

Czech Functional Structuralism: The Foundry

The sources were many, forged over time. The outcome, or what was gradually emerging, was original thought and methodology. Though the formal establishment of the Prague Linguistic Circle dates back to 1926, the roots of Czech structuralism were established at the beginning of the 20th century on the foundations of an earlier domestic tradition. Its lineage was disrupted after World War II when, following the communist putsch, the Circle discontinued its activities for ideological and political reasons.

Among the bones of contention was the received view of the evolution of society, or rather of its 'superstructure', including art and literature, as the orthodox tenet held that art was derived from the 'material basis'. In spite of these developments, Prague structuralism continued and saw its revival in the 1960s, to be terminated with the advent of the strict régime installed in 1972. The 1960s therefore saw both a re-awakening and a retreat – some structuralists left the country (see The Exiles). The 1980s culminated in the disintegration of the "socialist camp" and the collapse of socialist régimes in Europe by 1990. The period that followed involved both re-invigoration and confrontation with western paradigms in humanities.

Sources of Czech Structuralism

- Dialectics, historicism, dynamics: Hegel, early Marx
- Sociology: Durkheim, Weber
- Phenomenology: Husserl, Ingarden
- Philosophy: Carnap, etc.
- Functionalism: Bühler + domestic tradition
- Structuralism: Saussure + domestic tradition, etc.
- Aesthetics: Kant, Hegel, Christiansen, Russian formalism, Czech tradition (Herbartism)
- Theory of information, cybernetics, mathematical linguistics ... other theories