TRAVAUX DU CERCLE LINGUISTIQUE DE PRAGUE n.s.

PRAGUE LINGUISTIC CIRCLE PAPERS

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Table of contents

Preface

The present volume consists of two parts, the first of which (Section 1) brings three contributions connected with the classical period of the Prague School. J. Vachek looks back at the times of the beginnings of the Circle, which he witnessed as a student and a young researcher. O. Leška characterizes the work of the philosopher A. Marty, who as a professor of the German University in Prague, was one of the teachers of V. Mathesius, so that his ideas had an important impact on the activities of the Circle. The last paper of this section, written by V. Skalička, the typologist of the School, brings some very important insights into the study of linguistic typology.

The main body of the volume contains papers delivered at the conference "Function, Form, and Meaning: Bridges and Interfaces", organized in Prague in 1998 on the occasion of the celebrations of the 650th anniversary of Charles University. The contributions in Section 2 are devoted to issues of grammar of different languages including a syntactic annotation of a large Czech text corpus, a comparison of Hebrew conditionals with English, a characterization of the typology of the Indo-European verb. Section 3 is focused on topic–focus articulation (information sentence structure, functional sentence perspective), with a concept of 'perspective' introduced as close to but distinct from 'topic' and with three different viewpoints on the semantics of information structure. Two broader essays on the nature of language are presented in Section 4, while the last Section analyzes the structure of free verse. We offer this volume as a contribution to the continuing fruitful interaction between the work of the Prague School and the more and less closely related approaches of our colleagues elsewhere.

This was also the aim of the mentioned conference, which took place in connection with the twelfth cycle of Vilém Mathesius lecture series. We are grateful to all those who made these two events possible, especially to Charles University, to the Joint Institutes of Advanced Studies and to the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute, as well as to Alena Böhmová and other members of the Institute of Formal and Applied Linguistics of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University in Prague, who actively and enthusiastically participated in organizing the conference.

Eva Hajičová Tomáš Hoskovec
Jiří Hana Petr Sgall

Section I

The Prague tradition in retrospect

Prolegomena to the history of the Prague School of Linguistics

Josef Vachek
Translated by Z. Kirschner

Introduction

A research worker who decides one day to write out a detailed history of the Prague School of Linguistics (henceforth PS) will be facing no easy task. It is not only phenomenalistic data that he must be concerned with in his work (though mere detecting them today, after more than six decades, encounters considerable difficulties of heuristic as well as purely technical nature), but, above all, he will be expected to incorporate the linguistic endeavours of PS into national as well as international contexts. Another objective will consist in determining the manifold factors both internal and external that exerted their influence on PS at the time of its coming into existence and in the course of further development of its concepts; and, naturally, in tracing the differentiation emerging within the PS; also the range of its impact at home as well as abroad must be considered, as it was felt from the

beginnings up to the present. There is no doubt that each of the above points taken by itself is important enough to require monographic treatment.

Circumscribed time and space resources allotted to us to deal with this task have forced us to confine ourselves to outlining just prolegomena to a more extensive work. We wanted to limit ourselves to recording the events in the history of PS and the features that have appeared to us as really essential and characteristic. With respect to the restrictions mentioned above we haven't been able to go into the history of partial problems discussed in PS, whether phonological, grammatical or other (in part we have touched upon them, at least in passing, in the monograph Vachek 1966a).[1]

We decided to concentrate on keeping track of the origins and maturation of what appears to us as essential contributions and specificity of PS: its conception of language as a functionally and structurally regarded systemic whole.

Another intention of ours lay in initiating (at least in part and approximately) present-day readers into that unique working climate, the captivating companionability, which was so characteristic of PS in the times of gradual ripening of its conception. In doing so we are conscious that owing to this intention our report acquires a more memoir-like character than might be regarded as tolerable. In our opinion, however, our direct participation in at least a certain period of the history of PS (in its "classical" stage) obliges us to share this personal experience with those who came after us and those who are still to come. We firmly believe that the danger of subjectivism inevitably connected with a personal view of the given topic has considerably diminished today, when a certain lapse of time separates us from the history described, though the intensity of this experience has not decreased even after so many years.

By all that has been said here the sources of our work have been specified. They were our own reminiscences and written records as well as the recollections of other, at that time still living witnesses and participants in the activities and events to be mentioned; further, of course, also reports in publications (mainly scientific, as is only natural) that were appearing both in our country and abroad.

On this occasion it is not possible to forget the always readily offered and repeatedly given support represented for us in this work by consultations with the then still living members of the founding generation of the Prague Linguistic Circle. They were especially Professor Bohuslav Havránek, Professor Bohumil Trnka, and, from among our contemporaries and of the same generation background, our unforgettable friend Professor Vladimír Skalička. It was they who would often lend me materials and documents otherwise hardly accessible at that time. For all that they deserve acknowledgment and sincere thanks.

In concluding this introduction let us emphasize that it is solely the linguistic aspects of the Praguian theory that stand in the centre of our attention, its particular applications in the works of PS, and its significance for linguistics here

as well as abroad. That is also why we do not take a closer look at the very important part of the activity of PS which lies in the realm of aesthetics and literary science; nevertheless, we cannot leave it unmentioned here, be it only in a remark made in passing. Its more detailed evaluation would require a separate monograph conceived, of course, by a research worker well versed in both the disciplines involved.

Prague, October 29, 1994.

1. External History of the Prague Linguistic School

Naturally, the name *Prague School* has not been given to the Prague linguists by themselves: it does not occur in the history of our own and world linguistics before the Praguian researchers attracted the attention of foreign experts by their works and principles. As far as could be ascertained, the term *Prague School* (henceforth PS) was first used in a prospectus in which Dutch phoneticians were inviting broader circles of research workers to their First International Congress of Phonetics that was to take place in Amsterdam in 1932, i.e., probably some time in the second half of 1931, after the Prague linguists had already scored their successes at conventions in The Hague, Geneve and, of course, at the Prague Congress of Slavonic Studies. The term *école de Prague* became quite common surprisingly promptly, so that in the mid-thirties it appeared in general and univocal use, even in international context.

The real origins of PS, however, reach much deeper into the past. The beginnings and the prehistory of the Prague Linguistic Circle, the first organisational form of PS, were described in a very interesting and truthful way by its founder Vilém Mathesius in a lecture delivered at the festive session of the Circle in 1936, on the occasion of an anniversary — the first decade of its existence (see V. Mathesius 1936a). From this paper we learn that the first meeting of the Circle, then only a free association, took place at the Prague University Department of English (Mathesius was its director at that time, the Department having its seat at Nr 4, Veleslavínova Str.) on October 6, 1926. Five Prague members took part in the session (Bohuslav Havránek, Roman Jakobson, Vilém Mathesius, Jan Rypka and Bohumil Trnka); the only foreign participant, Dr. Henrik Becker from Leipzig, read a paper on "Der europäische Sprachgeist" (The European language spirit). The lecture was followed by a lively discussion and the participants agreed to meet at such sessions regularly.

As shown by Mathesius, during the first academic year of its existence, in all, nine lecture sessions of the Circle took place, while in the following year the number went up to eleven. Papers were given not only by Prague lecturers

(besides the participants in the first session, who all contributed their lectures, it was also Vladimír Buben, Bohuslav Ilek, Jan Mukařovský and František Oberpfalcer), but also by distinguished foreign guests: the Russians Sergej Karcevskij, Nikolaj Sergeevič Trubeckoj (Trubetzkoy), Petr Bogatyrev and Boris Tomaševskij, and the French scholars Léon Brun and Lucien Tesnière.

However, the number of participants in the meetings, according to the then preserved attendance records, for a long time failed to exceed ten. This made it possible that for several years a remarkable practice was established to organise, in addition to the usual meetings held on the premises of the Department, also informal lecture talks invited to the households of individual members. This custom, which substantially strengthened friendship ties among the members of the Circle, at the same time aided in introducing into its activities a good mutual understanding indispensable for collective work — a feature very soon to become characteristic of the Circle. This custom was abandoned only in the first half of the thirties, after the number of members grew to such an extent that similar meetings were no longer technically possible.

Becker's lecture marks the beginning of the Circle's history; however, it is necessary to pay heed to its prehistory as well, which can be traced yet much deeper back into the past. Mathesius mentions another earlier informal meeting of a handful of young linguists in which Havránek, Jakobson, Karcevskij and Trnka took part. At this meeting Mathesius presented his reflections on new currents and trends in linguistics (later published as Mathesius 1926). Nevertheless, for the oldest public presentation in which many of the later principles of the Circle had been proclaimed we have to go still further back to the past, as early as the year 1911. On February 6 of that year, at a meeting of the philosophical-historical-philological class of the Royal Czech Society of Sciences, Mathesius delivered a lecture "O potenciálnosti jevů jazykových" (On the potentiality of the phenomena of language), which was then printed soon afterwards, in the subsequent year (Mathesius 1911–1912).

Even after many years Mathesius used to recollect with a bitter smile how his exposition at that meeting fell practically flat and failed to evoke any response, there being no discussion — the authority in chair, Professor Josef Zubatý, very politely bestowed his praise on the lecture, which he nevertheless judged "too subtle" for the audience then present. Obviously, Mathesius at that time, with his views in which he emphasized, among others, the necessity of a synchronic, ahistorical approach to language facts, remained in complete isolation. Only after some young researchers with understanding for his conception appeared within the Czech linguistic community could Mathesius envisage more clearly a formation of an organisational and working centre, which the Prague Circle proved to become later; Mathesius himself explicitly points out that it was his young colleagues R. Jakobson and B. Trnka with whom he first found understanding and support for his positions.

By coincidence it happened that the Circle made its debut abroad and not at home. An occasion for it was offered by the First International Congress of Linguists convened to The Hague for April 1928 and to whose organizers four members of the Circle (Jakobson, Karcevskij, Trubetzkoy and Mathesius) sent their individual answers to the principal question posed by the preparatory committee of the Congress: which is the most suitable method for a full description of language.

The three Russian members of the Circle and Mathesius found that their own theses and the theses of the followers of the Genevese school, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (their materials had also been submitted to the Congress in advance) agreed in a number of essential points. Therefore, still before the relevant plenary session took place, they arrived at a joint resolution proclaiming a programme of a new, synchronically oriented linguistic analysis. This programme was then unanimously approved by the Congress at its session on April 12, 1928; this was the first great international success of the new Prague linguistic conception. Encouraged by this success, the Prague linguists decided to work out (for the first international congress of Slavonic scholars which was to convene in Prague in October of the following year 1929 on the occasion of the centenary of the death of Josef Dobrovský) a detailed conception of linguistic analysis based on the principles of the Prague approach to language facts, an approach which they called structurally functional. The theses summarizing this conception were being elaborated for several months by a special committee of the Circle consisting of Havránek, Jakobson, Mathesius and Mukařovský in cooperation with some other members, above all Miloš Weingart. As Mathesius reminisces, the meetings of the committee used to take place at a small coffee-house Derby in the then Bělského Rd (nowadays Dukelských hrdinů) in Prague 7. The theses represented a collective work indeed, although their separate sections were prepared by individual members of the committee. The theses were submitted to the Congress in two versions, Czech and French; the Congress approved them and elected an international commission of ten linguists assigned to do the preparatory work in the analysis of Slavonic languages according to the principles presented by the Circle.[2]

The Congress of Slavonic Scholars was very important for the Prague linguists also in that the Circle's very rich editorial activity was started in connection with it. On the occasion of the Congress the first two volumes appeared of a series that was later to become one of the most renowned in the world linguistics, *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague* (henceforth *TCLP*). The first volume entitled *Mélanges linguistiques* contained in addition to the French version of the theses of the Circle (1929) altogether twelve treatises on general linguistic themes. The language of both the first volumes was predominantly French, which remained to serve as the permanent basic vehicle of *TCLP*, and to a lesser extent German; English was to be met in *TCLP* only much later. The second volume of the series contained

Jakobson's French monograph on the phonological evolution of Russian (Jakobson 1929) as compared with similar developments in other Slavonic languages. Both the volumes met with extraordinary interest of the wide linguistic public, not only that concerned with Slavonic studies. Contacts with foreign research workers holding similar views were established, especially with the Polish and Russian followers of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and with modern American linguistics represented, above all, by Edward Sapir (1922) and Leonard Bloomfield (1933).[3]

Such and similar contacts before long crystallized into a design to appear before the Second International Congress of Linguists (which was to take place in Geneva at the end of August 1931) with a detailed programme of research in phonology, i.e. in a functionally conceived study of speech sounds, and, of course, with an account of factual results achieved up to then in that particular sphere of work. To make it possible to discuss a number of relevant problems of methodology, the Circle dared to assume a responsibility which appears hardly credible today: an international phonological conference was invited to Prague for December 1930, in which event no less than fifteen foreign linguists from eight European countries took part.

Among them were such very famous names as that of the Austrian psychologist Karl Bühler, Dutch linguists Jacob van Ginneken and Albert Willem de Groot, and also a Norwegian Celtic scholar Alf Sommerfelt; from Germany the Ukrainian psychologist, later on a renowned Comeniologue, Dmytro Čyževśkyj, from Poland the Slavonic scholar Witold Doroszewski, the Polonists Kazimierz Nitsch and Stanisław Szober; and, of course, neither Karcevskij nor Trubetzkoy failed to appear. For four days the Czech as well as foreign participants were giving fundamental papers, followed by lively discussions.

The papers and a summary of the discussions were then published in the fourth volume of the series *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague*, still in time before the opening of the Genevese Congress (even this seems incredible to us nowadays). The same volume contained a proposal drawn up in French of a standardised phonological terminology and a brief outline of the principles which phonological transcription should comply with, both accompanied by illustrative examples (Cercle 1931a, b).

Also the organisational success of the conference was important: it was agreed to found the International Phonological Association whose task would be phonological description of the greatest possible number of the languages of the world. Trubetzkoy was elected as chairman of the association, Jakobson became acting secretary and Mathesius treasurer.

The Genevese Congress in August 1931 unanimously approved the principles of the Circle regarding the research in phonology and the International Phonological Association was equally unanimously recognized as an organisation affiliated to CIPL (*Comité international permanent de linguistes*, in charge of the organisa-

tion of international congresses of linguists). As is obvious, also the Genevese Congress meant another international success of the Prague functional structural linguistic conception, in the same way as later both the first two international congresses of phonetics (in Amsterdam in 1932 and in London in 1935), not to speak of a number of international meetings of minor scope or of more distant subjects of study; such was, e.g., the session of the linguistic section at the international congress of ethnologists and anthropologists in London in 1934.

Moreover, an increasing need was felt for a more profound impact on the domestic linguistic events, although as early as 1929 Mathesius, Havránek and Trnka reported on the principles of PS at a convention of secondary school teachers of philosophy, philology and history in Prague. (This convention, however, failed to get the publicity given to the subsequent actions of the Circle.) An opportunity for a more notable action presented itself in 1930, when the Circle published, on the occasion of the 80th birthday of the Czechoslovak President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, two papers, delivered already in the preceding year by J. Mukařovský (about Masaryk as a stylist) and by R. Jakobson (on linguistic problems in Masaryk's work); both the lectures appeared in one booklet (Cercle 1931c). The motivation of the lectures was, of course, not purely scientific: it was, at the same time, an expression of gratitude to a sponsor who by subscribing a considerable sum made possible the publication of the first two volumes of *TCLP*. A much more important entry into the still rather stagnant waters of the domestic linguistic life was implemented by the famous cycle of lectures on Standard Czech and on language culture, organized by the Circle at the beginning of 1932. This cycle laid a firm basis for a functional structural conception of language correctness and language culture in general.

An external stimulus to organise the cycle, in which lectures were given by Mathesius, Havránek, Jakobson, Mukařovský and Weingart, was offered by the then extremely puristic practice of the journal *Naše řeč* (Our Language) represented above all by its editor-in-chief Jiří Haller. The lectures appeared in the same year in book form (Havránek and Weingart 1932), together with the "General principles of language culture" as a supplement, and were received by the cultural public with great sympathy (see, e.g., the commentary by F.X. Šalda in his *Zápisník* (Notebook) 1932, 1933). Even at the leftist cultural front they met with considerable sympathy, with the only exception of S.K. Neumann, who owing to lack of comprehension criticised them sharply in Peroutka's *Přítomnost* (The Present) Nr. 46 (1932).

It is well known that in the subsequent decades the principles of the Circle were to become a permanent starting point for the theoretical and practical care of the Czech language culture: in their spirit *Pravidla českého pravopisu* (The Rules of the Czech Orthography) were reformed partially as early as 1941 and especially in 1957. In the same spirit also collective lexicographic works were conceived and

elaborated, in the first place *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* (A Shorter Dictionary of the Czech Language) in 9 volumes and later the *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (A Dictionary of the Standard Czech Language) in 4 volumes published first in the years 1960–1971 (afterwards it appeared in 8 half-volumes), and, surpassing all, the outstanding collective *Slovník spisovné češtiny pro školu a veřejnost* (A Dictionary of Standard Czech for Schools and the General Public), elaborated under the guidance of František Daneš and Josef Filipec (Praha: Academia 1978). This dictionary was produced by the Lexicological and Lexicographical Department of the Institute for Czech Language under theoretical guidance and with methods developed by the Head of the Department, Josef Filipec, who was also the chief editor of the Dictionary.

Moreover, still in the same decade, the new principles of the care of Czech language made their way into school grammars of Czech for the lower forms of secondary schools (the authors' collective was again directed by B. Havránek). Their most valuable contribution can be seen, among others, in the consistently synchronic approach to Czech morphology, especially the classification of Czech verbs and in the regard to the functional stylistic differentiation of language means.

It can be said, therefore, that in the course of just one decade of its existence the Circle attained a significant position in Czech cultural life. In this connection even a seemingly formal detail deserves to be mentioned: in the autumn of 1930 the Circle became a regularly organized and politically authorised association; until then it had been merely a free group. Now it had its official Statutes and a formally stated aim of its activities (see Appendix I). According to the Statutes, the aim consisted in the pursuit of linguistics on a functionally structural basis; well worth mentioning is the fact that here for the first time in the history of Czechoslovak linguistics an organisation was established which pragmatically delimited its domain of research, but also the method to be applied in this work. From this, however, no conclusion can be drawn that the Circle would censure members using other methods. For that matter, among the seventeen signatories of its Statutes we can find the names of, e.g., Oldřich Hujer, Václav Machek, Vladimír Buben and František Oberpfalcer, who never adhered to the principles of structurally functional conception in their work: Hujer was an enlightened Junggrammatiker (Neo-Grammarian), Oberpfalcer-Jílek a refined connoisseur of the material which he, however, approached from eclectic rather than structuralist positions, and even V. Buben, a prominent Czech scholar in the field of Romance languages and literatures, as well as V. Machek, a comparative linguist, as further signatories of the Statutes could not be entirely classed with the followers of the functionally structural approach to language, although they undoubtedly sympathised with this point of view. Nevertheless, such an open profession of the Circle's adherence to a definite research conception even so meant a new feature in our conditions; for a number of more conservative linguists this, at times, gave cause for reprimanding the alleged

sectarianism and intolerance. Such criticism did justice to the reality only in part — it was certainly necessary to make way for the new approach using conclusive arguments, which, however, as a rule did not exceed the limits of fair play.

A proof of the successes attained by the Circle during the first decade of its work can also be seen in a great number of congratulations and acknowledgements which the Circle obtained on the occasion of the celebration of its first decade in 1936.[4] The clear, convincing and fruitful conception kept attracting to the Circle young linguists entering upon scientific careers. As early as 1931 they read their linguistic papers at the Circle's sessions; among them Josef Vachek (from the beginning of 1930 engaged as a student in secretarial work for the Circle), further, in the same year, Ľudovít Novák, later Vladimír Skalička, Pavel Trost, Karel Horálek, Jozef Ružička and many others.

For completeness' sake it is necessary to add that information on the work done in PS was presented abroad in two issues of the *Bulletin* of the Association internationale pour les études phonologiques (International Phonological Association), above all information on the already finished works in the domain of phonology, and on those in preparation. The first issue appeared in 1932 in French, the second three years later, in English; no further issues were published afterwards.

It was for the International Phonological Association that the Circle ensured the publication of a brochure by Trubetzkoy (1935) with an instruction concerning the phonological description of the world's languages (it appeared in German in Brno; later it was translated into English by the Australian linguist Bluhme). It is, of course, well known that the members of the Circle frequently published in other than their own journals and periodicals; above all, it was the *Časopis pro moderní filologii* (Journal for Modern Philology), *Filologické listy* (Philological Papers), *Naše řeč* (Our Language) as well as various University publications in Prague, Brno, Bratislava, etc.

Ample response to the work of the Circle from abroad has already been mentioned: it was strong especially in places connected with a deep-rooted tradition drawing on Baudouin and Ščerba. We have also mentioned the favourable reception of the phonological work of PS in American linguistics, particularly by Sapir and Bloomfield, who in their works were approaching the main concept of phonology — the phoneme — in their own way. The same can be said, with minor differences only, about the prominent English phonetician Daniel Jones, who was coming close to that concept as a practical transcriptionist (J. Vachek wrote about him in the miscellany *Charisteria* (Cercle 1932) dedicated to Mathesius on his fiftieth anniversary). Also Dutch linguists were showing great interest in the Praguian activities (a festschrift published to honour the fiftieth anniversary of Trubetzkoy contains contributions by e.g., Hendrik Josephus Pos and Nikolaas van Wijk).[5] Of the younger generation especially the Dutch Javanese scholar and general linguist Eugen M. Uhlenbeck must be mentioned, who during

the hard times of what was called "political normalisation" (*détente* of the early 1970s — editor's note) provided invaluable help to our young linguists by granting short-term stays to them in the Dutch Institute of Research Workers, which he had founded himself especially for young scholars from behind the Iron Curtain. In a similar way substantial help to our young researchers was provided by Robert Auty, a British Slavonic scholar and Bohemicist, professor in Cambridge, London and later in Oxford, who, among other things, had a perfect command of Czech. From the same country came the help of William Haas, a general linguist from Manchester (a German from Northern Moravia by origin), who cooperated with the Circle's scholars in those bad times; he shared a deep interest in the problems of written language with our scientists, an interest also shared by Philip A. Luelsdorff, an Anglicist from Regensburg, who was of great help especially as regards publication activities.

In 1948 members of the Circle took an active part in the first post-war linguistic Congress in Paris; they had submitted their own theses in advance, which were then duly read and commented upon at a plenary session of the Congress, though not by their own authors and main speakers: Jakobson's paper on the mutual relation of phonology and morphology was read in his absence by his colleague John Lotz, the English translation of the paper by B. Trnka, who could not be present at the Congress, was read by J. Vachek. Thus, though small in number, the PS delegation (consisting of three participants only, Havránek, Horálek and Vachek) did not appear as wholly insignificant.

Otherwise, in that post-war period, the entire atmosphere, both ideological and political, was getting darker and more sinister. This development, naturally, could not remain without consequences for the PS and its Circle. There were, however, too many factors in play, whose interaction was so complicated as to require a special chapter (Chapter 4).

2. The origin and maturation of the Prague Linguistic Theory

Mathesius in his University lectures (and in their posthumous edition which we have prepared for press, cf. V. Mathesius 1961) very fittingly sketched the climate of the period in which the Prague linguistic theory came to be formed and, at the organizational level, the Prague Circle was founded. He pointed out therein that up to the beginning of the twenties of our century two main competing currents had existed side by side in the world linguistics. The first of them, genetically comparative, found its origins in the efforts of Franz Bopp and Rasmus Rask, and culminated in the Neo-Grammarian School, whose prominent representatives were Hermann Paul, Karl Friedrich Brugmann, etc. The second trend, according to Mathesius, can be denoted as analytically comparative and its beginnings reach

back to Wilhelm von Humboldt: among its most outstanding representatives, e.g., Heyman Steinthal, Franz Nikolaus Finck and Georg von der Gabelentz can be classed. The former current elaborated an exact scientific method, yet it often erred in atomistically isolating the facts examined, in lacking a sense for the structural patterning of languages and for their synchronic, ahistoric study in general, regarded by them as downright unscientific. The latter trend had a much deeper sense and feeling for synchronic specific features of the languages examined, yet it failed to produce methods that could compete with those of the former current in respect of exactness and scientific accuracy: the differences between individual languages were frequently accounted for by differences in national psychologies of the given language communities. In this way, of course, the problems in question were transferred from the domain of linguistics to the domain of psychology, a science at that time still unable to work its way to a scientific method of the desirable degree of exactness.

Mathesius was well aware of both the strong and the weak points of the two linguistic approaches[6] and strove for a synthesis that would succeed in combining the merits of both the conceptions. He was conscious of the necessity of getting to know completely and reliably the language facts from which generalizing theoretical conclusions were to be drawn. This necessity led him already in the year 1911 to the requirement of a static (i.e., synchronic) analysis of language in addition to the dynamic (i.e., diachronic). Mathesius often stressed that only a synchronic analysis of a language can offer an exhausting and easily verifiable picture of a given language fact. Note that Mathesius' emphasizing the necessity of synchronic study was not connected with rejecting the diachronic approach; this holds true, for that matter, of the activities of PS as a whole (today it may seem unnecessary to stress it, but as late as the second half of the thirties, and even after World War II there were linguists — even prominent ones — who blamed PS, and especially its phonological studies, for ahistoric approach.) An important circumstance here is the fact that Mathesius' deep interest in phenomena of stylistic nature, attested already in his earliest works, proved clearly his essentially functional approach to language facts. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that in his beginnings Mathesius wrongly laid undue stress on the role of individuals in the language development and that he had a certain mistrust of what he then called "one-sided emphasizing of the social nature of speech". (This mistrust accounts for certain sympathies of his for Croce's and Vossler's theories at that time.) It is interesting that it was then the same "one-sided emphasizing of the social nature of speech" he held against Humboldt and his followers. It is also very well known that in this point Mathesius later substantially revised his initial opinions. As can be seen from the posthumous edition of his lectures (delivered at the turn of the twenties and thirties, cf. Concluding remarks of the editor to Mathesius 1961, pp. 249–52) he objected later (in the same way as the present PS) to another feature of

Humboldt's conception — his emphasis on constant creation in language (conceived as energeia), which concealed from Humboldt the fact that language is essentially a system; it can hardly be doubted that it is its systemic character and, consequently, the existence of a certain norm resulting from it that constitute the necessary precondition for the social functioning of language. Similar objections could be later raised to Chomsky's conception referring to Humboldt, which obscured the systemic nature of language from the American researcher in the same way as it had done previously from Humboldt.[7]

There can hardly be any doubts about the motives underlying the change in Mathesius' views of the problem: it was obviously his close contact with the friends with whom he was organizing his linguistic Circle. It was especially Jakobson and Trubetzkoy who influenced Mathesius substantially; they had learned about the social impact of language phenomena from the Russian tradition of Baudouin and Ščerba, although, otherwise, as will be shown presently, Mathesius' scientific type differed in a number of respects from that represented by these two friends of his. Nevertheless, it was obviously from them that Mathesius drew his knowledge in this respect, and, undoubtedly, it was their influence from which Mathesius' later interest in the problems of phonology sprang; as regards their quantitative studies, he became a true pioneer not only at home but also in the world context. As far as the internal differentiation of PS is concerned, it can be safely stated that two markedly distinct tendencies were competing (which is a better term than rivalling) in it. On the one hand it was the Trubetzkoy-Jakobsonian trend distinguished by a grand vision of general systemic outlines, with a deep sense of what used to be newly called language modelling. On the other hand, there was the Mathesius-Havránek's trend whose characteristic feature lay in refined tracing of inner systemic relationships, with special attention to the functional specialization of the means of expression of the given language system. Perhaps it could be said that in the characteristic epithet often used about PS and its approach to language facts, i.e., in the epithet "functionally structural", the Trubetzkoy-Jakobsonian trend emphasized rather the second member of this composite term, whereas Mathesius-Havránek's view stressed more the first component.

At the same time, as has been pointed out before, this difference in approaching the same facts can by no means be regarded as a contradiction: both the approaches complemented each other extremely well, and it was in the synthesis of both that PS displayed its strongest point, since this dual approach helped it to avoid impending one-sidedness. Nor can we say that the differentiation was due to national differences, i.e., differences between the "Russian" and the "Czech" approach. There were also Czech researchers to whom the Trubetzkoy–Jakobsonian approach appealed more strongly than that of Mathesius-Havránek, e.g., B. Trnka, J. M. Kořínek, and, on the contrary, it is possible to find scholars on the

Russian side as well who were close to the Mathesius-Havránek's position; this holds true, e.g., particularly about Leontij V. Kopeckij.

At the same time this internal differentiation shows how unjust it was to blame PS for the assumed dogmatic sectarianism allegedly forcing all adherents to swear by the official canon of principles of the Prague Circle: it is obvious that acceptance of the functional structural approach as the point of departure provided sufficient space for the members of PS to assert their own specificity of opinions. We can even find, in addition to the two main trends within PS that were characterized above, also other members of the Circle who deviated from the official canon of principles still more profoundly — from the classical period of the Circle J.M. Kořínek could be mentioned with his peculiar conception of *langue*, or some other aspects of language structure as well (see especially Kořínek 1942).

Nevertheless, the basic standpoint of all members of PS was concordant to such an extent that it made possible mutual fruitful cooperation and a unified collective procedure of all. The structural approach was being formed in clear-cut formulations opposed to the former Neo-Grammarian atomistic tendencies, the functional aspect made the needs of expression of a given language community into an important criterion in language analysis and evaluation. Simultaneously, the language means performing the purely communicative function (Bühler's *Darstellungsfunktion*, at times also referred to as projective function in Czech writings) were carefully distinguished from the means used for signalling emotive function (appeal, or individually expressive function, i.e., serving the functions for which Bühler used the term *Appellfunktion* or *Kundgabefunktion*). These aspects were applied in the analysis of all language levels from the phonological through the morphological and lexical to the syntactical.

By this respect to the functional differentiation of language means PS has always characteristically differed from other structuralistically oriented linguistic schools, especially from the Copenhagen glossematics and American descriptivism. In the same way PS can be favourably distinguished from these approaches in its recognition of the stylistic difference between the lexical layer synchronically domestic and that synchronically foreign (see especially Mathesius 1932b), a difference that, e.g., the American descriptivists came to notice only after World War II, and of whose existence the generative-transformational grammar began to be conscious still later (cf. C.C. Fries and K.L. Pike 1949, C. Rohrer 1967, on this topic also J. Vachek 1968c).

It has already been mentioned here that in spite of laying great stress upon synchronic analysis, PS by no means objected to the application of diachronic methods in linguistics. On the contrary, it is emphasized from the very beginning that language changes can be understood more fully only from the functionally structural point of view, viz, that it is necessary to examine any language change — not only a phonetic one — from the angle of the whole system that has been

affected by it.[8] Such an approach often shows that the examined language change largely has a therapeutical function, i.e., that it has been motivated by the need for preserving the endangered equilibrium of the language system, or, as the case may be, for recovering that equilibrium where it has been disturbed: what is meant by equilibrium here is the adequacy of language means for the purpose they are to serve. Already at its early stages PS often used to refer to this explanatory principle as teleological (for the first time this was formulated by Jakobson in his lecture in the Circle in January 1927; cf. Jakobson 1928, 1933).

In this PS conception the study of language development thus gets transformed into a study of the development of the language system as a whole, a study of its structural problems and their solution. It can be said that also this non-atomistic and non-static, i.e., dynamic conception of the relationship between language synchrony and diachrony represents another very important specific feature of the Praguian linguistic theory, unparalleled in the contemporary linguistic world, at least as regards the consistency of this conception.

It is undoubtedly true, as Jakobson points out (1963), that "what was regarded as a specific contribution of Prague to the development of modern linguistics appears to represent to a considerable extent a common denominator of a number of convergent trends in the scientific life of various European countries". (p. 482). As the common denominator of the work of such scholars as, e.g., the Dutch researchers Albert Willem de Groot and Hendrik Josephus Pos, the French linguist Émile Benveniste, the Norwegian Alf Sommerfelt, the Pole Jerzy Kuryłowicz, the Rumanian Alexandru Rosetti, the Hungarian Gyula Laziczius and the Russian Jevgenij Dmitrievič Polivanov, Jakobson presents in his paper the very fact that all of them were striving to create a linguistic means-end model. Nevertheless, of course, at the same time it must be stated — as has been already said above — that in none of the mentioned countries was such a model applied so consistently and in such a notable way as in PS — which was particularly Jakobson's merit.

In his lecture delivered in 1931 at the Second International Congress of Linguists in Geneva, Mathesius regards as two main pioneers of new linguistics Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, with whom "an eminent role is played by the idea of function", and Ferdinand de Saussure, who impressed Mathesius above all by "the requirement of synchronic analysis of language and the idea of language system" (Mathesius 1932a). As regards Baudouin, Mathesius disagreed with "his having been deluded by the mystifying light of psychology, and attaching undue importance to the fact that speech keeps constantly changing". — Although marking out the two prominent scholars was essentially just, this by no means represents full enumeration of the factors that contributed to the change in linguistic views in our country, not only as regards the linguistic factors but also as far as other entire scientific branches are concerned.

In the same lecture Mathesius himself mentions the analytic-comparative methods of Henry Sweet, who — like Otto Jespersen — helped him to get over the one-sidedness of the official Neo-Grammarian linguistics that predominated at the time when Mathesius' research profile was being formed. (It can hardly be a coincidence that the first item in Mathesius' chronologically ordered bibliography was represented by nothing else than a review of Jespersen's popular monograph *Growth and Structure of the English Language.*) Besides, Mathesius mentions two further opponents of the official Neo-Grammarian trend, the Romance scholar Hugo Schuchardt and the Czech Josef Zubatý. Although, as Mathesius rightly points out, neither of them went so far as to lay a "reliable foundation for a new period of linguistic research", even their role as precursors marking out a new era was certainly important. From among other branches of science the situation in linguistics at that period was certainly affected by the rise and influence of the *Gestalt* psychology and similar conceptions in musicology and theory of art, and equally, the abandonment of positivist philosophizing at that time: Mathesius often preached against "positivist narrow-mindedness", by which he understood adhering to phenomenalistic data and lack of courage to draw more general conclusions that could follow from them.

This much had to be said concerning the question of external influences which helped to form the teachings of PS. We would particularly emphasize the fact that the work of eminent external authorities (and also of the Russian protagonists of PS, Trubetzkoy, Jakobson and Karcevskij) was able to assert itself in such a pronounced way in the Praguian context for no other reason than that it had found the ground well prepared by the preceding efforts of the local, Czech members of this school (here especially the names of Mathesius, Havránek and Trnka should be mentioned). Anyway, the very fact that a new linguistic school of functional structuralist orientation was able to originate in Prague and not, e.g., in Vienna, where otherwise particularly advantageous conditions would have existed for its rise, is noteworthy: both Trubetzkoy and Bühler (whose influence upon Trubetzkoy's conception was beyond question) worked as university teachers there, and so were also the eminent comparatist Paul Kretschmer and the English scholar Karl Luick; in some points of their works both of them were inspired by Trubetzkoy's conception, or, in some respects, even anticipated it (cf. Vachek 1933). If, in spite of all these circumstances, a new linguistic school failed to originate in Vienna, then it was probably due to the fact that the ground was not prepared here to such an extent as it was in Prague; this was due in part to the emphasis (mentioned above) laid by Mathesius on the necessity of synchronic study of languages, in part to the influence of Zubatý, whose non-conformist attitude towards the mechanizing Neo-Grammarianism was taken over by his disciples as well, among whom a prominent place belonged to no one else than B. Havránek. (It certainly exposes a very poor knowledge of

an otherwise prominent linguist to class Zubatý as a "narrow and orthodox Neo-Grammarian", see Stankiewicz 1965.)

Havránek shared with Mathesius not only his mistrust of the dominating Neo-Grammarian trend, but also the essentially identical functional standpoint: one of Havránek's first articles deals with the question how Czech in the course of its development expressed the meaning conveyed by Latin adjectives ending in *-bilis* (Havránek 1929b); incidentally, an outline of the linguistic situation of the late twenties as seen by Mathesius in 1926 has much in common with Havránek's view as given in his introductory chapter of the first volume of his extensive monograph on voice in the Slavonic verb, see Havránek (1928–1929). It was this functional approach to language that enabled Havránek to create an important functional theory of standard language, of language correctness and language culture in general, a theory the principles of which he outlined in his lecture on the tasks of standard language and its culture (Havránek 1932).

According to this theory, accepted later by some prominent linguists abroad (e.g., Einar Haugen, Alf Sommerfelt, Paul L. Garvin), the correctness of a word or of a construction does not follow from historical criteria, but from functional adequacy of the given expression. Here Havránek together with Mathesius and Jakobson pointed out that any concern about foreign expressions (especially Germanisms) is totally unsubstantiated, as they have their legitimate place in the language norm, provided they fill a need in the language. Havránek then proved the importance of the functional approach by demonstrating in a number of examples how a sound form and a grammatical form in a given language can be profoundly influenced by functional needs of the given language community (cf. Havránek 1929a). For that matter, in this functional view any stylistic problems of a language appear as a formal differentiation of language performance given by functional needs of different kinds of language utterances; it was from this point of view that stylistic problems have always been analysed in PS (cf. Karel Hausenblas 1955, Lubomír Doležel 1964).

From the preceding paragraph a further no less important characteristic property of PS can be seen, i.e., its keen interest in everyday life situations, the problems of which the Praguian functional structuralists want to assist in solving. They do not belong — unlike, e.g., the linguists of the glossematic school — to research workers who seclude themselves in purely theoretical scientific work, but they want to serve the language community and contribute to satisfying its needs of expression. In perfect agreement with this essential tendency of PS is its lively interest in questions of the language of poetry (which, of course, is not dealt with in detail in our outline), an interest that caused the lecture sessions of the Circle to be often frequented by prominent critics, writers and artists in general, who contributed to the Circle's press platforms. Among them there were the novelist and play-writer Karel Čapek, who in his column greeted the publication of the

periodical *Slovo a slovesnost* (Word and Verbal Arts), the literary critic František Xaver Šalda, the author of an essay on poetical autostylization, and others, in particular Jaroslav Durych, Vladislav Vančura, Jindřich Honzl and Vítězslav Nezval. It was, of course, also the negative reaction of artists against the then purist practice of the journal *Naše řeč* (Our Language) aimed at the leading Czech writers, that gave the last, but not the only, impulse to the Prague Linguistic Circle to organize its series of lectures on Standard Czech and language culture.

The sense for serving the language community, however, manifested itself also in the domain of language pedagogy and didactics. A mention has already been made of the textbook of Czech for junior secondary schools prepared by a collective headed by Bohuslav Havránek (Havránek-Kopeckij-Starý-Získal 1933–36). Besides, there appeared a series of textbooks and dictionaries of foreign languages, especially of English and Russian, in which the authors verified in practice the soundness of the new linguistic theory within one of the most sensitive testing fields, in language teaching. Such names as Bohumil Trnka (Potter-Trnka 1926–28), Josef Vachek (1946b), Ivan Poldauf (Osička-Poldauf 1948), Kurt Roubíček (Krůta-Roubíček 1941), Karel Hais (1938), most of them Mathesius' disciples, can be adduced here; in the domain of Russian a particular mention must be made of an important representative of this section of the work of the Circle, Leontij V. Kopeckij, author of excellent dictionaries and textbooks of Russian (Kopeckij 1935) and the head of a collective that after World War II elaborated a large Russian- Czech dictionary. A more detailed list of publications of this kind would lead us too far, beyond the limits allotted to this outline.

In this connection it should be noted that by these schoolbook publications the Circle laid foundations to a systematic research using a method which Mathesius himself had called analytically comparative (as distinct from the historically comparative approach) and for which in the contemporary world the term confrontational or contrastive method is used. In addition to the textbooks of English and Russian also two remarkable, though popularising, monographs appeared on the ground of PS, comparing more systematically in this contrastive way a foreign target language with Czech, the pupil's mother tongue. This concerns, above all, the series of Mathesius' broadcast lectures accompanying a radio course of English, which appeared in book form in the mid-thirties with a telling subtitle "What cannot be found in textbooks" (Mathesius 1936b). Following the example of Mathesius, a similar, also successful book on German was written five years later by the Prague secondary school teacher Jaroslav Nosil (1941), who was in constant touch with Mathesius when writing it. Also in the domain of Russian important works appeared in the field of language contrasting, above all owing to the care of Vladimír Barnet and a group of his collaborators. The importance of all this comes to the fore if we remind ourselves of the fact that western linguistics, especially that in the US, became aware of the possibility of

such a synchronic comparison of languages first in the sixth or seventh decade of our century and developed then an intense activity in this field (see, e.g. W. G. Moulton 1962, H. L. Kufner 1962, G. Nickel 1971), often without knowing that these problem areas had been treated methodologically and practically by PS three or more decades before.

In his small booklet on English Mathesius sketched, be it only in a passing outline and with a predominantly popularising intent, a concrete example of what he theoretically postulated in Czech linguistics from the mid-twenties (and with which he acquainted the world linguistic public at The Hague Congress in 1928), i.e., a demonstration of linguistic characterology of a specific language. Mathesius himself explained the postulated concept as follows: "If the task of a descriptive grammar consists in presenting a complete inventory of all formal and functional elements that exist in a given language at a given stage of its development, linguistic characterology deals only with important and basic features of the given language at the given point in time, analyzes them on the basis of general linguistics and endeavours to find the relationships that exist between them." At the same time, of course, attention should be paid not only to qualitative, but also to quantitative characteristic features of the language examined; it is known that, as far as quantitative study of language facts is concerned, Mathesius belonged to the first pioneers in our country, at least as regards facts of the sound level (Mathesius 1929, 1931a).

From what has been said here it follows quite univocally that PS never intended to pursue science just for science sake (though its interest in general problems of linguistics was always lively and profound), but that PS as a rule endeavoured to draw as many practical consequences from theoretical knowledge as possible for the benefit of language users; in other words, through its scientific pursuits it wanted to serve the general language community. We can certainly venture the opinion that of all the structurally oriented linguistic trends, PS acquitted itself as by far the most sensitive to the needs and requirements of daily life, although it cannot be denied that some other similarly oriented groups manifested some understanding for such needs as well. What remains, however, beyond any doubt is the fact that nowhere else did this understanding attain so high a degree as in PS. For that matter already Bulygina (1964: 123) approvingly cites the statement by the German scholar H. Lüdtke (1959) that PS represents the only structuralist trend that "doesn't take refuge in an ivory tower and doesn't result in sterile formalism".

It is certainly true that, e.g., the Yale descriptivist school gained recognition for the application of its conception of language to practical language instruction. Nevertheless, it is also true that a number of other topical problems of daily life remained constantly beyond its attention. This holds, e.g., for such important domains as standardization of language: it is symptomatic that even in the subsequent decades after the prestige of descriptivism was weakened, when interest in

these problems began to emerge, the main American linguist in this field proved to be an American scholar of Indian descent (Punya Sloka Ray 1963). Finally, it was only after World War II that in American linguistics a more systematic research in the domain of the language of poetry began — pushed through, especially by Roman Jakobson and by a former Prague member of the Circle, René Wellek. Moreover, as a prominent American dialectologist Raven I. McDavid pointed out, the Yale descriptivists came to deal with the domain of language instruction by a coincidence of external circumstances (by carrying out a government assignment in connection with the entrance of the US into World War II) rather than from their own initiative, as it was in the history of PS — there the interest in these problems represented an organic outcome of the whole linguistic conception from the very beginning, mainly in the approach of Jakobson and Mukařovský. McDavid pointed out, too, that the American tradition — at least in his time — failed to bring linguists and literary critics together to a mutual fruitful dialogue, which in the Prague cultural tradition was conducted for decades.[9]

So much had to be said about the origins and maturation of the Praguian linguistic theory and its specific features, by which it distinguished itself both from the preceding linguistic schools (especially from the Neo-Grammarians) and from other linguistic schools of structuralist orientation. After this general and factual view it will be useful to concentrate our attention on some concrete personalities of the founding generation of the Prague Circle — we shall see how each of them contributed to the creation of the generation's profile by this or that particular feature. Although for technical reasons we have to confine ourselves to the founding generation of the Circle, it certainly will not do any harm to illustrate by further minor portraits the entire background in which PS originated and was gradually formed. In these portraits we base ourselves on our own personal reminiscences supplemented by recollections of other contemporaries with whom we have shared them and, last but not least, on the personalities' own work.

3. The personalities of the founding generation of Prague School

It is only natural that the first personality we want to deal with in this outline will be the founder of PS himself, Vilém Mathesius (1882–1945). Although already in the preceding chapters many a thing was mentioned in passing or suggested, no less than a minor monograph would be necessary to let his scientific and human personage come out in its full plasticity. This task has been at least in part fulfilled by the memorial volume (edited by J. Vachek) *Jazyk, kultura a slovesnost* (Language, Culture and Verbal Arts), published in 1982 on the occasion of the centenary of Mathesius' birthday (there a more detailed biography and a complete bibliography can be found; cf. Mathesius 1982).

First we should like to touch upon Mathesius' moral pathos that emanated from his entire personality, which played such an important role in forming PS, and by which all his disciples without exception were affected. We want to give thought to the sources from which this pathos sprang: it resulted in part from his personal qualities — his pedagogical mastery, the depth and breadth of his scientific vision, his extraordinary industriousness and a deep sense of fair play towards everyone, in part from his hard personal fate, first caused by a serious eye disease, later, furthermore, by tuberculosis of the spine. This handicap, however, transposed his moral greatness to a still higher, heroic, level.

The origins of his poor health Mathesius himself connected with his laborious efforts to provide the bare necessities of life during World War I: on Sundays he was obliged to get provisions for his family (since they had no relatives in the country) by trying to find better-off farmers willing to let a humble petitioner have some butter, flour or potatoes, not for money, of course, but for various valuables. The catastrophe occurred after the war, in 1924. By chance a report of an eyewitness was preserved showing how Mathesius himself heroically endured such blows. A miscellany prepared for the occasion of his 60th anniversary (completed and even set up for print, yet never published as the German occupation authorities severely curtailed scientific publications) contained among others also a personal remembrance by an intimate friend of Mathesius' family, Professor Jaroslav Peklo, a phytopathologist. (Owing to some circumstances it was just this very contribution that failed to be published later, although all the other papers appeared elsewhere, partly in the *Časopis pro moderní filologii* (Journal for Modern Philology), in part in the provisional revue *Český časopis filologický* (Czech Journal of Philology) that at least temporarily was to fill the gap caused by the liquidation of the two periodicals, *Časopis pro moderní filologii* and *Listy filologické* (Letters of Philology). In his recollections Professor Peklo describes how after having been alerted by an ominous phone message, in which the Mathesius family notified him that their father had lost his sight, he hurried to their flat near the then Letná water works. There he found that of the whole family only Mathesius himself remained calm, tried to comfort the others and to allay their fears. He was then, as his friend relates, in full control of the situation.

In the same way he impressed us, his disciples, as well as his other contemporaries in the after years. Otokar Fischer, who belonged to the same generation as Mathesius and who had also spent his young years in the lowlands around Kolín, in his commemorative article on the occasion of Mathesius' fiftieth birthday (1932) characterizes the honoured scientist as a rather classicist personality (while Fischer himself preferred to be taken as a romanticist). It can be said that to our generation, which came in touch with him in the second half of the twenties, Mathesius appeared to be a classicist par excellence. He always had full control of his emotions, never a stronger word passed through his lips and, at any time, he

was able to curb even the most righteous indignation he felt. He was absolute master of his time, and that is probably why he was able to give it out liberally to others who often turned to him asking for help, whether during their studies or after they finished them.

All these classicist traits were obvious to anyone who got to know Mathesius even from afar. Few people, however, would have guessed what Mathesius himself confided to the author of these lines in a private letter from 1942, three years before he died: that he had to fight hard with himself to achieve his equanimity since he was of a temperament "more explosive than quiet". Also this admission eventually completes the portrait of Mathesius as a man of strong character, who by his will power was able to overcome even such obstacles that would wear down anyone else.

Mathesius knew how to radiate the strength of his intellect and spirit from himself around — he was always full of optimism, which was not cheap but gained by striving with his enlightened faith and capability to view all, even his personal fate and everyday troubles, sub specie aeternitatis. In the obituary one of his disciples confessed ashamedly that in the hard times of the Nazi occupation we, the healthy ones, kept visiting the bedside of an incurably ill man to draw necessary doses of optimism, indispensable for us to be able to live, survive and go on fighting.

Using the same strength of his spirit Mathesius succeeded in grouping around himself his friends and pupils. When owing to his serious disease he could no longer attend the lecture meetings of the Circle he used to invite regularly to his flat a group of young people he called "Little Circle" so as to have once a week a discussion with them on both linguistic and general cultural problems. It was also this very strength of spirit that had enabled him formerly to organize his Prague Linguistic Circle and to succeed as editor of a number of journals and miscellanies in associating round himself groups of people (of similar opinions, it is true, but rather dissimilar in personal temperament and style of work) and in inducing them to participate in fruitful work. Perhaps, he was the only personality at that time that was able to play such a unifying role: his merits did not consist only in having founded the Circle, but above all in that he succeeded in endowing it with a spirit of companionable friendship resulting in collective cooperation. If one of the beneficial activities of the Circle consisted in putting methods of collective work through, it is particularly Mathesius' merit to have brought about that very atmosphere in which sociable cooperation thrived.

It is only to be regretted that Mathesius' work did not become better known in the world linguistics at an earlier date. It would have deserved it if for nothing else than for the really extraordinary importance of his treatise on the potentiality of the phenomena of language (Mathesius 1911–1912) — this remained without wider response, abroad mainly because it had appeared only in Czech and at

home because it could not meet with enough understanding at the beginning of the second decade of the century. When shortly after World War I Jakobson got to know this treatise, he told its author that in Moscow in 1911 he would have caused a veritable revolution in linguistics by its conclusions. And when finally in 1964–after more than half a century — the English translation of this lecture appeared (in the anthology J. Vachek 1964d), C.F. Hockett, a well-known American linguist, expressed his sincere admiration that such ideas could have been formulated at so early a period. (The Russian translation of Mathesius' article appeared after the English version in Kondrašov's anthology 1967.) Nevertheless, even so Mathesius gained international recognition still in his lifetime, especially by having been elected as the Czechoslovak representative in CIPL, the permanent international committee of linguists, which organizes international linguistic congresses. Thus he was recognized not only for his works in English studies, which were being published already from the first decade of our century and whose culmination was to become the posthumously published volume devoted to synchronic analysis of English (Mathesius 1961), but also for his works in Czech studies. These were concerned systematically with — also in this respect Mathesius was a pioneer — the living colloquial speech. There he mainly dealt with important problems of functional sentence perspective, which, only after his decease, became a major topic of our linguistics as well as in the international linguistic context, and with modern problems of language culture — especially in his call for stability of the Standard language (1932c). An invaluable bequest to Czech studies was made by his posthumous volume *Čeština a obecný jazykozpyt* (Czech Language and General Linguistics; 1947), not to mention his collection of essays *Možnosti, které čekají* (Chances that Lie Ahead; 1944).

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There is no doubt that in respect of international popularity Mathesius was at that time surpassed by another prominent representative of the Circle to whom we are going to devote our attention here, Nikolaj Sergeevič Trubeckoj (Trubetzkoy, 1890–1938). He came from an old Russian aristocratic family from which a number of eminent politicians and scientists had descended.

According to Jakobson, Trubetzkoy attended Moscow University from the age of 14, and he was seventeen when he started his publication activities, by that time not yet as a linguist but as an ethnologist. However, soon his interests centred on the field of linguistics, which prevailed to such an extent that by the time immediately preceding the Bolshevist Revolution he was preparing himself for associate professorship in comparative linguistics. The stormy period of the revolution and the subsequent civil war deprived Trubetzkoy not only of his reference library, but also of his home in his native country. After a transition period which he spent as

a professor in Rostov on the Don (in difficult conditions both personal and professional), he took refuge in Bulgaria, where he worked as a professor of Sophia University. At last in the year 1922 he was invited on Antoine Meillet's recommendation to Vienna University as professor of Slavonic linguistics, to the chair once occupied by Miklošič, Jagić and Vondrák. Here he undisputedly had much better working conditions than before, in Sophia. His working engagement became considerably more intensive owing to frequent contacts with Jakobson, who from the first half of the twenties lived in Czechoslovakia, and with the Prague linguistic background in general. What these contacts with this environment meant for Trubetzkoy can be illustrated by a passage from his letter sent to Mathesius on the occasion of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Circle in 1936. In an excerpt from it, as it was published in the periodical *Slovo a slovesnost* (1937:63f.), we read: "Various stages of the development of the Circle which I have lived through with it come to my mind today — first the modest minor meetings at the chairman's, then the heroic time of preparations for the first Slavonic Congress, the days of the Prague phonological conference never to be forgotten and many other beautiful days that I spent in the company of my Prague friends. All these recollections are connected in my mind with a special stimulating sensation, since at any contact with the Prague Circle I experienced a new upsurge of creative joy that in my lonely work far from Prague keeps sinking unwittingly again and again. This revival of and stimulus to intellectual creation represents the spirit inherent in our association and results, I insist, from the collective work of allied research workers sharing a common methodological approach and inspired by identical theoretical ideas."

Those years were probably the happiest period in Trubetzkoy's scientific and pedagogical life, but they were already darkened by warning signals of his deteriorating health: Trubetzkoy suffered from angina pectoris, which was undoubtedly a toll for the hard years of privation and homelessness that his weakened organism had to pay. Those who remember the lectures in the Prague Circle, the meetings of which were taking place in a coffeehouse milieu, would long recall how at the beginnings of the sessions, still before Trubetzkoy arrived, they were asked by the organizers to abstain for this once from smoking because of Trubetzkoy's heart decease. Understandably, the deteriorating political climate in the world (and especially in Austria) was by no means beneficial to his health. Under these circumstances his continuing scientific activities can be rated as the culmination of a supreme heroic effort. After the occupation of Austria by Hitler's Germany Trubetzkoy clearly saw that his further existence at the nazified Vienna University was no more sustainable. The last possibility which, at least theoretically, remained, his emigration to the USA (where Trubetzkoy had friends and where he could go on with his research) was considered. However, it was too late: his flat was invaded and thoroughly searched by Gestapo and he himself was subjected to a merciless

interrogation procedure. This shocking experience resulted in a serious heart attack to which Trubetzkoy finally succumbed in hospital care, dictating almost to the last moments the remaining chapters of his famous *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. He died on June 25, 1938, when according to Jakobson's information only some twenty pages were missing to make Trubetzkoy's great life-work complete.

Many valuable facts about Trubetzkoy's life as well as about the development of his linguistic (especially phonological) views were revealed by at least partial publication of the many-years' regular personal correspondence between Trubetzkoy and Jakobson. The letters written by Trubetzkoy to Jakobson were fortunately preserved thanks to the intrepidity of Professor B. Trnka, to whose care they had been entrusted by Jakobson, then on the run from the Nazis; Professor Trnka was able to give them back again to Jakobson in order after the war. The latter then published them in 1975 with Mouton as a valuable piece of evidence also for the early history of PS; unfortunately, Jakobson's letters to Trubetzkoy were not preserved, but Jakobson gave brief accounts of their contents.

Trubetzkoy's heritage survives undiminished even after his decease. His thoroughly thought-out theory of phonological oppositions served Jakobson as the point of departure for his well-known theory of binary oppositions of distinctive features. The stimulating nature of the *Grundzüge* had as its consequence a number of re-editions, in the original German version as well as in translations (into French by Jean Cantineau 1949, Russian by A. A. Xolodovič 1960 and, lastly, into English by C. A. M. Baltaxe 1969).

In Vienna (and later on also in some other smaller Austrian cities) several international phonological conferences took place (after 1964); twenty-five years after his death, Vienna University honoured Trubetzkoy by fixing a commemorative plaque in the university columns, as has been the custom pertaining to the most illustrious professors of that institution.

Trubetzkoy's communication with Jakobson was not only continuous but also highly concordant in opinions as regards fundamental problems. Jakobson appears to have often inspired Trubetzkoy, who, now and then, brought Jakobson's formulations to more perfect shape. They formed an excellent team together that used to participate in discussions jointly (as in The Hague case mentioned above).

There is no doubt that in respect of practical organization it was Jakobson who played the leading role in the cooperation of the two scholars; on the other hand, Trubetzkoy synthesized Jakobson's stimulating ideas in a most remarkable way: see, e.g., Trubetzkoy's system of phonological oppositions. As is known, Jakobson formulated his theory of binary oppositions of distinctive features — at least in its rudimentary shape — still at the very close of Trubetzkoy's life. The fact that this binaristic conception fails to be consistently accepted in Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge* does not necessarily involve, as has been inferred, e.g., by André Martinet, an essential contradiction between Trubetzkoy and Jakobson in ques-

tions of classification of phonological oppositions. It should be considered under what difficult conditions of life Trubetzkoy was bringing his manuscript to conclusion: he had absolutely no chance to subject it to a final revision and edition, which undoubtedly would have introduced desirable last corrections in more than one place.

Anyway, it can be said that in essential matters the two researchers' views concurred in a surprising way. The warm relationship of Jakobson to Trubetzkoy is shown by the fact that it was to him that Jakobson dedicated his *Remarques* (Jakobson 1929 = TCLP 2). In turn, as the Introduction supplied by the editors to the *Grundzüge* has revealed, in a planned yet never written preface Trubetzkoy intended to dedicate this work to Jakobson.

In some points there is certainly no doubt that Jakobson induced Trubetzkoy to make some minor corrections in his formulations. This concerns, e.g., some of Trubetzkoy's psychologizing definitions or, as the case may be, his psychologizing phraseology from the beginnings of phonological research, when Trubetzkoy was ridding himself of Baudouin traditions at a somewhat slower pace than Jakobson: the points in question were mainly the definitions of phoneme and morphoneme. Never, however, were the differences as serious as to indicate the existence of any fundamental contradiction between the two scientists.

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As is natural in the given context, the following lines will be devoted to the scientist whose name was repeatedly mentioned here in connection with Trubetzkoy's work, Roman Osipovič Jakobson (1896–1982). During his studies at Moscow University he got to know very well not only the traditions of the school of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and Lev Vladimirovič Ščerba, but also the subtle Neo-Grammarian methods of Filipp Fedorovič Fortunatov and his school. From the very beginning he manifested a lively interest in problems of poetics and poetical language, an interest he did not relinquish even later, when he concentrated his main efforts on questions of structural grammar and phonology. By coincidence he came into his first closer contacts with Czech ambience through his well-known monograph on Czech verse as compared with Russian (Jakobson 1923), which appeared three years later also in its Czech version.

He then became so familiar with the Czech environments and problems of Czech language, literature and culture in general that Arne Novák in his *Přehledné dějiny literatury české* (Outline of Czech Literature; 1936–38 = 1995:1617) did not hesitate to characterize him as a "Czechized Russian". From 1933 till the Nazi occupation he worked as professor of Russian and Slavonic studies at the University of Brno. After the country was occupied, in 1939, he fled to escape political and racial persecution and took refuge in Denmark, then in Norway and finally in the

United States, where he lived until his death. During the war he held for some time the post of professor of Czech language and literature at Columbia University in New York, from where at the beginning of the fifties he moved to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. as professor of Slavonic studies; at the same time, he was professor of general linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Our main interest will be centred on that period of Jakobson's activities in which his relationship with the Czech ambience was very close and in which he was regarded as one of the most prominent members of PS. He was one of its founding members: his name appears among the names of the participants of the first meeting of the Circle, and it was he who at one of the first meetings (on January 13, 1927) presented his views on teleogically conceived phonology. From the very beginning he was vice-chairman of the Circle and there is no exaggeration in maintaining that he was its spiritus agens. This was especially true about his role at the international phonological conference in 1930, where he not only delivered three important papers, but also prepared the wording of the "Outline of Standardized Phonological Terminology and of the Principles of Phonological Transcription"; moreover, he edited the minutes of the discussions, not to speak about his editorial share in publishing the fourth volume of *TCLP*, containing all the materials of the conference. In a similar way it would be possible to demonstrate his indefatigable initiative and efficiency by enumerating further activities, e.g., in connection with the cycle of lectures on Standard Czech and language culture, a number of longer and shorter articles published in *Slovo a slovesnost*, and his last editorial work, which had to be anonymous, viz the edition of Trubetzkoy's *Grundzüge* published as the 7th volume of *TCLP*. It was probably Jakobson to whom we are indebted for the arrangement of Trubetzkoy's bibliography (outwardly signed by B. Havránek) appended to the 8th volume of *TCLP*, in which treatises and essays devoted to Trubetzkoy's memory were contained. Jakobson's own article could not, of course, appear here. (Some of his papers succeeded in being eventually printed, mostly in the miscellany edited by Mathesius (1939–1940) *Co daly naše země Evropě a lidstvu* (What our Countries Gave to Europe and Mankind): they appeared under the name of Olaf Jensen — yet the initiated knew well who was hidden under this pseudonym.) Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that if it had not been for Jakobson the Circle would have been deprived of many a characteristic feature and its activities as a whole would have been much less diverse. It can be even maintained that without Jakobson the Circle would not bear its name, which was to become a concept known all over the world: the name Prague Linguistic Circle was presumably chosen after the model of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, a progressive association of which Jakobson used to be a very agile member before he moved to Prague. Even after years Jakobson came back to this point and substantiated the choice by the intent to express by this name a non-traditional scientific endeavour striving for new, progressive ways (Jakobson 1965).

At the meetings of the Circle Jakobson belonged to the most regular and best informed debaters: his profound philosophical erudition (he was, e.g., an eminent connoisseur of Husserl's phenomenology) enabled him prompt orientation in the problems in question and his clear rigorous logic qualified him to formulate his conclusions precisely and convincingly. In discussions with the adversaries of the Circle he was insuperable — his formulations were forceful as blows with a hammer and at the same time sharp as a razor. Nevertheless, he was completely devoid of any professional pride: at any time he was willing to discuss with anyone questions that fell within the domains of linguistics and poetics, being most obliging in this respect towards young adepts.

Jakobson's fervid interest in questions of verse, poetic language and poetics was closely connected with his constant contacts with poets, writers and artists in general who often attended the meetings of the Circle and contributed, as we already know, to its periodical. Jakobson thus represented, along with Jan Mukařovský, the main connecting link of the Circle with the artistic world. That is also why he very energetically took part in the cycle of lectures (often mentioned here before) on Standard Czech and language culture, where he subjected to scathing criticism the then puristic practice of Jiří Haller (at that time the editor of *Naše řeč*). The contacts with artists were naturally connected with Jakobson's intensive social life: he liked to visit wine restaurants together with men of letters (as has been also recollected by such poets as Vítězslav Nezval and Jaroslav Seifert in their memoirs). It was obviously due to his influence that for long years it was a custom in the Circle to visit after finishing a lecture session some cosy wine bar "to continue the discussion". This is only seemingly a marginal fact that might be omitted in this outline: it was also through such informal meetings that friendly ties were strengthened, ties that served as one of the main guarantees of successful results of a work done collectively. However brief this outline may be, it must contain a mention of Jakobson's (1936), as well as Frank Wollman's (1936), dauntless denouncement of a monograph written in the spirit of aggressive German chauvinism by Konrad Bittner, senior lecturer of the Prague German University, entitled *Deutsche und Tschechen I*. Both articles were based on papers read at a lecture session of the Circle and they exposed the unscientific character of Bittner's theses intended as ideological preparation of the Nazi occupation. It was this courageous deed that (in addition to the menace of racial persecution) forced Jakobson to leave Czechoslovak territory after the Nazi invasion as soon as possible. All these facts show in a very convincing manner how significant a role was played by Jakobson in the early PS. It would be possible to demonstrate in detail that a great majority of his theses (e.g., about the openness of the language system, about the therapeutic function of vowel changes, the need for finding general language laws, etc.) are valid till today not only within the confines of PS but on the international linguistic scene as well. It can be added here that even

Jakobson's well-known theory of binary oppositions of distinctive features has its origins already in the Prague period of his activity — for the first time he dealt with this topic more systematically in one of his Prague lectures, at the meeting of the Circle on March 21, 1938, devoted to acoustic classification of consonants; Jakobson's conclusions were then printed in full in French in the *Proceedings of the 3rd International Congress of Phonetic Sciences, Ghent, 1938*. Further development of his theses falls within the postwar period, when Jakobson worked outside the Czechoslovak domain.

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Another distinguished personality to be paid special attention is Bohuslav Havránek (1893–1978). He had entered the history of PS as one of the participants in the first meetings of the Circle, particularly by his very intensive cooperation in formulating the Prague theses from 1929 and, later, the general principles of language culture (1932). He substantially contributed to the success of the international Prague conference in 1930 and gave lectures at international congresses of Slavonic studies (beginning by the year 1929), where he always successfully promoted the functionally structural approach to the given language problems. Of great importance is his editorial work in the revue *Slovo a slovesnost*; here he originally collaborated with V. Mathesius and then, after Mathesius died, continued as its editor-in-chief.

At the Prague University Faculty of Arts, where Havránek studied in addition to Czech also classical philology, his teachers were mainly Josef Zubatý and Jiří Polívka. The significance of Zubatý's scepticism in the period of Neo-Grammarian hegemony has been mentioned above: among his pupils it was Havránek who belonged to the most perceptive. For Havránek's further scientific development an important role was played by his assignment to the Office of the Dictionary of Czech, where he penetrated deep into the problems of Standard language and where he benefited greatly from discussions with the researchers then working on the Dictionary, especially Kvido Hodura and the untimely deceased Václav Ertl. Just as Ertl, the originator of the theory of "good authors", Havránek worked his way to the conception of language correctness given by function, not by historical purity, and, in the same way as Ertl, he was able to incorporate his theoretical views into practical schoolbooks. — Havránek was also an excellent dialectologist; his first lecture as senior lecturer was devoted to Czech dialectology. Havránek's overview of Czech dialects as presented in the third volume of *Československá vlastivěda* (Czechoslovak National History and Geography) has not yet been surpassed, although a distance of more than six decades intervenes between its publication and our time. His two-volume monograph on verbal voice in Slavonic languages is regarded as a great contribution to the Slavonic as well as general

grammar. However, Havránek's main contribution to Czech studies was made by his works devoted to the theory and practice of standard language.

We have already mentioned Havránek's fruitful discussions with Hodura and Ertl, which helped to form his functional approach to the problems in question. This approach can be traced already in his paper on Slavonic adjectives corresponding to the Latin type in *-bilis*; however, the study to be noted here above all, is Havránek's extensive treatise based on his lecture on the tasks of standard language and on its culture (from the cycle organized by the Circle in 1932). This lecture laid firm foundations of the functional structuralist theory of language in respect of grammar as well as style. Havránek also showed how the function of standard language can influence the grammatical and phonological structure of the language; further, he drew a distinction between such important terms as "norm" and "codification", at a time when the Neo-Grammarian linguistics completely ignored this difference and when even progressive currents in western linguistics were not aware of the existence of these problems. Havránek's collected works dealing with these problems were published in the sixties (Havránek 1963).

Havránek's interest in questions of bilingualism and linguistic areas (*Sprachbund*) must be regarded as equally modern. As an expert in Balkan languages he devoted special attention particularly to the Balkan language situation, having thus anticipated in this field by several decades the sociolinguistic research, so topical in the contemporary world. As an exacting but fair pedagogue, Havránek, who came from the family of a secondary school teacher, could unerringly pick young talented students; a long row of his pupils, Slavists, Bohemicists as well as specialists in Russian acquired university posts in Prague or Brno. He never denied any of his pupils advice and help, either during their studies, or after they finished them. Also his relationship towards the staff and employees of the Institute of Czech Language, the director of which he became in 1950, was always distinguished by humane kindness, although he never made concessions in his exacting demands on work.

Moreover, we have not yet mentioned Havránek's editorial participation in numerous dictionary projects beginning with *Příruční slovník jazyka českého* (A Shorter Dictionary of Czech Language) through *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (A Dictionary of Standard Czech Language) up to the recent *Slovník staročeský* (A Dictionary of Old Czech); everywhere he joined in with pleasure and willingly placed his encyclopedic knowledge and many years' experience at the disposal of all. In all these works Havránek's contemporaries admired his amazing concentration on the given task and his precise matter-of-fact objectivity unaffected by transient moods, both being indispensable prerequisites of a successful scholar and teacher.

In connection with the work on the Old-Czech Dictionary let us recall that Havránek succeeded in training the leader of the lexicographic collective of this dictionary, Igor Němec; it was through the work of this scholar that the early idea