

Hoskovec (p. 206-225) and a «Semiotic-aesthetic bibliography of Jiří Veltruský» (p. 226-230), excluding his sociological and political writing. What is most astonishing is that Veltruský stopped his theatrical-aesthetic writings in 1942 in the age of 22 years, in order to continue them in the mature age of 57 years at 1976 nearly at the same point he left off. An index of names, titles and concepts would be helpful to finish this brilliant work in an adequate way.

Veltruský's late monograph is a unique «reader» to the theatre theory of the Prague Linguistic Circle, because it is written from the viewpoint of historical distance, personal critical revision and the maturity and wisdom of a leading exponent of the movement looking back to the theoretical work of his youth and commenting on other scholars. Veltruský did not summarize the whole of the enormous bibliography cumulated in the last decades on the topic of theatre semiotics, but his critical and essential review of the main positions of the Prague «school» can very well function as a critical mirror to the whole of theatre semiotics. Despite the fact that it is loosely structured, narrative in its style, it provides in the end a quasi-systematic overview of the semiotic theatre theory developed in Prague in the mid-war period, which is most probably the first essential chapter of theatre theory in the 20th century.

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*Theatralia/Yorick* 2012/2. A Special Issue on Structuralist Theatre Theory. Prague Semiotic Stage Revisited, Brno, Masaryck University, p. 237, ill., ISBN 978-80-210-5571-1.

This special issue of the *Theatralia* (section Yorick) publishes the papers delivered at an international symposium on the *Prague Semiotic Stage Revisited*, organized by the Department of Theatre Studies at the Masaryk University in Brno between 27-29 of June 2011. It is dedicated to the memory of Ivo Osolsobě (1928-2012), who passed just before the publication of the conference proceedings. This Symposium was financed by a Research Grant *Czech Structuralist Thought on Theatre: Context and Potency*. One of the main goals of the symposium was the question of whether and/or how Czech Structuralism is still topical for theatre studies. To this topic Pavel Drábek's contribution was dedicated: «Launching a Structuralist Assembly: Convening the Scattered Structures» (p. 13 ff.), which was the opening speech of the conference. In spite of the short period of its existence (1932-1940/1948), dissolved by the traumatic events of the Second World War, the Prague Structuralism had an immense (and delated) influence on theatre theory worldwide. Drábek offers an overview about the ongoing research programme. He is followed by Fernando de Toro, «The Legacy of the Linguistic Circle of Prague» (p. 24 ff.) and Patrice Pavis, «Semiology After Semiology» (p. 37 ff. in memory of Anne Ubersfeld), reflecting on Semiology in the context of the sixties, seventies, and eighties and its decline («Missed opportunities. A continuous series of misunderstandings, of missed opportunities over the course of the last thirty or forty years: this might be a possible explanation for this mirage, this disaffection, or even this rejection of semiology»). May I add the fundamental change of theatre practice itself? This section is finished by Ernest W. B. Hess-Lüttich, «The Schools of Structuralism – An Overview: The Impact of Prague School Structuralism on other Centres of Textual Analysis» (p. 50 ff., «city tour» of Geneva, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Tartu, Prague, Copenhagen, Paris, London, New York, and Liège). Every article is followed by bibliography, a short biography of the author and a summary.

The second thematic cycle is dedicated to the applications of the Prague School in theatre practice. It starts with Veronika Ambros, «Puppets, Statues, Men, Objects, and the Prague School» (p. 74 ff., mainly on Bogatyrev and Mukařovský; see also her articles «Prague's Experimental Stage», *Semiotica* (2008), p. 45-65 and «Czech Performance Theory», D. Pietropaolo (ed.), *The Performance Text*, New York 1999, p. 113-125) and continues with Šárka Havlíčková Kyssová, «“Asian” Theatre Sign: Its Potential and Its Limits in the History of the Czech Structuralist Thought» (p. 89 ff. mainly on the writings of Bruřák) and Andrés Pérez-Simón, «Manufacturing Authenticity: Anonymous Acting Celebrities in Atalaya's Production of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* (2009)» (p. 100 ff.).

The third area involves more partial theoretical issues, beginning with Herta Schmidt, «The Concept of Sign, Its Origin and Influence on Mukařovský's Structuralism» (p. 112 ff.). Especially interesting is here the chapter «Edmund Husserl's conception of sign and Mukařovský's aesthetic sign in comparison to the anti-semiotic performative turn» (p. 116 ff.), which criticizes specifically Fischer-Lichte's «performative aesthetics». Schmidt comments: «The very fact that this kind of aesthetics extinguishes semiotics speaks for itself, when we compare it with Mukařovský's semiotic aesthetics. This new kind of aesthetics brings a renewal of normative aesthetics, whose norms can be expressed by two orders and one prohibition. The first order says: “Be social!” The second order says: “Be open for the demands of your body, which needs sensations and emotions!” The prohibition says: “Do not use your reason for thinking about other things except the demands of your group and your body!” Admittedly, this is a caricature» (p. 121). See also by herself, «Jiři Veltruský's Vermächtnis an die Theaterwissenschaft», *Balagan* 2/3 (1997), p. 79-111 and «A historical outlook on theatrical ostensions and its links with other terms of the semiotics of drama and theatre», *Semiotica* 168/4 (2008), p. 67-91. This simplifying strike against the «performative turn» is followed by Yana Meerzon, «Concretization – Transduction – Adaptation: On Prague School Legacy in Theatre Studies Today» (125 ff.), focussing mainly on two articles, by Lubomir Doležel, «Literary Transduction», Yishai Tobin (ed.), *The Prague School and its Legacy in Linguistics, Literature, Semiotics, Folklore and the Arts*, Amsterdam 1988, p. 165-176 and Felix Vodička, «The Concretization of the Literary Work», Peter Steiner (ed.), *The Prague School Selected Writings 1929-1946*, Austin 1975, p. 103-133. This section is finished by Eva ělaisov, «Actualisace in English Scholarly Literature: Interpretation, Ignorance, and Misunderstanding» (p. 154 ff.), and Emil Volek, «Theatrology an Zich, and Beyond: Notes Towards a Metacritical Repositioning of Theory, Semiotics, Theatre and Aesthetics» (168 ff.). A Western translation of Zich's influential book on the Aesthetics of Dramatic Art, Prague 1931, available up to date only in its Czech version, is an urgent *desideratum*, as this book was the starting point and the basis of reference of a great part of the methodological reflexions of the Prague School on theatre art.

The special issue of the journal is finished by book reviews; the last is written by myself (p. 220-226), on Jiři Veltruský's *An Approach to the Semiotics of Theatre*, Brno 2012, edited by his wife after his death (see also my review in this issue of *Parabasis*); the adventurous story of this book is told by herself in the last article of this volume: Jarmila F. Veltrusky, «The Background Story of the Book» (p. 232 ff.). The reflective and critical «revival» of this specific historical intellectual movement like the Prague School of Structuralism, reaccepted with great delay in the West but being an important starting point for theatre theory in the 20th century (Walter Puchner, «Czech Theatre Semiotics as Starting Point for the Theatre Theory in the 20th Century», *Ad honorem Eva Stehlikov*, Praha 2011, p. 297-305), inaugurated now by the research programme of the University at Brno, goes in many ways parallel to Veltruský's last book: the distance of time and the fact of being *démodé* allows a more

sober and objective approach to its concepts and visions, which in the end were much more dialectical than the formalistic codifications of French structuralism. If there is a possibility for complementary functioning together with phenomenology, is, in my opinion, doubtful (Walter Puchner, *Θεωρητικά του θεάτρου*, Athens 2010); but no single methodology can do the work alone, analyzing the complex phenomenon of theatre performance. None of the methodologies of the 20th century is really new, but also none is superfluous, when the ephemeral enthusiasms have calmed down. The next symposium of this research project will be held in Brno in May 2013 on the topic of the recurrent motif of applying the tools of the Prague School onto the contemporary phenomena in theatre studies.

WALTER PUCHNER

Pavlina Šipová – Marcela Spívalová – Jan Jiřík (eds.), *Ad honorem Eva Stehlíková*, Praha 2011, p. 607, ill.

The *Festschrift* for Eva Stehlíková, Prof. em. of theatre sciences in Brno, is written in the Czech language, but some studies are also in English. To the life-work of the honored scholar the last section of the book is dedicated, «Indices», where her bibliography 1963-2009 is listed (p. 567 ff. with many book reviews, starting with ancient theatre and drama and ending with most recent theatre productions in Prague), her academic lectures (p. 588 ff.) and the post-graduate works of her students (p. 595 ff.), together with more personal notes of friends and scholars, «Ad personam» (p. 511 ff.). But among the 44 studies there are also several in English, worth to be mentioned here. The wide panorama of thematic issues and topics, so characteristic for her academic work, is mirrored by the English section as well. The beginning is made by a comparative study by Veronika Ambros, «Havel's and Stoppard's dramatic dialogue in three plays: *Leaving, Largo desolato*, and *Rock'n'Roll*» (p. 15 ff.), followed by Jan Bažant, «Sacri Romani Imperii Princeps. Wallenstein's Palace in Prague Revisited» (p. 32 ff.). In the middle of the book we find mostly studies on recent interpretations of ancient drama: an article by Magdaléna Jacková on «*Lashed to the mast?* Finding a way through the siren songs of Greek plays on the modern stage (with apologies to Homer)» (p. 104 ff.), also by Miroslav Kocur, «Voodoo in Atlanta. Staging Aristophanes Today, on the Example of *Thesmophoriazousae*» (p. 142 ff.). Pirkko Koski deals with the reception of Václav Havel on Finnish stage: «Finland meets Václav Havel» (p. 153 ff.). But the reception of ancient drama on contemporary stage and recent theatre plays is dominant in the English section: Platon Mavromoustakos, «Karolos Koun and the "Theatro Technis". A Theatre that Changed Knowledge» (p. 214 ff.), Cleo Protokhristova, «The Interpretation of the Tragic Myth in the Work of Gheo Milev – Intertextuality and Theatricality» (p. 289 ff.). This thematic predominance is interrupted by a theoretical article on Czech theatre semiotics: Walter Puchner, «Czech Theatre Semiotics as Starting Point for Theatre Theory in the 20th Century» (p. 297 ff.), but the thematic mainstream is succeeded by Maria Sehopoulou, «August Strindberg and the Early Greek Translations» (p. 338 ff.), Maria de Fatima Silva, «Hélia Correira, *Resentfulness*. A classical play on stage» (p. 385 ff.), Oliver Taplin, «Klytaimnestra's Beacons» (p. 455 ff.), Dmitry Trubochkin, «The Idea of the *Roman Theatre*» (p. 462 ff.), Nurit Yaari, «*Oedipus Rex* in Tel Aviv: Habima 1947» (p. 497 ff.). It is evident that most of the scholars of the non-Czech contributions are linked to the *European Network of Research and Documentation of Performances of Ancient Greek Drama*, which was