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Ondřej Sládek

Jan Mukařovský and Theatre¹

If we consult various specialized publications, dictionaries and encyclopaedias in search of articles and profiles dealing with the life and work of Jan Mukařovský (1891-1975), we find that he is mostly presented as a prominent Czech aesthetician, literary theorist and critic. As a member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, the author of numerous studies from the field of structural poetics, aesthetics and semiotics of art that played a crucial role in the formation and shaping of Czech Structuralism in the 1930s and 1940s. Some dictionary entries also mention his pedagogical activities at colleges and his work for a peace movement, but also his public renunciation of Structuralism which he made in the early 1950s – under the pressure of the Stalinist rule of the country.

All of the above is true. However, it is a kind of paradox that the very first articles published by Mukařovský were not devoted to literature, as one would expect, but to theatre.

(I) From Theatre Criticism to the Theory of Theatre

These works comprise theatre critiques of several folk performances organized in the 1920s by the Theatre Division of 'Osvětový svaz' (Public Education Organization) in Plzeň, where Mukařovský lived and taught at a grammar school at that time. He published his reviews in an information bulletin of the aforementioned Theatre Division called *Umění všem* (Art for Everyone). For instance, he wrote about performances and plays by J. Vrchlický, V. Dyk,

1 This study is a part of the project *Jan Mukařovský: life, works, reception* (No. P406/10/1911), supported by Czech Science Foundation.

J. K. Tyl, M. A. Šimáček, A. Jirásek and others. He also published articles on the National Theatre and the opinions of Jan Neruda on theatre criticism. In the years 1917–1920, he published nine separate articles of this kind – theatre critiques. It was only in 1921 that he published his first study from the field of literary theory and criticism – a review of a high-school textbook of poetics (cf. MACEK 1982: 838). From that time on, poetics, aesthetics and later also comparative semiotics of art played a central role in his scholarly interests. This, nevertheless, does not mean that he lost interest in theatre and the issues following from the approach to dramatic art as a separate and self-contained form of art. Rather the opposite is true: he deepened and transformed his interest, which was previously only reflected in theatre critiques, into a systematic work: into theoretical contemplations about theatre and dramatic art that found expression within his broadly-based aesthetic research.

The majority of Mukařovský's theoretical works on theatre, its essence and structure, on the nature and relations of its individual components were published in the years 1937–1948. According to some interpretations, this period was the peak of his scientific (i.e. Structuralist) work. It represents an entirely new, qualitatively different phase in the development of the study of art, a phase in which his dialectical principle of thought and orientation towards the question of meaning and purpose of art fully developed. A great number of theatrologists comment on and refer to Mukařovský's studies on theatre and dramatic art specifically from this period.

Now, a comment needs to be made here: if we are to provide a truly critical and unbiased evaluation of the work and scientific development of Jan Mukařovský, we are bound to perceive it in its entirety. That means to approach it as an indivisible unity, even though we may identify various developmental and perhaps even contradictory phases and tendencies within it. This should be primarily the role of broadly-based comparative and contextual research. And that is also the approach applied by me in this paper.

Thus, if there are many scholars who are concerned with Mukařovský's Structuralism only from the peak period mentioned above (in the case of theatre, i.e. 1937–1948), it is of course possible, but one needs to be aware of the fact that such a perspective is, to a certain degree, limited. Above all, what is lost is the developmental aspect – the perspective of change, continuity and discontinuity of Jan Mukařovský's scientific thought, which is, especially in his case, hugely important. In this respect, we should also emphasize that Mukařovský was not only a regular theatregoer all his life (attending theatre performances was even an organized group event for members of the Prague Linguistic Circle), but also had several lifelong friends among playwrights, theatre actors and directors (e.g. J. Honzl, E. F. Burian, J. Frejka and others). In addition, the Aesthetics Seminar led by him in the 1950s at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague was attended by a number of students – later prominent figures of our scientific and artistic (in particular literary and theatre) life: F. Černý, O. Krejča, M. Kundera, R. Lukavský, A. Sychra and others.

Even though his articles on theatre, particular theatre performances, theatre theorists (esp. on J. Honzl) and dramatists (esp. on V. Vančura) that were published in the fifties and sixties do not have such a broad theoretical scope as his older studies, they are still interesting and inspiring in many ways. If for nothing else but the fact that in those works Mukařovský returns to some of the topics he had dealt with previously or expresses opinions that he would most probably not have written on other occasions.

The entire collection of texts dealing with theatre and dramatic art wrote and published by Mukařovský in the years 1917–1971² can be classified according to their theme and genre into six main types:

- a) Literary-aesthetic criticism of specialized works on drama and dramatic art
- b) Theatre criticism
- c) Articles on plays and dramatists
- d) Theoretical and overview studies
- e) Lectures
- f) Various – dealing with theatre and dramatic art

The above typology is not hierarchically arranged and does not intend to be an evaluation. The order of individual types is motivated to a certain degree by an attempt to take into account the historical (developmental) perspective, but it is primarily driven by the logic and pragmatics of my exposition.

(II) Types of Publications, Contexts and Links

In this section I will deal with individual types of work in more detail. My aim here is not to provide a complete and exhaustive account of Mukařovský's studies on theatre, but rather to identify their most important characteristics, mutual relations, the circumstances in which they were produced and the broader context. I also take into account the fact that Mukařovský's theoretical papers on theatre are well known and have been subject to a great deal of critical assessment and interpretation. Thus, I will – paradoxically – mention them only briefly.

Ad a) Literary-aesthetic criticism of specialized works on drama and dramatic art

I mean specifically Mukařovský's review of *Estetika dramatického umění* (Aesthetics of the Dramatic Art) (ZICH 1931) by Otakar Zich, which was published in June 1933 in *Časopis pro moderní filologii* (Journal of Modern Philology; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1933). We should be

² In 1917, Jan Mukařovský published his very first article – theatre critique; in 1971 he published his very last Czech work published during his life – an interview made with theatrologists Miroslav Kouřil and Miroslav Kačer (cf. MACEK 1982: 838, 877).

reminded that Otakar Zich, professor of aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, and Jan Mukařovský knew each other personally, at least from the autumn of 1928. Jan Mukařovský contacted Otakar Zich and asked him to start his habilitation procedure. The committee set up for this purpose was composed of the professors Z. Nejedlý, M. Weingart and O. Zich. However, it is highly probable that they had met much earlier. It is nevertheless not true that Mukařovský was Zich's direct student, as some researchers incorrectly believe. If he was his pupil, then only indirectly, since there is not a single record of Zich's name and the names of his seminars in Mukařovský's student record book and the reports of the exams taken by him.

Zich's name, on the other hand, appears in a notebook from the meeting of the Prague Linguistic Circle which took place on 17 January 1933 and where Zich presented his lecture on the tempo of poetic language (cf. ČERMÁK, POETA and ČERMÁK 2012: 131). It shows that Zich shared a number of views in common with the Circle. This is, for that matter, already confirmed by Mukařovský in his review of Zich's *Aesthetics of the Dramatic Arts* (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1933). What Mukařovský especially appreciates is his concept of the semiotics of drama and his holistic approach to dramatic art. He also takes note of some of his older works from the field of poetics and aesthetics, and in the final part of his text explicitly states Zich's ideas that are fully in line with functional linguistics promoted by the Circle. This concerned in particular the semiotic character of even the most individual verbal responses on the stage and the confrontation of dialogue in drama and in epic (cf. MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1933: 326).

Zich's influence on Mukařovský was considerable, but its main domain was terminology. Mukařovský adopted and applied a number of terms introduced by Zich in his *Aesthetics* (e.g. character, stage figure, dramatic, stage space, etc.). In other articles of his concerned with Zich, Mukařovský later pointed out that it was Zich who cleared originally psychological terms (e.g. idea) of their psychological layer and treated them as objective, super-individual facts – i.e. in the spirit of semiotics that was just emerging on the scene (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2000g).

Ad b) Theatre criticism

I have already mentioned Mukařovský-the theatre critic and his first texts. Even though these were limited exclusively to reviews of particular theatre performances, Mukařovský was never in the habit of providing just a description and evaluation of the stage presentation. He always aimed at a broader analysis of the drama from the perspective of its organization on the level of text and meaning.

Ad c) Articles on plays and dramatists

This is an entire collection of works published by Mukařovský after WWII, or more specifically, in the 1950s and 1960s. The centre of his attention was at that time occupied by Vladislav Vančura and his dramatic work. It is perfectly understandable, as they were very good and close friends for many years. Mukařovský is the author of several texts on the premiers of Vančura's plays (e.g. *Pražský žid* [The Jew of Prague], *Josefina* [Josephine]), but also of the epilogue in the published play *Jezero Ukereve* (Lake Ukerewe) (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1958). He also wrote an extensive treatise "O Vančurovi – dramatikovi" (On Vančura – the Playwright; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1959), which became part of a publication containing the entire dramatic work of Vančura (VANČURA 1959). In addition to the group of studies on Vančura, Mukařovský's publications of this type also include his article on F. X. Šalda and his approach to dramatic art (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1947). The role adopted by Mukařovský in all these studies is not that of a theatre theorist and critic, as we might expect, given the character of the material in question (e.g. the relation between drama and reality, structure and dynamics of dialogue in dramatic works of V. Vančura etc.), but that of a literary critic and historian. He always strove to arrive at a comprehensive characteristic of Vančura's dramatic work and a clarification of internal connections between his dramatic and prosaic production.

Ad d) Theoretical and overview studies

For the purposes of clarity, this group of Mukařovský's texts dealing with theatre can be divided into two separate parts. The first is formed by texts that belong to the so-called golden treasury of scholarly works of Jan Mukařovský. These are Mukařovský's studies on theatre and dramatic art that are most often commented on, cited and translated and also included in several anthologies and collections from his extensive work. The second part of this group is reserved for studies that are not as well known as the first group, but are nonetheless interesting and inspiring in their own right. There is a slight imbalance between the two groups in terms of numbers. While the first one comprises approximately ten studies (even though it depends on the perspective and selection criteria applied), the second consists of approximately six studies.

(1)

There is a vast body of writings reflecting the critical reception of Mukařovský's works on theatre and interpretation of his views. It demonstrates that his work has been a continuous source of inspiration and that there is also the lingering need to come to terms with his

work again and again. In our country, a range of ‘new’ readings of his texts can be attributed mainly to F. Černý, M. Procházka, M. Kačer, P. Pavlovský, I. Osolsobě, O. Sus, J. Veltruský and others. I will therefore touch upon the main theoretical works of Jan Mukařovský and his contribution to theatre studies, the theory and semiotics of theatre only briefly.

One of the first works in which Mukařovský turned his attention to theatre was a study named “K jevištnímu dialogu” (On Stage Dialogue). It was published in March 1937 in the journal of the ‘D’ Theatre of E. F. Burian, which was launched in the said year under the title of *Programme D 37*. In this study, Mukařovský considers dialogue as the unifying force of all components forming theatre. He paid special attention to the difference between dialogue in ordinary speech and dialogue in theatre. He sees dialogue as a continuous play of twists of meaning (cf. MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2000b: 409). It is evident that Mukařovský still follows in this study in the footsteps of the theoretical research of dramatic art undertaken by Zich.

He elaborates on his views in several of his other studies and lectures. One of them was, for instance, already delivered in May 1937 at an international conference of Avant-Garde theatre practitioners in Prague, during which the International Bureau for Avant-Garde Theatre was established. What I have in mind here is the paper “Jevištní řeč v avantgardním divadle” (Stage Speech in Avant-Garde Theatre) in which Mukařovský, in contrast, argues that in the new (avant-garde) theatre, each component maintains its autonomy. All components of theatre structure thus have an equal position and are equally important. Therefore, dialogue, i.e. constantly interrupted stage speech “jumping from person to person, gushing once and again from an extralinguistic situation” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2000c: 412-3), cannot be superior to all the other components.

Probably the most systematic and well-arranged work on theatre written by Mukařovský is the study “K dnešnímu stavu teorie divadla” (On the Current State of the Theory of Theatre). It is a paper delivered at a meeting of the Circle of Friends of D 41 – in 1941. Here Mukařovský provided a very exact characterization of theatre as a complex structure, as a set of components that can constantly change their position and create very diverse connections and tensions (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2000a: 397; cf. MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1978: 208). And it is a changing “flux of immaterial relations which constantly regroup” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1978: 210) that he sees as the essence of theatre.

Another significant study dealing with theatre is Mukařovský’s paper published in 1946 in the volume *Otázky divadla a filmu* (Issues of Theatre and Film, 1946) – “K umělecké situaci dnešního českého divadla” (On the Artistic Situation of Contemporary Czech Theatre) (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2000d). It provides a detailed description of contemporary theatrical structure, which is, in Mukařovský’s, opinion in crisis. The structure of stage work has, in his eyes, disintegrated, with individual components falling apart. The main task and aim of theatre should therefore be restoration of the lost unity of the components, and thereby also restoration of the structure as a whole. At the same time, he also calls for seeking and building of a new relationship between an individual and society. The reason

for this is obvious: it was the wide-ranging cultural and political transformation of Czech (Czechoslovak) society which was expected with suspense and great hope and which culminated in February 1948 when Communists seized power in our country. While some friends of Mukařovský did not place much trust in this historical and political development, Mukařovský decided to advocate it.

In addition to the texts mentioned above, this peak period of Jan Mukařovský's work is also represented by the study from 1948 - "D 34-48 ve vývoji českého divadla" (D 34-48 in the Development of Czech Theatre; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1966a) and several other works thematizing in particular the issues of monologue and dialogue, composition of dramatic dialogue in terms of sound and meaning, but also the theory and art of recitation (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1971, 2000e, 2000f, 2001).

(2)

It should be said that the neglected theoretical and overview works forming the core of this second part are often substantially affected by the ideological jargon of Marxism-Leninism. However, the question is: To what extent are these works actually disqualified? If we take the trouble and carry out a thorough analysis thereof, we discover that the layer of terminological and ideological padding is hiding a core which is firm and may well be used. But this group also contains texts in which any traces of ideology would be hard to find. One such work is a study written by Mukařovský in English "Shakespeare and Czech Theatrical Criticism" (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1966b).

However, there are also other works, mainly from the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which Mukařovský was concerned with language and voice culture, the art of conversation, the issues of gestures and facial gestures, etc. These were, however, mostly publications of his older articles and radio lectures from the 1940s.

I will now focus more closely on the study "Jindřich Honzl jako teoretik divadla" (Jindřich Honzl as a Theorist of Theatre), which was published in 1957 in the journal *Divadlo* (Theatre; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1957). In the introduction, Mukařovský recalls the publication of an extensive anthology from the scholarly work of Jindřich Honzl - *K novému významu umění* (On the New Meaning of Art; HONZL 1956), which served for him as a stimulus to undertake a critical survey of Honzl's work not only from the perspective of what is permanent and substantial, but also from the point of view of his own artistic and scientific development. Honzl and Mukařovský knew each other already from the 1920s. They were very close, not only in their ideas on art, its main tasks and orientation, but partly also in their life history after 1948, when they both, under the pressure of the time, published their public self-critical statements. This personal relationship of theirs is naturally also reflected in the article mentioned above in which Mukařovský analysed, interpreted and advocated Honzl's work with remarkable accuracy and deep understanding.

He is concerned with his artistic and scientific principles, the conception of theatre, his relation to realism, surrealism, and formalism and he also mentions this work after WWII, especially in his Studio of the National Theatre. Mukařovský applies a strictly dialectic approach in his interpretation: he points out his opinions and basic aims of his work as a director which partly overlapped with the aims and intentions of Russian Formalists, he even provides a very accurate description and analysis thereof, but he quickly continues – mainly to make sure that he does not depict Honzl as a formalist – to show that Honzl’s approach was progressive and different: he is said to have been fully aware all the time that the revolutionary nature of art needs to be not only artistic, but also political (his continuous interest was struggle for socialism).

The entire article is marked by Mukařovský’s effort to demonstrate a remarkable unity of Honzl’s work; that even though after WWII “he started his inner struggle for a consistent transformation of his artistic views in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1957: 730), he did not abandon most of his original standpoints. Although one can find certain contradictions in his theoretical and artistic practice, they were never such as to obscure the uniform line and purposeful orientation of his work. “And it was exactly because,” Mukařovský writes in his study, “Honzl managed to keep the deep tendencies of his artistic practice and theoretical work intact, his position in the history of Czech culture assumed special importance.” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1957: 731)

This remark about the unbroken continuity of Honzl’s work made by Mukařovský is quite significant. It also appears in Mukařovský’s other texts on Honzl, for instance, in the article “V zdánlivé zátíší samoty” (In the Apparent Retreat of Solitude; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1965), published as part of memoirs on Czech theatre and theatre practitioners from the period of WWII called *Theater – Divadlo* (Theater – Theatre), prepared by František Černý. Mukařovský wrote here about Honzl: “The work undertaken by [...] after the war was a direct continuation of the effort devoted by him during occupation in the apparent retreat of his study. And it was at the same time the climax of his lifelong endeavour. There are only few artists who are able to remain so steadfastly loyal to the path taken in their youth. Honzl managed this.” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1965: 53) The last two sentences cited are crucial. On the one hand, we can see it as Mukařovský’s warm tribute to his friend, and on the other hand, as a deep sigh concealing all too much of inner traumas and pain of his own life.

This brings us to the question of self-criticism, which is definitely very interesting, but I will touch upon it only lightly. In his extensive article on Honzl, Mukařovský also deals with his self-critical paper from 1948 “K situaci divadelního umění” (On the Situation of Dramatic Art; HONZL 1948). Mukařovský explains Honzl’s motivation behind the writing of the piece as not wanting to renounce his past, but merely to point out certain hidden mistakes that simply happened. Nonetheless, his evaluation of Honzl’s statement was, on the whole, disapproving: “One can hardly object to Honzl’s ‘generational’ self-criticism,” writes Mukařovský, “much else than its being too strict” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1957: 742).

A note on Mukařovský's own self-critical statement should be made here. In the archive fund of Jan Mukařovský, deposited in the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague, there are several letters written by Honzl and addressed to Jan Mukařovský. Among them, one dated 27 November 1951. It should be noted that Mukařovský published his article "Ke kritice strukturalismu v naší literární vědě" (On Critique of Structuralism in our Literary Theory and Criticism) in the weekly *Tvorba* (Creations) in early October 1951 (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1951). Honzl addresses Mukařovský in the letter "Drahý soudruhu" (Dear comrade), and sends his late congratulations on his sixtieth birthday. He is late with his congratulation since he has been staying in a sanatorium and is not in good health. There is a sentence worth closer attention in the letter. Honzl writes: "It wasn't good – I realized it from your article in *Tvorba* – but nothing could have been changed anymore" (HONZL 1951). It is most probably Mukařovský's self-criticism that Honzl is referring to. We need to ask what exactly does he mean by this "it wasn't good"? Whether it was his article on the relationship between Mukařovský and Vančura, which Honzl tried to write about during this time and which he briefly mentioned before this sentence in the letter, or Mukařovský's public renunciation of his own Structuralist past, here the article itself? Or it was the general situation and the pressure that Mukařovský most probably had to face and to which he finally yielded?

The story of the relationship of Jan Mukařovský and Jindřich Honzl, which we can follow on the basis of their correspondence and studies written by Mukařovský on the life and work of his friend, has an intriguing epilogue. Its main protagonist is Jan Honzl, the son of Jindřich Honzl, who wrote to Jan Mukařovský, in response to the publication of his study "Jindřich Honzl as a Theorist of Theatre" in the *Divadlo* journal in 1957 (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1957) the following letter. I will quote the whole text:

Dear Professor,

Let me take this chance to send you and your family best wishes for the coming new year. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank you for your excellent article on my father in the *Divadlo* journal. I keep a close eye on all articles and written material concerning my father. Your paper has been the most comprehensive of all of them and has rendered a fitting characterization of my father's artistic and theoretical thinking. To me personally, the paper was most pleasing in that it emphasized those issues and aspects of his work that he himself considered most important and paid most attention to. This paper of yours has also done a lot for preventing some misunderstandings and false interpretations, for instance as far as my father's attitude to Realism is concerned.

Thank you very much, dear Professor, for the care that you have dedicated to the memory of my father, both for me and my mother.

Most respectfully yours,

J. Honzl

(HONZL 1958)

Jan Honzl thus attests to the significance of this, nowadays little known and cited, article by Mukařovský.

That much for a short note on the margin, so to speak. Now, let us return to the main topic of the paper.

To sum up the findings on the types of Mukařovský's work on theatre under discussion: Jan Mukařovský is the author of numerous theoretical and overview works on theatre and dramatic art, but only a part of it is widely known and commented on. This gives rise to the impression that Mukařovský dealt with theatre in bursts only, producing in fact only the occasional text. However, the opposite is true: published studies are just a fragment of his actual, systematic work developed in the field of study of dramatic art and aesthetics of drama. This is clearly evidenced by his lectures delivered by him in the 1930s and also in the 1940s at the universities in Bratislava and Prague.

Ad e) Lectures

The very first university courses led by Mukařovský on theatre and drama appeared already in the third year of his engagement at Komenský University in Bratislava. In the winter and summer semesters of 1932/1933 he offered the first seminar on the aesthetics of drama and film. In was only in the summer semester of 1934 that he gave a separate lecture “Vybrané kapitoly z estetiky dramatu” (Selected Chapters from the Aesthetics of Drama) in Bratislava. He taught a separate course on drama in Prague at the Faculty of Arts first over the academic year 1937/1938 (winter, summer). It was a lecture called “Estetika dramatu a filmu I, II” (Aesthetics of Drama and Film I, II; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 2008). Besides this he taught a seminar in Prague devoted to the basic issues of the relationship between drama and fine arts (winter 1937). And we could continue in this enumeration. I will only mention two of his lectures whose texts were preserved; one from the year 1945/1946 “Teorie jevištního přednesu” (The Theory of Stage Diction), the other from the winter 1946/1947 “Zvuková a významová výstavba dramatického dialogu” (Phonetic and Semantic Structure of Dialogue in Drama; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1971). Mukařovský follows in his older, predominantly theoretical works from the late 1930s, focuses on the issue of systematic cultivation of voice culture (especially for the stage), the relationship between voice and actor's acting, voice and gesture, etc.

Apart from the university courses that I was primarily concerned with, Mukařovský also gave a number of public and radio lectures. I will leave them aside for the moment.

Ad f) Various – dealing with theatre and dramatic art

This is a group of texts published by Mukařovský on various topics on different occasions from the 1950s to 1970s. This includes shorter newspaper articles (on the National Theatre, on Honzl's Studio of the National Theatre, etc.), memoirs (esp. on V. Vančura and J. Honzl), survey answers (the most remarkable performance of the season) etc.

(III) Conclusion

If we record the dates of the start of Jan Mukařovský's individual university courses on a time line and add the dates when his first works on theatre were written, we will get interesting data.

- 1) The years 1917–1920 are a period in which Mukařovský profiled mainly as a theatre critic.
- 2) He paid more systematic attention to the issues of theatre, drama and film from the beginning of the 1930s. He understood the study of drama and dramatic art as an inseparable part of aesthetic studies. When he opened his seminar on the aesthetics of drama and film in Bratislava, he was intensively dealing with Zich's *The Aesthetics of the Dramatic Arts*, which was the subject of his review published in 1933.
- 3) In the mid-1930s, he published a number of significant works from the field of poetics, aesthetics and semiotics of art. In March 1937, he published his study "On Stage Dialogue"; in May he took part in an international conference of Avant-Garde theatre practitioners. In the autumn of that year (winter semester) he gave a separate lecture on the aesthetics of drama in Prague. It is evident that Mukařovský was becoming ever more focused on the issues of dialogue and monologue, stage speech and artistic recitation. It is also evidenced by the setting up of a group for the study of the acoustic aspect of stage speech with the orthoepic committee of the Prague Linguistic Circle, which worked closely with theatre artists: actors as well as directors. Mukařovský also mentioned the creation of this group in an interview for the weekly *Čin* (Action; May 1937; MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1937). He was writing and lecturing on the theory of stage speech, the art of recitation, on language and voice culture with greater or lesser intensity – but practically without interruption – until 1948. This also forms the actual core of his works on theatre.
- 4) 1950s and 60s: mainly texts on an occasional basis, but also extensive critical and theoretical works on V. Vančura and J. Honzl. The position of Mukařovský's study on Shakespeare and Czech Theatrical Criticism from 1966 is somewhat peculiar. It was clearly a solicited piece of work.

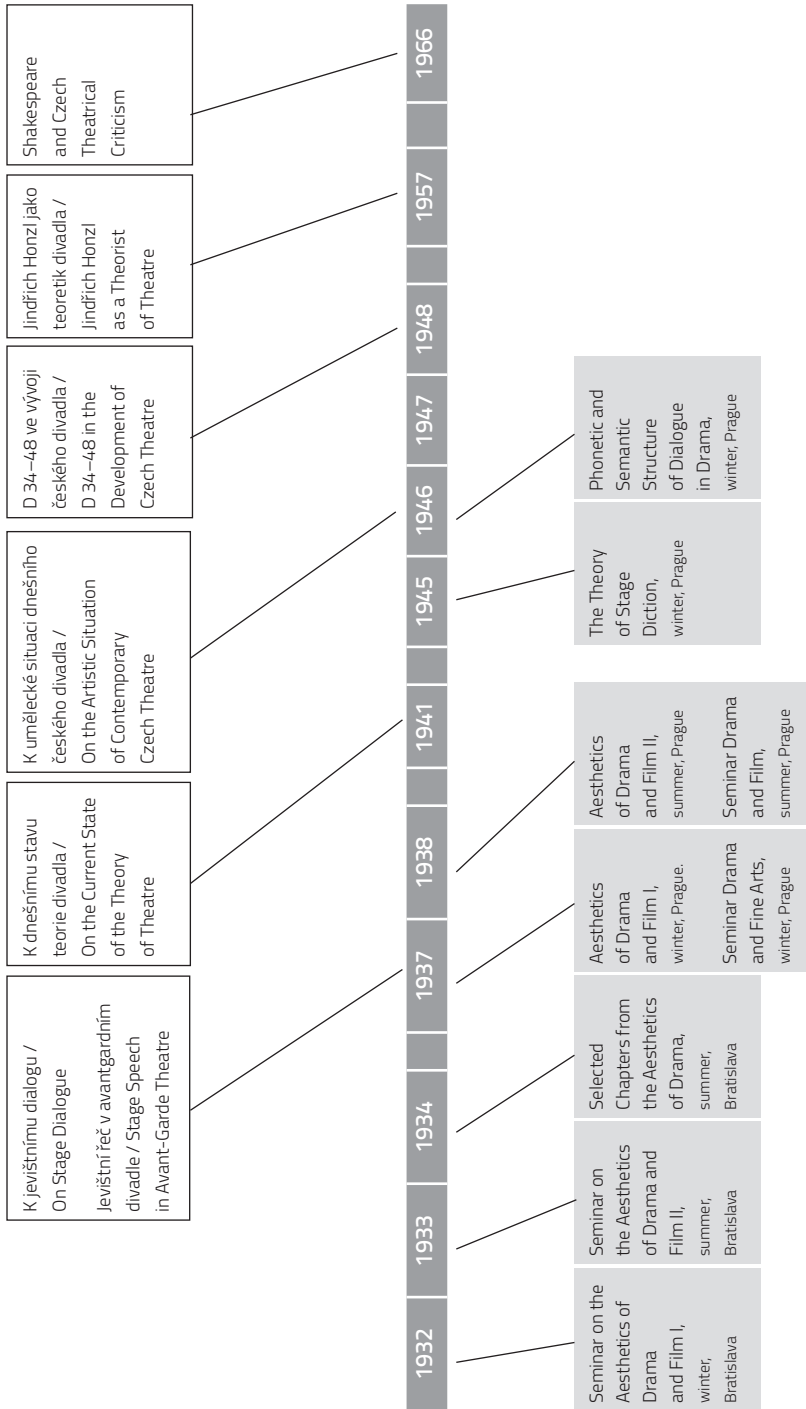


Table: Timeline of Jan Mukařovský's studies and seminars on theatre and dramatic art

These are only a few concrete conclusions on Jan Mukařovský's relationship to theatre and dramatic art. We need to emphasize the following two facts at least. First: Mukařovský's interest in theatre and stage speech was always an integral part of his research into poetics, aesthetics and semiotics of art. Second: despite several internal contradictions, his *scientific orientation* is in principle *continuous*. Mukařovský did not, in principle, change anything as regards his views on stage speech, dialogue, monologue, individual components of dramatic structure, etc. after 1951 when he publicly renounced Structuralism. He did adjust his views in the spirit of the ideology and terminology of the time, but there were still several crucial theoretical and methodological rules present in his thought that he never abandoned. This may be easily traced in his published works on theatre and dramatic art.

However, apart from the published texts, there is also a great deal of unpublished materials – his excerpts, notes (e.g. on the dictionary of theatre), but also correspondence, that testify to this and are equally significant in this respect.

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Summary

Jan Mukařovský (1891–1975) has played a prominent and unique role in the history of Czech Structuralism. He is the author of numerous theoretical and overview works on theatre and dramatic art, but only a part of it is widely known and commented on. This gives rise to the impression that Mukařovský dealt with theatre in bursts only, in fact producing only the occasional text. However, the opposite is true: published studies are just a fragment of his actual, systematic work developed in the field of study of dramatic art and aesthetics of drama. The entire collection of Mukařovský's texts dealing with theatre and dramatic art can be classified into six main types according to their theme and genre: 1) Literary-aesthetic criticism of specialized works on drama and dramatic art, 2) Theatre criticism, 3) Articles on plays and dramatists, 4) Theoretical and overview studies, 5) Lectures, 6) Various – dealing with theatre and dramatic art. The main aim of this study is not to provide a complete and exhaustive account of Mukařovský's studies on theatre and dramatic art, but rather to identify their most important characteristics, mutual relations, the circumstances in which they were produced and the broader context. The author of the study argues that a) Mukařovský's interest in theatre and stage speech was always an integral part of his research into poetics, aesthetics and semiotics of art, and b) despite several internal contradictions, his *scientific orientation* is in principle *continuous*.

Keywords

Jan Mukařovský, Czech Structuralism, theatre, drama, theory of theatre, literary-aesthetic criticism

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