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MAIN TRENDS IN RECENT THEATRE SCIENCE

Theatrology is a very young discipline still in the process of elaborating its tools, theory, systematics and methodological foundations. All important scholarly centers where theatre has become the object of a serious consideration, are concerned with these problems. This concern motivated the Catholic University in Lublin to gather a group of people representing various institutions: universities, research institutes, theatrical journals, and the theatre tout court for a symposium.

The general methodological situation in the field can be characterized as pluralistic and syncretistic. Attitudes and approaches of very different philosophical and cultural roots coexist in the same scholarly works: a distinctive effort towards methodological integration is evident in theatre science as well as in other fields. These syncretic tendencies can be substantiated by the writings of Roland Barthes, who considers himself to be all together a structuralist, a semiotician and a representative of anthropological, psychological and sociological criticism.

These terms call for clarification in reference to the theatre. This provides us with the opportunity to explain in more detail the tendency which already has been mentioned: towards pluralism and syncretism. Closer analysis of the various methods will show the inherent shortcomings and one-sidedness of each.

Let us start with the anthropological approach which entered triumphantly to the fore in the second decade of our century and which was to fall into a would-be oblivion. From the very beginning, the theory of myths and archetypes was applied to drama and theatre. No wonder: the fact can be explained by the very character of the „mythic outlook” or „the mythic idea of the world”. Already Cassirer¹ stressed the dramatic nature of myths, considering the ”mythic world” to be a scene of the struggling powers, scene of ”actions and forces”. The mythographic

¹ *An Essay on Man*. New Haven 1944.

² *Mythologies*, Paris 1956, Seuil.

³ *Elements d'une sociologie du spectacle*. Paris 1973.

method appeared to be quite adequate with regard to Greek tragedy and the tragedy in general; it proved also fitting for the analysis of the symbolist and expressionist drama and for all sorts of poetic plays based on great metaphors. In opposition, realistic drama, such as documentary and historical, whose only objective is to render some specific, historical reality, resist virtually any "mythic" explanation. However, even in regard to the latter category the notion of the myth was quite successfully applied, myth being specified as social, individual or historical. In these terms was interpreted the tremendous success of Greta Garbo or Gérard Philipe by Roland Barthes² and Richard Demarcy³. In the latter's book on sociology of the performance many a social myth, among others that grounding Offenbach's operetta, was revealed.

So far, the mythic interpretation of drama and theatre was concerned primarily with its themes, action and characters. That methodological determination may be regarded as a legacy of pre-war British studies (Lord Raglan's⁴ and Maud Bodkin's⁵) as well as of the post-war American criticism (Northrop Frye and Francis Fergusson). Whereas the former (Frye) in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957)⁶ did not but touch on the problems of comedy (Mythos of Spring) and those of tragedy (Mythos of Autumn), without any more detailed exemplification, Fergusson as early as 1949⁷ started a close mythic analysis of drama. His idea of drama as ritual and as imitation of an action was supported by the close reading of *Oedipus the King*, of *Berenice* and *Hamlet*.

All the categories proposed by Fergusson were accepted not only in American, but in European criticism as well. The most basic categories are: theatre as ritual and realization of a myth; action intended in the broadest sense such as to be identified with the theatrical macrocosm; the hero understood as a scapegoat; the analogy of an action; and the tragic rhythm.

New methodological inspiration in this field was brought in by the French criticism, first of all by Lévi-Strauss and Mircea Eliade. The inspirational power of the *Anthropologie structurale*⁸ along with the *Structures du mythe*⁹ is so manifest that it is indisputable. As we all remember, Lévi-Strauss undertook an analysis of the Oedipus myth i.e. the myth that has often served as the point of reference to all mythic and

⁴ *The Hero*, London 1936, Methuen.

⁵ *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, m. 1934.

⁶ N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton 1957.

⁷ F. Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater*, New York 1949.

⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale*, Paris 1958.

⁹ *Ibid.*

psychoanalytic interpretations. Again, Lévi-Strauss concentrated mainly, if not exclusively, on the narrative construction, on plot and characters.

The impact of M. Eliade's criticism¹⁰ proved to be no less important inasmuch as he focussed the critics' attention on the problems of time and space i.e. on the theatrical potentialities of drama and the temporal-spatial dimensions of every performance. The problematic was recognized at once as essential; moreover, Eliade encouraged the critics to discriminate between the profane and the sacred spheres of space and time.

Cosmic mountains and axes started to fill up critical studies all over the world. The author of the present essay is not without fault, either; her only excuse being that those categories appeared to be particularly pertinent with regard to Norwid's theatre, which she applied them to¹¹.

The contemporary theatre is extremely interested in the problem of space because of the revolutionary changes, still in progress, aiming at the full integration of the stage and the auditorium in order to create one theatrical space instead of the previous separation. This common space is believed to promote communion between the actors and the audience.

Interest in spatial problems paralleled that in the temporal ones, particularly emphasized by Eliade and Poulet. Both authors assumed a close relationship between the concept of time governing the play and the playwright's epistemology, which, in turn, depends upon that of his period. Poulet's many volumes on the human time (*Etudes sur le temps humain*)¹² provided ample evidence of that dependence. It does not seem possible any more to eliminate these assumptions altogether; they have gained an unquestioned authority.

The frontier between the mythical criticism and the psychological is almost nonexistent, at least when psychological criticism is considered in the broad sense as in France recently. The confluence of the two approaches may be substantiated by such terms as „le mythe personnel” used in psychological criticism and the new name the latter assumed: “psychocritique” or “nouvelle critique”.

Its recognized proponent, Charles Mauron, applied the method to the

¹⁰ *Le mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris 1949, Gallimard; le même, *Das Heilige und das Profane*, Hamburg 1957, Rowohlt; le même *Mythe, rêves et mystères*, Paris 1957, Gallimard.

¹¹ I. Sławińska. *Znaki przestrzeni teatralnej w „Krakusie” Norwida*, [W:] *Reżyserska ręka Norwida*, Kraków 1971, Wyd. Lit., s. 210-227.

¹² G. Poulet, *Etudes sur le temps humain*, I-IV, Paris 1950-1968, Plon.

analysis of Racine as early as 1957¹³. Whereas he refers constantly, in the frame of depth psychology, to the biography of the poets examined, Roland Barthes' concern may be phrased as "a kind of structural psychoanalysis of the text and of the characters", "a kind of anthropology" (Goldmann's phrasing)¹⁴.

A significant event in the development of the French "new criticism" was the book by André Green *Un oeil en trop* (1969)¹⁵ which includes some useful methodological suggestions. When undertaking "a psychoanalytical reading of tragic authors", Green turns intentionally to the very popular Oedipus complex placing himself under the patronage of the greatest authorities in psychology i.e. Freud and Lacan. Moreover, the whole of 20th century theatre experience is present in the book: the experience of the post-Freudian period. "Le théâtre d'après Freud" — according to Green — is a "theatre of passion, of primitive processes [...] theatre that ignores time along with space [...] that defies logic". It is an extremely dynamic and intense theatre of antinomies and condensation. Against the background of this theatre and in the framework of its problematic, all the great tragic playwrights of the previous epochs are revaluated and re-read. The book was judged both revealing and controversial. Its last chapter antititled: "Oedipus - a myth or a truth?" appeared to be particularly important. The hero is defined as a representative of our common subconscious ("notre impensé commun"), not so much for his relationship to his mother as for the impossibility of ultimate cognition, which is a universal flaw.

Goldmann, whose name has been already mentioned, should be associated with the sociological approach in theatre criticism, although his most famous book *Le Dieu caché* (1955) testifies to his psychological interests alike. He himself identified his attitude with structuralism ("genetic structuralism"). However, in opposition to the group of critics discussed above, according to Goldmann the most instrumental in shaping the work is neither "the personal myth" of the author, nor his subconsciousness, but "the mental structures" of his social class. Despite of this rigid formula, Goldmann's analysis of the interrelations of many structural elements in a theatrical or literary work proved very inspiring.

¹³ Ch. Mauron, *L'Inconscient dans l'oeuvre et la vie de J. Racine*, [w:] *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres*, Aix en Provence 1957; le même, *Des métaphores obsédantes au mythe personnel*.

¹⁴ L. Goldmann, *Situation de la critique racinienne*, Paris 1971, L'Arche, s. 106.

¹⁵ A. Green, *L'Oeil en trop. Le Complexe d'Oedipe dans la tragédie*, Paris 1969, Les Editions du Minuit.

This can be substantiated by his study on Genet's *Les Nègres*¹⁶, where the first 25 lines were submitted to a very careful analysis. Although the critic admitted himself to be much more interested in the *significata* than in *significantes*, his comments on the various theatrical signs intended for use by Genet are also very enlightening. Let us add, that sociological research in this field is carried out at the Centre of the Sociology of Literature in Brussels (Université Libre) and in Paris (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes).

Along similar lines, with its emphasis on meanings and designates (the signified) the recent Brechtian literature has enriched and refreshed the sociological problematic in theatre criticism. Although some studies deduced Brecht's theatre from his political and social assumptions, its theatrical form *per se* would be skillfully and competently examined, also. Bernard Dort is the most instrumental in this methodological shift¹⁷.

However different from that discussed above, another novel aspect of sociological interest appears also in Duvignaud's works. Of these, two pertain to the theatre: *L'Acteur* and *la Sociologie du théâtre*, both published in 1965¹⁸. Duvignaud's concerns are centered on the social functions of actors and of theatre in various periods and within the framework of different socio-political structures. A deep insight, which this disciple of Gurwitsch is able to bring to the theatrical problematic, along with his ample knowledge of theatrical life, led to many valuable contributions. These concern changes in actors' *emplois*, in the model of the hero in successive periods, in theatrical space and the like.

No less important in this respect are studies devoted to theatrical conventions, such as E. Burns' *Theatricality: a Study of Convention* (1972)¹⁹. Traditional as the title may sound, Burns' methodological proposals should not be neglected.

The most resourceful, however, as far as theatre problems are concerned, is a modest book by Richard Demarcy: *Eléments d'une Sociologie du Spectacle* (1973), published in an inexpensive paperback edition 10/18. Its very title is highly significant and carefully chosen so that it may

¹⁶ L. Goldmann, *Le théâtre de Genet. Essai d'étude sociologique*; le même, *Microstructures dans les vingt-cinq premières répliques des „Nègres” de Jean Genet. Both studies*, [in:] *Sociologie de la littérature*, Bruxelles 1970, ed de l'Institut de Sociologie s. 9-34; 35-52.

¹⁷ *Corneille dramaturge*, Paris 1972, L'Arche; *Lecture de Brecht*, Paris 1960, Seuil.

¹⁸ J. Duvignaud, *L'Acteur. Esquisse d'une sociologie du comédien*, Paris 1965, Gallimard; le même, *Sociologie du théâtre. Essai sur les ombres collectives*, Paris 1965, PUF (the 2nd ed. also).

¹⁹ E. Burns, *Theatricality. A Study of Convention in the Theatre and in Social Life*, London 1972, Longmans.

convey its main concern with the performance itself in opposition to the previous studies on the audiences. The presentation on musical comedy and operetta is particularly interesting in Demarcy's book on account of his analysis of the steady stock of their conventions. Such motifs as a long journey, the sun, symbolic colours (golden and purple) are discussed along with the function of feathers and of the stairs in the star-system. However well known before, all these elements are integrated into one structure for the first time. Less informative are the passages devoted to the social prestige of the classical repertoire. Even there, however, we may come across some very instructive paragraphs: suffice to mention the one on Gerard Philipe's mythology. Greta Garbo's face became the subject of Roland Barthes' examination prior to Demarcy's book.

The traditional concern with the actor/audience relationship continues to attract sociologists. For many years studies on the subject have been pursued in various countries, but, primarily, in the German-speaking world. The present proponent of these problems is Heinz Kindermann, the founder of the Theatre Institute in Vienna, who summarized his life-long interests at a Theatre Symposium in 1971 when presenting his plaidoyer "fuer Publikumforschung"²⁰. At the same session, a representative of a much younger generation, Diederichsen²¹, introduced the participants into the methodological aspects of the problem.

These aspects are predominant in the report (by Ravar and Anrieu) on the research performed at the Sociology Institute in Brussels²². The authors consider the actor/audience relationship to be based on a mutual exchange, and they try to characterize its very essence using semiotic terminology. In semiotic terms, the theatre public may be defined as an ensemble of people perceiving various signs emitted from the stage. What the authors are chiefly interested in, is to establish a certain and practical method of acquiring, recording and interpreting the data of audience response. The research was carried out at successive performances of the Frisch's play *M. Biedermann et les incendiaires*, where the reactions of the spectators were recorded on tapes. As those responses varied from one performance to another, all possible intervening factors — internal as well as external — were noted, especially at points of audience's laughter.

²⁰ H. Kindermann, *Plaedoyer fuer die Publikumforschung*, „Maske und Kothurn", m 1971, H. 4, s. 293-303.

¹² D. Diederichsen, *Methodische Probleme der Publikumforschung*, „Maske und Kothurn", 1971, H. 4, p. 304-319.

²² R. Ravar et P. Anrieu, *Le spectateur au théâtre. Recherche d'une méthode sociologique d'après M. Biedermann et les Incendiaires*. Bruxelles 1964, Ed. de l'Institut de Sociologie.

A still different aspect of sociological insight into theatre originated within the context of mass-media. Here theatre research would be a specific discipline within the more comprehensive science of the performing arts and mass-communication.

Methodological foundations for such an approach were provided by prof. Margaret Dietrich at the conference mentioned above (1971). She proposed a "integrativwissenschaftlich koordinierte Grundlagungsforschung"²³. This complex expression was intended to denote a whole corpus of disciplines necessary and adequate for elucidating both the functions and the means employed by the mass-media. This corpus — she specified — should include such disciplines as: theory of communication, cultural anthropology, psychology, pedagogy, social philosophy. The cooperation of so many specialists could create an extremely valuable and serviceable methodological apparatus, which would be useful to theatre research. In order, to implement the project, an interdisciplinary institute would have to be founded.

Prof. Dietrich is not the only one to realize the necessity of such cooperation: the idea seems to ripen in many countries nowadays. For several years now some Polish critics have examined a theatrical performance as a message within the context of information theory and/or as an intersemiotic translation.

When reviewing various tendencies in contemporary theatre research, we cannot omit those due to Roman Ingarden. His inspiration is by no means extinguished; on the contrary, it grows in power, challenges discussion, urges us to take a stand in face of the Ingardenian philosophy and aesthetics.

As far as the methodology of theatre criticism is concerned, an ambitious attempt at creating a comprehensive theory and systematics based on the Ingardenian premises should be mentioned. It was undertaken by Dietrich Steinbeck, in *Einleitung in die Theorie und Systematik der Theaterwissenschaft* (Berlin 1970). Its most significant part deals with the structure of a theatrical work. Assuming the model of a stratified structure, after Ingarden, Steinbeck distinguishes different strata and interprets them in a different way. To avoid misleading translations, let us give the original phrasings: 1) die Schicht der realen Bedeutung, 2) die Schicht der intendierten Bedeutung und 3) die Schicht der vermeinten Bedeutung.

The three strata come into existence in the process leading from the dramatic text (resp. scenic script) to the ultimate vision, created by the

²³ M. Dietrich, *Sinn und Notwendigkeit von integrativwissenschaftlich koordinierter Grundlagenforschung in ihrer Beziehung zur Theaterwissenschaft*, „Maske und Kothurn“, 1971, H. 4, p. 275-284.

spectators (Schicht der vermeinten Bedeutung). The first stratum, that of a "real meaning", arises from the material data of the performance (actors, objects, accessories). The intermediate one (Schicht der intendierten Bedeutung) is created by the scenographer and the actors (resp. the producer) and, in turn, constitutes the ground of the third stratum. All three strata are closely interrelated with each other in the sense that every successive stratum fulfils the projection of the preceding one.

In the author's theory another new term is introduced: that of a correlate (pendant). The objective correlate to the dramatic character is created by the actor; Steinbeck calls it a "Rollentraeger". Subjective (individual) correlates arise from the spectators. Nevertheless, a theatrical work (the production) transcends all its strata and correlates; it should not be identified with them. This is made explicit in Steinbeck's definition of the performance: "... a work, to which are added objective and subjective correlates, created by both the intentional and the realized theatrical forms, and which transcends all real and intentional objects, although they constitute its source and its ontic foundation"²⁴.

A simpler formula defines the theatrical work (a spectacle) as "an object determined primarily (primaer bestimmt) by the design of the production and its further concretizations and, in addition, by the structure of the spectators' intentions".

Closely related to these formulas are some problems of an ontological nature brought up by Steinbeck. They are concerned with the mode of existence of the performance, with its integrity and its identity. Ontological problems become methodological inasmuch as they have indirect consequences for theatre criticism. Steinbeck insists on the very different mode of existence of each stratum of the theatrical work. Hence, for the analysis of each, different tools are needed.

The historian of the theatre would be interested, first of all, in the second stratum, i.e. in the stratum "of the intended meaning", which amounts to the particular performance viewed as an unrepeatable occurrence (Ereignis). The main task is the reconstruction of this fact.

The third stratum, that pertaining to the spectators' perception and individual visions, would engage the sociologist, whereas the theoretician and the methodologist would take into account the abstract work of theatrical art as dealt with in Steinbeck's definitions. The topics and issues of the history, the systematic and the sociology of the theatre are discussed in the respective chapters of Steinbeck's book.

Though little known as yet and certainly controversial, the book delineates new issues; therefore, it is unlikely to pass unnoticed.

²⁴ Ibid.

Like many other critics nowadays, Steinbeck employs the term *structure*, which has already permeated our vocabulary to such an extent that we do not use the word *structuralism* anymore except when linked with some adjective. Goldmann considered himself to be a proponent of "genetic structuralism". To structuralism adheres, also, Roland Barthes and the representative of psychoanalytic studies, Jacques Lacan, not to mention Lévi-Strauss. Insofar as theatrical criticism is concerned, structural analysis stands for an examination of the theatrical work or process within the limits of the work itself seen as a whole subordinated to an integrating principle.

Such an approach may serve as a convenient starting point for a functional analysis. Whenever the critical process aims at revealing the theatrical functions performed by the particular dramatic elements, it is called in French "lecture dramaturgique". The term has been often used by Bernard Dort with reference to Brecht's dramas and productions.

The most recent methodological proposal in theatre criticism is that of *semiotics*. Though not the most recent in the chronological sense, having originated in Prague in the early thirties, we feel entitled to refer to semiotics this way due to the position it has achieved today.

The first systematic presentation of theatre semiotics was performed by a Polish romanist, Tadeusz Kowzan (1970)²⁵. At that time, when publishing the first version of his book, he seemed to have ignored Czech achievements in theatre theory. Nevertheless, he was instrumental in the revival of the theatre semiotics in general. Owing to this renewed interest, Czech articles and essays were translated and published by such journals as *Poétique*, *Littérature*, *Semiotica*, *Travail Théâtral*. Since then, numerous attempts at examining particular productions or dramas in semiotic terms have been made. The definition of 'theatre as a "universe of signs" gained popularity; it has been used by R. Demarcy along with R. Barthes, whose formula identifying theatre as "a semiotic act of extreme density" imposed itself, also. While in 1973 M. Corvin could state that semiotics of the theatre was still embryonic²⁶, this is certainly no longer true.

GŁÓWNE ORIENTACJE W TEATROLOGII WSPÓCZESNEJ

Streszczenie

Ogólną orientację w teatrologii określa autorka mianem *pluralizmu* i *synkretyzmu*. Współżyją ze sobą stanowiska i orientacje o bardzo różnej proveniencji

²⁵ *Littérature et spectacle dans leurs rapports esthétiques, thématiques et sémiologiques*, Varsovie 1970, PWN (2nd ed. in 1975).

²⁶ *Approche sémiologique d'un texte dramatique: „La Parodie” d'Arthur Adamov*, „Littérature”, nr 9, 1973, p. 86-100.

filozoficznej i kulturowej; trwają też próby zintegrowania różnych metod i postaw.

Autorka omawia kolejno *krytykę mitograficzną, psychologiczną, socjologiczną*, próby zbudowania teatrologii na przesłankach, zaproponowanych przez Ingardena, wreszcie dojrzewającą u nas i na Zachodzie *semiologię* teatru.

Krytyka mitograficzna zrodziła się już na początku naszego wieku, czerpiąc asumpt zarówno z rozwijających się wówczas badań antropologicznych (szkoła w Cambridge), jak i z autorytetu dramatu symbolicznego. Zainteresowania jej skupiły się głównie na *tematyce, akcji i bohaterze*, przy czym na długo miały tu pozostać kategorie, zaproponowane przez Fergussona (teatr jako *obrzęd* i realizacja *mitu; analogia akcji; rytm tragiczny*) oraz N. Frye'a (*mythos wiosny* = komedia; *mythos jesieni* = tragedia). Nowe inspiracje badawcze wniosła tu współczesna krytyka francuska, przede wszystkim Lévi-Strauss i Mircea Eliade. Pierwszy zaproponował nową interpretację mitu Edypa (w swej „Antropologii strukturalnej”), drugi skierował uwagę badaczy ku sprawom *czasu* i *przestrzeni*, które to problemy także i w teatrologii współczesnej uzyskały pozycję centralną.

Miejsce krytyki *psychologicznej* zajęła dziś *psychokrytyka* i nowe odmiany *psychoanalizy*, przede wszystkim *lakanizm*. Psychokrytykę zainicjował i zastosował do badań nad dramatem Ch. Mauron (już w 1957 r.) ukazując działanie *mitu osobistego* (*le mythe personnel*) na przykładzie Corneille'a, Racine'a, a ostatnio i Giraudoux. Psychoanalityczną lekturę tragików greckich demonstrowuje André Green (1969), wyzyskując zarówno inspiracje Freuda i Lacana, jak i całe doświadczenie teatru współczesnego.

Szerzej omawia autorka bardzo dynamiczny rozwój studiów *socjologicznych* nad teatrem. Dotyczy on zarówno samego ukształtowania dramatu, jak i spektaklu, konwencji teatralnych, architektury scenicznej, teatru jako instytucji, relacji *scena/widownia*, oddziaływania różnych czynników i układów społecznych na życie teatralne.

Socjologicznej analizie dramatu uczył Goldmann, szukając w elementach tekstu odbicia ogólnych struktur mentalnych epoki. Z teatralnymi koncepcjami Brechta wiąże społeczne założenia jego dramatu Bernard Dort; w konwencjach teatralnych wyczytano również nacisk społecznych przemian. Całościowa socjologia teatru powstała we Francji, stworzona przez ucznia i kontynuatora Gurwitscha, J. Duvignauda. Jest on autorem dwóch znakomitych i obszernych prac: *Aktor i Socjologia teatru* (1965). Obie książki są tu przedmiotem krótkiego (z konieczności) omówienia.

Wielki autorytet uzyskała również skromna książeczka R. Demarcy pt. *Elementy socjologii spektaklu* (1973). Uwaga autora skupia się tu na samym spektaklu. Autor omawia społeczne uwarunkowania pewnych środków teatralnych jak np. pióra, złoty kolor, schody w operetce, budując w ten sposób socjologiczną estetykę Offenbachady.

Nie ustały też bynajmniej studia nad publicznością teatralną, zainicjowane i kontynuowane głównie w RFN i Austrii, przede wszystkim dzięki inspiracji Heinza Kindermanna (choć historię publiczności teatralnej opracował Francuz, M. Descotes). W studia socjologiczne nad teatrem włączono także problem mass-mediów. W tym kontekście każe nam spojrzeć na teatr obecny dyrektor Instytutu Teatrologicznego w Wiedniu, prof. M. Dietrich, postulując stworzenie specjalnego Instytutu do koordynacji i integracji interdyscyplinarnych badań nad środkami masowego przekazu.

W ostatnich latach (ściślej: w 1970 r.) pojawiła się próba zbudowania całego systemu badań nad teatrem na przesłankach Ingardenowskiej koncepcji. Próbę tę podjął w RFN D. Steinbeck. Teorię warstwową struktury zastosował Steinbeck do spektaklu, wskazując, jak te warstwy konstytuują się w procesie powstawania

spektaklu, od tekstu dramatycznego poprzez wkład inscenizatora i aktorów aż po percepcję widza, w której widzi Steinbeck trzecią warstwę, współtworzącą spektakl. W rozważania swoje wprowadza autor pojęcie *korelatu*: obiektywny korelat do postaci scenicznej dotwarza aktor, kreując *postać aktorską* (*Rollenträger*). Subiektywne korelaty są tworem indywidualnych widzów. Książka Steinbecka podejmuje też cały szereg pytań ontologicznej natury: zagadnienie sposobu istnienia dzieła teatralnego, jego całości i identyczności. Autor stawia tezę, że w każdej ze swych warstw dzieło teatralne istnieje w sposób odrębny — a odrębność ta wymaga zróżnicowania narzędzi badawczych. Inne instrumenty stosuje badacz dramatu, inne historyk teatru (którego przedmiotem jest warstwa druga tj. sama inscenizacja), inne socjolog, skupiony na warstwie trzeciej, percepcji spektaklu.

Ostatnia oferta metodologiczna to oferta semiotyki. Ostatnia — nie w sensie chronologicznym, bo powstała przecież przed wojną w Pradze. Pierwszy systematyczny jej wykład dał teatrolog i romanista polski, Tadeusz Kowzan (1970). Od tego czasu zainteresowanie semiologią teatru rośnie, głównie we Francji i we Włoszech. Ukazało się już sporo artykułów w czasopismach (prób zastosowania klucza semiotycznego do analizy dramatu i spektaklu) oraz dwie antologie, obie w 1975 r., w Brukseli i w Barcelonie. Kierunek ten budzi też wielkie zainteresowanie w Polsce.