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Jiří Veltruský Revisited

In our times, the question of the relation between drama and theatre seems to have been definitively settled. Due to the long-lasting period of the so-called director's theatre the dramatic text has lost its acknowledgement as a work of art worth respect. Even more harmful is the denial of the difference between drama and epics by modern theorists. Jiří Veltruský is particularly upset about their habit of describing the drama using terms borrowed from narratology.¹ Underlying his research is a continuous reconsideration of the specifics of the two art-kinds, drama and theatre. His reconsideration results in the advice that these arts should again combine, yet neither under the flag of literature like in Hegel's time nor under the dominance of non-literary arts like during the historical Avant-Garde, but rather in clear awareness of their difference.

Were such a standpoint dictated by personal preference alone, it might be brushed aside as the opinion of a Don Quixote-like outsider. Veltruský knows that he must deliver convincing arguments for his view. One could head his quest for arguments under a motto formulated by Oskar Walzel with regard to the quarrels about William Shakespeare's dramas: good things stand out of their time and place. They find acknowledgement throughout the centuries.²

1 In "Drama as Literature and Performance" he writes: "[Zich's] manifestly absurd inclusion of dramatic literature in the narrative genre has been resuscitated, at least by implication, in the recent studies that try to describe drama by means of narratology." (VELTRUSKÝ 1985: 16)

2 Cf. (WALZEL 1968). He criticizes Gustav Freytag (I refer to him later) for measuring Shakespeare by inadequate norms. Walzel, who adhered to Johann Friedrich Herbart's formalist aesthetics, applied comparative analytical methods in literature. Baroque painting and architecture allowed him to discover Shakespeare's baroque-like use of space and time. Baroque and Renaissance are not only characteristics of historical epochs, but also universal art styles.

The ‘good things’ coming to support Veltruský are twofold. First, he finds a congenial personality in Otakar Zich. Zich was Jan Mukařovský’s predecessor on the chair of Aesthetics at the Charles University in Prague. His *Estetika dramatického umění: Teoretická dramaturgie* (Aesthetics of the Dramatic Art. A Theoretical Dramaturgy), published in 1931, met with much critique, because the author rejected modern experimental theatre in favour of old fashioned realism. This was not a matter of ignorance or individual taste, but of insight won by experimental aesthetics.³ My article tries to lay bare what good Veltruský found in Zich, apart from the latter’s seemingly stubborn opposition to mainstream thinking resembling Veltruský’s seeming Don Quixotism. The second support comes from his academic teacher Jan Mukařovský, who was charged by the Prague Linguistic Circle to develop a structural theory of literature. There are of course many other influences, but it seems to me that Veltruský’s life-long inner dispute with Zich and Mukařovský lies in the centre of his research.⁴

The way of disputing with the two great personalities is crosswise. Veltruský uses Mukařovský’s investigations in dialogue and monologue as an argument against Zich’s main thesis according to which the written drama is not a self-standing work of art, but depends for its completion on the theatrical performance. On the other hand, Zich’s insights into the structure of the dramatic plot help Veltruský in part to bid defiance to Mukařovský’s amputation of the dialogue principle in the theatre. Nonetheless, the dramatic plot remains an open problem. Sometimes Veltruský admits that he finds no satisfactory solution to the problems touched upon. I think that in the case of the dramatic plot, this has to do with the analytical method of the so-called ‘semantic gesture’ (*sémantické gesto*) created by Jan Mukařovský.

Dialogue and monologue as speech forms and as literary genres

In 1940 Mukařovský publishes his famous article “Dialog a monolog” (Dialogue and Monologue). This is not a study in literary genres, but in every day-life communication. The starting points are the constituents of the communication: two or more partners present in the same outer situation, and the common subject matter of their speeches deliver the conditions of either dialogue or monologue. The precondition of a dialogical communication is the right of each partner to take over the role of the active speaker. In the monologue only one partner is an active speaker, the other one remains a passive hearer. What makes the study so famous is the analysis of the semantics of dialogue and monologue. Dialogical semantics is constituted by the interferences between two (or more) contexts, expressed by the replicas and counter-replicas of each participant. Mon-

3 Zich applies Gustav Theodor Fechner’s psychology to his so-called pre-semiotics. See (ZICH 1986 [1931]: 93, also 350, note 93). The notes and comments in this edition were written by Ivo Osolsobě and Miroslav Procházka.

4 Miroslav Procházka (1994) too realizes the long-lasting impact of Zich and Mukařovský on Veltruský.

ological semantics is constituted by the continuous development of only the speaker's context. As a result, the inner semantic structure of the dialogue is more complex than the semantics of the monologue. The analysis of dialogical complexity demands specific linguistic tools until then only scarcely elaborated, because dialogue and monologue used to be regarded as outer stylistic forms.

The aim of the "Dialog a monolog" is the finding of dialogical sub-genres and transitions between dialogue and monologue.⁵ This was a linguistic trend of the period, propagated among others by Michail Bachtin in Russia. The trend was often connected with psychological research in language. A reflection of this can be seen in Mukařovský's usage of the term 'psychological situation' (*psychologická situace*) for the inner situation of each partner and for the interrelation between the partners. Another time-bound topic is the problem of genetic priority of either monologue or dialogue in the history of human language and in the individual consciousness or subconscious. Mukařovský discusses this topic in his 1940 article "O jazyce básnickém" (On Poetic Language). In this and previous articles he also clearly distinguishes between lyrics and epics as the two monological genres and drama as the only dialogical one.

As I said, the splendid study "Dialog a monolog" is not concerned with the specifics of the dramatic genre. One can observe a general neglect of drama and a preference for theatre in Mukařovský's writings. A possible reason for neglecting the drama might be Otakar Zich's influence. Zich not only excluded drama from the literary genre system; he also proclaimed that the dramatic genre was historically generated by epics.⁶ This faced Mukařovský with a methodological problem, because he derived the literary genres from the communicative functions in Karl Bühler's Organon Model. As we know, that model connects the outer situation with the referential function (*Darstellung*), the relation between speaker and situation with the expressive function (*Ausdruck/Expression*)⁷, and the relation between hearer and situation with the function of appeal (*Appell*). It is instructing to observe how Mukařovský handles the functional model: He places the referential function near to epics, the expression near to lyrics, yet appeal and drama, which according to this distributional logic should be brought together, are totally left out of his consideration.⁸ The reason for Mukařovský's silence was probably his insight that the appeal is not necessarily a dialogical function. His approach to the question of linguistic functions and literary genres had led to a dilemma.

5 Psychological transitions between dialogue and monologue are analysed in the fourth part of "Dialog a monologue" subtitled "Dialog v monologu a monolog v dialogu" (Dialogue in monologue and monologue in dialogue).

6 See also note 1.

7 Bühler discusses various denominations for *Ausdruck* and *Appell*, among others also Edmund Husserl's *Kundgabe/Kundnahme*. These variants are connected with problems of function and sign, which I leave aside. Henceforward I shall use the word 'Expression' for Bühler's *Ausdruck*.

8 Cf. (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1983 [1938]: 57). He treats the relation between linguistic functions and literary genres in a somewhat lax way, although it concerns a fundamental problem. The main topic of the article is the addition of the aesthetic function to Bühler's three functions.

Veltruský seems to have remarked on Mukařovský's dilemma. His own approach to Bühler's model offers a way out. Instead of directly linking a single linguistic function with a single literary genre he first considered what Bühler had meant by '*Darstellung*'. In Veltruský's view, Bühler's theory of language follows the traditional conviction that language serves primarily as an epistemological tool. Therefore the function of '*Darstellung*' is a matter of cognition. The function of 'Expression' is to articulate the speaker's thought, the function of '*Appell*' indicates the speaker's wish to hear his partner's thought in reaction to his own. Language considered as an epistemological tool centres on '*Darstellung*', the thinking subject of which is regarded as a universal mind, in which every individual mind participates. The two functions of 'Expression' and '*Appell*' show how the thinking acts of concrete human beings approach universally valid thoughts or ideas. The involvement of the individual cognitive acts may be accompanied by personal feelings, but, as Veltruský stresses, the emotional elements must not overshadow the cognitive contents. Modern theories considering language a means of communication instead of cognition define expression and appeal as the main functions of language, so that emotions and will-power prevail. Veltruský is clearly not adherent of this view.⁹

Veltruský published his ideas about Bühler's theory in a 1985 article entitled "Bühlers Organon-Modell und die Semiotik der Kunst" (Bühler's Organon Model and the Semiotics of Arts). In the main, the article disputes Roman Jakobson's addition of three more functions to the Bühler's three.¹⁰ Yet more relevant to me is the implicit dispute with Zich and Mukařovský.

Veltruský's review of the three functions of the Organon Model reveals a monologue as well as a dialogue potential in communication. The actualization of either potential depends on the speaker's way of handling the appeal. He can either wish the partner to take over his thought or wish him to develop thoughts of his own. In the first case the result is a monologue, whereas the second case opens up a dialogue. Therefore, it is up to the speaker to decide whether the process of communication is to become a monologue or a dialogue.

Veltruský has to find a stronger argument in favour of the dialogue. It runs approximately as follows: if the functional system leaves the decision about monologue or dialogue to the speaker, the communication can be subdued to his personal interests, while the interest in cognition is suppressed. So an objective ground on which the double-sided cognitive process in the communication is solidly founded must be found. Karl Bühler teaches that language refers to objects by the symbolic signs of nouns and by the index signs of pronouns. The index signs have no self-standing meaning, they merely point like a finger

9 Aristotle's *Poetics* distinguishes between three types of drama: drama of action, of character, and of thought. It is evident that 'thought' must be expressed by language. Aeschylus, who had introduced the dialogue into the drama, "treated the dialogue as the essence" (ARISTOTLE 1979: 19; transl. HS). Aristotle evaluates the drama of thought as the lowest, the drama of action as the highest type, and the drama of character is of middle quality. Veltruský follows rather Aeschylus in this matter.

10 In "Lingvistika a poetika" (Linguistics and Poetics, 1959), Jakobson presents his model of six functions. The fourth one, called poetic function, corresponds with Mukařovský's aesthetic function. The Czech term for the referential function (Bühler's *Darstellung*) is *poznávací funkce* (cognitive function). Cf. (JAKOBSON 1995: 82).

at something outside themselves. The pronouns of language are the first person pronoun *I*, the second person pronoun *you* and the third person pronoun *it*. These three pronouns constitute a scenario, when linked to a communication.¹¹ The *I* and the *you*, then, indicate the speaker and the hearer, while the *it* indicates the communicational object. In the scenario, the *I* and the *you* are marked by the subjectivity of the two human partners, whereas the *it* lacks subjectivity. If now the partner of the speaker is reduced to a person only spoken *to*, yet not spoken *with*, the *you* is deprived of its subjective mark, so that it resembles the *it*. This is the case of the monologue communication. To make things clearer we can also imagine the three pronouns as a triangle, the polar basis of which is occupied by the *I* and the *you*, while the top is taken by the *it*. In the monologue the *you*-pole loses its place on the basis and is shifted onto the top, next to the third person pronoun *it*. The monologue genres of lyrics and epics, so to speak, cut off a half-side of the triangle. In drama, on the contrary, both sides are actualized.

This view of language, which I tried to summarize, allows Veltruský to reject Zich's derivation of the dramatic genre from epics. No monologue genre can engender the dialogical genre. In ancient Greece the drama developed, when the discussion of public affairs needed an adequate public forum and form. The already existing epic and lyric genres turned out to be inadequate due to their monologue constitution. Plato's philosophical dialogues certainly also delivered an impulse to create the drama. According to Veltruský, the two monological, and thereby simpler, genres of epics and lyrics had prepared the way to the more complex drama thanks to their deficits. A look at the historical development of the drama allows Veltruský also to refute Mukařovský's idea that monologue and dialogue are equally entitled.

Action and reaction versus action without reaction

In the foregoing, I tried to explain how Veltruský solved Mukařovský's dilemma of the dramatic genre and how he contested Zich's genetic derivation of the drama from epics. Now I want to point at what I think is Veltruský's own dilemma.

As already mentioned, Mukařovský inclined more to the theatre than to the drama. He was particularly interested in the experiments of the theatrical Avant-Garde during the first three decades of the twentieth century. I also hinted at the fact that Otakar Zich preferred the Realistic epoch to the Avant-Garde. In 1940, shortly before his defence of the "Drama jako básnické dílo" (Drama as a Poetic Work, 1942),¹² Veltruský had written

11 Bühler discusses the index signs in connection with space and time. See Paragraph 7, "Die Origo des Zeigfeldes und ihre Markierung", in (BÜHLER 1978). I will leave these aspects aside, although Veltruský was highly interested in them. The term 'scenario' is central in Valetin Vološinov's social linguistics, to which Mukařovský and Veltruský often refer.

12 The 1942 version in *Čtení o jazyce a poesii*, distorted by the sensor, was in the 1977 English version *Drama as Literature* restored and redrafted by Veltruský. In 1999 a new Czech edition came out with Ivo Osolsobě's epilogue and commentary.

a critical article on the Avant-Garde, “Člověk a předmět na divadle” (Man and Object in the Theatre). The critique comes more to the fore when compared with his 1984 article on Bühler’s Organon Model. “Člověk a předmět na divadle” describes how in the theatrical experiment the actor and the elements of the setting change position, so that the living man turns into an object, and the dead object into a living being. In the article on Bühler, published more than thirty years later, the same phenomenon is analysed from a theoretical and even philosophical viewpoint. Veltruský is worried about the blurring of the distinction between the human subject and the object, a blurring which might destroy the cognitive capacities of the drama. The topics I have now to deal with are rather complex, because they involve analytical methods as well as theoretical poetics and aesthetics.

I shall start with the simplest issue. It is connected with Mukařovský’s attitude toward the Avant-Garde. In “Jevištní řeč v avantgardním divadle” (Stage Language in Avant-Garde Theatre) dating from 1937, and in the 1941 study “K dnešnímu stavu teorie divadla” (On the Present State of the Theory of Theatre) Mukařovský praises the widening of our knowledge about the theatrical code and the enrichment of the code’s combinatory possibilities as a liberation from inherited limitations and as a setting free of creativity. Not long after, in 1945, the tone has changed. In “K umělecké situaci dnešního českého divadla” (On the Artistic Situation of the Present Czech Theatre), Mukařovský diagnoses a dangerous crisis connected with the loss of the hierarchical principal in theatre.

There are two aspects of the hierarchical principal which have got lost by the experiments of the Avant-Garde. One of them is the abandonment of “Aristotle’s theory of the unifying tension gradually rising to the culmination point and then abruptly falling”¹³ (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1966 [1945]: 451). The other one is a total change of tension: “the play turns into a zone of incessant partial tensions, each of which finds a self-standing solution without contacting its neighbours”¹⁴ (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1966 [1945]: 451). The second aspect is a consequence of the first, but there is yet something else to it. Previously Mukařovský had thought that in the Avant-Garde theatre the action–reaction pattern had shifted from its home-place in the verbal dialogue onto the relation between all material elements of the theatre. That shifting was supposed to bring forward a new type of dialogue, in which the human word was just one element among others. But it is highly doubtful whether the juxtaposition of, let’s say, elements of setting and light may be called a dialogue in the sense of an action–reaction or replica–counter-replica relation. Besides, mere juxtaposition is not a hierarchical principal, so that it cannot become the constructive principle of a work of art, which needs hierarchy. In the 1937 article Mukařovský had hoped that the anti-hierarchical chain of action–reaction between the heterogeneous material elements would deliver a model of egalitarian contacts between the members of a democratic society outside the theatre. When the political situation in his country had shattered his hope,

13 Orig.: “Aristotelská teorie jednotného napětí úměrně stoupajícího k vrcholnému bodu a po něm srážejícího [...]”

14 Orig.: „[...] hra stává se nepřetržitým pásmem napětí dílčích, z nichž každé dochází samostatného vyřešení a nenavazuje styku se sousedními.”

Mukařovský proposed something new: the action–reaction pattern should be replaced by chains of actions *without* reactions. The carrier and thereby the initiator of the continuously renewed actions should be the human actor on stage. This solution re-established the superiority of the human subject against the reign of the objects, but it also meant the abandonment of the dialogical principle in theatre and the definitive separation of theatre and literary drama.

There are several problems inherent in Mukařovský's thinking, for example, his (short-time)¹⁵ abandonment of the hierarchical structure of a work of art. Yet in my opinion, the greatest problem is probably his conviction that the Aristotelian 'unifying tension' has irrevocably got lost. I have now to speak about that 'tension'. It will lead us to Veltruský's unsolvable dilemma announced above, but it needs a little patience to retrace the way.

Aristotle deals in his poetics with two functions of the dramatic plot vis-à-vis the whole structure of the dramatic work of art. The plot defines the relations between the beginning, middle, and the end of drama as logical relations and the compositional distribution of the parts as aesthetical relations. The two functions thus constitute two different constructive levels, a logical and an aesthetic level. The Russian Formalists had named the two levels *fabula* (plot) and *sjuzet* (story). Unfortunately, they considered the *fabula*'s logical form a passive form in relation to the active form of the *sjuzet*. They had not noticed that it was the *fabula* which determines the unity of the total work. Their mistake was forgivable, for they applied the analysis of *fabula* and *sjuzet* only to epics, wherein the plot's functions follow other principles than in the drama. In contrast, Hegel's most influential aesthetics had favoured the drama, and all through the nineteenth century we can observe a vital interest in this genre. I will now turn to two theorists, Gustav Freytag and Otakar Zich.

In 1863, the German dramatist Freytag published *Die Technik des Dramas* (The Technique of the Drama). His contribution to dramatic analysis is twofold. Like Hegel, he defined the plot as a combination of two constitutive parts, called action and reaction (Freytag prefers the terms *Spiel und Gegenspiel*/play and counter-play). It is important to notice that, in contrast to the epic plot, the number of dramatic plot-parts is strictly reduced to only *two* parts. The action-part is always an initial change (or the attempt at a change) of a given situation; the reaction-part follows afterwards. Action and reaction deliver two places for the location of the drama's main characters. The protagonist is put in the place of the action (first player), the antagonist in the place of the reaction (second player). The hero of the play is either the protagonist, charged with the action, or the antagonist charged with the reaction. So there are *two possible types* of a dramatic hero, the initiatively active or the reactive hero.¹⁶ What makes us speak about a 'hero' at all, is not the role of the action-

15 In his last article on Czech theatre, "D34–D48 ve vývoji českého divadla" (D34–D48 in the Development of the Czech Theatre, 1948), Mukařovský applauds E. F. Burian's return to the strictly hierarchical directorial theatre. The dialogical axis is no longer inside the theatrical work, but between director and audience. This kind of 'dialogue' resembles a propagandistic monologue.

16 The discrimination between the active and the passive hero is derived from the grammatical categories of the verb.

carrier or reaction-carrier itself, but the permanent focus on one of the two role-carriers during the temporal course of action and reaction. In addition to this new approach to the plot-level Freytag also examined the compositional level. With regard to Aristotle he defined five constant points in a tension-curve, whereof the first three led gradually to the culmination and the last two mark the fall and the final catastrophe (in the tragedy). He also added variable points like, for instance, retardation and acceleration taken from musical composition.

Otakar Zich is interested, more than Freytag, in the logical relation between action and reaction. He distinguishes between three possibilities: the reaction adapts itself to the action or it negates the action or else it contradicts the action. He also describes the inner structure of a human act as an *inner* causal nexus between a motivation and an intention. When two acts are combined like in the dramatic action-reaction pattern, their *outer* causal nexus can be analysed by means of the three logical relations.¹⁷

Freytag's and Zich's analytical tools can be combined with each other. Zich's typology of logical plot relations allows analysis of Classical, Realistic and even Modern dramatic constructions; Freytag's two types of hero-construction fit the Classical and the Realistic drama, and it can be applied to Modern drama's anti-hero, who, being put in the place of either the action-carrier or the reaction-carrier, remains completely inactive. The difference of such a case to Mukařovský's cutting off the reaction from the action consists in the fact that in the drama, the *topoi* (logically defined local points) of action and reaction are always present no matter how they are filled in by the dramatic agents. And, of course, the composition of a drama must differ from the classical Aristotelian type, when action and reaction follow Zich's first type, i.e. the adaptation of the reaction to the action.¹⁸

If action and reaction, understood as paired *topoi*, are always present in a drama, then their logical and aesthetical functions in the total structure are also always present. Their 'unifying tension', mentioned by Mukařovský, cannot be abolished in the theatre, as long as it stages a literary drama. We might use the term 'constructive principle', defined by the Russian Formalist Jurij Tynjanov, for the role of the dramatic plot.¹⁹ Such a principle coins all parts and moments of any work of art. The 'constructive principle' must not necessar-

17 These parts in Zich's book have found little or no echo among theorists of the Prague School. Even Emil Volek (2013), who points at Husserl's anti-psychological influence on Zich, takes no notice of Zich's logic of action.

18 Zich classifies the first case "the least intensive in dramatic effect" [co do dramatického účinku nejméně intenzivní] (ZICH 1986: 137). Shortly afterwards he says that a third person acting against the other two is needed to create dramatic tension. This contradicts the logical truth that a low degree of tension is still a tension. Especially in modern drama it can become very relevant. Veltruský diagnosed such shortcomings of Zich as 'simplifications' (*zjednodušení*) (VELTRUSKÝ 1994 [1981]: 16) in favour of realism.

19 Tynjanov (1977 [1924]) distinguishes between the constructive principle and the constructive factor. These terms should be considered in discussions about genres. Jiří Veltruský's verdict on the literary genre as "some sort of ideal form which undergoes no changes in time and is only embodied with greater or lesser perfection in specific works" could find support in Tynjanov's theory. By the way, the passage quoted from Veltruský (1977: 7) differs from the Czech version from 1942, where probably the censor, disliking the expression 'ideal form', allowed only the term '*nadčasovost*' (timeless validity) (VELTRUSKÝ 1942: 404).

ily be located on the lowest, material stratum, as the Russian Formalists and the Prague Structuralists had assumed. It can also be situated on the higher, more abstract stratum of the dramatic plot. Such an assumption contradicts Mukařovský's analytical method of the literary work of art, elaborated under the name of 'semantic gesture' (*sémantické gesto*). In his 1942 study "Drama jako básnické dílo" (Drama as a Poetic Work) Jiří Veltruský applied that method to the dramatic genre. Veltruský's study delivers most valuable tools for the analysis of the dramatic dialogue, but it is of little help with the analysis of the dramatic plot and composition. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that Veltruský never freed himself from the kind of dogma inherent in the notion and the method of the 'semantic gesture'. The 'gesture' rests on the assumption, that the poetic phenomena on the various strata of a work of art are coined by a 'dominant' always located on the lowest, material stratum. The 'gesture' thus generates the poetic structure from the bottom toward the top. The opposite way, from top toward bottom, is not taken into consideration.

Edmund Husserl's differentiation between '*einseitige Fundierung*' and '*wechselseitige Fundierung*' ('one-sided foundation', 'mutual foundation') allows us to characterize the 'semantic gesture' as a thinking only in terms of '*einseitige Fundierung*'. The '*wechselseitige Fundierung*' would perhaps have solved Veltruský's dilemma consisting in the impossibility of deriving the drama's upper stratum one-sidedly from the lower stratum.²⁰ The philosopher Oleg Sus once suggested that a work of art might have two 'dominants' (SUS 1996 [1968], 1981). As far as I know, this idea has never been discussed by the Czech Structuralists. Sus's suggestion would also need a discussion about the 'constructive principle' and the 'dominant'. The discussion could run in the following way: Aristotle's idea about the plot's function of defining the constitutive parts of the entire drama (beginning, middle, end), combined with Freytag's and Zich's discoveries of inner variants, represents the 'constructive principle' of the drama, whereas Mukařovský's and Veltruský's findings about the dialogue define the 'dominant' on the linguistic level. In *Drama as Literature*, Veltruský comes close to this view when he defines drama by two statements: First, drama is "the literature of dialogue as regards its language and of action as regards its plot. Between the two descriptions, the first is more pertinent. It points to the specific semantic construction which affects the entire structure of drama, including the plot and its concentration on action." The second statement reads: "[...] in drama the dialogue is merely the dominant of the language." (VELTRUSKÝ 1977: 85-6) The contradiction between the two statements testifies to Veltruský's unsolved dilemma.

20 Edmund Husserl discusses the different forms of foundation in his *Logische Untersuchungen*. The question is related to the problem of parts and wholes. Particularly important to literary studies (they are not discussed by Husserl) could be the so-called foundation by '*Stufenfolge*' (sequence of foundations from lower to higher parts) and the relative independence of the abstract parts (motives and themes in literature) from the material parts (HUSSERL 1992: 267ff).

Veltruský's attempt at reuniting drama and theatre

Veltruský's effort to reunite drama and theatre is much more motivated by his concern about the situation of the theatre than about the drama's situation. Drama as a literary genre does not need the theatre, but theatre without the drama is "distorted".²¹ This is a clear statement against Mukařovský's proposal to solve the crisis of the theatre by the definite separation of both arts, and likewise it is a rejection of Zich's opinion that the written drama is dependent on the theatrical performance.

The positions of Veltruský and Mukařovský are marked by different temporal horizons. Whereas Mukařovský sees the damages done to the theatre by the Avant-Garde, Veltruský looks back to the separation of theatre from drama, which already started in late nineteenth century. Otakar Zich was helpful insofar, as he reintegrated the written drama into the structure of the theatre, when other theorists promoted the exclusion of the drama. But Veltruský cannot accept Zich's way of reintegrating drama. His main point of dissent with Zich concerns the role of the dialogue.

I have the impression that in Zich's view, the dialogue, written by the author of the text, is not the lowest basis of the dramatic theatre; he rather locates that basis in the physical theatrical space. According to Zich, a single actor on stage can never constitute a dramatic theatre, at least two actors are necessary.²² Their bodies are centres of energetic forces in an energetic spatial field; their movements shape the field by dynamic parallel or contrasting lines. Zich's insistence in at least two actors on stage guarantees that the bipolar form of the spatial stratum reappears by the law of structural correspondence in the dialogue and in the plot. This explains why theatre has a stronger inclination toward the dramatic text than toward epics and lyrics, although in some periods lyrical or epical tendencies also prevail.

When Zich argues that the theatre brings aspects of the dramatic text afore which the written text cannot unfold, he apparently has the spatial form in mind, where, as mentioned, at least two actors have to be present. The actors' speech-acts are no full speech-acts, because the wording with its meaning belongs to the dramatic characters and not to the actors. Zich separates the physical speaking of the actors from the speaking of the dramatic characters. He is, of course, right in doing so, and Veltruský would not deny this. But Zich argues that the actors' physical acts of speaking create physical tensions (parallel to their bodily tensions), which are not inherent in the written dialogue. These additional tensions have a special impact on the spectator unknown to the reader of the dramatic text. Here lies Veltruský's fundamental dissent with Zich's aesthetics.

Zich's experimental aesthetics consists in isolating single elements from the structural whole in order to test their immediate effect on the spectator in theatre. The method is best visible in Zich's so-called pre-semiotic model of the actor. Zich distinguishes between the

21 Cf. (VELTRUSKÝ 1985: 15). For a summary of Veltruský's entire theory see his 1996 collection of material for a planned book. See also Jarmila Veltruský's reconstruction of the book edited in 2012.

22 This excludes the so-called monodrama with only a single actor from what Zich considers the true theatrical drama. For Veltruský, the monologue in a drama is a variant of the dialogue.

actor (*herec*), the actor's stage figure (*herecká postava*) and the dramatic character (*dramatická osoba*). These three aspects can be roughly compared to the material, the *signans*, and the *signatum* of a sign. Zich correlates these three factors with three effects on the spectator: the actor is perceived as a living person present in the same physical space as the spectator himself; the spectator interprets the actor's creation of the stage figure by means of costume, mime, gestures and pronouncement of words as a 'technical concept of meaning' (*technická významová představa*); he interprets the incarnated dramatic character as an 'image-like concept of meaning' (*významová představa obrazová*). Only in theatre can the first and second of these effects be produced. Zich calls them motoric reactions (*motorické reakce*). He insists that this kind of reactions, also called 'dramatic tension' (*dramatické napětí*), must not be confused with the tension aroused by expectation.²³ Thus, 'dramatic tension' means immediate bodily communication between stage actor(s) and audience in the sense of stimulus and response. This is supposed to be the aesthetic 'completion' added to the written text of a drama.

Neither the method of pairing isolated elements with isolated reactions from the recipient, nor the foundation of a work of art on immediate bodily effects in the sense of stimulus and response can be accepted by the Prague Structuralism. The aesthetics of this school continues Aristotle's 'aesthetics of distance', expressed by his catharsis theory. This well-known theory presupposes the recipient's survey over the entire work. During the process of perception the survey is enabled by logical and formal expectations, which during the course of perception find partial and at the end perfect fulfilling. The philosopher criticizes actors, who by overdoing their role-playing try to attract the audience's attention and applause. Because of this vulgar contact between actors and audience Aristotle preferred reading the drama to watching the theatre.²⁴

I leave Veltruský's obvious aesthetical 'Aristotelism' aside and concentrate on two poetical aspects instead. One of them concerns the losses of the theatre caused by its separation from the written drama, the other one is connected with Veltruský's original analysis of the so-called main text (*Haupttext*) and side-text (*Nebentext*) in the drama.

The theatre's losses are losses in intellectual capacities and artistic refinement. The system of language is intellectually superior to all other sign systems. Thanks to the age-old symbiosis of drama and theatre, all non-literary arts used in the theatre have become intellectualized too, so that they can take over functions of the verbal sign. There exists a very fine study of Mukařovský's early years, wherein he analyses the condition, under which the gesture, put in the dominant position, can take over functions of the verbal sign. The study, entitled "Pokus o rozbor hereckého zjevu: Chaplin ve Světlech velkoměsta" (Chaplin in *City Lights*. An Attempt at an Analysis of Actors Appearance 1931; Czech vers. 1931,

23 Cf. (ZICH 1986: 40). Tension evoked by logical and compositional action-reaction patterns on the levels of dialogue or plot is thus excluded from Zich's materialist concept of 'dramatic tension'. On the other hand, he acknowledges the specific tensions belonging to dialogue and plot.

24 Cf. (ARISTOTLE 1979: 29, 107). On 109 he says the tragedy "brings forth its effects even without the actors' mime and pantomime. [...] Reading manifests already the qualities inherent in the tragedy". (Transl. HS)

Engl. transl. 1978), is on the actor in silent film, but holds also for the theatrical actor. The condition enabling the dominance of non-verbal signs is the total suppression of the verbal sign: “the word which is most capable of influencing gestures must be suppressed if the gestures are to be the dominant component”²⁵ (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1978: 173-4). Veltruský would certainly subscribe to Mukařovský’s analysis. In addition to its general intellectual capacities the verbal sign also transposes its poetic refinements onto the art of the actor. Veltruský elaborates these aspects meticulously in several studies.²⁶ Thus, the symbiosis between drama and theatre has especially improved the art of acting.

The question of the relation between the main text and the side-text has been discussed by many theorists.²⁷ Veltruský’s original contribution is the category of the subject. He distinguishes between the author’s central subject of the entire work and the subjects of the dramatic characters, who are only parts of the work. From-out the central subject’s all-embracing perspective the two different kinds of text, main text and side-text, are constantly correlated with each other. The reader is invited to share the central perspective. This allows him to follow the unfolding of the drama in all phases and on all strata from the distance required by Aristotle’s catharsis. Linguistically speaking one could call the relation between author and reader a monologue. But this term is not quite adequate, because the dramatic author (always to be understood as the work’s central subject) cannot directly address the reader. The true relation is rather an act of showing on the side of the author and an act of looking on the side of the reader.

Veltruský derives two types of drama from the variable relation between the central author’s subject and the subjects of the dramatic characters. In one of the types the subject of the author comes more to the fore, in the other type he remains hidden behind the subjects of the dramatic characters. Such a typology is very useful in the analysis of all sorts of dramatic texts.²⁸ In the discussion with Otakar Zich’s thesis about the incompleteness of the literary drama and its dependence on the theatre, Veltruský insists that it is the correlation between main text and side-text that renders the literary drama independent from the theatre. The dependence exists on the other side: theatre without the literary drama must decline intellectually and aesthetically.

25 Orig.: “Slovo, které je nejvíce s to, aby ovlivňovalo gesta, musí být úplně potlačeno, mají-li se gesta uplatnit jako složka dominující.”

26 See among others (VELTRUSKÝ 1994 [1941-1976]), where he describes the structural effects of single verbal elements like rhythm, intonation etc. in the dominant position. The cipher 1941 indicates probably the continuation of this study with “Drama jako básnické dílo”, published in 1942 but finished in 1941.

27 Roman Ingarden (1931) has coined the terms *Haupttext* and *Nebentext* nowadays established in drama and theatre theory. More recently Manfred Pfister (1988) has taken up this issue.

28 The typology has already been developed by Veltruský (1942). I tried to apply Veltruský’s typology to texts from different ages and in different languages (SCHMID 1992).

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Summary

The article deals with Jiří Veltruský's ideas about the relation between the literary drama and the theatre. Veltruský speaks in favour of a reunion between both art kinds, whose theoretical and institutional separation began in the late nineteenth century. Arguing that the theatre suffers intellectually and aesthetically from the separation Veltruský refers to Jan Mukařovský's studies on the dialogue. His main opponent is Otakar Zich, who considered the written drama a mere component of the theatre. The article shows also that in Zich's and Gustav Freytag's theories one can find logical and poetical models of the dramatic plot valuable until today, yet neglected by the Prague School and by Veltruský too.

Keywords

drama as a literary genre, logical structures of the dramatic plot, problems of the dominant theory, reunion of drama and theatre, Veltruský's two types of the literary drama

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