forms, and Surrealism as a break from reality, he makes these groups self-questioning modern artists, radical avant-gardes developing a modernist response to the need for new forms of art in Czechoslovakia.

Like many other texts on Czech art in written in English, Novotný claims that Gutfreund is the first Czech sculptor to apply principles of modern art to his medium, and that he and Filla are most "daring" in their work. in English In general, however, he believes that the sculpture does not demonstrate the same wealth of development as Czech painting. The reason for this, he continues, is that sculpture is in itself a slower form of creation, and so the initial creative impulse is dulled by the making process. This basic description of Czech sculpture does not further the reader's understanding of the work. It also contradicts the attitude of sculptor Gutfreund. Gutfreund viewed sculpture as a realisation of an imaginary idea in real space. This realisation is an ongoing process, and Gutfreund does not imply that this is dulled by the practicalities of making a sculpture. Gutfreund states that sculpture is, "the tendency to materialise emotions and transfer them into space".[136]

Novotný provides a short definition of Slovakian art, which he states has been mainly oppressed by Magyar cruelty. Compared to the Czech Lands, Slovakia has a "wealth of folk-art which, however, is apt to encourage mere colour transcription".

---

[135] Ibid, eighth page
[136] Otto Gutfreund, "Surface and Space", *Between Worlds* (LA, 2002)

[137] This small acknowledgement of Slovak art is typical of the coverage of this country's work in Anglo-American texts. It is more, at least, than Mansbach, who fails to include the country in his book, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: from the Baltic to the Balkans* (Cambridge, 1999). Vojtěch Lahoda's review of this book in *Umeni* (XLIX, 2001) offers criticism that can be applied to Novotný. Lahoda writes about Mansbach's neglect of Bulgaria: "[Mansbach] is convinced that in every country at the beginning of the century there were attempts at, or in some cases discussion of, modern art, although this conception of art might not seem modern to us in the Western sense of the word"[138]. And yet, in Lahoda's opinion, Mansbach does not deem the rural art of Bulgaria and Slovakia as modern enough to be included in his survey.

According to Ladislav Holy, writing in 1996, Czechs see themselves as only temporarily neglected from cultured and civilised Europe, in contrast to the uncivilised East. In the post-communist climate, Holy states that "the boundary between 'historical lands' [Czech Lands] and Slovakia [is] the boundary between Western rationalism and Eastern emotionality". He states that previous Czech viewpoints have asserted that Slovakia "has never belonged economically and politically to Western Europe".[139]

Though Novotný does not necessarily write from a Western point of view, he appears to agree with, or cater to the preconceptions of the Western audience, as

[137] Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art, 1947, ninth page
[138] Vojtěch Lahoda, Review of Steven A. Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: from the Baltic to the Balkans, Umeni* XLIX 2001, p.87
[139] *Respekt*, Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 107

Mansbach does. Five works by leading Slovak artist L'udo Fulla were exhibited at the 1947 exhibition, including works displaying typical subject matter used by Slovak artists, inspired by folklore, religious motifs and the Slovak countryside. For example, *Farm's abundance*, *Madonna with shepherd* and *Song and toil*. This subject matter, as for Mansbach, does not appear to coincide with Novotný's notion of the modern, which is all that can be concluded from his short description highlighting a "wealth of folklore" and not much else. And yet, works such as L'udo Fulla's *A Farmer's Wedding*, 1957 (plate 15), fulfil Mansbach's notion of modernism as an expression of "national identity by means of avant-garde art".[140] The work shows a wedding, in folk colours and flat decorative shapes. It combines traditional Slovak imagery with a modernist technique of flattening the surface and exposing its two-dimensionality. As such, the work reflects on international modernism through contrasting subject and technique, which is an example of modernist self-consciousness and expressing 'national identity by means of an avant-garde'.

15. Ľudo Fulla *A Farmer's Wedding* 1957

[140] Steven A. Mansbach, Modern Art in Eastern Europe (Cambridge, 1999), p. 4

The work of the Slovak artists is further dismissed by Novotný as demonstrative of Magyar oppression. Though an attempt at sympathy, this dismissal is misplaced. Lahoda's statements on Mansbach are also relevant here; Lahoda states in the same article that if Mansbach had included Slovakia he may have been able to provide contacts between the individual centres of "Eastern Europe". For instance, Kosice as the centre of Slovak Secession, or contacts between Hungarian and Czech Modernists. [141] This is another area little attended to in Anglo-American texts, of which the 1947 catalogue is just one example.

Novotný finishes the essay on a patriotically triumphant note, which recalls Kokoschka's plea for the understanding of the plight of the Czechoslovakian people. In this manner, his writing also echoes that of Kovárna. Novotný's catalogue provides early Czech and Slovak modernism with a nationalistic function.

> The art which is by no means fully represented in this exhibition grew and developed under unusually difficult conditions, and, all too often suffered loss and interruption through the premature death of its creators, but it bears witness to the moral and spiritual strength of two peoples who, though few in numbers, have never ceased to cherish and strive after the highest ethical and cultural values of humanity.[142]

Novotný's emphasis on moral strength recalls the terms used by Masaryk in 1919.

Two contemporary articles published in *BLOK*, (Brno, 1948) express similar sentiments regarding 'values of humanity' in art. An article on monumental

[141] Ibid
[142] Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art, 1947, ninth page

painting by František Kaláb, Editor-in-chief, condemns French, post-Revolution, monumental painting as decorative, "pandering to sentimental bourgeois thought".[143] He states that in times of upheaval society requires new art, but "the new collective consciousness of human values" cannot be expressed in the forms or "symbols of old historical epochs".[144] Kaláb is a painter himself, and is mentioned in the next article, on wall and monumental painting in Moravia. Great monumental artists outside of Moravia are listed as Aleš, Preisler and Bílek. Author J.B. Svrček notes that "our National Artist Antonín Procházka would also have been a painter of monumental works had he not died".[145] These articles reveal that the 'new' forms required to express 'human values' in post-World War Two Czechoslovakia include those used by pre-First World War artists, thus indicating continuity.

In the same year but several issues later, František Kaláb published an article which reveals an attitude towards Western art that is characteristic of Czechoslovak publications of this period. It offers a strong contrast to the 1947 catalogue, which gives no indication of contemporary relations between British and Czech understandings of art. The article is entitled "The Legacy of Western Culture", and acknowledges Western influence on Czech art, but declares the frame of Western European culture as inadequate for contemporary development. The latter entails "new direction leading towards a higher social conception, higher ideals of humanity, a period when the whole structure of our life is about to undergo a thorough change".

[143] František Kaláb, "Monumental Painting", *BLOK*, 1947-1948, 2nd Year, Issue 2
[144] Ibid
[145] J.B. Svrček, "Wall and Monumental Painting is being carried out in Moravia", Ibid

[146] Whilst he approves of recent destruction of all things bourgeois, he reminds the reader that the issue is not so simple. Kaláb quotes Lenin: "you would be mistaken if you fancied that you could become communists without acquiring all that human knowledge had gathered up till now".[147]

Kaláb believes the solution is to review world and Czech art, in order to fully understand the social function of art. In doing so, he denies any great disparity between West and East, claiming that the churlish mention of a "curtain" is only to save Western culture, for are not 'we' also the "cultural heirs" of Europe? He finishes by confirming that "without any prejudice", he views Western art as serving "only a limited number of…customers". The latter is manifested in the West's obsession with "solving the different questions of shape, space, time" whilst neglecting the "whole sense of art".[148] Such contemporary opinions are not even hinted at in British publications of the time.

Architectural influence between British and Czech architecture is one instance of Kaláb's 'cultural inheritance' from Europe. An article of 1948 entitled "Industrialism, urbanism, architecture", written by Bohuslav Fuchs and published in *BLOK* allots the systematic building of towns and cities, and the distribution of industry to Ruskin. It was Ruskin, writes Fuchs, who advocated the improvement of the living standard of man, in the "urbanistic" sense. He quotes G.B. Shaw: "Especially Ruskin is ahead of all expert socialists, even Karl Marx in the violence of

[146] František Kaláb, "The Legacy of Western Culture", *BLOK*, 1947-1948, 2nd year, Issue 10
[147] Ibid
[148] Ibid

his invectives. Lenin's critics of modern society are in comparison with him the sermons of a simple country parson."[149]

In 1967 an exhibition was held at the Tate Gallery entitled *Cubist Art from Czechoslovakia: An Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture by Czech and French Artists*, organised by the Arts Council. A programme of exchange between Great Britain and Czechoslovakia was drawn up by representatives of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education and Culture, the Foreign Office and the British Council. They arranged for an exhibition of Henry Moore's work to be held in both Prague and Bratislava in 1966. In exchange an exhibition of Fine Arts from the Czechoslovak National Collection of Fine Arts was shown in Britain a year later. Moore was admired in Czechoslovakia as an example of Modernism. During research carried out in the Institute for Art History in Prague, I discovered that between 1946 and 1985, around thirty Czech art journals mentioned his work, whilst ten contained reproductions. Other British artists discussed or reproduced by Czech journals were Paul Nash, Barbara Hepworth, Graham Sutherland, and in the 1960s, Francis Bacon.[150] This shows a Czech awareness for contemporary British art, whereas British publications from this time still focused primarily on Czech Cubism.

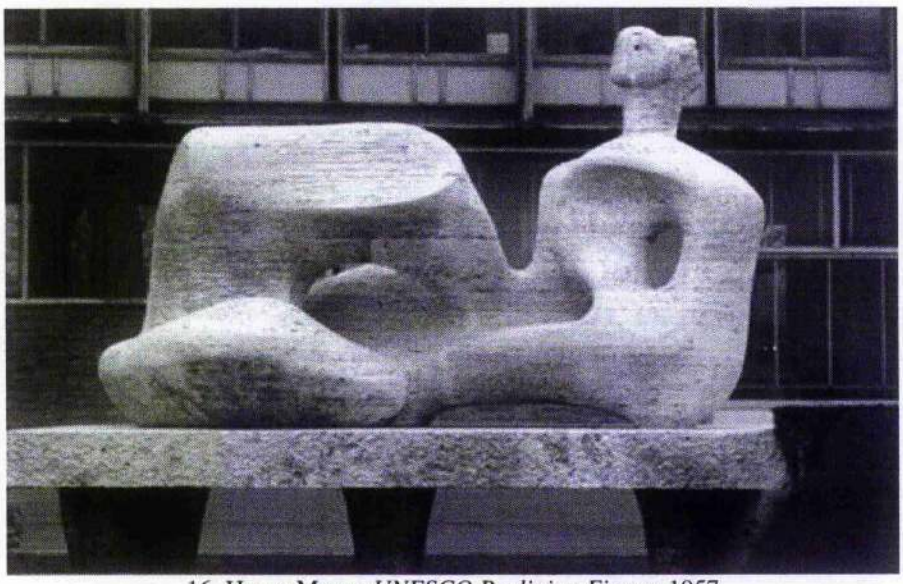
An aspect admired in Moore's work was the 'monumental'. Whilst recalling the aforementioned article by Kaláb on this theme, a 1958 article in *Výtvarné Umění* discusses Moore's placement of monumental shape in space, which opposes Kaláb's dislike of questions of shape, space, and time. In a discussion with J.P. Hodin, Moore

[149] Bohuslav Fuchs, "Industrialism, urbanism, architecture", *BLOK*, 1947-1948, 2nd year, Issues 3-4
[150] According to research carried out by author in the Institute for Art History, Prague, 01.06.06

considers two central principles: "the monumental shape value of a sculpture in... space" and "psychological expression without any special elements of composition".[151] The latter concerns innate expression, without using expressionist formal values, and is reminiscent of the aforementioned writings of Gutfreund.

Throughout the articles in this issue, terms are used which reflect the direction of art and politics in Czechoslovakia in 1958: "social effectiveness", "social effect", "feelings of contemporary people", "monumental structures [in conjunction with] a functional social centre", "educating large masses" and "sensitiveness for actual surroundings".[152] The latter themes are explored in relation to Moore through the figure for the Time-Life building in London (1952-53), and for the UNESCO building in Rotterdam (1955, plate 16), which have a social purpose, are within a social centre, and show "sensitiveness for actual surroundings". Whilst the themes applied to British artists in Czech journals are selective, and often reflect communist ideology, they arguably consider British contemporary artists with more awareness of current developments than the retrospective exhibitions of Czech Cubism shown and discussed in Britain.

[151] J.P. Hodin, "Henry Moore: Monumental Shape in Space", *Výtvarné Umění*, Ročník 8, (1958) p.24
[152] Various authors, *Výtvarné Umění*, Ročník 8, pp. 2-34



16. Henry Moore *UNESCO Reclining Figure* 1957

The 1967 Tate Gallery exhibition, based on the *Paris Prague* exhibition held at the Musee d'Art Moderne in Paris, 1966, is one such example. Accordingly, a French emphasis is noticeable within the works and artists selected, and the French works collected by influential Czech collector Vincenc Kramář make up one section of the exhibition. Kramář (1877-1960) was one of the major collectors of Picasso and Braque. A substantial part of his collection is now in the National Gallery in Prague, and had a large influence on several decades of Czech Modern art. The 1967 exhibitions also shows a large emphasis on Kupka, based in Paris for a lengthy duration. Gabriel White's foreword notes that in comparison to the Paris exhibition, "the designers and one or two of the artists have been omitted but the painting is strengthened by the inclusion of Frantisek Kupka".[153]

The introduction to the exhibition catalogue provides a more nuanced description of Czech Cubism than the 1947 catalogue. Czech author Jaromír Zemina asks "what

[153] Gabriel White, *Cubist Art from Czechoslovakia* (London, 1967), p. 1

purpose, what meaning and value does the culture of a small nation in the heart of Europe have in the history of modern society, a nation that over the centuries has had to struggle to establish its own independent existence?"[154] He thus anticipates the questions of the British audience, and proceeds to offer answers. He explains that Czech Cubism expresses a passionate meaning which is demonstrative of local character, by which I presume he means the Czech artists' interest in spiritual and existential meaning, as well as localised influences such as the Baroque, which differs to the function of Parisian Cubism. Zemina relates this to the national struggle for independence, resulting in a pre-occupation with the fate of modern man. Cubism provided a new expression of this meaning, and a large influencing factor in the artists' inclination towards Parisian art was Vincenc Kramář's collection of French art, symbolic of a cultural balance between East and West.[155]

Zemina later offers a more detailed explanation of 'local' characteristics. He claims that the patriotism of the soon-to-be Czechoslovakian republic influenced the Czech interpretation of Cubism. In looking to the past of their nation and its history, they were influenced by historical developments that differed from those of interest to Cubists abroad, namely High and Late Gothic art and the Baroque. These gave national meaning to their work. As a specific example of the influence of the Gothic period, Zemina describes the formal device of 'Diamond Vaulting', so important to Czech Cubist form.[156] This does not, he continues, mean that the artists were traditionalists. This is shown through their application of Cubist notions to architecture. However, Zemina believes that the latter use of Cubist ideas tended

[154] Jaromír Zemina, "Introduction", Ibid, p. 5
[155] Ibid, p. 12
[156] Ibid, p. 7

towards decoration of a building, divorced from material and function, resulting in a compromise of the overall structure. This, he believes, impeded the Czech development of Cubism.

The 'value' of Czech Cubism is to be judged by the British audience. The terms of this invitation are humble. Zemina concludes, "We submit all this, the works and the problems they create, to the British audience hoping that it will view the exhibition in the same spirit of sincerity that was our motive in the preparation of the exhibition."[157] One British opinion is expressed in an article published in *The Times*, entitled "Cubist miscellany from Czechoslovakia", by Guy Brett. The term 'miscellany' provides an indication of his opinion, developed in his description of the works shown as "some 'cubist', some not, together with French cubist paintings". French therefore denotes true Cubism. The only Czech artist Brett considers a true Cubist is Kubišta. Brett views the Czech use of Cubism more as a form of liberation than a serious artistic endeavour, because most of them, writes Brett, turned to socialist realism. This opinion could have been construed from Zemina's discussion of national struggle. Brett concludes that the most significant part of the exhibition is the collection of French Cubism, demonstrating Kramář's inspired collection of Picasso's paintings.[158] The off-hand manner in which the British press often treats social realism during this period, earlier and later, insinuates that Czech artists were unable to deal with movements such as Cubism, and had to revert to realism.

Guy Brett, "Cubist Miscellany from Czechoslovakia", *The Times*, September 15 1967, Issue 57047, Col A [04/10/2006] http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

The texts discussed in chapter two begin to question 'inherent' Czech value in art beyond European influence. Whilst vocabulary such as that used by Kovárna still implies that Czech art is a receptacle or vacuum, Novotný criticises unthinking 'conformity to fashion'. These departures from Western influence, or a more critical awareness of those influences, are not present in the contemporary British press. Similarly, the fairly unchanging lists of Czech artists included in articles and exhibitions do not reflect the questioning of Western culture, the emphasis on social meaning and the monumental, or the re-evaluation of typically 'Czech' art forms and their function in post-war Czechoslovakia, articulated in contemporary Czech art journals. The respective political climates seem to encourage British ignorance and Czech re-questioning. The latter themes will be seen in British texts on sculpture in chapter three.

Chapter Three (1968 to the late 1980s)

The role of the individual within Czech history: key spokesmen and the operation of art historical chronologies

This chapter continues to look at the use of themes of geographical placement in English, and Anglo-American texts on Czech art and exhibitions of Czech art, from the late 1960s to the late 1980s. As in the periods considered in previous chapters, the Czech art discussed in these publications is mainly Cubist, and remains the predominant form of Czech modern art shown in Britain. Notions of history, national prosperity and identity, and the emphasis on international links remain key issues, as they were in relation to the exhibitions and texts discussed in chapters one and two. There are three central elements that can be added to the discussion, which will be looked at in this chapter. These can be described as follows: firstly, a focus on sculpture, through the discussion of two central exhibitions. Secondly, an analysis of the notion of nationhood, the Bohemian national awakening, and its relevance to, or role within, English texts on Czech sculpture from the period under survey in this chapter. And thirdly, the important role of the National Gallery of Prague in Anglo-Czech cultural relationships. In relation to the latter, I will be looking at the position of Jiří Kotalík as a key spokesman for this period.

This chapter focuses on two exhibitions. Firstly, *Otto Gutfreund (1889-1927) Sculpture and Drawings*, which took place in Edinburgh in 1979, and was then shown in the Courtauld, London. This was the first time Gutfreund exhibited in a public gallery in Britain. The exhibition was organised by the Scottish Arts Council,

arranged with the assistance of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Socialist Republic and the Visiting Arts Unit of Great Britain. The catalogue was written by Jiří Kotalík, and published by the Scottish Arts Council. The second exhibition was entitled *Czech sculpture, 1800-1938*, held at the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, in 1983. The catalogue was written by Peter Cannon-Brookes in collaboration with Jiří Kotalík, Petr Hartmann and Vaclav Procházka, published by Trefoil, London. The editor also acknowledges the help of the British Council and Visiting Arts Unit.

In 1968 the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was constituted as a federal state. Many of the great changes in Czechoslovakia and Bohemia were due to student and intellectual revolt, often symbolised by the actions of student Jan Palach, who set himself on fire in 1969 in protest against the suppression of free speech following Soviet invasion in 1968. The latter followed a period of liberalisation in Czechoslovakia known as the Prague Spring (1968), under the leadership of Alexander Dubček

Characteristic of this period was the re-questioning of moral ideals and the notion of being educated and cultured. These are elements which recur in Czech writings and historiography, as many of the quoted publications in this thesis show. Particular to this are the sentiments of Masaryk, one of the many key figures who seem to dominate a period of Czech history, or signify certain aspects of their national identity. Hus and Masaryk have arisen in this thesis as key figures. This chapter introduces a new key figure of Czech history: František Palacký (1798-1876). Another to add to the list, relevant to the period considered in this chapter, is Václav

Havel. Ladislav Holy allots the latter's popularity to his role as representative of ideals concerning an educated, cultured, democratic nation. He writes, "Are we not a well-educated and cultured nation? Look at Havel".[159] Holy goes on to point out that Havel supports the veneration of an individual in order to have a strong democratic tradition.[160]

The notion of the Czech martyr and individual figures of power is one of the themes explored by twentieth-century Czech author Josef Skvorecky in his novel, *The Miracle Game*. Published in Prague in 1972, but not translated into English until 1990, the novel concerns the Prague Spring of 1968, and the role of religion within socialist Czechoslovakia. Skvorecky's description of the street names in small town Hronov is an analogy of the changing political allegiances of the Czech people tp individuals who are symbolic of Czech political positioning over various periods of history. Skvorecky satirically uses Baroque simile as a characteristically Czech visual image, in reference to the ultimate notion of power (God):

> Hronov and its main street – which over the past thirty years had been named after Eduard Beneš, Frederick the Great, Stalin, Lenin, Professor Nejedly, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, and finally, once more, Lenin – are lost in the early evening mist like a small heap of stones in a poisonous green basin of meadows and fields. On the western horizon the ruler of the Universe, playing at being a baroque engraver, had produced a masterly fantasia of cloud and light.[161]

---

[159] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 163
[160] Ibid, p. 164
[161] Josef Skvorecky, *The Miracle Game* (London, 1990), p.2

Havel's power as an individual is made explicit through Skovercky's character "the world-famous playwright Hejl", who he describes as behaving "as though he wanted to follow in the footsteps of the [murdered] priest and become a martyr to the ideals of *annus mirabilis*. I was certain he would. Ultimately everything in the world turns out for the worst."[162]

Havel was one of the signatories of Charter 77 that called for a new political framework within Czechoslovakia, departing from the antiquated aspirations of Dubček ('socialism with a human face'). The aim was to allow people to live in truth in contrast to the falsity of the contemporary communist system. This would take into account the increasing popularity of Christianity (especially Catholicism), nationalism, and contemporary conservatism, all of which demonstrated the need to rethink the role of ideological freedom within an oppressive (Havel calls 'post-totalitarian') regime structure. A series of essays were included in a *Samizdat* publication in the 1970s, by Charter 77 signatories. These were republished in translation in Vaclav Havel et al, *The Power of the Powerless*, 1985. The title is taken from the first essay of the collection, written by Havel. Havel writes of the dominance of that loose term, 'ideology', used by the communist regime as an umbrella to cover individuality. The individual is a central character within Havel's essay, an idea promoted in relation to himself as a necessary figurehead of the promotion of truth, and one which recalls Masaryk's emphasis on the right of the individual.

[162] Ibid, p. 83

Havel views ideology as a means through which the individual can deceive his true conscience and legitimise his actions, unquestioningly, within the structure of communist socialism: "Ideology is a specious way of relating to the world. It offers human beings the illusion of an identity, of dignity, and of morality while making it easier for them to *part* with them."[163] Thus a false sense of reality is created, as ideology spans the gap between the system and the individual, and justifies the actions of both. It is easier to move with the current of this "pseudo-life" than to conflict with it. [164] The way to combat this is not so much open opposition, as the political framework allows no official capacity for opposition in the democratic understanding of the term, but in the private adherence to truth, to the self, to the human conscience.

He equates the increase of truth with power, which is reflective of a moral dimension. Morality and truth as tools of individual power, though within a very different context, recall Masaryk's early aims for the Republic. For Havel the concept of truth must be carried out within the existing system, and must not be mistaken for an idealisation or desire of a new, Western-style democratic system. Havel acknowledges some strength in Masaryk's notion of 'working for the good of the nation'. This relates to Havel's solution which is to encourage 'small-scale work' across the nation. Through the adherence to personal truths in work, the private sphere, culture and relationships, the power of truth can penetrate the veneer of ideology which dominates the public sphere during the time in which he writes.

---

[163] Vaclav Havel et al, *The Power of the Powerless*, (London, 1985), p. 28
[164] Ibid, p. 38

In light of Havel's statements on the political climate of this period, one can begin to understand the restrictions placed on information accessible to the public during this period. The texts provided for English-speaking audiences largely originate from institutions within the Czechoslovak public sphere, and so would have been affected by such restrictions. Havel's statements show that Czech re-questioning of Czech culture and morality was still active within Communist Czechoslovakia. The terms used often recall Masaryk's discussion. At the end of chapter two I mentioned that Czech self-interrogation does not transfer to Anglo-American publications durint this period. One reason for this is presented through the texts studied in this chapter, namely that they are mostly published by public organisations which rely on the official language of Czech communication from this period. They therefore promote Czech culture through relying on many of the definition of Czech nationhood used in pre-WW1 publications.

The role of cultural institutions in promoting Czech national consciousness is described in the 1983 National Museum of Wales catalogue in a section entitled "The Society of Patriotic Friends of Art". The latter was founded in 1796 by a group of Bohemian nobles and rich Prague citizens. It was a Germanic institution for most of its life, but it was responsible for the foundation of the Prague Academy of Fine Arts in 1799, and so would provide basic training for future generations of Czech artists. It also established a collection of paintings and sculpture which constituted the main public collection of the nineteenth-century. This came under state control in 1937 as the State Collection of Old Art. The Czech National Gallery came into existence in 1945, but was not formally founded until 1949. After describing these institutions,

the first usage of the word 'nationalistic', rather than 'national awakening' or 'nationhood', occurs in the catalogue:

> The Czech National Museum has always had a strong nationalistic role and is fundamentally inward looking within Bohemia, whilst the National Gallery, close in spirit to the ideas of its founding fathers in the Society of Patriotic Friends of Art, is more international in its interests.

Nationalism thus connotes introversion, as is often associated with modern notions of nationalism. In this context nationalism becomes negative, like the nationalism of Germany during the war. It is both revolutionary and restrictive, whereas the above quotation promotes internationalism, again supporting a modern viewpoint. This is in keeping with the catalogue's encouragement of cultural exchange, and recalls the fact that this exhibition is strongly influenced by the international institution mentioned – the National Gallery.

The texts under discussion in this chapter demonstrate attitudes towards Czech art are not just sourced from institutional communication but are also influenced by western art historical hierarchies. One example of this is Douglas Cooper's *The Cubist Epoch*, published in London in1971. This was published by Phaidon to accompany an exhibition held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the introduction, Cooper describes the dissemination of Cubism, starting with Picasso and Braque and radiating out to other countries, including Czechoslovakia. He divides Cubist artists into the 'true' Cubists and derivative Cubists. The latter he calls "dependents".[165] Cooper than divides the

[165] Douglas Cooper *The Cubist Epoch* (London, 1971), p.12

'dependents' into three groups: those who 'cubified' as a mannerism, those who tried to make a scientific method of Cubism, and those who used and transformed Cubism to achieve other "(not always reconcilable)" pictorial ends.[166]

The first definition could be applied to Czech Cubism, as their use of it was not what Cooper would call 'true', but with its combined application of expressionist and futurist methods achieved different ends. The term 'mannerism' also has negative connotations. It implies that French Cubism is a preliminary form which led to later and less valuable developments in Czech art, just as Renaissance mannerism led from High (like Cooper's 'true') to Baroque. Cooper continues the introduction with terms such as "expansion" and "dominated", which resulted in the development of Cubism into an "international style".[167] Though these terms are appropriate to some extent, they connote colonialism and the periphery. These connotations are found in exhibition catalogues of this genre throughout the twentieth-century.

Though Cooper does at least add lesser known figures to a widely-recognised chronology, *The Cubist Epoch* is restrictive, focusing only on a few central Cubist artists to set the standard against which all other artists are judged. The beginning of his introduction compares the vision of Cubism to that of Renaissance artists, who replaced the "experiential conceptions" of medieval artists with "visual perception", by which he means perspective and natural light.[168] As David M. Sokol wrote in his review of this publication in the *Art Journal*, autumn 1971, Cooper views Cubism as

[166] Ibid
[167] Ibid, p.14
[168] Ibid, p.11

a "new reality" over what Sokol calls "a new pictorial language".[169] Cooper uses a model reliant on notions of absolute, or 'true', Cubism and relative, or 'dependent' Cubism. This is a model that is found, in varying degrees, throughout the catalogues discussed in this thesis.

In a chapter entitled "The Influence of Cubism outside France", Cooper devotes six pages to Czechoslovakia. The artists he looks at are all Czech: Filla, Kubišta, Procházka, Beneš, Gutfreund and Čapek. He begins his section on these artists with the well-known idiom (though his geography is not entirely sound!); "Situated geographically at the centre of Europe, with Russia and Germany to the north, Italy to the south and France and Austria lying west and east, Czechoslovakia (or Bohemia as it then was) was open to several currents of artistic influence".[170] Cooper outlines the standard chronology of Osma, Mánes and Skupina, tracing the influence of Munch, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Bourdelle and then French Cubism, as is suited to an overview of the period. He describes Skupina as embracing Futurism, Cubism and "their national cultural heritage, German Expressionism".[171] Despite Cooper's often Francophile attitude, this is a refreshing acknowledgement of German influence. The collection of French paintings belonging to key art historian Vincenc Kramář is also noted. As in 1967 exhibition reviews, Kramář's collection relieves western writers of their fear of the unknown, allowing them to position Czech Cubism according to a French collection. Yet Cooper also adds an alternative

[169] David M. Sokol "Douglas Cooper The Cubist Epoch" *Art Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1. (Autumn, 1971), p.102.[14.08.2006] http://links.jstor.org
[170] Ibid, p.150
[171] Ibid, p.151

through mentioning the heritage of German Expressionism and its influence on Czech art.

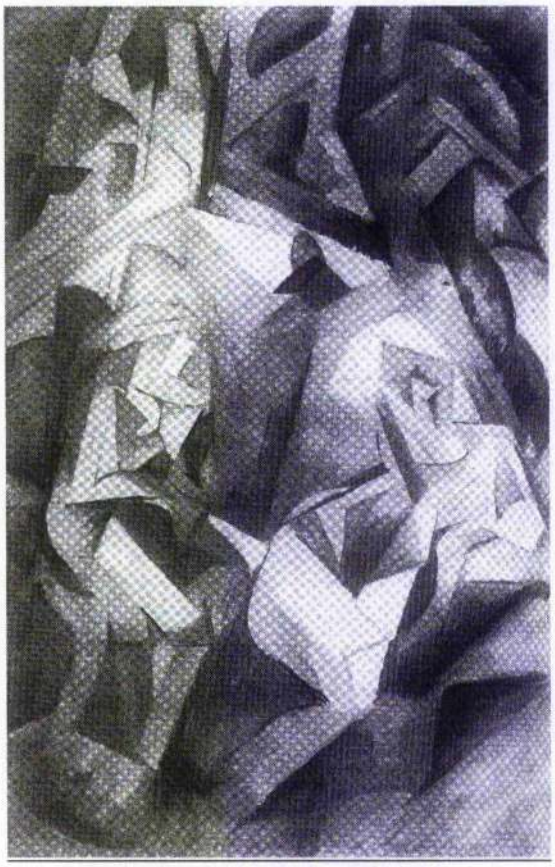
Cooper goes on to say that the Czech artists were not affected by Orphism, or by any other experiments of the Cubist School in Paris, and that Kupka was the only one to go on to non-figurative art. He sees Filla's 1912 work, *Bathers* (plate 17), as proof that Filla studies the works of Braque and Picasso "intelligently", by which he seems to mean that he kept "the expressionist strain in check".[172] *Bathers* is an early example of the influence of French Cubism on Filla's work. Cooper fails to mention that in studying Braque and Picasso "intelligently", Czech artists took Cubism in a new direction. This was through the expressive nature of their work, whose central figures are posed in stage-like settings, and the psychology of the characters is shown. This would be more apparent in works such as Filla's 1912 *The Dance of Salome*. However, one can also find these aspects in their early form in *Bathers*. Art historian Miroslav Lamač provides a concise description of Czech Cubism:

> Prague's material contribution to the European avant-garde was the confrontation of the spiritual atmosphere of Central Europe with the pictorial structure of the Paris Cubists.[173]

The second most important Czech Cubist, writes Cooper, was Gutfreund, who made a significant contribution to Cubist sculpture. Cooper concludes by mentioning the interesting "side-effect" of Cubism in Czechoslovakia, namely design and architecture. He provides Vlatislav Hofman, Pavel Janák and Josef Gočár as

[172] Ibid, p.153
[173] Miroslav Lamač, "Czech Cubism: Points of Departure and Resolution", Czech Modernism 1900-1945 (Houston, 1989), p. 56

examples. In considering design and architecture as 'side-effects', Cooper displays his ignorance of Czech Cubist theory, and its modernist approach to medium. Gutfreund wrote that "to be a sculptor it is not enough to be able to model: a sculptor must be a mathematician who fashions according to a preconceived plan, this is also an architect".[174] Cooper's categorises and separates visual art, design and architecture in a manner that is contrary to the inclusive Cubist approach of Gutfreund.



17. Emil Filla *Bathers* 1911-12

Cooper's decision that Filla and Gutfreund are the most 'significant' of Cubist sculptors is echoed in the prominent role which the two artists play in British

[174] Ibid, p.5

exhibitions of Czech modern art. Within the context of my thesis, the gallery space can be viewed as a forum for cultural exchange. The commitment of key institutions, mainly councils and ministries from both countries, to this exchange is reiterated in the prefaces, forwards and introductions of all the catalogues surveyed. During the period under discussion the National Gallery of Prague played a prominent role in the cultural communications between Britain and Czechoslovakia. It has been previously mentioned that Jiří Kotalík was central to this relationship.

Jiří Kotalík is an architectural and art historian. Amongst other things he has also worked for the Prague Institute for Care of Monuments, was professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, and Head Manager of the National Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage. He was also the Director of the National Gallery in Prague from 1967 to 1990.

Now sadly out of print, *Czech modern art 1900-1960*, published by the National Gallery in Prague in 1995 describes the modern art collection, and the conception of the catalogue and exhibition at the Trade Fair Palace, Prague. Writers include Lenka Bydzovská, Vojtěch Lahoda, Karel Srp, and commissioner of the exhibition, Václav Erben. This text is a rare entity as it describes the National Gallery's modern collection in English, a resource currently unavailable in the list of gallery publications, though texts on the other parts of the collection (for example the nineteenth-century) can easily be obtained. The nearest publication that can be found on this subject is the catalogue that accompanies the permanent collection displayed at the House of the Black Madonna.

The role of the national institution is illuminated by the following text. Martin Zlatohlávek, Director of the National Gallery in Prague, begins the preface to *Czech modern art 1900-1960* by saying that it is hard to write an introduction to the catalogue for the modern art collection as there has not been public access to a permanent exhibition until relevantly recently. He sees this as having a sizeable impact on the development of Czech artists, placing the collection of the National Gallery at the centre of Czech artistic development. He claims that artists had no space whatsoever to "draw inspiration from the experience of their predecessors":

> The Czech cultural public was not given the opportunity to see the art and sculpture of this century in an integrated permanent exhibition; it did not have the opportunity to form its own opinions on contemporary art from knowledge of the accepted values of art works which, as a rule, are found in national galleries. The following artistic generation could not draw inspiration from the experience of their predecessors, thereby enriching the ideas which would condition their work...[175]

The collection was opened to the public in the Trade Fair Palace in 1995. The key position of Kotalík as Director of the National Gallery of Prague from 1967 to 1990 coincides with the time frame under examination. The introduction, entitled 'History of the Collection', states: "It wasn't until the appointment of Jiří Kotalík that success was really achieved"[176]. On 15th of November 1978, government decree no. 334 enabled the National Gallery to acquire the Trade Fair Palace. This building, however, was not to be opened for another seventeen years. During this period Czech

[175] Lenka Bydzovská, Vojtech Lahoda, Karel Srp, et al, *Czech modern art 1900-1960*, (Prague 1995)
[176] Ibid, p.18

modern painting exhibitions were held in the short term. During the 1970s (1972-1975) a four-part series on Czech painting of the twentieth-century was shown by Kotalík, Ludmila Karlikova and Karel Miler, for which two catalogues were published.[177]

According to the introduction, after the war 860 exhibitions of Czech modern art were organised by the National Gallery in Prague. Kotalík set in motion a project with the aim of gradually presenting to public what would become the definitive collection at the Trade Fair Palace through a series of exhibitions entitled "Czech Art of the 20th Century". The first part was shown at the U hybernů palace, the rest in the Riding School at Prague castle. There were sixteen parts from 1984-1990.

The story for the sculpture collection is slightly different. The collection opened to public in Troja castle in 1936. From 1954 the collection was shown in Zbraslav castle. Vaclav Procházka, then head of the sculpture collection, wrote an extensive catalogue in 1967. Changes were made to the exhibition in 1966 and again in 1976, a year relevant to this chapter. Procházka collaborated with Peter Cannon-Brookes on the catalogue for the 1983 Gutfreund at the National Museum of Wales. The National Gallery collection was largely influenced by the aforementioned Vincenc Kramář..

In 1979 the Scottish Arts Council hosted an exhibition of *Otto Gutfreund (1889-1927) Sculpture and Drawings*. In the catalogue Kotalík tells that Gutfreund was

[177] Information from Ibid

inspired by the countryside around Dvur Kralove, where there was much Baroque art in to be found. A natural enclave of sculpture and rocks shaped by "the imagination of M.B. Braun" was nearby at Kuks. At first, writes Kotalík, Gutfreund was more interested in Antiquity and Gothic than Modern ideas. The School of pottery Bechyne, South Moravia, led Gutfreund to an interest in medieval art, where in Gothic late phase churches were fashioned in diamond vaulting, Kotalík suggests these shapes foreshadow Czech Cubism.

Jiří Kotalík begins the introduction by stating that Gutfreund is an artist with rare international as well as home significance. Such a claim echoes the words of G.M. Forty, Director of Fine Art for the British Council, in his introduction to a 1978 exhibition of *British Drawings And Watercolours Of The 20th Century From The Collection Of The British Council,* in Prague. This exhibition was also shown in Bratislava later in the same year. It was an exhibition of drawings and watercolours, curated by Geoffrey Grigson in 1951, and drawn from the British Council collection. It was a touring exhibition including works by Sickert, Gilman, Gwen John and Frances Hodgkins, as well as Moore, and Sutherland. The exhibition also went to New Zealand, Israel and Portugal. The exhibition was reformulated again with the addition of works by artists such as Robert Adams, Eduardo Paolozzi and Alan Reynolds, for a tour of Canada from October 1955 to May 1957, and revived again in the 1960s for showings in the Middle and Far East; and finally in the 1970s for exhibitions in Europe[178].

[178]"British Drawings And Watercolours Of The 20th Century From The Collection Of The British Council" http://collection.britishcouncil.org/html/exhibition/exhibition.aspx?id=15356 Accessed 23.07.06

Forty states in his preface that the "powerful" artists Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson and Graham Sutherland are "known nowadays as leaders in international continental art" as well as at home. His words resemble the positive words of Kotalík, who also states that Gutfreund "made an original contribution to European sculpture after seeing the problems with it". [179] In this he was "aided by knowledge of French collections". [180] He could also rely on a tradition of Czech culture that had developed a new breadth with the turn of the nineteenth century. "There was, moreover, an opportune concord between outer circumstances and the sculptor's inner disposition, purposeful determination and dignified character".[181]

Francis Carey (Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum) also wrote for the 1978 British Council catalogue. This can be linked this to a later discussion of 1993 exhibition *Czechoslovak Prints from 1900-1970* at the Hunterian Gallery, Glasgow, whose accompanying catalogue was published in 1986. The exhibition was the result of an exchange with the British Museum and the National Gallery in Prague which started with an exhibition of medieval pieces in 1982-3 called "Greater Moravia". The Hunterian exhibition actually took place from 1992 to 1993. Due to the success of these exhibitions, the organisations involved decided to exchange collections rather than exhibitions. So works by Blake, Gillray, Paolozzi, Hockney were sent from Britain; some of which were specially purchased. This exhibition was, "to the best of our knowledge, the first historical survey of 20th century Czech

[179] Jirí Kotalík, *Otto Gutfreund 1889-1927,* (Edinburgh, 1979), p.3
[180] Ibid, p.3
[181] Ibid

printmaking to be shown outside of Czechoslovakia".[182] The preface thanks academician Jiři Kotalík.

Powerfully impressed by Bourdelle when his work was exhibited in Prague in 1909, Gutfreund went to Paris to work in the artist's atelier. His very close friend from the time, Antonín Matějček, wrote: "What was surprising in this young sculptor was his exceptional intelligence, literary education, certainty of judgement and developed sense of cultural values".[183] Matějček's 1927 text on Czechoslovakian art was discussed in chapter one. In 1910 Matějček selected works from the Salon des Independents to be shown in Prague. Kotalík writes in the 1979 catalogue that the artists amongst those originally chosen from the Salon des Independents, for example Picasso, whose work showed a stress on solution and autonomous pictorial composition, were not included in exhibition. He points out that despite this, the influence of the latter's pictorial approach on Gutfreund is apparent, as is his developing interest in the modern. Kotalík's inclusion of the missing works, though not explained by the author as such, reconstructs a relationship between Picasso and Czech audiences originally desired by Matějček, and allows Kotalík to place Gutfreund in the line of French influence. In doing so perhaps he hopes to clarify Czech Cubist practice via French norms, more familiar to the Scottish audience.

According to Kotalík, in 1910 Gutfreund returned to an exciting atmosphere in Prague. Osma exhibitions between 1907 and1908 aims were becoming more cogent. From 1911-14, Cubism became the dominant practice, and there were several

[182] Francis Carey, Preface, Irena Goldscheider, *Czechoslovak Prints from 1900-1970* (London, 1986)
[183] Jirí Kotalík, *Otto Gutfreund 1889-1927*, (Edinburgh, 1979), p.3

Skupina exhibitions that included international participation. Kotalík categorises Gutfreund's work during this period according to his attempts to solve the issue of how to dramatise sculpture. Kotalík begins with 1911, citing *At the Mirror*, *Job*, and the resulting *Anxiety* as Gutfreund's first solution to the problem (plate 18). The characterising features of these works are geometrically precise surfaces with defined sharp edges, restless, analytical stress of surface, intense light and shade effects.

18. Otto Gutfreund *Anxiety* 1911-12

19. Otto Gutfreund *Morning Toilet* 1911

As examples of a second solution, Kotalík names *Hamlet* and *Don Quixote* (plates 20 and 21), works that show a greater stress on analysis, resulting in a broken surface which added dynamism to material. Kotalík believes that this working from the outside rather than from within suggests Gutfreund was working from derived

principles, as they are characteristic of pictorial Cubism in Czech painting. The decorative elements produced by this rhythmical treatment are also seen the work of Filla, Procházka, Beneš, and most importantly Kubišta. To describe these artists' approach to Cubism as "derived," reiterates Cooper's argument that the Czech use of Cubist art was mannerist. The Czech artists' interest in the psychological and expressive is also mentioned by Kotalík, though he develops this point further than Cooper by writing of the Czech use of Cubist methods to express themes of spirituality, uncertainty and disillusion. *Anxiety* is a well-known instance of these themes.

20. Otto Gutfreund *Hamlet* 1912-13

21. Otto Gutfreund *Don Quixote* 1911-12

Kotalík discusses Gutfreund's statements in his 1912 article "Surface and Space", discussed in chapter two. This essay explains that his sculpture is expressive of

psychological meaning; Gutfreund saw sculpture as materialisation of images born within. Kotalík believes that part of this was the need for sculpture to break with painting: Gutfreund broke up space; Picasso's broke up surfaces.[184] This dramatised form from within, as shown in the 1912-13 works shown at the Edinburgh exhibition.

Kotalík relates Gutfreund's complex lines of force to architecture. He writes that internal and external dynamics were heightened by light effects, to reveal elements with conflicting Baroque features.[185] In this context Cubism is an approach to expression and movement rather than a formal orthodoxy. Kotalík sees this approach as distinguishing Gutfreund from the constructivist aims of Paris School Cubists, where sculpture is a continual reflection of reality, not a petrified fragment of time.[186]

Kotalík writes as a specialist in the field, and with greater discernment than many of the texts discussed so far. A review of a Gutfreund exhibition of 1966 demonstrates a much less discerning attitude towards his art, reminiscent of Cooper's statements. The exhibition of bronzes and drawings took place in the Grosvenor Gallery, London. The review of this exhibition, published in *The Times* in 1966, begins by stating that Gutfreund worked briefly in the Cubist style, but the works show that he was never "quite confident of his direction as a sculptor".[187]

---

[184] Ibid, p.7
[185] Ibid, p.8
[186] Ibid
[187] "Czech Sculptor", *The Times*, June 18 1966, Issue 56661, Col A [04/10/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

The only work discussed is Gutfreund's *Don Quixote*, which is described as in the style of Daumier, (who was a strong influence on Gutfreund and his contemporaries). Laurens and Lipchitz are cited as other similar artists, which the reviewer concludes from the works themselves rather than from any researched information. The review concludes, "He did not react to the tremendous possibilities in the Cubist fragmentation of volume because when he left Paris and went back permanently to Prague he returned to a more conventional, academic style".[188] These statements continue the notion of mannerist Cubism, wherein Gutfreund did not really explore Parisian Cubism, and so was a mere imitation of the real thing. The author is apparently unaware of the artistic activity in Prague, to which Gutfreund returned.

During the early 1920s in Czechoslovakia there was also a renewed interest in folk art and city folklore, called "humble arts" by Josef Čapek.[189] This was part of a post First World War interest in life, work and the environment of the common man. Kotalík believes this also explains Gutfreund's occasional interest in marginal themes of decorative or applied character, for instance a design for a five crown coin, and a sculpture with emblem for the Škoda Works. Kotalík writes: "In his work he advanced to an understanding of the relation of life to art, and discovered the sources and ideas of the modern myth".[190] Kotalík concludes, "This exhibition of his sculptures and drawings is proof of the creative ethos of an artist who left a permanent mark upon the history of modern European sculpture".[191] Judging by

[188] Ibid
[189] Jirí Kotalík, *Otto Gutfreund 1889-1927*, (Edinburgh, 1979), p.8
[190] Ibid, p.13
[191] Ibid

British awareness of Gutfreund's work, this 'permanent mark' has been neglected in English art historical texts.

Kotalík's catalogue on one artist, Gutfreund, is the first of its kind in British publication. The more frequent style of discussing groups of Czech artists through definitions of nationhood is once again adopted by Peter Cannon-Brookes in the catalogue accompanying *Czech sculpture, 1800-1938*, held at the National Museum of Wales (1983), despite the fact that Kotalík collaborated with him on this exhibition. Peter Cannon-Brookes was the Museum Consultant, and Keeper in the Department of Art, in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, from 1978–86.

The author's Preface for the catalogue accompanying this exhibition begins:

> Misinformation and misunderstandings concerning Bohemia have abounded since long before Shakespeare endowed her, in *The Winter's Tale*, with a seashore, and even today mention of Prague immediately evokes a response normally associated with distant, exotic lands. Nevertheless, as was recognised by the Emperor Charles IV in the 14th century, he who rules Bohemia effectively controls the crossroads of central Europe.[192]

The reference to Emperor Charles IV shows that the idiom common to so many of the catalogues of art from Bohemia and Czechoslovakia is not a new one. Cannon-Brookes takes up the Emperor's example and goes on to locate Prague as centre both of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Bohemia. He emphasises that the area is largely unknown, but that English speakers increasingly visit., Cannon-Brookes uses

[192] *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, ed. Peter Cannon-Brookes [et al.], National Museum of Wales, (London, 1986), p.5

vocabulary that recalls that of Will S. Munroe who wrote nearly eight decades earlier, "...Prague is still altogether too little known by the great army of American and English tourists that visit Munich, Dresden and Carlsbad annually"[193]. In keeping with this travel-style of writing, Cannon-Brookes later concludes that he presumes the audience will have a limited knowledge on the subject, and hopes readers can find further references in guidebooks.

In terms of the further information that Cannon-Brookes hopes the reader will find in a guidebook, the examples of the early 1970's publications are exactly what they claim to be: facts and figures. A guidebook to Czechoslovakia published by Olympia (Prague) in 1974 offers limited information on the cultural attractions of the country. The Prague guidebook tells the reader of the average rainfall, population, government and economy, the lengths of pavements, number of tunnels, average altitude and hectares of green spaces.[194]

We are told that "Lovers of historical and cultural monuments will find more than 36,000 state-protected buildings of all kinds in Czechoslovakia".[195] The guidebook highlights specialised museums such as those of the worker's movement, a headgear museum, watch and clock museum, glass-making and ceramic arts are also mentioned. A Czechoslovak guide to Prague from 1973 offers more information on galleries, briefly describing the Collection of Modern Art held at the Municipal Library, which represents artists from many 'national schools' as well as Czech and Slovak. The core of the latter collection are the works of those artists "who may be

[193] Will S. Munroe, (London, 1910), p. 417
[194] *Czechoslovakia,* Olympia Guidebook (Prague, 1974), p.9
[195] Ibid, p.27

considered the founders of modern Czech sculpture: J. V. Myslbek, Jan Stursa and Otto Gutfreund".[196] Rybár elaborates:

> The statues of Gutfreund, one of the first to create Cubist sculpture, are unique for their atmosphere of calm, simplicity and directness of appeal [sic]. His statues are neither monumental, nor emotional, in their expression - they are simply human.[197]

The guidebooks are very telling indeed, but perhaps not in the manner that Cannon-Brookes hoped.

Cannon-Brookes is not alone in beginning his text with information on the great Czech history. This is seen in many of the catalogues and publications discussed. In so doing, he validates the role of Czech civilisation within Europe, proud of its sense of history. He also participates in an agreement of what constitutes greatness within Czech history, and unquestioningly continues its legacy.

Cannon-Brookes designates Prague as centre of Czech artistic activity. He states that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the majority of better sculpture was produced in Prague, and that this remained the same until after 1920. He laments the fact that little research has been done into early nineteenth-century Czech sculpture, which shows an understanding for contemporary trends in European art, "however unostentatiously interpreted".[198] He does not develop this point, and the reader is left

---

[196] Ctibor Rybár *Prague: Guide, Information, Facts* (Prague, 1973), p.203
[197] *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, ed. Peter Cannon-Brookes [et al.], National Museum of Wales, (London, 1986), p.5
[198] Ibid

unsure of whether the implied modesty of Czech sculpture is a negative or positive facet.

Cannon-Brookes hopes that this exhibition: "will provide a useful contribution to the further development of Anglo-Czechoslovak cultural relations".[199] And in an unusual attention to geographical explanation, he goes on to state that Semantics have an important role in improving the understanding of the western world, and thus clarifies that by Czech he means the western part of the country, and this must not be confused with Czechoslovak. It is unusual for a British catalogue to emphasise this aspect, and it may be said that to neglect this explanation is to invest in 'Czechoslovakism', which will be discussed further.

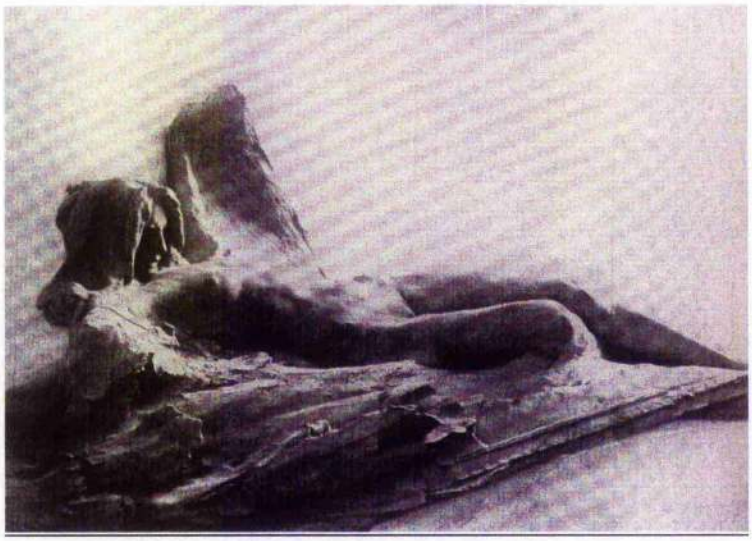
Cannon-Brookes partakes in the Czech construction of Czech history through the use of central events and figures, which function as aspects and motivations behind the nineteenth-century Czech 'National Awakening'. He begins with the loss of Czech independence at the Battle of the White Mountain (Bilá hora) in 1618. After this, the protestant nobility were dispossessed and the Habsburgs ruled through the Roman Catholic minority. Two key elements of the Czech national awakening are thus introduced: the rejection of Habsburg rule and the dominance of Rome. He also mentions the Hussite Wars in the fifteenth-century. The latter epitomised the national struggle for religious and political freedom, an ideal largely generated by the nineteenth-century poet, historian and politician, František Palacký.[200]

[199] Ibid, p.5
[200] Ibid, p. 10

Palacký wrote the seminal *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*, though Cannon-Brookes omits the second clause of the title. The first two sections of the book were the published in German (1836-1837), which were then published in Czech 1848, and third volume was published between 1850 and 1854. Palacký saw Czech history in terms of "the constant contact and conflict between Slavs on the one hand and Rome and the Germans on the other".[201] He saw the Hussite movement as the most glorious part of Czech history, symbolic of the victory of the Czechs over Roman Emperors and German crusaders, relevant to his contemporary Czech nation which was forming itself in opposition to Germans in Bohemia and the Habsburg rule.

Cannon-Brookes does not elaborate on the means through which Palacký's writing influenced Czech people at large, and mentions only the 'educated'. Though not read widely, Palacký's use of Jan Hus and the Hussite movement was fostered by literature, journalism, drama, music, and as some of the sculptures chosen for the Cardiff exhibition show, the visual arts (Stanislav Sucharda's *Monument to František Palacký* 1898-1912). Cannon-Brookes vaguely discusses Czech nation, failing to mention that Palacký cultivated an understanding of Czech nationhood beyond the state, referred to as 'we'. Palacký stated, "We were here before Austria, and we shall be here after it".[202] Palacký influenced the ideas of Tomáš Masaryk and the founders of the first Republic.

[201] Cited (source not given) Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 38
[202] Ibid



22. Stanislav Sucharda *Monument to František Palacký* (Detail) 1898-1912
23. Ladislav Jan Šaloun *Monument to Jan Hus* 1900-1915

Cannon-Brookes provides a scant description of Stanislav Sucharda's *Monument to František Palacký* 1898-1912 (plate 22). He admires the eloquence of the symbols used, never reduced to "mere empty bombast".[203] He claims that the period of time it took Sucharda to design and complete the monument meant that his use of different materials, characteristic of Art Nouveau sculpture, would have been lost on 1912

[203] *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, ed. Peter Cannon-Brookes [et al.], (London, 1986), p. 41

audiences, as would the monument's "rich picturesque qualities and poetic romance".[204]

Ladislav Jan Šaloun's *Monument to Jan Hus* (plate 23), located in the Staroměstské náměsti, was also designed and made over a lengthy period of time: 1900-1915. Cannon-Brookes states that this work had to be a monument to Czech history and Czech national consciousness, as well as an appeal for an independent Czech state.[205] He compares the freely modelled surfaces and expressive outlines to Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* (1884-94). He concludes by stating that though these two monuments were complex sculptural forms, reflecting a new vigour in Czech sculpture, it was the example of Myslbek that would be most influential during the post-First World War period.[206]

Whilst Palacký was considered the 'father of the nation', Jan Hus has a similarly symbolic role. Born in 1372, he was a master of liberal arts at the University of Prague, and then its rector. Influenced by John Wycliffe, Hus was head of a reform movement. The papal schism led him to recognise only Christ as the head of the church. Czech king Wenceslas IV wanted to end the papal schism and be named Roman King. University support of Hus led to arrests, and demands to release the imprisoned supporters marked the beginning of the Hussite movement (labelled a revolution by communist historiography).[207] After 1918, the state principles of morality, truth and freedom (outlined in relation to discussion of Masaryk in Chapter

[204] Ibid, p. 42
[205] Ibid, p. 48
[206] Ibid, p. 49
[207] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 36

One) paralleled Hussite ideology. His statements on truth led to the republic's motto, seen on its coat of arms: "The truth prevails".[208] Cannon-Brookes's use of the Palacký and Hus monuments partake in national symbolism though he does not provide any discussion of their inclusion in the catalogue.

The role of terms such as nationalism, nationhood and nationality is somewhat problematic within the communist framework. Expressions of nationalism and national terms are often presumed to have been silenced under socialism. Yet Ladislav Holy believes that there was a presence of nationalist sentiment, "in spite of the suppression of its political expression".[209] He provides examples of how this sentiment was manifested. In 1968 the federation of the two republics was created on a national principle, the Federal Assembly included both a Chamber of the People and the Chamber of Nations. He states that people were made aware of their nationalism through the occasional population consensuses and the inclusion of nationality on their identity cards.[210] Holy discusses Czech émigré circles who, in the 1980s, claimed that the Czech nation no longer existed, and only a Czech-speaking population was left. Awareness of being Czech is thus "tacit":

> It is grounded in an implicit awareness of the common historical fate of the collectivity spoken of as 'we', but is seldom the subject of explicit discourse.[211]

Holy continues by stating that nationalism is made explicit in times of crisis, or threat from an Other. His methodology concerns such times. Demonstrations and the Velvet Revolutions are amongst the instances he uses to reveal 'symbols' of Czech

[208] Ibid, p. 40
[209] Ibid, p. 7
[210] Ibid, p. 8
[211] Ibid, p.9

national feeling. This approach could be placed in a category that Umut Ozkirimli finds problematic, viewing it as simplistic: "At the heart of this approach lies the belief that nationalism is a latent force that manifests itself only under extraordinary conditions, a kind of natural disaster which strikes spontaneously and unpredictably".[212] Yet whilst Holy isolates events significant of nationalist activity, and is potentially in danger of the simplistic approach outlined, he is aware of nationalism as a continuing discourse, and uses symbolic moments as case studies with connections to wider contexts.

Cannon-Brookes' use of national terms are applicable to the period in which he writes if one considers the contemporary writing of Czech scholar Miroslav Hroch. Hroch published a socio-historical analysis of nationalist movements in 1971 entitled *The Revival of the Small European Nations I: The Nations of Northern and Eastern Europe* (Prague 1971). He compares the national awakening of the nineteenth-century to contemporary social disintegration:

> In a social situation where the old regime was collapsing, where old relations were in flux and general insecurity was growing, the members of the 'non-dominant ethnic group' would see the community of language and culture as the ultimate certainty, the unambiguously demonstrable value. Today, as the system or planned economy and social security breaks down, once again – the situation is analogous – language acts as a substitute for factors of integration in a disintegrating society. When society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee.[213]

[212] Billing (1995), p.6, cited by Umut Ozkirimli *Theories of Nationalism*, (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 4
[213] Hroch (1996), p.261, cited by Umut Ozkirimli Ibid, p. 163

Language and culture are thus designated as means of integration, but during times of political and social disintegration. These discussions illustrate that nationalism, or national identity, were active issues during the communist period. One mode of its expression seems to have been in exhibitions abroad. The Cardiff exhibition emphasises issues of national identity, within the constructs of Czech history. Cannon-Brookes's vocabulary is similar to the restrictive, factual vocabulary of guidebooks issued at the time, which indicated that he is largely reliant on an official explanation of Czech history. The catalogues discussed in this chapter perhaps illustrate the greater flexibility allowed in publications abroad, but they still lack the nuanced readings of post-1989 texts.

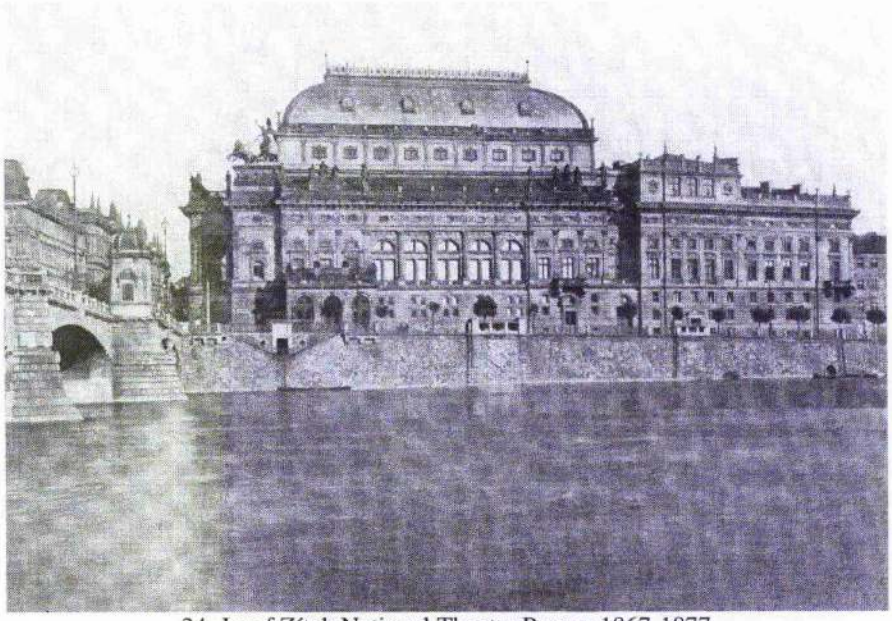
The catalogue runs from 1800 to 1976, ending with Karel Lidický. Emphasis is on the national movement, monuments and the establishment of national groups and museums. The artists are mapped according to these categories, and works are arranged according to a strict chronology. Some artists reoccur on the time line, for example Gutfreund appears in different years throughout the catalogue. The catalogue seems to emphasise sculpture in relation to what Cannon-Brookes calls the "Czech socio-cultural situation". In this context it is relevant that several curators from the National Gallery in Prague, collaborated with the National Museum of Wales for the exhibition.

In further adherence to themes of national awakening and relevant institutions, Cannon-Brookes discusses the founding of the National Museum in Prague. Its foundation was announced in 1818, and the collections were initially housed in the

Minorite monastery. The museum was admired by Palacký, as well as founder of the modern Czech language, Joef Jungmann, and the founder of the Czech literary language, Josef Šafařik, a leading figure in Slavonic studies. The institution, placed at the top of Václavské náměsti, a site of many important gatherings and demonstrations, became a focus for Czech cultural life and national endeavours. In 1831 the Society for the Scientific Teachings of the Czech Language and Literature was founded and based in the museum, as was its publishing house, Matice Česká.[214] In connection to the literary movement, Cannon-Brookes describes the sense of inadequacy caused by the lack of Slavonic myths in comparison to German myths, such as those exploited by Wagner. Manuscripts were 'discovered' by Václav Hanka at Zelena Hora and Dvůr Králové, and gained popular success until Masaryk confirmed that they were forgeries.

As well as the National Museum, the National Theatre played a key role in the 'national awakening' (plate 24). Built between 1868 and 1881, then destroyed by a fire and re-built two years later, the National Theatre, designed by Prague architect Josef Zitek, employed almost every high-standing artist of Bohemia, including sculptures by Bohuslav Schnirch, Anton Wagner and J.V. Myslbek. The foyer contains a cycle of monumental paintings by Aleš and Ženišek, depicting scenes from Smetana's *My Country*. The involvement of so many artists in this project led to the collective name, applied by Cannon-Brookes, The Theatre Generation. The words 'Nation to Itself', inscribed above the proscenium arch, demonstrate the role of this building as a national emblem.

[214] *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, ed. Peter Cannon-Brookes [et al.], (London, 1986), p.11



24. Josef Zítek National Theatre Prague 1867-1877

On May 16, 1918, a meeting in Prague celebrated the foundation of the National Theatre. Delegates included Poles, Romanians, Italians and Yugoslavs. Speaker Dr. Kramář used the National Theatre as a symbol of national rights: "we firmly believe that as we succeeded in erecting our National Theatre, so shall we also obtain our rights and be able to rejoice with a song of a full and free life."[215]

Myslbek founded the School of Sculpture at the Academy in 1886 and remained professor until 1919. Cannon-Brookes describes Myslbek as "autocratic and domineering", and personality clashes with him encouraged a number of young sculptors to escape to Paris.[216] Cannon-Brookes sees their trips to Paris as "beneficial to Czech sculpture".[217]

---

[215] Cited by Vladimir Nosek, *Independent Bohemia*, (London, 1918), p. 153
[216] *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, ed. Peter Cannon-Brookes [et al.], (London, 1986), p. 26
[217] Ibid

At the turn of the century, Czech artists, mostly Myslbek's students, working in a "limited" style, began to strive for new modes of artistic expression.[218] Cannon-Brookes describes this as a move that paralleled other parts of Europe. He defines three main directions in which the artists' search for new expression were realised; Art Nouveau (Stanislav Sucharda, Ladislav Šaloun), Symbolism (Bílek), and Impressionism (Bohumil Kafka, Josef Mařatka). The latter he describes as being "the first [in French art] to mature into a definite style".[219] However, he continues, it reached sculpture last in Bohemia, through an exhibition of Rodin in 1902.

In a brief section on František Bílek, Cannon-Brookes claims the artist was most influenced by late-Gothic art and the artist's origins in South Bohemia. He implies that Bílek's work is to some extent indefinable. It concerns the mystical and spiritual, religious idea but no definite religion, an expression of the metaphysical, both Art Nouveau and Symbolist in style, with a two-dimensional stress on expressive outlines and soft modelling. He writes of Bílek's use of modern literature and old myths of the Orient, the new age and the old. He also combines many materials in his sculptures, whilst producing drawings, ceramics and graphics. Cannon-Brookes thus encapsulates many of the main descriptors of Bílek and his work. But he ends with a confused conclusion: he asks whether Bílek's ideas and style be allotted to Pre-Raphaelite influence, or Symbolist? Where should one look for the origins of his ideas: 1890s Paris? His earlier work can be compared to Gauguin's ceramics and wood carvings, but the later works cannot. Cannon-Brookes leaves these questions

[218] Ibid, p. 30
[219] Ibid

unanswered, and in doing so conveys the notion that Bílek cannot be placed in a certain genre or movement, and therefore is confusing. This restrictive view seems to call upon Western European definitions as the only means of justifying an artist's place in Art History.

In a section entitled "The Impact of Rodin", Cannon-Brookes lists artists who went to Paris, or had some contact with Rodin and were influenced by him. He seems to place Rodin firmly in the category of French Impressionist, and writes at length on Bohumil Kafka as an artist greatly influenced by Rodin, and therefore a Czech Impressionist sculptor.[220] Bourdelle was equally influential through his exhibition in Prague in 1909. Maillol is another influence mentioned in this section. Cannon-Brookes briefly lists the artists impacted. He concludes "...the impact of the classicism of Bourdelle and Maillol was short-lived in Bohemia as that of the Impressionism of Rodin".[221]

Cannon-Brookes claims that František Úprka, influenced by the life of the people of the countryside, and Southern Moravian folklore throughout his career, would emphasise the "varied roots of Czech realism", which would flower in the 1920s, through such works as *The Hoer* (1908, plate 25).[222]

[220] Ibid, p. 64
[221] Ibid, p. 67
[222] Ibid, p. 69

25. František Úprka *The Hoer* 1908

In a section entitled "Otto Gutfreund: 1910 – 1919", Cannon-Brookes outlines a brief biography. Cannon-Brookes views the wide-range of ideas accessible to Gutfreund in Prague and Paris as encouraged by his traditional Czech Jewish family background. He does not elaborate, but one assumes that his inclusion of Gutfreund's religious upbringing is an attempt to provide a specific context for his work, beyond generalised networks of external influence. Cannon-Brookes continues in this vein by mentioning Baroque influence, and the resulting aesthetic dynamism, as being the main element that separates Gutfreund's work from the Paris Cubists.[223]

Cannon-Brookes later describes Gutfreund's return to Prague in 1919. After this, clay became his medium of choice. He also altered his subject matter, focusing on the life and work of the common man. Cannon-Brookes states that Gutfreund would aim to forge "a new sculpture for a new country".[224] On this development art historian V.V. Stech wrote, "A feeling for the existence of the "small man" grew up within him, a feeling for the quiet and almost overlooked life close to the soil and growing like a blade of grass among the paving stones. In brief, he, the former man

[223] Ibid, p. 86
[224] Ibid, p. 97

of elegance and exclusive formalism, became more human".[225] An example of one such work is *Industry* (1923, plate 26).

26. Otto Gutfreund *Industry* 1923

Part of this collection of works that approached the theme of the 'common man' was the relief

Cannon-Brookes finishes his description of Gutfreund by stating that towards the end of the 1920s, Gutfreund lost direction. He believes that the course of Objective Realism, which Gutfreund had been following for some time, ceased to satisfy him. Cannon-Brookes believes that Gutfreund's designs for his Smetana Mounment (1926) made a "nonsense" of such works as Sucharda's *Monument to František* and

[225] Ibid

Šaloun's *Monument to Jan Hus*. He sees the scale of this work and the qualities of Objective Realism as incompatible. Cannon-Brookes' belief that Gutfreund 'lost direction' in his final years contrasts to Kotalík's statements on Gutfreund's later work, which he calls 'synthetic Cubism', and Penelope Curtis's belief that the late 1920s were a new stage of Gutfreund's artistic development (to be discussed). Cannon-Brookes thus offers a less discerning reading of Gutfreund's later work, apparently conforming to the belief that Objective Realism was the way forward, and Cubist interest implied regression, or loss of direction. This is confirmed in his strictly chronological approach which largely ends with examples of 'Objective Realism'.

One of the final sections of the catalogue is entitled "Objective Realism and the Generation after the 'Return of the Legionaries'". Gutfreund's relief *The Return of the Legionaries* (1921), was referred to by Kovárna (discussed in Chapter Two). Cannon-Brookes supplies further information on the work, which was designed for the façade of the Banka Legii in Prague (the Bank of Czechoslovakia). Štursa was commissioned to create four limestone consoles which support the frieze. The two artists' works divide the offices in the top section of the building from the bank below. Cannon-Brookes points out that this is reminiscent of Roman palaces. The style for both sets of works was, according to Cannon-Brookes, set by Gutfreund in his frieze. Štursa then followed suit. As a result, Gutfreund's frieze is part of a series of works made in the same fashion, whereas Štursa's consoles are isolated from the rest of his artistic development.[226]

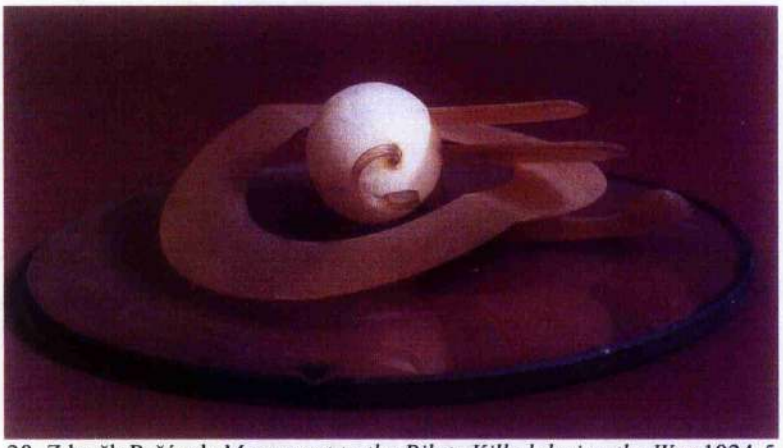
[226] Ibid, pp. 99-100

Not only does Cannon-Brookes seem to view the latter work as a dividing point between works before and after, but he also sees the death of Gutfreund as robbing Czech art of one of its main protagonists. He states that the influence of Myslbek was still very strong, and even Gutfreund could see that Cubism was intellectual but not intelligible to ordinary people. And so following the *Return of the Legionaries*, artists turned to styles that were in accordance with the social and political aspirations of the 1920s (plate 10). He states that this paralleled many movements in Europe towards Realism, especially the Neue Sachlichkeit in Germany. In Czech art, the movement towards Objective Realism moved people on from the carnage of the First World War, and artists turned away from Myslbek in a direction more akin to the work of Úprka in its depiction of the common people. This influence lasted until the end of the 1920s.

And here Cannon-Brookes begins to grind to a halt. He mentions other Objective Realists (Břetislav Benda, Benřich Stefan), but fails to include many details on further artists of the 1930s. Movements towards Constructivism, Surrealism and Abstraction are neglected, despite the dates given for the exhibition being 1800-1938. The only works that begin to cover this ground are *Torso III* (Benřich Stefan, 1929), *Composition* (Hana Wichterlova, 1929-30, plate 27) and *Lying Torso* (Josef Wagner, 1935). They are only mentioned and not thoroughly discussed. Two photos of works by Devětsil member Zdeněk Pešanek are included (*Monument to modern traffic*, 1926, and *Monuments to the Pilots who died for Prague*, 1924-26, plate 28), but Pešanek is not included in the text. These artists are a sad omission from the

discussion, as is the decline of indepth analysis. The themes of nationhood so keenly discussed in relation to the nineteenth-century works diminish, and themes of internationalism more applicable to the later works are not mentioned. It would be interesting to consider works in light of these themes, especially those of Pešanek. One presumes that the neglect would be less apparent in the exhibition itself, whose works may have been recommended, if not chosen by Jiři Kotalík, Petr Hartmann and Václav Procházka.

27. Hana Wichterlová *Composition* 1929-1930



28. Zdeněk Pešánek *Monument to the Pilots Killed during the War* 1924-5

However, this catalogue does something new, which anticipates post-1989 catalogues, and art historical texts such as Akos Moravanszky's *Competing Visions* (1998). It is a methodology that is lacking in other seminal texts such Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (1999). The Wales catalogue places Czech artists not just on a scale that is continually related to Western art, but that provides networks of influence between Central European artists. Polish Jewish artist Elie Nadelman is cited as an influence, showing an artistic connection between Central European countries.[227]

In an article published in *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, in 1987, Penelope Curtis offers a more nuanced analysis of Gutfreund's relationship to both Objective Realism and Cubism. Curtis's attention to this subject as an English writer, particularly to the Czech relationship to German art, anticipates post-1989 discussion. Unlike Cannon-Brookes' assurance that Gutfreund spent the 1920s, up until his death, exploring Objective Realism, or Kotalík's conclusion that Gutfreund finished his career with realist, decorative and folk arts, Curtis concludes a chronological discussion of his work with the belief that Gutfreund's last works "suggest that he was near a much more interesting synthesis of the abstract and the objective".[228] Curtis describes the Czech Pavilion at the 1925 International Exhibition in Paris, which was designed by Gočar. She describes the interior as folk-derived, the exterior as in the International Style. Curtis claims this is the beginning of a turning point in many of the Czech artists' careers, including Gočar. She believes that the pavilion showed no work that was "absolutely Czech", writing that

[227] Ibid, p. 95
[228] Penelope Curtis, "Otto Gutfreund and the Czech National Decorative Style", *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 4. (Spring, 1987), p. 44

even the interior had a Biedermeier feel to it: "In searching to escape the German yoke, the Czech style returns to it."[229] This recalls Cooper's "true heritage".

Czech architects began to build stark, modernist buildings, which Curtis describes as subjected to "a third proto-cubist designate: right-angled cubism", the second presumably being the distinctively Czech rondo-cubism.[230] Curtis views this change as a liberation from national style, and suggests Gutfreund's return to Cubism in the mid-twenties (omitted from Cannon-Brookes' and Kotalík's chronologies), is part of this liberation. She pronounces his architectural reliefs of the early twenties as anticipants of Gutfreund's later synthesis of styles, seen in their use of shallow space and synthetic still lives. His last works parallel the lighter touch of the twenties French Cubists, and combine his later interests in objective art whilst departing from his earlier Cubist works.

The publications discussed in this chapter use a restrictive and often reductivist approach to information, largely controlled by national institutions. The theme of nation has been central to the discussion of sculpture, particularly on works by Gutfreund. The focus on one medium and often one artist, namely Gutfreund, shows an attempt to decipher a specifically Czech artist approach to Cubism. Also, whilst more implicit than explicit, discussions of nation demonstrate new attitudes towards nationalism, within which remain themes described in chapters one and two: morality, individual freedom, and cultural exchange. Whilst new approaches and new explanations are not always apparent in the British catalogues and texts from this

[229] Ibid, p. 42
[230] Ibid

period, the questioning of cultural and political conditions seen in the writing of Havel, Hroch, Hanak and Skvorecky is present in the vocabulary of such writers as Curtis, and even in the small mention of Central European artistic influences in Cannon-Brookes' otherwise orthodox text.

These publications came into being whilst the political climate of Czechoslovakia was rapidly changing. However, much of the vocabulary and discussion bears a resemblance to the publications and approaches of earlier texts on the subject. Whilst this resemblance can also be found in post-1989 texts, the beginnings of new questions will also arise.

Chapter Four (1989 to 2006)

The need for a new vocabulary: socio-political approaches and plurality

This chapter looks at the representation of Czech Modernist art within post-1989 exhibitions and publications. A shift of emphasis from British reception to Anglo-American reception is necessary, as many of the large scale exhibitions and accompanying publications have taken place in the United States. In part this reflects changes in publishing on the subject, where co-publishing arrangements are often encouraged in order to maximise circulation in the English-speaking world. Due to the more lenient political climate and renewed accessibility, many surveys of Czech Modernism, and indeed that of the whole of Central and Eastern European art have been possible. Accompanying this is the questioning of the role of Czech Modernism within wider discussions of Modernism, and the ensuing re-questioning of Western attitudes towards Modernism as a whole. By 2006, enough resources exist, such as the LA County Museum's sourcebook and Mansbach's seminal text on 'Eastern' Europe, to provoke the questioning of the approaches and resulting methodologies in such resources, and how they function in aiding understanding and constructive responses to what James Elkins calls 'World Art'.[231] The texts published on this subject since 1989 also act as a filter through which I have viewed the publications discussed in previous chapters, as they offer the main sources of translated information.

---

[231] James Elkins *How is it Possible to Write about World's Art,* ARS 2/2003, pp.75-81 http://www.dejum.sav.sk/RES/elkins.htm

The representation, or communication, of information about Czech Modernism based on the texts which hope to inform the world of a region inaccessible to so many for so long, is an area of scholarship that now requires further re-questioning. The instructive purposes of early 1990s exhibitions are still apparent in more recent texts and exhibitions, and the dedication of many of these to the didactic can sometimes result in a less penetrating analysis of the work than is allowed once information about the art of Central Europe is more established, or known. Then more nuanced studies can be developed. This is an issue I raised both with Czech art historian Vojtěch Lahoda and Czech curator Jaroslav Anděl, both of whom gave an affirmative response to this situation and its needs.

The publications in this chapter originate from the post-communist period, after 1989. As such, themes that appear to be the same as those encountered in the twentieth-century publications discussed throughout the thesis, take on a new meaning. Central to this is the relationship to Europe. Chapter Two contained a quotation from the author of the 1947 catalogue, Novotný, about "throwing wide the windows onto Europe". In the post-1989 period, Václav Klaus stated in the 1990 election campaign, "As a slogan of our 'gentle revolution' we chose 'the return to Europe'..."[232]

A central response to the need to inform audiences about largely unknown Czech art has been discussed in previous chapters. This need to explain is often responded to through approaching Czechoslovakia as a region privileged by its location on the

[232] Václav Klaus, *Lidové Noviny*, 10 March 1990, cited by Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 151

geographical and cultural map of Europe, and part of a network of influences understood by the Western audience. Such a mapping, to confirm Czech art's role and position within European Modernism, and accordingly to communicate and justify its original status, has been seen in many of the texts discussed. One need only consider the well-known disparaging quotation from Chamberlain, already cited, to understand this mapping approach in order to locate the 'distant' and unknown. It is also a matter of compensating for inaccessibility under the Communist regime, and of educating ill-informed Western audiences, many of whom were confused by nations apparently closed off from the world, which frequently changed names and boundaries over the course of the twentieth-century. The particular insularity of Britain can be held responsible for this lacking in British comprehension.

The mapping approach will also feature in the texts discussed within this chapter. An interesting alternative was suggested to me by Jaroslav Anděl who, aware of this method of introducing Czech art to non-Czech audiences, offered a more political and sociological approach, emphasising the plurality and multiplicity of Czech Modernism, in an exhibition in the IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia, in 1993. The exhibition, curated by Anděl, was entitled *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*. His approach is outlined in the exhibition catalogue, and addresses the Western bias towards cultural centres. There were many small groups of artists in Czechoslovakia, and Devětsil in particular emphasised multiple centres of artistic development. The forthcoming exhibition, *Surrealism and Photography in Czechoslovakia 1925-1950*, to be curated by Anděl at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, aims to address some of these preconceptions.

The notion of pluralism is applicable to Czech Modernist visual art, but it also is one of the discourses that has arisen within Czech society after the fall of the Communist regime. Ladislav Holy relates this specifically to a more anthropological definition of culture, which incorporates the notion of democratic pluralism. He lists other discourses including market economy, gender relations, individualism and nationalism, and Czechoslovak and Czech statehood. He claims that these discourses have been brought into prominence by post-communist transformation, and have been constructed either to invoke pre-communist Czech society or in opposition to the official discourses current during the socialist period. In this instance such discourses can be applied to new approaches, such as the IVAM exhibition, to visual culture.[233]

In the IVAM catalogue, Anděl uses the geographical terms "West and the East, North and the South", but this time in reference to a wider Modernist issue, rather than as a means of justifying Czech Modernism's place on the European map.[234] His use of the points of the compass is to emphasise the plurality of the international character of the avant-garde movement, fed by exchanges between the periphery and the centre. This is to offer a contrast to the "uncritical acceptance of avant-garde internationalism's self-proclaimed vision of the world as a homogenous continuum developing in a linear progression, a vision that disregarded regional idiosyncrasies."[235] The latter is an approach that could describe Kotalík's 'organic'

[233] Jaroslav Anděl, "Introduction", *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*, (Valencia, 1993), p.9
[234] Ibid
[235] Ibid

processes (to be discussed). It is also applicable to many of the writers discussed, who often seem to partake unquestioningly in Modernist criterion.

Jaroslav Anděl's exhibitions and writings offer specific socio-political approaches to the Czech avant-gardes which illustrate the development of post-1989 nuanced readings of the subject, which contrast to the type of catalogue vocabulary discussed in previous chapters. The content of the IVAM Centre exhibition is more specific than the catalogue for 1989 exhibition, *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, held at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in that it covers a more concise time period: the interwar years. With no reference to Czechoslovakia as a forgotten country, which has been seen in the first paragraph of so many of the catalogues discussed so far, Anděl begins the catalogue introduction with the outlines of his theoretical approach to the show, as previously quoted in the introduction to this thesis:

> "Modernism" and "the avant-garde" are terms that are often felt to be interchangeable. This exhibition, however, pursues a more specific notion of the avant-garde, one which reserves the term for those movements and works that questioned both the artist's role in society and the institution of art itself.[236]

He goes on to state, in terms that parallel those of Rees and Elliot in the 1990 Devětsil exhibition to be discussed, that the principal aim of the exhibition is to "recover the rich body of work made in Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1938, before the Communist regime succeeded in obscuring, and in many cases, completely obliterating it over the course of nearly four decades."[237] The works shown in this exhibition were ones that appeared in seminal exhibitions in Europe

[236] Ibid
[237] Ibid

during the 1920s and 1930s (Bauhaus *Internationale Architektur*, New York's *International Style*, and Paris's *Abstraction-Création*), and yet such works disappeared from historical surveys of European Modern art after World War II. These omissions, Anděl continues, "are a sign of how much our understanding of the past is conditioned by the political reality of the present – how, in other words, closely culture and political systems are interlocked. [sic]"[238] This approach offers a new and exciting reading of Czech Modernism.

As Anděl points out, later works by Czech artists in the interwar years, especially those of such groups as Devětsil and Linie, were largely destroyed during the post-war period. Very few, if any, of their trademark picture poems still exist. Their representation both abroad and within the Czech Republic is sparse as a result, and the necessity of gathering together remaining works was pertinent during the early 1990s. This has affected the representation of Czech Modernism in the UK. The exhibitions studied so far have shown that Cubism is the main form of Czech art represented in Britain, the main export to Western Europe during the Communist years. In terms of architecture, the emphasis has been on Functionalism. Contemporary interest seems to focus on Karel Teige, Surrealist artist Toyen, Czech photography, and design as the main exports of interest to the West. This will be shown through the texts discussed in this chapter.

The first exhibition of Czech art from the interwar period to be shown in Britain was entitled *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and*

[238] Ibid

'30s. It took place at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, and the Design Museum, London in 1990. The exhibition was conceived by art historian and theorist František Šmejkal, and prepared by Galerie hlavního města Prague, The Institute of Theory and History in the Czechoslovak Academy of Science, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, and the Moravian Gallery in Brno. The foreword is co-written by David Elliot, the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, and Helen Rees, director of the Design Museum, London. The foreword ends: "After forty years of enforced isolation, Czechoslovakia is once again at the heart of a debate about the role of culture in modern life."[239] This statement flags Devětsil as a means of escaping isolation and promoting understanding of Czechoslovakian Modernist art. It also uses Czechoslovakia as a case study through which the "role of culture in modern life" can be understood.

The latter quotation is somewhat ambiguous, supplying the exhibition with universal capabilities, as a means through which a generalised theme can be understood. Perhaps the phrase would be better read as a means of understanding a specific branch of the relationship between modernity and culture. This is particularly relevant to the Constructivist aims of the early Devětsil members, and to the artists' use of technology and new methods such as photography, photomontage and film. On a less literal level, Devětsil promoted modernist themes such as internationalism, pluralism, political meaning and the interest in non-elitist, mass appeal and mass production, art. It must also be remembered that the work of Devětsil members,

[239] *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s*, (Oxford, 1990), p.7

applicable as many modernist themes are to their work, enable a very specific debate about a certain culture in a particular version of "modern life".

The foreword to the Devětsil exhibition also contains the famous Chamberlain quotation. This is used to convey that during the period of Nazi invasion, to which Chamberlain refers, the independence of the relatively newly formed Czechoslovakia was threatened. It is this newly formed nation that made little impact on the British consciousness, state Rees and Elliot.

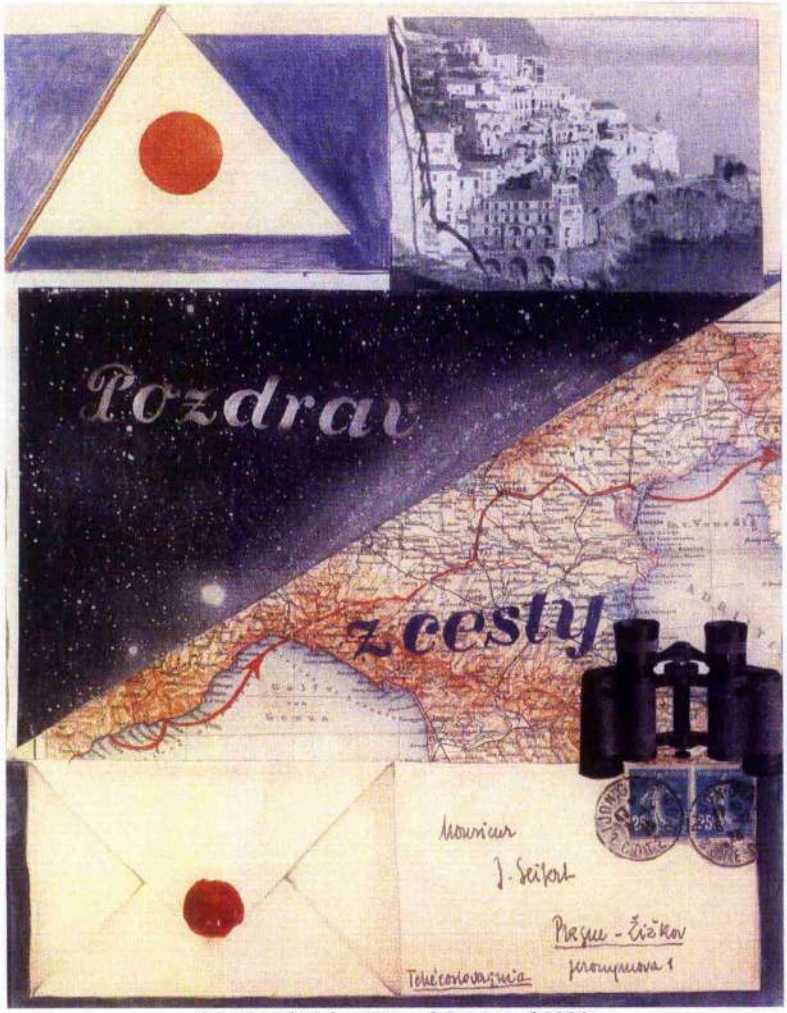
They elaborate on the character of this independent nation. In a quest to replace the decadence of the old empire, continues the foreword, the young republic aspired to new styles, art, architecture and design which drew upon the vernacular in order to be accessible to the people. Besides this was the ambition to build a technological state to rival other industrial nations. It is in reference to these aims that the foreword now contains the phrase which is seen, in limited variations, in the texts discussed in this thesis: "Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Czechoslovakia became a meeting point for the ideas and culture of the developed world".[240] Up until 1990 this description has been used in catalogues and texts to encapsulate mainly artistic movements, for instance the meeting of Futurism, Expressionism, and Cubism. The Devětsil exhibition catalogue also emphasises technology and the industrial, which whilst recalling the 1906 exhibition in its analysis of home industries and design, positions the works discussed and displayed at the Devětsil exhibition in the modern, or modernist, environment. This anticipates the closing statement of the foreword,

[240] Ibid, p.6

which considers the work of the Devětsil group central examples of "modern life", and modernity. Both authors thus participate in Czech historiographical concepts.

Rees and Elliot go on to specify the cultural exchanges which mediated within the heartland of Czechoslovakia. These are the European '–isms' of post-war avant-gardes, listed as Constructivism, Futurism, Dadaism, Purism, Surrealism and the Bauhaus. Whilst pre-war artists looked mainly to Western Europe and Cubism, post-war artists began to look to the USSR. The co-authors place pre and post-war Czech modern art on a scale common to many of the texts of the period under discussion in the chapter, which can be reduced to the modernist dialectic of the rational and irrational, the classical and romantic, with all the complexities and diversities that such terms suggest. Rees and Elliot suggest the Czech Cubists stretched between the classical rationalism of Adolf Loos and the "irrational terror" of author Franz Kafka, which could also be described as the existential anxiety that gripped the artistic climate in which the Czech Cubists worked. The authors transform these oppositions into their post-war equivalents which they call "utilitarian objectives…set against lyrical subjectivity".[241] Such a binary, in this catalogue and other texts on the subject, is used to illuminate the theories and approaches of leading Devětsil spokesman, critic and artist, Karel Teige, whose Constructivist-Poetist picture poems are seen as key examples of Devětsil production. Teige defined this umbrella category in his essay "Our Basis and Our Way: Constructivism and Poetism" (1924).

[241] Ibid, p.7



28. Karel Teige *Travel Postcard* 1923

One example of Teige's Constructivist-Poetist picture poems is *Travel Postcard*, painted in 1923 (plate 28). This is an example of the Devětsil movement towards using new technology to create machine-made works. Through the use of both typography and visual, multi-media images, Teige synthesised poetry and the visual image. These works are expressive of lyrical feeling and poetry, combined with the use of Constructivist materials and composition.

Rees and Elliot view the balance of oppositions within Devětsil production as "fragile", expressing wonder at the group's ability to cooperate for eleven years. A binding force, in their opinion, is in the consistent left-wing position of the group, as well as the dominance of Teige and his concept of *ars una*, which they describe as a "modernist update of the nineteenth century *Gesamtkunstwerk*".[242] Rees and Elliot inform the reader that after the communist government took power in 1948, there was little interest in the pluralist culture of the pre-war "bourgeois republic".[243] Such information makes the approach of Anděl in the IVAM catalogue even more radical in relation to what would have been permitted under the Communist regime.

Rees and Elliot emphasise the archaeological approach of this exhibition: they use vocabulary suggestive of resurrection. The art of Devětsil has been uncovered and unveiled for Western European eyes. They write, "Like bones in a Natural History Museum, however, these can give little more than an evocation of the body of Devětsil, the spirit of which has long since perished". However, they point out the "genes" of Devětsil have survived to the present day in the form of Teige's writings. Such vocabulary aids the Western preconception that Czechoslovakia has been buried and stagnant, void of movement or analysis since it was covered over by the regime changes of the 1940s. This raises the question; in what way do exhibitions of other, probably Western, artists manage to recreate the "spirit" of past artistic movements? Rees and Elliot's vocabulary implies that the ability to reassess the work of pre-war avant-gardes, granted to democratic European nations, allows the essence of an artistic movement not only to continue in its full strength, but to be

[242] Ibid, p.6
[243] Ibid, p.7

recreated at will for exhibition audiences. This is an example of mapping the unknown in a manner which risks sounding like armchair anthropology, and as such is potentially marginalising. It implies that there is an active core (the west) versus a dormant periphery (of east).

In conclusion, Rees and Elliot state that Devětsil caused its own demise: "its political radicalism was directed against the same pluralist society upon which it depended". Teige's failure to anticipate the ambitions of totalitarian states led to the group's dissolution. In voicing this accusation, Teige is held to great account for wider European issues.

In criticising Rees and Elliot's approach, I do not mean to suggest they do not provide an introduction to many of Devětsil's characteristics. But the exhibition must also be questioned as a method of communicating the histories and political climates of Central and Eastern European countries, whose image in the West is still under construction. Relevant to this critique is the analysis of contemporary art practices. Marko Stamenkovic wrote on this issue in *Inferno*, 2004, in an article entitled "Curating the Invisible: Contemporary Art Practices and the Production of Meaning in Eastern Europe". The article focuses on the curator as the figure accountable for much of the production of meaning. At a conference on Czech Design held in Brighton, December 2005, this accountability was summarised in the phrase "cultural ambassador", which was applied to Milena Lamarová. On raising this issue with Jaroslav Anděl, he demonstrated dissatisfaction with the term, stating that the exhibition is a more complex mode of producing meaning, in which the publicists,

catalogue contributors and publishers, as well as other staff members of the institutions involved play an important role. He stated, "The curator is one of many other people, there is a network or environment, and of course the curator plays an important role, but with or without his or her relationships to other people in the network, it would be impotent."

Stamenkovic stresses that the article refers to the area known as "Eastern Europe". This is an ambiguous phrase, as for writers such as Mansbach this can encompass Central Europe. One presumes that Stamenkovic means Eastern Europe proper. Nevertheless, the discussion in this article is relevant, as it addresses curatorial practice in the post-socialist condition. Stemankovic asks how applicable contemporary art practices are to cultural policy in former communist and socialist countries. More pertinent to this thesis is Stemankovic's next question, "what has the recent political redesigning of the European map contributed to the establishment of the new ideological questioning of these particular marginalised cultures into the subjects of defined cultural micro-systems?"[244] Stamenkovic offers two methods of marginalisation within exhibiting practice; "the notion of cultural hegemony and principles of appropriation of 'minority cultures'".[245] The interest of Western curators, who Stemankovic calls 'cultural managers', in Eastern European art places the latter on a global scale. In so doing, they focus on the "critical art practices in the region and the cultural stereotypes related to it".[246] In order to coordinate these elements within exhibition practice, Stemankovic states that there are several

[244] Marco Stamenkovic "Curating the Invisible: Contemporary Art Practice and the Production of Meaning in Eastern Europe", *Inferno*, vol.9, 2004 p.53
[245] Ibid
[246] Ibid, p.54

common denominators being "exploited". For example, a feature of globalist ideology is the dichotomy between 'East' and 'West', which are re-articulated in reference to "ideological mechanisms" which are formed by this re-articulation whilst producing it at the same time.[247] These are issues that Jaroslav Anděl addresses in his introduction to the 1993 IVAM exhibition.

Stemankovic provides some terms that could be useful tools in analysing this complicated area of exhibition practice. He calls the exhibition the central "medium" through which art becomes known as a "visible" part of contemporary culture.[248] In consideration of new discourses surrounding the exhibition, of investigating the politics of display outwith traditional art historical interpretations, the contemporary art curator becomes the "selector" and the cultural manager "the producer".[249] Stemankovic informs the reader that these roles are conditioned by power systems, global rules, institutional criterion and finances. This can be related to the 'network' described by Anděl. The article remains somewhat ambiguous in its generalised approach to art practice as an entirety, and it is sometimes unclear whether Stemankovic refers to Western interpretation of Eastern European art, or new practice within Eastern Europe.

However, this is another point that can be related to the exhibitions discussed in this thesis, which are often a conjunction of commentators and institutional figures from Britain and America, as well as Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. Stemankovic cites Slovenian philosopher, theoretician, video-artist and curator,

[247] Ibid
[248] Ibid
[249] Ibid

Marina Grzinic, who explains, "The East has not provided the West with the relevant theoretical and interpretive instruments to recognise the uniqueness, idiosyncrasies, diversity and interpretive instruments of artistic projects in Eastern Europe".[250] Though this emphasises contemporary art practice, one feels the lacking in 'interpretive instruments' in Anglo-American exhibition catalogues on Central European art.

The complexity of the debate raised by this statement draws attention to another of Stemankovic's arguments, namely that any matter can be made relevant within the broad spectrum of means of presenting art, and that these are often provoked by conventions that may be manipulated by "centralised power".[251] The latter can perhaps be interpreted as centralised methods of interpretation governed by certain gallery practices, in this case British, and later in this chapter, American institutions. Such an argument provides another explanation for the repetitive vocabulary, using imaginary and real maps to convey the position of Czech Modernism on a wider, Western European and American scale.

In the same year as the British Devětsil exhibition, an exhibition entitled *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, was held at the Museum of Fine Art in Houston (1989). This exhibition, like the Devětsil exhibition, contained a wide selection of Czech Modernism, from Czech Cubism to Czech Surrealism. The exhibition's interdisciplinary nature aimed to illustrate the comprehensive approach of Czech artists from 1900-1945. Jiři Kotalík wrote the foreword for the exhibition catalogue,

[250] Ibid, p.55
[251] Ibid, p.60

explaining that Czech Modernism was comprehensive due to its inclusion of architecture and applied arts. Kotalík describes Czech Modernism in a contrasting way to the foreword for the Devětsil catalogue. Whereas the latter emphasises the separation and distinction of Devětsil, implying that due to the ensuing political climate the work ceased to have any connections to present day artistic movements, and has to be uncovered and brought back to life, Kotalík concludes his foreword by stating that there is an organic progression from the Czech Modernist artists shown at the Houston exhibition, to present day artists.

Kotalík views Czech art is profoundly connected to national activities, and an "integral component of history"[252]. Kotalík maintains that this principle remains true today. Kotalík describes the continuity of modern art, running in organic lines up to contemporary artists. It seems dangerous to discuss fate and continuity, assuming national givens and predestined events both in the history of a nation and its art. This could be explained, or justified, by the writer's need to define a largely unknown place to their audiences through an assumed consensus of national feeling and ambition. In the case of Kotalík, this means the newly accessible post-1989 Czechoslovakia, soon to be the Czech Republic. He attempts to make Czechoslovakian art seem less alien through connecting contemporary art to pre-Communist democratic Czech art and its history. This relates to Benedict Anderson's definitions of nationalism: "Nothing was better suited to this end than the idea of nation which always looms out of an immemorial past, and more importantly, glides into a limitless future: '[it] is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny'.[253]

[252] *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1989), p.9.
[253] Cited by Umut Ozkirimli *Theories of Nationalism*, (Basingstoke, 2000) p.146)

An article published in *BLOK* in 1948 offers a further explanation of Kotalík's attitude towards issues of 'past' and 'present' within art. He writes that modern art must maintain continuity in development, and that its course is "determined not only by the material and ideological context but also by the movement immanent to artistic structure".[254] The course of action recommended by Kotalík in 1948 is to summarise the results of the past and use them to initiate the new, which would also allow a renewed connection between art and life. His opinions on the continuity between past and present seemed have changed little by 1990.

Amongst the few National Gallery of Prague's publications in English on the Trade Fair Palace collection, is *Trade Fair Palace Fourth Floor: Nineteenth-Century Art, guide to the permanent exhibition* (2002). This publication ends with a paragraph expressive of similar attitudes to history as those conveyed by Kotalík. The anonymous author states that the meaning of the Trade Fair Palace collection is to show how art responded to historical and social events, and contemporary philosophy. They hope that the collection will create a bridge across time, reminding the viewer of the past whilst connecting them to future generations.[255] As such the collection and the exhibitions of Czech art abroad, serve to confirm shared historical knowledge, which conveys a sense of collective Czech nationhood.

This contradicts the history of the National Gallery in Prague, discussed in chapter three, which described the disconnection of post-war artists from pre-war artists, due

[254] Jiří Kotalík, "About the Problems of Modern Art", *BLOK* 1947-1948, 2nd Year, Issue 10
[255] *Trade Fair Palace Fourth Floor: Nineteenth-Century Art, guide to the permanent exhibition* (Prague, 2002), p. 106

to the lack of a determined space to display the national collection. Kotalík uses the idea of organic process throughout his foreword. For instance, he states that the focus of Czech Modernism on the lyrical or imaginative is compatible with the rest of Czech culture which was dominated by poetry and music. Czech Modernism was an art that addressed Czechoslovakian traditions as well as European developments, with a social significance and vitality: Czech art was not just decorative but also an active and integral component of history. Kotalík provides Czech Modernism with a position on a historical, European, Czechoslovakian, and sociological scale, opposing the isolation imposed by the vocabulary of Rees and Elliot.

The historical organic links described by Kotalík also occur in Peter C. Marzio's (director of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts), opening statement to the 1989 Houston catalogue. He writes that the "cultures of Czechoslovakia exude a sense of antiquity, a deep and distant past with a powerful tradition".[256] He reminds us that some of the oldest European settlements were found in the region. He states that he mentions tradition in a catalogue about the avant-garde "because the artists in this exhibition placed themselves in a constant struggle with the distant past, the present, and a challenging future".[257] Marzio writes that this dialogue created emotional and intellectual qualities, and a disciplined striving for originality and truth. He states the "desire to produce contemporary art within an ancient civilisation produced a thesis-antithesis-synthesis pattern, which made artistic achievement both fragile and timeless".[258] This pattern parallels one outlined by Kotalík in the aforementioned 1948 *BLOK* article, in his advice on how to treat past art: "there is nothing else left

[256] *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, Houston Museum of Fine Arts (Houston, 1990), p.8
[257] Ibid
[258] Ibid

but to proceed from analysis to synthesis which would try to summarise, check and review the many valuable results of the past".[259]

In placing Czech modern art within a framework of 'timeless' achievement, Marzio neglects the two-tiered history of the region on which he writes. He refers to the cultures of Czechoslovakia, thus incorporating Slovak identity as part of Czech identity, a union which he implies dates from 'ancient' civilisation. In the 1989 context of rising national tensions in post-communist states such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, this blurring of identities seems inappropriate. Three years later Czechoslovakia will separate into independent states.

Marzio's statement colludes with the Czech assurance in its own sense of nation, a sentiment that could be compared to the English person who uses the term English to communicate British nationality, comfortable in their sense of belonging to a country that has achieved sovereignty and is therefore forgetful of the discrepancies between national identity and feeling existent in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Holy, writing in 1996, claims that the Czech national identity has been formed in opposition to the Slovaks since 1945, "perceived as their most significant Other".[260] Since 1993, according to his research, the prevailing feeling in the Czech Lands is that the disintegration of Czechoslovakia was the result of "Slovak nationalism, anti-Czech sentiment, and Slovak separatism".[261] At the time of my writing, between elections, the SNP is gaining popularity in Scotland. One of their main proposals is Independence; one wonders if, should this ambition be realized, English opinion

[259] Jiří Kotalík, "About the Problems of Modern Art", *BLOK* 1947-1948, 2nd Year, Issue 10
[260] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 6
[261] Ibid

would echo the aforementioned Czech designation of accountability regarding Slovak sentiments.

Marzio implies that the work of Czech Modernist artists was both rooted in history and transhistorical. In so doing he participates in a key modernist criterion. One is reminded of articles written by the Czech Cubists, such as Otto Gutfreund, as discussed in relation to Kokoschka's article in chapter two. Both designer and architect Pavel Janák and sculptor Otto Gutfreund wrote on the relationship between contemporary art and the Baroque, as discussed in chapter two in relation to Gutfreund's 1912 essay "Surface and Space".

Gutfreund, like so many of his contemporaries, took inspiration from traditional art forms, in this case the particularly nationally relevant Baroque movement, and used it for the development of modern art with universal aims. This use of the traditional and the contemporary together is an illustration of Marzio's thesis-antithesis-synthesis pattern. This formula, when considered as an approach to describing art from a post-socialist region, echoes one cited in Stemankovic's article on contemporary art practice. He describes Grzinic's explanation for the need for retro-avant-gardes to affirm their socio-political character in the form of a specific critique of ideology within art. She calls this a thesis-antithesis-synthesis, which can be related to Zizek's Hegelian scheme: "ideology in-itself, for-itself and ideology in-

and-for itself, as indices of the different concrete historical situations of post-socialism".[262]

Guest curator of the Houston exhibition was Jaroslav Anděl. He also wrote three of the essays in the catalogue. He begins the first chapter, entitled "In Search of Redemption: Visions of Beginning and End", with a discussion of concepts of history within art historical approaches to modernist aesthetics. He introduces two central ideas: progress and primitivism. Anděl states that the appeal of progress has diminished over the 1970s and 1980s, causing historians to question modernist aesthetics and their concept of history. It is this tendency that he believes has allowed people to take a more complex view and take into account other centres of art other than obvious ones. This relates to the IVAM catalogue which will be discussed shortly.

Czech Modernism focused on themes of beginning and end, birth and death, which are part of modernism, and reflect its underlying concepts of "progress and primitivism" and the "transcendental power of art". Anděl describes central elements of nineteenth century modernization as individualism, pluralism, historical consciousness, relativism, alienation and uprootedness, social upheaval and spiritual unrest. "Nietzsche proclaimed that God is dead", Marx "linked political economy with secular eschatology", and Freud voiced the" concept of the unconscious". In "fear of nothingness" and "the ultimate limitation of the self", themes of beginning and end were crucial to the development of Modernism. Related to this is the artists'

[262] M. Grzinic, "Retro-Avant-Garde, or Mapping Post-Socialism", *Fiction Reconstructed: Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism & the Retro-Avant-Garde* (Vienna, 2000) p.37, cited by Stamenkovic, 2004 p.55

embrace of teleological concepts of history.[263] Devětsil distanced itself from older generations, and subscribed to idea of political revolution and new role of the artist in society. Devětsil looked to the future rather than the past.

The organic links discussed by Marzio and Kotalík contrast to the aims of the Devětsil artists described in the catalogue. Their approach also contrasts to the IVAM exhibition, which clarifies the significance of the political climate, causing one to question, how did organic links continue under such a dramatic period of regime change? The notion of progress, discussed by Anděl in the Houston catalogue is brought into question here too. He states in the introduction that progress, as the central idea of modernity, has "lost its luster", throwing into question the whole modernist movement.[264] This statement seems to clarify that the Houston catalogue was very much a post-1989 introduction to Czech Modernism for American audiences. Three years later, Anděl can begin to question the terms used in the Houston catalogue. One wonders if this is also affected by the audience, this time European.

Anděl believes that Czechoslovakia is a useful case study for reviewing Modernism, recalling the words of Rees and Elliot, due to its position in the centre of Europe, but he adds another new element which is an analysis of the diversity within Czechoslovakia itself. This is the fact that Czechoslovakia was a "multi-national country", whose ethnic groups included Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Ruthenians, and Jews. As well as this, he emphasises that Czechoslovakia was the

[263] Jaroslav Anděl, "In Search of Redemption: Visions of Beginning and End", *Czech Modernism 1900-1945*, (Houston, 1990), p.15
[264] Ibid, p.10

only democracy in Central Europe, allowing favourable circumstances for artists to develop their work during the 1930s. The process of nationalism within Central Europe, which has led to conflict between the ethnic groups, is closely "intertwined with the project of modernity".[265]

Other European countries also have the claim to democracy as a conducive environment in which to develop modernism. But Czechoslovakians, according to Anděl, felt the benefits of democracy more pertinently than their neighbours due to their being "forced to witness the elimination of their peers' movement in neighbouring countries, such as Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union".[266] However, they were soon to suffer the same fate, and accordingly were unable to carry out a post-war reassessment of their work, disallowing a dialogue with their past, "trapping individuals in an artificial and ahistorical system".[267] This recalls the writings on the National Gallery of Prague, discussed in chapter three, and if read chronologically with the other texts considered in this thesis, illuminates much of the repetitive and staid vocabulary of pre-1989 publications and catalogues, published after 1948.

The idea of a "project of modernity" and its links to the Central European socio-political climate, including the development of various forms of nationalism, relates to Rees and Elliot's statement that Czechoslovakia can help the contemporary audience to reassess the "role of culture in modern life". Anděl's writing provides a possible explanation for the meaning of this general and somewhat ambiguous

[265] Ibid
[266] Ibid, p.11
[267] Ibid

phrase. Culture can connote the development of a particular intellectual stage of a certain society, unfashionable though the notion of development may be, and as such has a consciously symbiotic, not symptomatic, relationship to the socio-political climate in which the specific form of culture is produced. If this meaning is taken from Rees and Elliot's use of the term culture, it is comparable to Anděl's notion of 'project modernity', which denotes a systematic process, to develop the modern. To understand the project of modernity is to understand modern life, and the role of society in culture, and culture in society. These are particularly modernist themes, in which the plurality, internationalism, democracy, industry and left-wing tendencies of Czech artists make Czechoslovakia a strong case study through which the 'project of modernity', or the 'role of culture in modern life', can be analysed.

Anděl's introduction to the IVAM catalogue also echoes the words of Grzinic, cited by Stemankovic, on contemporary exhibition practice: Grzinic criticises the lack of instruments available through which the East and West of Europe can discuss and display art. Anděl claims a "critical void" has existed over the latter half of the twentieth-century and a "common frame of reference" is absent, though the latter aids the sense of periphery and centre. [268] Anděl closes his introduction by reminding the reader that this dialogue and its reassessment are not only part of postmodern discourse, but was also a central concern of the avant-gardes under discussion. The use of this absence as a positive base on which to construct new discourse is continued in the final sentence, where he states that it can also

[268] Ibid

"contribute to a better understanding of how we lose and recover our historical memory", which will also help us to learn "how we understand ourselves".[269]

One of the main texts on Central European Modernist art available to the English-speaking market is Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (1999). Mansbach voices optimism for a reassessment of modernist production in Central and Eastern Europe in light of the changed political circumstances since 1989. He claims that it is not merely the obstacle of language, access or politics that have impeded what Anděl calls a "common frame of reference", but a "general ignorance of the historical, political, and social conditions to which the respective modern movements were a creative response".[270] Using such terms as "creativity", "flourishing" and "forward-looking", Mansbach communicates the cultural capacity of an area much overlooked in western writing on European modern art.[271] Despite his aim to promote understanding of 'eastern' art, in establishing a sense of European geographical boundaries, Mansbach ultimately highlights a dichotomy between western territories and what he calls the "eastern periphery of Europe".[272] Mansbach does not blame only the west for the 'critical void'. He states that the avant-garde from the regions discussed were responsible for their "disappearance", though their own dogmatism and "destructive internecine strife and contention".[273] The foundations upon which the artists built their groups and movements are described in fragile and threatening terms – Mansbach describes the avant-garde art as constructed on "the fallen empires

[269] Ibid
[270] S.A. Mansbach *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 3
[271] Ibid
[272] Ibid, p. 1
[273] Ibid

of the tsars, sultans and German Kaisers", followed by the neglect of Stalin's regime and the cultural intolerance of post-1940s "liberation".[274]

Mansbach uses a similar tool to Katherine David-Fox, aiming to overcome east-west separation through the term "cross-fertilisation", instancing journals, reviews and exhibitions as a means of implementation. Using a technique that will reoccur throughout the text, Mansbach draws an imaginary line through geographical boundaries to highlight the conjoining elements of European art through the modern period: "from Petrograd to Paris, from Constanta to Chicago and well beyond".[275] Despite his aim to provide cross-currents of influence and understanding, Mansbach's text perpetuates the binaries of 'east' and 'west', relying on western norms as descriptors, inserting 'new' Modernism into a western art historical framework, thus neglecting the interaction of 'east' and 'west' during the period in which the artists in question were working. This is clear through his use of terms such as "periphery", and is even conveyed through the very title of the book, which includes countries such as Czechoslovakia in 'Eastern Europe'. He fails to distinguish between many of the minority groups in the region, and finds the origin of Central and Eastern European art in the ruin of former sovereignties and leaders. In so doing, he gives little credit to national groups and neglects the complexities of the history of this area and its contemporary interaction with each other and 'western' Europe.

[274] Page 2
[275] Ibid

Like Rees and Elliot, Mansbach provides the artists discussed with a social role, as means of understanding 'modern life', through a concise summary of the motivation behind modern art in the discussed regions: "Well into the 1930s the leading artistic personalities of these eastern regions were forging a new aesthetics, preparing for new societies, and ultimately educating a new citizenry".[276] Whilst applicable in many instances, Mansbach's statement sets up a strong anticipation for thematic subtext that could bias some readers' interpretations of the art produced in the widely diverse area covered in *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*.

Whilst many of the cultural traditions and artistic structures departed from western influence, Mansbach warns that western ideological categories cannot be readily applied to those in the East. Superficially styles and subjects may be similar, but political and intellectual meaning and intention are often profoundly different. A central stimulus of much of the art in the East was the prominence of a "national awakening"[277], wherein the promotion of "cultural expression and preservation" was encouraged over the "revolutionary political action and social reconstruction that occurred in the west"[278]. Mansbach implies that western formal solutions were used by eastern artists to suit their aesthetic and social conditions, paralleling national ambitions rather then aiming for political meaning. Mansbach claims that any politicised aesthetics tended to tie in with national sensibilities and aims. Such a thesis appears generalised, suggesting automatic support for the use of art as a nationalist vehicle. Whilst true in many cases, such a statement demands further interrogation. Is it to safeguard this generalisation that in the next paragraph

[276] Ibid
[277] Ibid, p. 4
[278] Ibid

Mansbach warns, "the reader will not find here every progressive artist and modern movement that emerged there during the period under discussion"[279]?

The most recent exhibition held in Britain that contained examples of Czech Modernism, whilst concerning design is an example of a British institution attempting to use wider concepts of Modernism to provide a more nuanced understanding of 'project modernity'. *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939* was held in the V&A, London, in 2006. The exhibition demonstrated a new approach to Modernism as a wider series of discourses, encompassing those outside of the normative Western chronology. The catalogue begins with a lengthy explanation of Modernism, from an Oxford English Dictionary definition to a Greenbergian definition. The term had different meanings in different contexts, but this exhibition adheres to its definition within the 'designed world': "Modernism was not conceived of as a style, but as a collection of loose ideas".[280] These covered a wide range of movements and style in many countries, especially in the cities of Germany, Holland, as well as in Moscow, Paris, Prague and New York. The main impetus in all these places is outlined as a search for the new, and often "an equally vociferous rejection of history and tradition", and the utopian desire to build a new world through the potential of the machine and industrial technology.[281] The aim of the exhibition appears to be plurality and wide-ranging comprehension.

Whilst an exciting addition to institutional acknowledgment of non-Western Modernism in a post-1989 climate, the approach is susceptible to generalisations,

[279] Page 5
[280] *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939*, V&A (London, 2006), p. 14
[281] Ibid

two of which can be found in the above quotations, which refer to city-based centres of Modernism and a rejection of history, both of which are not entirely applicable to Czech Modernism. But the acknowledgment of wider Modernist discourses and their need to be incorporated into the accepted chronology add to the developing awareness of Westerns norms, and remind the viewer that these must be questioned.

Conclusion

Though this thesis concerns Modern and Modernist visual art an article from 1957 demonstrates that similar vocabulary was used in relation to Czech art of the Middle Ages. In 1957 an exhibition of *Art of the Middle Ages in Czechoslovakia* was held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, and reviewed in *The Times*. The "local variations" of the Gothic style seen in the exhibition are, according to the *Times* art critic, almost entirely unknown in Western Europe. The article continues that the reason for the character of Czech Gothic is their geographical situation, where influences were taken from the Gothic north, the south, and Slovakia.

The unnamed author participates in the understanding that the Czechs and Slovaks are almost one and the same (an instance of 'Czechoslovakism'), through claiming that it was the sudden productivity of Slovak artists in the fifteenth-century that enabled Czech medieval art to "end dramatically rather than fizzle damply out". The blurring between Czech and Slovak identities underlines the inference that the West knows little of this area of Europe. However, the author ends with a more positive statement than many of its era: that the exhibition allows a new and more varied perspective on the "Gothic spirit", which "expressed itself from one end of Europe to the other". It is hard to find such a positive role provided for Czech modern art in pre-1989 texts by a British writer.[282]

[282] "Czech Art from the Middle Ages", *The Times*, August 22 1957, p. 4, Issue 53926, Col A, [04/10/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

I introduce this article to indicate that the notion of Czech culture as dependent on external influences which 'flow' into the country is not restricted to modern art. The article also introduces an approach that, whilst similar to those used in post-1989 texts such as the V&A *Modernism* catalogue, would be beneficial to more writings on the subject. This is the assumption that Czech art is part of a wider European discourse. However, the review of Czech art of the Middle Ages generalises this issue as a non-specific 'spirit' that stretches across Europe. I would promote socio-political specifications in preference to this, whilst concurring with the review's approach to the inclusion of Czech art in a wider structure and series of discourses that are not reliant on, or privileged by, influence from Western countries. Increasingly, more texts are being published on this area in English. Amongst these are Elizabeth Clegg's *Art, Design, and Architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1920* (Yale, 2006), F. Kupka and A. Pierre, *Frank Kupka in White and Black* (Liverpool, 1998), and *František Bilek (1872-1941)*, City Gallery Prague (Prague, 2000)

Whilst acknowledging the danger of homogeneity or the crucial role of the aforementioned Western influences, I would promote an awareness of the concepts introduced by the use of terms such as "melting pot", "crossroads" or "heart of Europe", which through their varied use and application throughout the texts considered in this thesis, have been shown to incur a generalised understanding of Czech Modernist art and the culture from which it originates. It should be acknowledged by users that the terms are loaded with specific Czech and Czechoslovak socio-political meaning.

These terms are rooted in national and political conceptions. As shown in chapter one, their application is not just cultural. Czechoslovakia considered itself a bridge between warring nations, and promoted its ability to act as a barrier between German and Eastern regions. The Second World War proved these military ambitions unsuccessful. The notion of centre as a positive aspect of their geographical positioning continued to be used in political, sociological and cultural texts. Ladislav Holy points out that, in his opinion, "The idea of balance embodied in the metaphors of centre, bridge, and cultivation (the last itself a metaphor for the right kind of reason that mediates between the naturally constituted and the wilfully created) is the guiding idea of Czech culture. The achievement of balance is recognised as the ideal".[283] This statement demonstrates the sociological connotations of terms casually used by art historians to locate Czech Modernist art on a cultural map.

Placing Czech Modernist art on a European and global map through the aforementioned geographical terms is a useful methodological tool to some extent. However it is susceptible to generalisation, western standards, and marginalisation. Anděl's IVAM catalogue offers a specific socio-political approach which aids a more comprehensive understanding of Czech Modern and Modernist visual culture. This thesis has discussed specific concepts of history and the modern, as conditioned by Czech and British interpretations. In the attempts to 'introduce' English-speaking audiences to the 'unknown' that is Czech visual culture, these specifics are often subordinated to a homogenous map, which allows the author to select cross-references, thus allowing a means of controlling 'imaginary territories'. In so doing,

[283] Ladislav Holy *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 183

they participate in national, social and cultural constructs, such as Moravansky's use of those promoted by the Habsburg Empire, and Mansbach's 'Eastern Europe'. In so doing, they conform to historiographical concepts, largely generated by either western chronologies and definitions, or the promoted identity of certain nations and sovereignties. On way in which this is manifested in pre-1989 texts on this subject is a tendency towards viewing Czech artists and groups as Francophile.

In British catalogues up to 1989 (and sometimes beyond), writers participate in the promotion of the national symbols of the Czech 'awakening' and their manifestations in cultural production, thus supporting outmoded patriotic aims such as those voiced by Masaryk. Writers such as Cannon-Brookes participate in this structure through reiterating events and persons symbolic of the establishment of Czech nationhood, without questioning their connotations and applicability.

Many questions are thrown open by this discussion, two of which need further consideration: what is the role of British national identity within their reception of art from outside of their Isles, specifically from new EU members of Central and Eastern Europe, and how are gallery and museum policies and exhibition choices influenced by this political climate? This is especially relevant as xenophobic sentiment in Britain, often expressed in Tabloids, manifests itself in fear of the "Polish Plumber", symbolic of the opening 'sluice gates' of exchange with new Europe. Such racial stereotypes have also arisen in the texts discussed in this thesis, a specific branch of which is the 'Czechoslovakism' displayed by writers such as Matějček and Cannon-Brookes.

Establishing a suitable vocabulary to describe different racial groups and nations who have experienced periods of tense political relationships is still an issue in Czech cultural writing on Slovaks, as discussed in relation to Holy's research on the Czech belief that the separation of 1993 was due to anti-Czech Slovak sentiments. Due to my focus on Czech Modernist art, I too have had to restrict the extent to which I have discussed Slovak art, which opens up an area of comparison for the texts considered in this thesis. The policies of bodies responsible for contemporary cultural endeavour within this context should be considered, using the combined analysis of political, historical and cultural documents which I hope to have exemplified through the methodology used in the preceding chapters.

This thesis has analysed the terms used to express Czech identity and concepts of Czech Modern and Modernist art and, to a lesser extent, architecture. These terms have been considered in their original context and in comparison to publications from alternative periods, in order to illuminate regional and international concepts of nation and Czech Modern art within this. My approach has been to question the vocabulary used by all the authors and spokespersons selected for this thesis. Whilst I acknowledge that I have constructed a specific interpretation of Czech Modernist art within the context of British interpretation, I hope that at the same time I have generated a methodology that opens up questions as to who is responsible for the British understanding of Czech Modernist art, and how their opinions, or exhibitions, been received and understood.

Through an analysis of the 'tools' and 'instruments' used by key writers and figures, whose purpose has been to facilitate cultural exchange and understanding, I have questioned the underlying hierarchies imposed upon descriptions of Czech Modernist art. These have been significant in terms of national identities, state and institutional policies, conceptions of shared histories and symbolic figures within those histories, and choices of key artists considered representative of Czech art. As Central European Modernist art gains an increasingly prominent role in wider understandings of Modernism, it will be of great interest to see how Czech Modernist art's reception and representation changes over the twenty-first century.

Bibliography

Books

Will S. Munroe, *Bohemia and the Čechs* [sic] (London, 1910)

Vladimir Nosek, *Independent Bohemia: an account of the Czecho-Slovak Struggle for Liberty* (London, 1918)

Antonín Matějček and Zdeněk Wirth, *Modern and contemporary Czech art* (London, 1924)

Victor Stretti, *Joseph Pennell* (Prague, 1932)

Martin, Nicholson & Gabo (eds), *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (London, 1937)

R.W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks* (London, 1943)

J. Stalin, *The National Question and Leninism* (Moscow, 1950)

Hugh Seton-Watson, 'The Russian colonial empire' *The Soviet Union After Thirty-Five Years* (London, 1952)

Miroslav Lamač, *Contemporary Art in Czechoslovakia* (Prague, 1958)

L. Vachtová, *Frank Kupka* (London, 1968)

Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch* (London, 1971)

Josef V. Polišenský, *The Thirty Years War* (London, 1971)

Ctibor Rybár, *Prague: Guide, Information Facts* (Prague, 1973)

Olympia Guidebook *Czechoslovakia* (Prague, 1974)

Voices of Czechoslovak Socialists (London, 1977)

Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1978)

Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980)

Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague 1861-1914* (Princeton, 1981)

Hugh Seton-Watson, *The making of a new Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the last years of Austria-Hungary* (London, 1981)

A. French, *Czech Writers and Politics 1945-1969* (New York, 1982)

Jaroslav Novák and Vlastimil Válek (eds), *Josef Mánes Líbány na Hané* (Prague, 1982)

Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford, 1983)

Donald G. Daviau, *Hermann Bahr* (Boston, 1985)

Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (MIT, 1985)

Vaclav Havel et al, *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central Eastern Europe* (London, 1985)

Pormorska & Rudy (ed.s), *Roman Jakobson: Language in Literature* (Harvard, 1987)

Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (eds), *Historians as nation-builders : Central and South-East Europe* Basingstoke: Macmillan, in association with School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London (1988)

Robert P. Pynsent, *Decadence and Innovation: Austro-Hungarian Life and Art at the Turn of the Century* (London, 1989)

Francis Carey, *Avant-garde British printmaking, 1914-1960* (London, 1990)

Terry Eagleton, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (London, 1990)

Josef Skvorecky, *The Miracle Game* (London, 1990)

David Evans, *John Heartfield A12/VI 1930-38* (New York, 1992)

Michael Jacobs, *Czechoslovakia, Blue Guide* (London, 1992)

Petr Wittlich, *Prague: Fin de Siecle* (Paris, 1992)

Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, 1994)

Eva Hoffman, *Exit into History: A Journey through the New Eastern Europe* (London, 1994)

Michal Bregant [et al.], *Kubistická Praha: 1909-1925* (Prague, 1995)

Lenka Bydzovská, Vojtech Lahoda, Karel Srp, et al, *Czech modern art 1900-1960* (Prague 1995)

Eric Fernie, *Art History and its Methods: A Critical Anthology* (London, 1995)

P.M. Hohenburg & Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe 1000-1994* (MIT, 1995)

Otto M. Urban & Lubos Merhaut (eds.), *Moderní Revue: 1894-1925* (Prague, 1995)

Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the post-communist social transformation* (Cambridge, 1996)

Vojtěch Lahoda, *Ceský kubismus* (Prague, 1996)

Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler: the Diplomacy of Edvard Beneš in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1996)

Jaroslav Slavík, *Josef Čapek* (Prague, 1996)

Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map pf Civilization in the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1996)

Charles Harrison, *Movements in Art: Modernism* (London, 1997)

Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy-Nagy, 1917-1946* (Chicago, 1997)

Bohuslava R. Bradbrook, *Karel Čapek: In Pursuit of Truth, Tolerance and Trust* (Sussex, 1998)

F. Kupka and A. Pierre, *Frank Kupka in White and Black* (Liverpool, 1998)

Charles Harrison, Paul Wood and Jason Gaiger, *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford, 1998)

Akos Moravanszky, *Competing Visions: Aesthetic Innovation and Social Imagination in Central European Architecture, 1867-1918* (MIT, 1998)

Eva Petrová, *Skupina 42* (Prague, 1998)

Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998)

Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: a Czech History* (Princeton, 1998)

Edwin Becker, (ed.), *Prague 1900: Poetry and Ecstasy* (Amsterdam, 1999)

Eric Dluhosch, Rostislav Svácha (eds), *Karel Teige 1900-1951: l'enfant terrible of the Czech modernist avante-garde* MIT (c.1999)

Malcolm Gee, Tim Kirk and Jill Steward (eds), *The City in Central Europe: Culture and Society from 1800 to the present* (Aldershot, c. 1999)

S.A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: from the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1989-1939* (Cambridge, 1999)

Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Macmillan, 2000)

The Norton Anthology: Theory and Criticism (New York, 2001)

Timothy O. Benson (Ed.), *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes 1910–1930* (MIT, 2002)

Sibelan Forrester, Magdelena J. Zaborowska & Elena Gapova (eds.), *Over the Wall/After the Fall: Post-Communist Cultures through an East-West Gaze* (Indiana, 2004)

Alexander Maxwell, *Multiple Nationalism: National Concepts in Nineteenth-Century Hungary and Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities"* (Routledge, 2005)

Elizabeth Clegg, *Art, design, and architecture in Central Europe, 1890-1920* (Yale, 2006)

Catalogues

Bohemian section at the Austrian exhibition, Earl's Court, London, S. W. 1906, Under the auspices of the City council of the royal capital Prague, and under the honorary presidency of Francis count Lützow and Vladímir Srb...Guide to the Bohemian section and to the kingdom of Bohemia (Prague, 1906)

Exposition de l'art populaire Tchéco-Slovaque (Paris, 1920)

Kamil Novotný, *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Modern Art*, London (Prague, 1947)

Cubist and Surrealist Paintings 1903-1938 from the Collection of Roland Penrose, Great Britain: Arts Council of Great Britain (Cambridge, 1954)

Arts Council of Great Britain: *An Exhibition of painting and sculpture by Czech and French artists at the Tate Gallery* (London, 1967)

F. Kupka, M. Rowell, et al. *Frantisek Kupka, 1871-1957: a retrospective*, New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. (1975)

G.M. Forty & Francis Carey, *Britské kresby a akvarely 1900-1950*, British Council (Prague, 1978)

Jiři Kotalík, *Otto Gutfreund 1889-1927: Sculpture and Drawings* Scottish Arts Council with the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Socialist Republic and the Visiting Arts Unit of Great Britain (Edinburgh, 1979)

Ronald Alley, *Catalogue of the Tate Gallery's Collection of Modern Art other than Works by British Artists*, Tate Gallery and Sotheby Parke-Bernet, (London, 1981)

Peter Cannon-Brookes in collaboration with Jiři Kotalík, Petr Hartmann and Václav Procházka, *Czech sculpture 1800-1938*, National Gallery of Wales (London, 1986)

Irena Goldscheider, *Czechoslovak prints from 1900 to 1970* (London, 1986)

Gustav Peichl et al, *Czech functionalism: 1918-1938*, Architectural Association (London, 1987)

Czech Modernism: 1900-1945 The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, 1989)

Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and '30s, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, and the Design Museum, London (Oxford, 1990)

Štyrský and Toyen: Artificialismus 1926-1931, Vychodoceska galerie plus others (1992)

Alexander von Vegesack (ed.), Milena B. Lamarová [et al.], *Czech cubism: architecture, furniture, and decorative arts, 1910-1925* (New York, 1992)

Jaroslav Anděl, *El Arte de La Vanguardia en Checoslovaquia 1918-1938*, IVAM Centre Julio González, Valencia (Valencia, 1993)

Dana Bořutová, Anna Zajková and Matúš Dulla (Eds), *Dušan Jurkovič: General Exhibition of the Architectural Work*, Slovak National Gallery (Bratislava, 1993)

Karel Teige Surrealist collages 1935-1951: from the collections of the Museum of National Literature in Prague (Prague, 1994)

Czech modern art 1900-1960: the National Gallery in Prague: modern art collection, the Trade Fair Palace, [conception of the catalogue and exhibition, Lenka

Bydzovská, Vojtech Lahoda, Karel Srp; commissioner of the exhibition, Václav Erben], Národní muzeum v Praze (Prague, 1995)

Zdeněk Pešánek 1896-1965, National Gallery in Prague, Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art (Prague, 1996)

Czech art: 1900-1990, from the collections of the Prague City Art Gallery, House of the Golden Ring / [catalogue and permanent exhibition conceived by Lenka Bydzovská, Vojtech Lahoda, Karel Srp] (Prague City Art Gallery, 1998)

Edwin Becker, Roman Prahl, Petr Wittlich (eds); authors, Michael Huig [et al.] *Prague 1900: Poetry and Ecstasy* (published to accompany the exhibition in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam 17 December 1999-26 March 2000 and the Museum of Applied Art, Frankfurt am Main 11 May-27 August 2000), (London, 1999)

František Bilek (1872-1941), City Gallery Prague (Prague, 2000)

Petr Stepán, *Ozveny kubismu : návraty a inspirace kubismu v ceském umení, 1920-2000* Catalog of an exhibition held at Dum u Cerné Matky Bo zi, (Prague, 2000)

Trade Fair Palace Fourth Floor: Nineteenth-Century Art, National Gallery in Prague, guide to the permanent exhibition (Prague, 2002)

The Muller Villa, City of Prague Museum (Prague, 2002)

Otto Gutfreund, Museum Kampa (Prague, 2003)

Jaroslav Anděl, *The Avant-Garde Across Media: Josef Bartuška and the Linie Group, 1931-1939*, Obecní Dum Prague (Prague, 2004)

Folklorisms in 20th-Century Czech Art, The Czech Museum of Fine Arts (Prague, 2004)

Josef Čapek: The Humblest Art, Municipal House (Prague 2004)

The Black Madonna House: Museum of Czech Cubism, National Gallery in Prague,

guide to the permanent exhibition (Prague, 2004)

Richard Gregor, *Realism and Reality: The Permanent Exhibition of the Slovak twentieth-century art* (City Gallery Bratislava, 2005)

IV. New Zlín Salon 2005: The first review of contemporary Czech and Slovak visual art, Krajská galerie výtvarného umění ve Zlíně (Zlín, 2005)

Landscape in Czech Art of the 17th-20th Centuries: Guide to the Exhibition of the National Gallery of Prague in Kinsky Palace (Prague, 2005)

Christopher Wilk (ed.), *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914-1939*, V&A (London, 2006)

Periodicals and Journals

Elkin Mathews, "Aubrey Beardsley Londýn", *Volné Směry*, Viii (1904), p.84

Lloyd Williams "Our Book of the Week", *Weekly Sun*, 12th October (1907)

J. Skola, "Czech Sociology", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28, No. 1. (Jul., 1922), pp. 76-78

W.G.C. "Modern and Contemporary Czech Art", *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 48, No, 275 (Feb., 1926), p. 111

Edward Gleichen, "Czechoslovakia: The Land of an Unconquerable Ideal", *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 4. (Jul., 1927), p. 259

ReD r. 3, č. 1 (1929-1931)

František Kovárna, "Painting and Sculpture in Czechoslovakia", *The Studio*, Vol. 115, no. 542 (May 1938), pp. 236-249

Oskar Kokoschka, "An Approach to the Art of Czechoslovakia", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.81 (1942), pp. 264-269

Edith Hoffmann, "O modernism britském malířství", *Život* XX. 1 (1946), p. 52

Bohuslav Fuchs, "Industrialism, urbanism, architecture", *BLOK*, 2nd year, Issues 3-4 (1947-1948) [English Summary]

František Kaláb, "Monumental Painting", *BLOK*, 2nd Year, Issue 2 (1947-1948) [English Summary, page numbers not designated]

František Kaláb, "The Legacy of Western Culture", *BLOK*, 2nd year, Issue 10 (1947-1948) [English Summary]

František Kaláb, "About the Situation of our Culture", *BLOK*, 2nd Year, Issue 10 (1947-1948) [English Summary]

Jiří Kotalík, "About the Problems of Modern Art", *BLOK*, 2nd Year, Issue 10 (1947-1948) [English Summary]

Bohumil Hochmann, "Which Way are going the Masters of Art?", *BLOK*, 2nd Year, Issue 10 (1947-1948) [English Summary]

J.B. Svrček, "Wall and Monumental Painting is being carried out in Moravia", *BLOK*, 2nd Year, Issue 2 (1947-1948) [English Summary, page numbers not designated]

J.P. Hodin, "Henry Moore: Monumental Shape in Space", *Výtvarné Umění*, Ročník 8, (1958) pp. 24-29

Jan Rizeč, "Umění v Anglie", *Kultura*, r.vi, č.i, (1962), p. 8

"Britské malířství", *Výtvarná Práce*, Vol. XII (1964), p. 3

Karel Bartosek, "Czechoslovakia: The State of Historiography", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 2 (Jan., 1967), pp. 143-155

David M. Sokol, "Douglas Cooper The Cubist Epoch" *Art Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 1. (Autumn, 1971), p.102

John Sillevis, "Czech Art 1878-1914. Darmstadt", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 127, No. 983 (Feb., 1985), 118+121

Penelope Curtis, "Otto Gutfreund and the Czech National Decorative Style", *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 4. (Spring, 1987), pp. 30-45

Marc Robinson, "Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930; France Fin de Siecle", *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 3. (1987), pp.118-119

Margaret Iverson, "The Positions of Postmodernism", *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1989), pp. 31-34

Jonathan Harris, "Alterity, Mataphor and Formation: Around the Edges of a Paradigm", *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1991), pp. 88-95

E. Clegg, "Expressionism and Czech Art, 1905-1927", *Burlington Magazine* 137(1106), (1995), pp. 341-342

Johanna Drucker, "Formalism's Other History", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 78 (Dec., 1996), pp. 750-751

Vojtěch Lahoda, "František Kupka's Creation in Visual Art: 'Organic' and Czech Connections, *Umění* XLIV (1996), pp. 16-40

Margaret Olin, "Nationalism, the Jews and Art History", *Judaism* (autumn, 1996)

Karel Srp, "The Philosophy of the Recess", *Umění* XLIV (1996), pp. 41-52

"Moderni revue 1894-1924", *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 139, No. 1126 (Jan., 1997), pp. 52-53

R.J.W. Evans, "Bohemia in History", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 52, No. 4. (Nov., 1999), pp. 823-824

Katherine David-Fox, "Prague-Vienna, Prague-Berlin: The Hidden Geography of Czech Modernism", *Slavic Review* Vol.59 No.4 (2000), pp. 735-760

Vojtěch Lahoda, "Review of Steven A. Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: from the Baltic to the Balkans*", *Umění* XLIX (2001), pp. 86-92

James Elkins, "A Closer Look at Eastern European Modernism: Response", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 84, No. 3. (Sep., 2002), p. 539

Mária Orišková, "Several remarks on the book *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890-1939* by S.A. Mansbach", *ARS* (2002)

Marco Stamenkovic, "Curating the Invisible: Contemporary Art Practice and the Production of Meaning in Eastern Europe", *Inferno*, vol.9 (2004), pp. 53-61

Steve Ross, "Welcome to Bata-Ville", *The Guardian*, (19 June 2006), pp. 20-23

Internet Sources

Katherine Bement Davies, "The Modern Condition of Agricultural Labour in Bohemia", The Journal of Political Economy, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Sep., 1900), p.491 JSTOR [15.09.06] http:// links.jstor.org/

"Court Circular", *The Times*, May 8 1906, p. 10, Issue 38014, Col A [04/10/2006] http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

T.G. Masaryk, "A Socialist State in Being: President Masaryk's Ideals", *The Times*, Nov 06 1919 [04/10/06], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/781/298/95607240w5/purl=rcl_TTD

A

"Masaryk of Czechoslovakia", *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 9 (May, 1930), p. 420 [04.11.06] http://links.jstor.org

Neville Chamberlain, September 27, 1938, [17.07.2006] http://www.historyguide.org/europe/munich.html

Noel Buxton, "The Czech Problem", *The Times*, July 15 1938, Issue 48047, Col F [04/01/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

"Czech Art from the Middle Ages", *The Times*, August 22 1957, p. 4, Issue 53926, Col A, [04/10/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

Guy Brett, "Cubist Miscellany from Czechoslovakia", *The Times*, September 15 1967, Issue 57047, Col A [04/10/2006] http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

"Czech Sculptor", *The Times*, June 18 1966, Issue 56661, Col A [04/10/2006], http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark

"British Drawings and Watercolours of the 20th Century from the Collection of the British Council" 1978 [23.07.06] http://collection.britishcouncil.org/html/exhibition/exhibition.aspx?id=15356

Los Angeles County Museum of Art Office of Communications and Marketing, "Lacma Adds More than 1,400 Works of Art to Permanent Collection in 2002" [14.08.2006] http://www.lacma.org/press/releases/2002acquisPR.htm

James Elkins "How is it Possible to Write about World's Art", *ARS* 2/2003, pp.75-81 http://www.dejum.sav.sk/RES/elkins.htm

Jan Čulik, "Czech Media now – a postcommunist model?" [06.02.05], http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/Slavonic/Czechmedianow.htm

Umělecké besedy (Prague Artistic Forum) [06.02.05]

http://www.blisty.cz/2004/2/6/art16861.html

Ivo Krsek: "Czech Republic: Painting and Graphic Arts after c. 1900", Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [21.11.05], http://www.groveart.com/

Tyrus Miller, "Rethinking Central Europe: The Symbolic Geography of the Avant-Garde" [21.11.05] http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modernism-modernity/v010/10.3.html

Edwin Lachnit: "Kokoschka, Oskar" Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [13.07.06], http://www.groveart.com/

Robert Radford: "Artist's International Association" Grove Art Online. Oxford University Press, [13.07.06], http://www.groveart.com/

"Frantisek Kovarna", Československé dokumentační středisko, o.p.s. [13.07.2005] http://www.csds.cz/

Vaclav Podany „Kamil Novotny", [14.07.06] http://www.archiv.cas.cz/english/pages/novotny.htm

Information on Jiri Kotalik [26.07.06] http://www.expo2005.cz/en/who_we_are/kotalik.shtml

Conferences/Symposiums

Czech design, Culture and Society, International Symposium, University of Brighton, 02-03 December 2005

Memory and Oblivion: Monuments in Central and Eastern Europe, Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, 23 November 2005

Interviews/Discussions

Keith Hartley, Dean Gallery, Edinburgh 19.12.05

Jaroslav Anděl, DOX, Prague Vojtesska, 110 00 Praha 1 23.05.06

Vojtěch Lahoda, Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Husova 4, Prague 31.05.06