

MODERN CZECH SELF-REFLECTION

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The main cause of modern Czech self-reflection is the attempt to justify Czech national existence. The clearest proof for national existence turned out to be the national language and history, despite the inclination of Czech self-reflection to supranational conceptions.

The beginnings of modern Czech self-reflection developed among such Czech „outsiders“ in the atmosphere of Vienna as Machar, Schauer and Masaryk. The „Czech question“ as formulated by Schauer and Masaryk was an existential one of the Czech nation. In his novel *The Stranger*, Šusta has recorded the critical condition of Czech self-reflection. For F. X. Šalda the answer to the Czech question is positive, while in the case of Pekař an inferiority complex vis-à-vis the West came to the fore. Rádl, in contrast, sees the meaning of the nation not in itself, but in supranational action.

Čapek's Czech self-reflection was historically unique, by virtue of its unshakable faith in the supranational significance of a small nation sorely afflicted by history.