Structuralism in Theatre:

The Prague School Contribution

by František Deák

Between 1928 and 1948 in Czechoslovakia, a prolific group of linguists and theoreticians of literature, theatre and music, known as the Prague school, worked out the first systematic structuralist-semiotic approach to the study of art. (The semiotics of art—the study of art as a system of signs—was actually established by Jan Mukařovský's programmatic statement "Art as a Semiotic Fact" at the Eighth International Congress of Philosophy in Prague in 1934.) Concentrating primarily on the problems of poetry and literature, structuralists gradually expanded their interest to include theatre, film, visual arts, and music as well as the problems of general theory and esthetics.

Structuralist theatre studies translated into English include: two studies by Petr Bogatyrev, "Semiotics in the Folk Theatre" and "Forms and Functions of Folk Theatre"; two studies by Jindřich Honzl "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theatre" and "The Hierarchy of Dramatic Devices"; three studies by Jiři Veltruský "Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre," "Basic Features of Dramatic Dialogue," and "Construction of Semantic Contexts"; and one study by Karel Brušák "Signs in the Chinese Theatre." All of these studies are included in *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions*, edited by Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik, MIT Press (1976). Another essay by Jiři Veltruský, "Man and Object in Theatre," was published in *A Prague School Reader*

on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style, selected and translated by Paul L. Garvin, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C. (1964). All the translated studies are from 1938–1943 and are fully representative of Czechoslovakian structuralism in theatre.

Between 1945 and 1948 several book length studies appeared. Antonín Dvořak's *Dialectické Rozpory v Divadle* (1946) (*The Dialectic Contradictions in Theatre*), Jaroslav Pokorný's *Složky Divadelního Výrazu* (1946) (*The Components of Theatre*) and Peter Karvaš' *Úvod do Základných Problémov Divadla* (1948) (*Introduction to the Basic Problems of Theatre*). Only the last one seems to break some new ground by incorporating the sociological and structuralist approach. In 1960, there was in Czechoslovakia a renewed interest in structuralism, but in theatre only a recapitulative study by Zoltán Rampák, "Structuralizmus a Divadlo" ("Structuralism and Theatre," *Slovenské Divadlo* XV, 4, 1967) appeared.

Before dealing with the particular contribution of Czech structuralism to the theory of theatre, the definition, sources, and terminology of structuralism in general will be briefly discussed.

According to Jozef Hrabák's definition, "Structuralism is neither a theory nor a method; it is an epistemological point of view. It starts out from the observation that every concept in a given system is determined by all other concepts of that system and has no significance by itself alone; it does not become unequivocal until it is integrated into the system, the structure, of which it forms part and in which it has a definite fixed place. . . . For the structuralists, there is an interrelation between the data (facts) and the philosophic assumptions, not a unilateral dependence. From this it follows that there is no search for the one and only right method; on the contrary, new material usually also entails a change in scientific procedure. Just as no concept is unequivocal; this is why the structuralist attempts to integrate the facts into the kind of relationship in which their unequivocality, as well as their superordination and subordination, can come to fore. In one work, the entire structure is more than a mechanical summary of the properties of its components since it gives rise to new qualities."

Jan Mukařovsky in "Structuralism in Esthetic and Literary Science" gives the following as the most important antecedents of structuralism: in the field of esthetics, the influence of the Czech followers of the Herbartian esthetic (concentration on the formal structure and the use of the empirical method); in philosophy, Hegel's understanding of the inner contradictions of the structure, Husserl's phenomenology, and Bühler's language theories; in the theory of literature the main influence was that of the Russian Formalistic School; and in the field of linguistics there were the works of A. Meillet, A. Marty, V. Mathesius and F. de Saussure. Mukařovský includes in the theoretical background pronouncements of artists beginning in poetry with the Symbolists, in painting with the Impressionists, and in architecture with the Functionalists.

Two factors played an important role concerning structuralism in theatre: 1) the coexistence of a strong traditional repertory theatre with an active and diversified avant-garde theatre movement supplied an abundance of material—Futurism, Surrealism, as well as the Russian Revolutionary theatre were well-known and highly influential—and was an inspiration to theoreticians; 2) the establishment of theory and esthetics of theatre as an independent field of study. Otakar Zich's *Estetika Dramatického Umění* (*The Esthetics of Dramatic Art*) published in 1931 played an important role in the development of structuralist theory. Almost every structuralist study quotes or refers to Zich's work, using it as a source for methodological observation or as an authority against which a different structuralist approach is foregrounded. Zich was

an esthetician with a thorough knowledge of theatre. He approached it from a phenomenological point of view concentrating on the interrelationship of components. He was not concerned with semiotics, but in his emphasis on the two aspects of performance (technical and imaginary) he came close to a semiological distinction of the double articulation of sign. The technical aspect of the performance was designated as that which is created on stage, i.e., the physical product. The imaginary aspect of the performance is that which is perceived by the audience. For example, there is a flat upon which is painted a forest. Its technical aspect is the painting (color and form). The imaginary aspect is the dramatic place of a forest which the audience perceives in the context of the unfolding drama. The distinction between the technical and imaginary aspect can be made with every component of theatre. In acting, this difference can be drawn between the stage figure, the technical aspect that includes each actor's artistic choice, and the dramatic character, the imaginary aspect that the audience perceives. Zich illustrates this in a diagram.

Artist	Material	Product	Image
the actor	the actor's individual person	stage figure	dramatic character
a group of actors	each actor's individual person	interplay	dramatic plot

Zich's distinction is of theoretical importance because it allows on a technical level an objective discussion of an artistic work to take place.

The basic concepts and terms of structuralism can be grouped into three areas: 1) the concept of structure; 2) the concept of foregrounding; and 3) the application of the Saussurian linguistic model.

Structure

The dictionary definition of structure as the manner in which the elements of anything (a whole) are organized is acceptable also in regard to art. The structure is not just the sum of its components—this would be a static understanding of structure—but it involves the relationship between the individual components as well. The study of the structure of an artistic work then involves the identification and description of its components. Some components (the material ones) are given by direct observation; some (usually the nonmaterial) are deduced through the inferential

method on the premise that the nature of structure is systematic. The next step is the study of the relationship among the components; the establishing of hierarchy, dependence, and dominance and the specific pattern of organization. The structuralist approach is functional and contextual. The question structuralists ask is: What is the function of this component in regard to (or in the context of) another component or the whole, the esthetic or communicative function, etc? After the problems of the immanent structure are dealt with, the relationship of this structure to other larger (higher) structures such as the social structure can be studied. To bridge the immanent structure of the art work with the larger structures, Mukařovský introduced the term *semantic gesture.* By this term he means the conceptual unity of semantic composition from the smallest unit to the general features of the work which locates it in the context of esthetic norms and values as well as in the social and political context.

What is the whole and the components in the realm of theatre? The basic structure in theatre for structuralists is the structure of the performance (time of perception and cognition). Otakar Zich in *Esthetics of Dramatic Art* in his discussion of the components, first considers the synthetic theory that designates as the components of theatre the arts that enter into the performance itself (literature, music, painting, acting). He sees the use of theory to be limited to the Wagnerian concept of *gesamtkunstwerk* and suggests that the structure of the theatre should be viewed as consisting of the visual and audial components. Further he defines four conceptual (non-material) components—dramatic action, dramatic character, dramatic plot and dramatic place—in which the visual and audial components are realized.

The study of theatrical structure as the study of the material and conceptual (non-material) components in their interrelationship was accepted by structuralists with two differences: 1) the conceptual components were not given *a priori* but were the object of the analysis itself; 2) the audience was included as part of the material components of the theatrical structure. The material components were never analyzed in detail, and there was no attempt to classify them in any systematic way. They are usually enumerated as dramatic text, actors, set, costumes, and the audience—or in a more detailed way when dealing with a particular problem such as acting. In this case acting would be broken down into mime, gesture, speech. Speech could be broken down into intonation, voice coloring, and intensity. The emphasis was on analysis of conceptual components. Among the more recent attempts to deal with the classification of the material components is the suggestion by the Polish theoretician Tadeusz Kowzan to distinguish thirteen categories of material components (signs). Kowzan's distinction is in accordance with, if not directly based on, the structuralist approach with one exception. It does not include the audience as a component.

1 Word 2 Tone	Spoken text	Actor	Auditive signs		Auditive signs (actor)
3 Mime 4 Gesture 5 Movement	Expression of the body	Actor	Visual signs	Space and time	Visual signs (actor)
6 Make-up 7 Hair-style 8 Costume	Actor's external appearance		Visual signs	Space	Visual signs (actor)
9 Accessory 10 Decor 11 Lighting	Appearance of the stage	Outside the actor	Visual signs	Space and time	Visual signs (outside the actor)
12 Music 13 Sound effects	Inarticulate sounds	Outside the actor	Auditive signs		Auditive signs (outside the actor)

(Tadeusz Kowzan, *"The Sign in the Theatre,"* Diogenes, Spring 1968, N61)

Defamiliarization (Foregrounding)

In a pamphlet entitled "The Resurrection of the World" (1914), Viktor Shklovsky advanced for the first time the palpableness of form as the principle of artistic perception:

> . . . when they (words) are used in everyday speech and are not completely enunciated or completely heard, then they have become familiar, and their internal (image) and external (sound) forms have ceased to be sensed. We do not sense the familiar, we do not see it, but recognize it. We do not see the walls of our rooms, it is so hard for us to spot a misprint in a proof—particularly if it is written in a language well known to us—because we cannot make ourselves see and read through, and we do not "recognize" the familiar word.
> If we should wish to make a definition of "poetic" and "artistic" perception in general, then doubtless we would hit

> upon the definition: "artistic" perception is perception in which
> form is sensed (perhaps not only form, but form as an essential
> part).

When writing this pamphlet Shklovsky advanced the futurist cause and was influenced by it, especially in regard to poetry. (Futurist poetry, as he remarks, uses general linguistic thought processes as poetic devices.) The second influence was William James' *Principles of Psychology.* Shklovsky adopted James' distinction of habitual/unhabitual as a noetic position. (James: "Genius, in truth, means little more than the faculty of perceiving in an unhabitual way.") Shklovsky also adopted the difference between "seeing an object" and "recognizing an object." (James: "The whole education of an artist consists in his learning to see the presented signs as well as the represented things . . . and to dwell upon them for their own sake.")

The concept of defamiliarization, the synthesis of the practice of modern art and psychological observation on perception, was defined in the programmatic statement entitled "Art as a Device," 1917. (The title is also translated as "Art as Technique.") Shklovsky writes: "And Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony.* The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception, because the process of perception is an esthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*"

Shklovsky sees the function of art as noetic; the process of perception as an end in itself and the defamiliarization of the object as the device (technique) to achieve the two objectives. Further on in the essay, Shklovsky gives sufficient examples to demonstrate the concept in various literary works.

Even if the concept of defamiliarization was not applied directly to theatre theory by the Formalists, its importance, especially in view of avant-garde performance analysis, is still evident. When a performance is conceived on the lines of perception (the major concern of the artist being the deautomization of perception), then the ability to recognize this intent, to perceive the specific artistic devices and strategies, is a necessity for an understanding and appreciation of the work. The productions of Richard Foreman are an example of a forced, foregrounded attention to objects, signs, details, etc. through the use of framing devices. Foreman's preoccupation in his Second Manifesto [T63] is also explicit on this point: "In daily life, we suppress awareness, noticing as little as possible of what would distract us from (inherited, taught) aims . . . The art work should be a field for noticing. Which means: It should INVITE the viewer to SEE what's THERE."

Bertolt Brecht's concept of alienation is usually understood in terms of creating esthetic distance. There is another aspect to alienation, that of making that particular situation, object, character, idea, "unfamiliar" in order to see it differently. According to John Willett, the term alienation (*Verfremdungseffekt*) is a literary translation of Shklovsky's phrase "priom ostrannenia" or device for making strange ("ostrannenie" is translated as "making strange" or as "defamiliarization"), and it may not be a coincidence that it should have entered Brecht's vocabulary after his Moscow visit.

When they took over this concept of defamiliarization, structuralists emphasized the binary opposition of "unfamiliar/familiar," using the slightly altered terms of foregrounding and automatization. "Foregrounding is the opposite of automatization, that is, the deautomatization of an act; the more an act is automatized, the less it is consciously executed, the more it is foregrounded, the more completely conscious

does it become. Objectively speaking: automatization schematizes an event, foregrounding means the violation of the scheme." Foregrounding can happen to formal as well as thematic elements. From this point of view, the term "structure" was understood as a mutual relationship of foregrounded and unforegrounded elements.

In structuralist theatre theory, foregrounding played an important part in analysis. Jindřich Honzl in "Dynamic of the Sign in Theatre" (1940) analyzed how foregrounding functions in changing the traditional role of components in theatre. For example, the scenic, visual information can be conveyed by speech, or an actor can be replaced by sound or lighting, or text can be projected as a painter's image. Every time a traditional function of a component is replaced by a different "new" function, the component is being foregrounded. The large amount of components in theatre makes foregrounding possible in many variations. Jiři Veltrusky, in "Man and Object in Theatre" (1940), sees the importance of the renewal of the relationship of man and the thing. He writes: "In daily life we are, of course, used to differentiate very exactly between man and thing as far as their spontaneous activity goes, but again only in terms of our present-day epistemological horizon as determined by civilized life. In other horizons, for instance in the mythical world, views of primitives or children, personification and the fluctuation between man and thing play a very important part indeed." It is in theatre, according to Veltrusky, where various aspects of reality can be linked together in an unconventional way. "We are perhaps not exaggerating if we claim that this is one of the most important social objectives of the theatre. This is precisely where the theatre can show us new ways of perceiving and understanding the world."

The Linguistic Model

Ferdinand de Saussure, in his *Course in General Linguistics* suggested the existence of a general science of signs. "Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas . . . A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable . . . I shall call it *semiology* . . . Semiology would show what constitutes a sign." Saussure's suggestion was to study semiological systems other than language in order to better understand the language. What happened in application was quite the opposite. Other semiological systems began to be studied as "language." In this context, art was also postulated as a system of signs, and its analysis proceeded on the lines of the linguistic model. Two concepts were taken over by the structuralists: 1) that of the dichotomy of language and speech; and 2) the double articulation of sign (signified and signifier).

The dichotomous concept of language/speech is central to Saussure. He defines language as a collection of necessary conventions, a type of contract signed by the members of a community in order to allow communication among them. Speech, on the other side, is the individual part of the language, the individual application, selection and expression. "In separating language from speaking we are at the same time separating: 1) what is social from what is individual; and 2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental."

At first glance, the application of the language/speech dichotomy does not seem to be of consequence in theatre. In traditional theatre, we are perhaps aware that there are certain conventions (language in Saussurian terms) which allow the communication to take place, but, because of the primarily illusionistic character of this theatre, these conventions are not brought into focus; they remain blurred with the conven-

tions of everyday life. In avant-garde theatre, the breaking of particular conventions is often present, but the investigation of the avant-garde theatre's own assumptions, conventions or "language" does not occur because the opposite of "language," the individual innovative act ("speech" in Saussurian terms), is of primary importance. Only in the strongly codified theatre forms of the oriental and folk theatre is the distinction of language and speech clearly visible. It is not surprising that this distinction was first made by Petr Bogatyrev in the analysis of folk theatre, and through this example the awareness of a code in theatre was increased. Bogatyrev writes: "We can carry over the concept of language and speech from the field of language phenomena to art. Thus, just as the hearer, in order to comprehend the individual utterance of the speaker, must have command of the language, that is language as a social fact, so also in art the observer must be prepared to receive the individual performance of the actor or of any other artist—his special speech acts, as it were—in terms of his (the observer's) command of the language of that art, its social norms. This is the point of congruence between the field of language and the field of art."

In Saussure's definition "the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name but a concept and a sound-image." Further, Saussure replaces the term "concept" by the term "signified" and "sound image" by the word "signifier" and states that the bond between them is arbitrary. This means that the "signified" of the word tree is not the tree but a concept of a "tree"; a mental image of a tree. The "signifier" on the other hand is material and sensory. (In the case of the word "tree," it is the psychological imprint of the sound of the word "tree.")

As the linguistic sign is an intermediary between at least two interlocutors, for Mukařovský "the work of art is meant expressly to serve as an *intermediary* (sign) between its creator and the community." The components of an autonomous artistic sign Mukařovský identifies as follows: the signifier is the "artifact"—"That which represents the work of art in the outside world, for which in the collective consciousness there is a corresponding signification (often labeled 'esthetic object') given by what is common to subjective states of mind aroused in individuals of any particular community by the artifact."

Saussure's definition of the sign in its graphic form would be transformed for the autonomous artistic sign as follows:

Saussure
(in language)

Mukařovský
(in art)
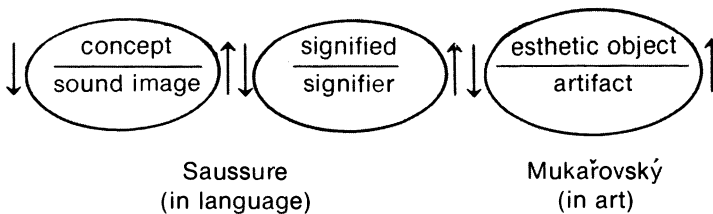
The consequences of this understanding of the sign and its components for the study of art are far-reaching. First, the semiotic understanding of art eliminates the identification of a work of art with the artist's state of mind or with the state of mind of its perceivers. Secondly, by emphasizing the double nature of the sign, the exclusive attention to the artifact is replaced by a more complex relationship between the material (artifact) and a corresponding signification in the collective consciousness.

The relationship between the signifier and the signified does not constitute a full linguistic model; a third element, that of the relationship of a sign to the reality it evokes, completes the relationship. For Mukařovský, art as an autonomous sign does not refer to anything in particular but "to the total context of all phenomena that may be called social, for example, philosophy, politics, religion, economics, and so on." The artistic autonomous sign is defined primarily in its *relationship* to another autonomous sign rather than in terms of the reality it *refers* to.

The work of art, besides having an esthetic function and being an autonomous sign, is also an informational sign and has a communicative function: ". . . a poetic work, for instance, functions not only as a work of art but also, simultaneously, as an 'utterance' expressing a state of mind, an idea, an emotion, etc." The informational sign is present at least potentially in every work of art but in the representational arts it often has a dominant position. The communicative sign is often confused and identified with the subject: "The subject would seem, at first glance, to function as the work's communicative signification. In actuality, every component of a work of art, not excluding even the most 'formal' ones, possesses an informational value of its own, independent of the 'subject' . . . The subject of a work simply plays the role of an axis of crystallization with respect to that signification which, otherwise, would remain vague."

The fact that the formal components possess an informational value is often dismissed. We can tell the same story in two different ways, first in a linear time progression and second with the use of flashback. The second story would differ from the first only by the fact of this "formal component" (flashback). The informational value of both stories would not be the same. The different organization of the same material not only will act differently on the psychological process of perception, but also the reality (the relationship to the reality evoked) will change.

The informational sign, besides being composed of "formal" and "subject" elements, has a relationship to the reality it evokes. This relationship is different from that of the autonomous sign, which refers to the total context of all phenomena. Art as an informational sign refers to some particular distinct reality, to an event, person, fact, etc. According to Mukařovský, "The relationship between the work of art and thing signified does not have existential value. In regard to the subject of a work of art, it is impossible to postulate the question as to its documentary authenticity insofar as the work is held to be a product of art. This does not mean that modifications of the relationship to the thing signified (that is, different degrees along the scale 'reality-fiction') are unimportant for a work of art; they function as factors in its structure."

The discovery and the emphasis on the fact that there are two semiotic functions—the autonomous and the informational—which coexist in the art work, is of fundamental importance to structuralists. Instead of denying one or putting one against the other, the structuralists can study each of them separately as well as in their interrelationship, which Mukařovský considers to be ". . . one of the essential dialectical antinomies of the evolution of these (representational) arts."

In theatre the communicative and artistic autonomous signs coexist on a wide continuum ranging from documentary drama, where the majority of signs are perceived as communicative and artistic signs are close to zero, to the other extreme, when artistic signs dominate and the communicative signs are close to zero. Post-Modern Dance [T65] is an example where concepts, patterns, propositions, intentions are the signs of the performance with almost zero referential value but with a relational existence. (Their only "meaning" is in how they relate among themselves and not as they refer to any distant reality.) The fact that performance appears to be predomi-

nantly in one or the other category does not mean that it should not be analyzed from both points of view. Any dance communicates as a semantic gesture—for example, where it stands in the context of the contemporary dance esthetic. On the other hand, the analysis of artistic devices in a documentary production that appears to be "the reality itself" can reveal more about the nature of the performance than a purely thematic (communicative) analysis.

There are different aspects to a discussion of the contribution of structuralism to the theory of theatre. For example, what new knowledge, insight, or perspective is gained through its application? How inclusive is the general structuralist model in regard to theatre? This problem was partially addressed when pointing out the specific application of concepts such as structure, defamiliarization, language/speech, and autonomous signs in theatre. How the structuralist methodological frame operates on different material and what concrete insights are given into the nature of theatre will be seen in the following analysis of three essays: Jindřich Honzl's "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theatre," Jiří Veltruský's "Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre," and Karel Brušák's "Signs in the Chinese Theatre."

Honzl sees the performance as a system of signs (he does not categorize them in a systematic manner). By using various examples from the history of theatre as well as from the contemporary avant-garde theatre, he empirically proves two points concerning the characteristics of the theatrical sign: 1) that in theatre practically anything can be represented by anything else. For example, a dramatic space can be represented by painting, literary sign or speech; and 2) that the theatrical sign "changes its material and passes from one aspect into another, animates an inanimate thing, shifts from an acoustical aspect to a visual one, and so forth." For example, an actor can be represented by light or sound, or an actor can represent a piece of furniture. Honzl sees dramatic action as a uniting conceptual (nonmaterial) component of this structure of ever-changing signs. "Action, taken as the essence of dramatic art, unifies word, actor, costumes, scenery, and music in the sense that we could then recognize them as different conductors of a single current that either passes from one to another or flows through several at one time." Honzl's approach is almost identical to Zich's, except that he replaces four conceptual components by a single one, that of action, and thus reduces substantially Zich's normativeness but does not eliminate it.

Honzl sees sign mainly in its referential function (what stands for what) and fails to notice that the dynamic of theatrical signs exists in the context of stable signs. The use of signs in analysis facilitates the discussion of the metaphoric and metonymic relationship among the components. What is new in Honzl's observations is not necessarily the information, but the way in which the problem is observed.

Veltruský in his essay "Dramatic Text as a Component of Theatre" analyzes the theatrical structure from the point of view of dramatic text. Before the actual analysis, he had to address himself to an old methodological problem, that of the relationship between dramatic literature and theatre. Veltruský's functional approach to this problem demonstrates well the structuralist attitude: "The unending quarrel about the nature of drama, whether it is a literary genre or a theatrical piece, is perfectly futile. One does not exclude the other. Drama is a work of literature in its own right; it does not need anything but simple reading to enter the consciousness of the public. At the same time, it is a text that can, and mostly is intended to, be used as the verbal component of theatrical performance. But some forms of theatre prefer lyric or narrative texts to drama; theatre enters into relation with literature as a whole, not just with the dramatic genre."

The methodological frame of Veltruský's analysis is given as the relationship of one system of signs to another system of signs inside the same structure. The known

components are: dramatic text, divided further into dialog, direct speech, author notes; theatrical space; music; stage figure which is divided into many detailed aspects-signs. The unknown components are the relationship of the linguistic system (text) to the extra-linguistic system (dramatic space, music, and the stage figure). Veltruský analyzes in detail in which way the stage figure is predetermined in the text: "The emphasis marked by the italics in the following speech from Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkman: "You deserted the woman *you loved!* Me, me, me!" cannot be created by intensity, since the peak of loudness is reached at the end of the triple exclamation that follows. The meaning of the graphical sign will almost automatically be transposed into a gesture." After a systematic analysis of the components in their interrelationship, Veltruský summarizes in the following observation: "In theatre, the linguistic sign system, which intervenes through the dramatic text, always combines and conflicts with acting, which belongs to an entirely different sign system. All the other components, such as music, scenic sets, and so forth, can be eliminated by the text itself; by the same token, the intervention of the sign system to which they belong can be reduced to 'zero degree'—unless they reenter the theatrical structure through the intermediary of the actor. Therefore, the general function of drama in the shaping of the semiotics of theatre can be brought out only by means of confronting the two sign systems that are invariably present, that is, language and acting."

Veltruský's observation that in theatre two systems of signs exist: the linguistic and extra linguistic, does not seem to be normative, but his notion that they represent a focal antinomy in theatre is normative. Veltruský's analysis is limited to literary theatre. His examples from Shakespeare, Ibsen, Maeterlinck and Chekhov indicate the possible extent of applicability. The reason that Veltruský avoids the theoretical consequences of the avant-garde theatre is not that he has a negative attitude toward it but because the implications "are so enormous that they would require a special study."

In the opening paragraph of "Sign in the Chinese Theatre," Brušák states: "The components of the structure appear simple enough, but individual elements within the structure carry numerous obligatory signs standing for referents that are often very complex." The components he mentions are text, acting, scene design, etc. Because the system cannot be analyzed on this level, Brušák proposes a different approach. He divides sign into two groups: visual, that is those associated with dramatic space (the visual side of dramatic performance apprehended by the spectator) and acoustic signs, that is those associated with the dialog, music and sound effect. The visual sign he divides into two groups: 1) signs related to the scene (scenic articles, costumes, makeup); and 2) the action space (in this case he does not categorize the sign but states only that every motion, gesture, and facial expression of the actor is a sign). Brušák does not classify the acoustic sign either. The first difference with previous approaches is the division of the components. The second difference is in the method of analyzing the unknown non-material components. Brušák approaches the sign system also as a "language" and attempts to reconstruct its code: the agreement which permits the understanding of the performance by members of the community. Brušák's summary in part reads: "By examining the signification of individual elements in the Chinese theatre, we find a structure generally homogeneous, a stock of several systems of lexicalized signs, systems which though autonomous in their own right develop spontaneously one from another. The shaping of these systems, the stability of whose entire structure depends on the maintenance of virtually inviolate lexicons, evidently owed something to external, extra-theatrical influences (religion, traditions of social intercourse, and so forth) . . ."

Brušák's analysis stops short of connecting the inner lexicalized structure with the

larger structures. He indicates possible relationships (religion, tradition of social intercourse) but does not attempt to reconstruct the semantic gesture which would bridge the structure of the performance and the social structure. It should be mentioned that no other theatrical study makes such an attempt either.

Compared to their writing on theatre, there is an overwhelming difference in the quantity and variety of material contributed to literary theory by structuralists. The literary studies include highly specialized work—for example, Mukařovský's "The Connection between Prosodic Line and Word Order in Czech Verse"—general studies on the methodology of analysis, concrete examples of structuralist analysis of poetry and other literary works, studies of individual authors, and historical studies, plus the general theoretical and esthetic works. There are no examples of structuralist analysis of actual performance. The closest to it is Mukařovský's early analysis of Chaplin's acting in *City Lights*, entitled "An Attempt at Structuralist Analysis of an Acting Phenomenon" (1931). There are no studies on particular directors, playwrights or theatrical styles.

Without a comparable variety of structuralist studies in theatre and without the application of the problematic of the autonomous and communicative signs on diversified material, contemporary as well as historic, it is impossible to talk about structuralist theory of theatre. The potential of structuralism in theatre was never fully tested by Czech structuralists or by contemporary French and Italian structuralists and semioticians.