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**“The sounding forms of the native tongue in motion”: an essay on the aesthetic aspects of Otakar Hostinský’s concept *národnost* [nationhood] of art formulated in his writings on Czech art and prosody.**

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In this essay I discuss the aesthetic aspects of the concept *‘národnost* [*nationhood*]*’* of art and of the treatise on Czech verse that were theorized by the aesthetician Otakar Hostinský (1847-1910), who championed Smetana and was one of the founders of Czech aesthetics and musicology.

Hostinský formulated the basis of his theory on *národnost* in his earliest essays ‘Art and Nationhood’ (1869) and “‘Wagnerianism” and Czech National Opera’ (1870), in which, criticizing his contemporary Czech intellectuals, he redefined the notion of *národnost*. He regarded it as the aesthetic taste of an ethnic group that is not to be argued in the discipline of aesthetics but of history of art, and emphasized that since beauty and *národnost* are theoretically compatible with each other, all works of art of any nation and period are both aesthetic and national, and that history of arts in Europe, therefore, should be regarded as that of the methods of representing *národnost* in art. Then, by comparing the materials, methods and media employed in the plastic arts, music and literature, he concluded that the last two genres of art are the most appropriate to express *národnost* because both of them are based upon the sounds of the native tongue, the only medium free from any thematic and physical restriction. On the ground of these premises, he laid stress on the aesthetic and historical significance of utilizing Wagnerian *leitmotiv* and declamatory style in composing national operas and of reforming Czech prosody as the cornerstone of poetry, songs and operas.

He discussed the necessity to reform Czech prosody in his essay ‘Some Remarks on Czech Prosody’ (1870) to achieve realistic, musical and national declamations. In Czech prosody there were two opposite versificating systems: quantitative and accentual verses. The former was adapted from classical Greek prosody while the latter from the German and the French. He denied Czech quantitative verse, asserting that in spite of its

sophisticated sounds it violates natural accents in the spoken language, the communicative aspects of the words and *národnost* meanwhile, he claimed that Czech accentual verse, neglecting the correct strength and length of syllables, produces unmusical verses. And he proposed a new principle of accentual verse by founding on the orthoepy of the Czech language. He demonstrated in his theory *On Czech Musical Declamation* (21886) the ways of applying it to declamations in songs and operas.

Considering his discussions, we notice that while Hostinský's theory on *národnost* was 'local' in that it was typical of linguistic nationalism in Central Europe in the 19th century, it also contained the strategies for the 'periphery' to contribute works of art both aesthetically universal and national to the 'centre'.