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## SLOVENE DRAMA AND THEATER: THEORY AND HISTORY

This article describes the processes in Slovene literary and drama studies that during the course of the twentieth century led to a crisis involving changes in the concept of theatricality and texts' performance dimensions, and the introduction of visual and spatial forms that were simultaneously employed in staging practices. These were incorporated into theory, which developed a compendium of scholarly definitions and terms. We have included comprehensive historical and theoretical representations of the evolution of post-WW II Slovene drama (by Denis Poniž, Silvija Borovnik, Janko Kos, Lado Kralj, and Malina Schmidt Snoj), along with studies of the relations between drama and the theater (by Tomaž Toporišič, Mateja Pezdirc Bartol, Blaž Lukan, and others).

**Key words:** drama theory, literary history, contemporary Slovene drama, performance theory

### 1 Drama in the age of art

“All drama—Slovene included—is integrally connected with theater. Even when we are speaking about so-called dramatic readings, the reader sees a stage or a theatrical setting in his mind and imagines that to himself” (KERMAUNER 2002: 27).

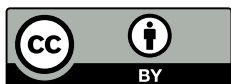
“Unlike other literary genres, drama depends not only on the creative will of an individual author, but is essentially tied to and nurtured by cultural institutions that we collectively call theater in the broadest sense of the word” (KORUZA 1972: 9).

The views of these two great theorists and historians of drama in the Slovene and comparative contexts precisely mark the “boundedness” or “multimedia” nature of the subject of study even today. This is the special branch of literary studies known as the theory and history of drama and theater, an inseparable pair. This dialogic consideration of the state of the field will proceed from a Badiouan skepticism towards the philosophy and theory of art, out of a conviction that both literary and theater studies (like philosophy) but facilitate encounters with truth.<sup>1</sup> Just as the methods and approaches we have at our disposal come after the fact, after art, so too a reflection on art performs the function of summarizing and showing the truth that art produces as “immanent, unique thinking.”

In recent decades it has become *de rigueur* in Slovenia for literary and theater studies, which are as inseparable as Siamese twins before the subject of Slovene (no longer) drama and (no longer) theater, always to start with the practical context—live drama and theater production, its immediate reception, reflection, and resonance, and to confront its impact on the personal and social levels. These are paired disciplines

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<sup>1</sup> See Badiou (2004).



that must be united in every serious study of drama, as well as theater and staging practice. Both research fields underwent crises in the twentieth century. There were changes in the concepts of theater and the performance dimensions of texts, and new visual and spatial forms entered and were simultaneously employed in drama performances. These were incorporated into theory, which developed a compendium of authors' definitions and terms.

We have inherited these crises, which resulted from the death of the author, the crisis of the subject, questions of representation and mimesis, the transformation of dramatic forms, the crisis of language, and reconsideration of the meaning of theater in a media-saturated world... Therefore it became clear that we cannot continue to "conform to the role of an authoritative, rational system abstracted from historical chaos." For this reason theory and history have changed "in accordance and conjunction with methods, each having its proper conceptual components, foci of problems, and value politics" (JUVAN 2006: 30).

Thus both literary studies and performance theory—and the historicization of both fields—are experiencing a blurring of traditional methodological boundaries and theoretical approaches at the same time that artistic fields and creative approaches are. We are witness to the eradication of lines between primary and secondary literature, primary and secondary authors, text and intertext, and a work, its author, and the reader. The specificity of a drama—and for that matter any literary work—has sunk in the waters of intertextuality, and the uniqueness of the theatrical has been submerged in the multi-media, hybrid, and performative.

Theodor Adorno's comment three decades ago, that "it is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist" (ADORNO 1998: 1), seems to apply to contemporary drama and theater. Like aesthetics, theater theory and performance practices—a transverse field that spans disciplinary lines and cultural differences—are forced even more clearly than in Adorno's time and the late phase of modernism to confront the altered status of their fundamental object of research: textual and performance art. It is as if at a time of crisis for all methodological approaches to literature and performance it has become evident that theory and history must openly and undogmatically describe and confront the specifics of the dialogic relation between textual and stage practices. At the same time, they also confront the transformation of the two artistic practices into the culture of recent decades. In Slovenia, there was a parallel self-observation and reflection on literary and performance arts and their dilemmas between late modernism, post-modernism, and beyond into post- post-modernism, or the time we are living in, which the Russian philosopher Mikhail N. Epstein terms a future time after the future, capturing all later or post- periods.<sup>2</sup>

Our goal is to frame the dialog between theory and contemporary drama and theater in recent decades. We are interested in how analytic and interpretive discourse, by which university teaching and learning about drama and theater is constituted at the interstices and in the tracks of literary and theatrical theory.

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<sup>2</sup> See his book, *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture*.



## 2 What theories and for what drama and theater?

In the introduction to the collection *Prisotnost, predstavljanje, teatralnost* (Presence, performance, theatricality 1996), Emil Hrvatin, who acquainted Slovenes with key semiotic and post-structuralist theoreticians of drama and performance art, states that we live in a time following a crisis in the dominant semiotic representational model in academic discourse on theater. It appears that Slovene theory has recently and primarily with the arrival of younger generations assimilated Patrice Pavis's idea that "We are now beyond the quarrel between a semiology of text and a semiology of performance" (PAVIS 1992: 2).

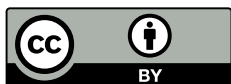
The semiotic thought of Anne Ubersfeld and her followers suggests to us that theater can and must be read together with drama, that its reception and analysis are tied to the reading of a dramatic text, which enable reading the text of its presentation. Thus in Slovenia as well there was a reckoning with the classical understanding of the relation between text and performance, according to which the text has absolute primacy and performance is but an expression or a translation of a literary text. At the same time, equal treatment of text and performance as two distinct, only partially overlapping bundles of signs was established. In this way, the text became a product of the dramatist, someone who writes with an awareness of his age's theatrical code and is connected to the "encyclopedic universe" (Eco) of the posited viewer. It became clear that the classical understanding of hostile and unstable relations between the field of theory and practice was hypertrophied. Further, we witnessed continual interaction between the fields within the worlds of the first, second, and third paradigms—production, the work itself, and its reception. It was as Mark Fortier observed: "To treat everything as language or as dominated by language seems a distortion of the nature of theatre as rooted in the physical and the sensual, as much as it is in words and ideas" (FORTIER 1997: 4).

Therefore, drama and the theater and theories about them are on a certain step on the ladder of discursive practice, contradiction, adaptation, and other survival strategies that in Slovenia had been, as Miško Šuvaković points out, for half a century as a rule associated with extra-theatrical forms of discourse: first with aesthetic humanism (Josip Vidmar, Dušan Pirjevec, Andrej Inkret), then with anti-aesthetic, ludistic anti-humanism (Taras Kermauner, early Dušan Jovanović, Tomaž Kralj, Lado Kralj), semiotics of an analytic bent (Rastko Močnik, Lado Kralj, Zoja Skušek), phenomenology and Heideggerian philosophy (Tine Hribar, Denis Poniž, Ivo Svetina), an urban critical alternative (Eda Čufer, Marina Gržinić), and finally materialistic theory and post-structuralism (Aleš Erjavec, Lev Kreft, Emil Hrvatin, Tomaž Toporišič, Aldo Milohnić).

In perspective, there was a series of thrusts in Slovenia in historicizing and theorizing drama, theater, and performance arts. First there was a shift from positivism to phenomenology and existentialism, then to structuralism, followed by a period of transfers from structuralism to post-structuralism. While these leaps were taking place, the so-called classical theory of drama and theater studies and criticism remained to a significant degree dominant, being rooted in pre-semiotic or pre-structuralist, positivist experience linked to Marxism or phenomenology and Heideggerian philosophy.

Slovene drama theory and theater theory, which was comparatively less developed, thus saw the advent of some mild semiotic emphases in the late twentieth century and first decade of this century. Rudi Šeligo, for one, evolved a new literary practice and semiotically colored reflection on drama and theater. It was more pronounced with Lado Kralj, Andrej Inkret, Denis Poniž, and Silvija Borovnik. At the same time, post-semiotic and post-structuralist emphases were characteristic for the younger generation, especially Eda Čufer, Emil Hrvatin, Blaž Lukan, Tomaž Toporišič, Mateja Pezdirc Bartol, Bojana Kunst, Aldo Milohnić, Barbara Orel, Andrej Leben, Krištof Jacek Kozak, Jure Gantar, Katja Mihurko Poniž, Primož Jesenko, Gašper Troha, Rok Vevar, and Katja Čičigoj. This generation came up in the 1990s. In his essay “Negotovost or point de capiton” (Uncertainty or *point de capiton*), Miško Šuvaković vividly dubbed it a “shift from the poetics of political art to art in the age of culture” (ŠUVAKOVIĆ 1999: 42). Just as intensively as texts, the younger generation studies the “grammar” and “politics” of presentation and performance, theatricality, and the third paradigm, reception and performativity.

During this time, translations of some fundamental works of European drama and theater theorists appeared; for instance, Patrice Pavis’s *Dictionnaire du théâtre* (1996; 1997), Anne Ubersfeld’s *Lire le théâtre* (1976; 2002), Hans-Thies Lehmann’s *Postdramatisches Theater* (1999; 2003), Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Ästhetik des performativen* (2004; 2008), and Jacques Rancière: *Le Spectateur émancipé* (2008, 2010). In addition, there were article translations in two collections, *Prisotnost, predstavljanje, teatralnost* (1996) and *Drama, tekst, pisava* (Drama, text, writing 2008). In general, the latter clearly points up how the relation text-centric–stage-centric is now irrelevant, and the classical concepts of drama theory, such as dramatic character, dramatic time and space, dramatic act, and dramatic speech are inadequate. New writings by European and Slovene dramatists shows textual material does not disappear in dramatization but reappears with different formal approaches and a different relation to staging. New textual practices require different analytical approaches, which the theory of drama ought to take into account. Dramatic texts are embarking into the post-dramatic (Hans-Thies Lehmann), no longer dramatic (Gerda Poschmann), and in some cases they go beyond both concepts. The collection of studies by Slovene and other theoreticians entitled *Drama, tekst, pisava* extends the fundamental monograph by Lado Kralj, *Teorija drama* (Drama theory 1998), which remains within an Aristotelian frame and offers the theory of mostly classical drama, but considered with contemporary semiotic methodological techniques, such as actant models. At the same time it reveals the inexactness and unreliability of contemporary terminology. Tomaž Toporišič’s *Ranljivo telo teksta in odra* (The exposed body of the text and the stage 2007) tests the utility of such concepts and theories on specific examples. It is based on the crisis of the author and transformation of traditional forms of drama characteristic of the second half of the twentieth century. Toporišič reads theater texts through the juxtaposition of theory and practice, and with an eye to the developmental process of crisis based in the works of Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Eugène Ionesco, and Samuel Beckett. The book focuses on authors of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Peter Handke, Dane Zajc, Venko Taufer, Milan Jesih, Ivo Svetina, Dušan Jovanović, Bernard-Marie Koltès, Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek, and Sarah Kane. Toporišič



considers dramatists who searched for various solutions to crisis of dramatic form and representation, and for changes in aesthetic paradigms. Their works offer new and original formal elements, unconventional forms of theatricality, and a desire to supersede current dramatic forms. Mateja Pezdirc Bartol devotes her attention to the reception of dramatic texts, to the reader and viewer, in the second chapter of *Najdeni pomeni: Empirične raziskave recepcije literarnega dela* (Meanings discovered: Empirical research on the reception of literary works 2010). She first presents the receivers abstractly, through the prism of different methodological techniques, then through empirical research results, from which she concludes how readers and viewers apprehend the components of a drama. She investigates their understandings and interpretations, evaluations and satisfaction, while comparing their readings with that of the director. Already in her doctoral dissertation, “Recepcija drame: Bralec in gledalec sodobne slovenske dramatike” (“Drama reception: The reader and viewer of contemporary Slovene drama” 2004), she depicted the viewer comprehensively, looking into the sociological make up of the public at a given theater, its horizon of expectations, theatrical tastes, experiences, and customs. Both of her studies point up that drama theory paid too little attention in the past to the receiver. This is an area that deserves more research in the future.

There have been new questions in the field of theory of dramatic genres and sub-genres. Denis Poniž surveys these questions and critically examines them in the monograph *Uvod v teorijo dramskih zvrsti* (Introduction to the theory of dramatic genres 2008). Barbara Orel’s *Igra v igri* (A play in a play 2003) tests Peter Szondi’s concept of dramatic absoluteness on the play within a play in order to show how in all times drama expresses its situatedness in the workings of the world. In the book *Komedija in mešane dramske zvrsti* (Comedy and mixed dramatic genres 1995), Denis Poniž carries out a systematic survey of the history and theory of comedy and mixed dramatic genres in Slovene. He supplements it with a critical outline of the theory in works by Aristotle, Hegel, and contemporary drama theorists. Jure Gantar deals with comedy in *Dramaturgija in smeh* (Drama and laughter 1993) from a theoretical perspective, as does Mateja Pezdirc Bartol in the article “Motivi in teme v najnovejših komedijah Toneta Partljiča in Vinka Möderndorferja” (Motifs and themes in recent comedies by Tone Partljič and Vinko Möderndorfer). Twentieth-century tragedy is the subject of *Privlačna usodnost: Subjekt in tragedija* (An attractive fatefulness: The subject and tragedy 2004) by Krištof Jacek Kozak, who subverts the postulate of the death of tragedy and illustrates the genre’s survival in contemporary theatrical forms of tragedy. Gašper Troha’s article “Problemi poetične drame” (Problems of poetic drama) and Tomaž Toporišič’s “Gregor Strniša in ‘drugačna teatralnost’” (Gregor Strniša and “another theatricality”) reinterpret poetic dramas. Krištof Jacek Kozak’s “Meta-romantika kot paradigma sodobne slovenske drame” (Meta-Romanticism as a paradigm for contemporary Slovene drama) advances the thesis that as post-modernism ran its course, Slovene drama once again turned to tradition, but views it in a new way.

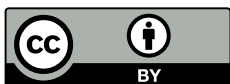
Drama theory often intersects theater studies; for instance, Lado Kralj and Tomaž Toporišič’s articles deal with the spatial ties between drama and theater. In the article “Predstava in pisave” (Preformance and writings), Blaž Lukan examines the



question of the text's location in contemporary performative acts. The monograph collection *Še preden se je svet začel: Peter Božič, človek gledališča* (Before the lights go up: Peter Božič, man of the theater; edited by Ivo Svetina and Tomaž Toporišič 2011) scrutinizes the theoretized historicization of the phenomenon of the dramatist and those in theater. Drama studies have been examining drama's relationship with the theater and society, in particular Blaž Lukan in *Slovenska dramaturgija: Dramaturgija kot gledališka praksa* (Slovene dramaturgy: Dramaturgy as theater practice 2001), and Primož Jesenko in the book *Dramaturški koncepti v slovenskem gledališču 1950–1970* (Drama concepts in the Slovene theater, 1950–70 2008). Denis Poniž and Gašper Troha research the same area in connection with censorship, the former in *Cenzura in avtocenzura v slovenski dramatik in gledališču 1945–1990* (Censorship and self-censorship in Slovene drama and theater 2010), and the latter in "Slovenska dramatika in oblast – nasprotnika ali zaveznika" (Slovene drama and power – opponents or allies). The history of the junctures between the drama and theater theory and Slovene literary studies, theater studies, comparative literature, and theater and drama practice are the topics of the collection *Dinamika sprememb v slovenskem gledališču 20. stoletja* (The dynamics of changes in twentieth-century Slovene theater; edited by Barbara Sušec Michieli, Blaž Lukan, and Maja Šorli 2010) and *Svobodne roke: Antologija teoretskih misli o slovenskem gledališču (1899–1979)* (Free hands: An anthology of theoretical thought on the Slovene theater [1899–1979]; edited by Blaž Lukan and Primož Jesenko 2012).

### 3 To historicize drama means to historicize theater

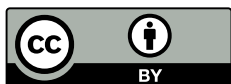
At the turn of the century, Slovene literary theory and theater studies somewhat more openly wrestled with the changed status of the dramatist in the realm of contemporary theater, resulting in new attempts to historicize today's Slovene dramatists. Comprehensive historical and theoretical models of the development of post-WW II Slovene drama fit into this context, as do studies dealing with the relationship between drama and theater; for example, Denis Poniž's article on Slovene drama in the book *Slovenska književnost III* (Slovene literature III 2001), Janko Kos's deliberations on recent Slovene drama in his *Primerjalna zgodovina slovenske literature* (A comparative history of Slovene literature 2001), Lado Kralj's contribution to *Sodobna slovenska dramatika (1945–2000)* (Contemporary Slovene drama [1945–2000] 2005), Silvija Borovnik's *Slovenska dramatika v drugi polovici 20. stoletja* (Slovene drama in the second half of the twentieth century 2005), and Tomaž Toporišič's monograph *Med zapeljevanjem in sumničavostjo: Razmerje med tekstom in uprizoritvijo v slovenskem gledališču druge polovice dvajsetega stoletja* (Between infatuation seduction and suspicion: The relationship between the text and performance in the Slovene theater of the second half of the twentieth century 2004). All of these publications share an undogmatic, open view of drama (and, at least conditionally, of the associated theater) of the second half of the 1900s, one that is panoramic (e.g., Jože Koruza and Taras Kermauner) and free of ideological encumbrances. The authors consistently situate Slovene dramatists in space and



time, and the studies are organized around focal points suggested by the dramatists' works and their dialogic relationship with the theater and society. Thus we gain a view of the history of the formation of drama writing and interactions with the theater field, and not infrequently and necessarily of the history of the (post)socialist polity as well.

In the chapter "Dramatika," in his preliminary conclusions, queries, and dilemmas, Denis PONIŽ (2001: 205–07) starts with the conviction that Slovene drama cannot be categorized by existing models, because the models are always approximations. He also finds temporal continuity questionable, which leads him to note the key problems that the authors of post-WW II drama surveys have encountered. Drama texts resist classification and historicization, and so questions of periodization, selection of authors, manner of presenting them, and systematization by period, tendency, and currents remain open. Individual authors' cases vary, but for the most part they are admittedly forced. Poniž analyzes significant stages, turns, and shifts Slovene drama, attempting the while to preserve temporal divisions that at times bring with them the most varied social, motivational, and genre terms, which somewhat decreases the presentation's comprehensiveness. The author opens his survey with political drama, which was typical of the period right after the war, and closes with a short overview of authors of the late 1980s and 1990s, including Evald Flisar, Boris A. Novak, Vinko Möderndorfer, Matjaž Zupančič, Draga Potočnjak, and Vili Ravnjak. He dedicates much space to dramas' contents, briefly noting the characters and dramatic structure, along with temporal and spatial settings. He inserts some illustrative quotations from the texts or scholarly literature, covers the majority of authors and works, and thus draws together a wealth of materials in one place.

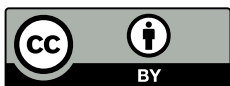
Silvija Borovnik's survey, *Slovenska dramatika v drugi polovici 20. stoletja* (Slovene drama in the second half of the twentieth century) considers the same period, but the presentation differs from and thus complements Poniž's survey. Borovnik takes up developmental patterns in the introductory chapter. Every successive chapter is devoted to the analysis of an individual author and dramatic opus. Thus she covers twenty-three key dramatists (including two women, Mira Mihelič and Draga Potočnjak), with their essential biographic data and a photograph. Interpretations of individual works are accompanied by quotations from the dramatic texts, scholarly literature, and reviews. Lado Kralj's article "Sodobna slovenska dramatika (1945–2000)" (Contemporary Slovene drama [1945–2000]) has an especially persuasive section called "Smeri in tokovi" (Tendencies and currents), which concludes that post-war social realism came to an end only in the late 1960s. He sees the main tendencies of post-war drama as drama of the absurd and poetic drama, while postmodernism appears in drama by virtue of recycling historical dramatic techniques and storylines. He then analyzes canonical authors like Dominik Smole, Primož Kozak, Milan Jesih, Dušan Jovanović, Rudi Šeligo, and Drago Jančar. He finds an important motif of contemporary Slovene drama to be consciousness and criticism of the repression the communist regime exercised over people. The overview concludes with a thought the status of theater and drama today: "The theater is simply no longer such a relevant institution as it was before 1991. Crucial moral and social questions are dealt with elsewhere" (KRALJ 2005: 116).



In the second edition of *Primerjalna zgodovina slovenske literature*, Janko Kos added a chapter entitled “Konec stoletja: Slovenska literatura v letih 1970–2000” (End of the century: Slovene literature in the year 1970–2000), in which he assigns a short section to drama, “Dramatika v obdobju slovenske postmoderne: od Ivana Mraka do Iva Svetine” (Drama in the period of Slovene postmodernism: from Ivan Mrak to Ivo Svetina). He concludes that postmodernist features are less noticeable in drama as compared to poetry and prose, but that pluralism in drama and the theater, as well as dramatists’ auto-poiesis are important. The research focus of Tomaž Toporišič’s *Med zapeljevanjem in sumničavostjo* is explained by the subtitle, “Razmerje med tekstom in uprizoritvijo v slovenskem gledališču druge polovice 20. stoletja” (The relationship between text and performance in Slovene theater of the second half of the twentieth century). If Lado Kralj and Andrej Inkret observed the relationship primarily from within literary studies and theoretical discourse, Toporišič is the first in Slovenia systematically to test it in practice as well, using actual stagings, directors, and the profiles of theaters. The chapters follow a periodization by decade and feature only stagings that were daring, innovative, and experimental as concerns the relationship between text and performance. Throughout, the author traces the text’s changing function in the theater and how new theater practices exert a reverse influence on the techniques and poetics of composing drama texts. Malina Schmidt Snój’s monograph *Tokovi slovenske dramatike* (Currents in Slovene drama 2010) contains the most recent survey of Slovene drama. The author arranges the material chronologically (but without a real periodization), beginning with the first shoots of Slovene drama in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then depicting the stasis and rise in the nineteenth century. She writes in detail about drama at the turn of the twentieth century and during the two world wars. The second volume is devoted entirely to post-WW II and revolutionary drama. Within the five time periods, she follows a certain collection of motifs (e.g., between marriage and profligacy: from Kveder to Kraigher, from Majcen to Alojzij Remec), an idea, the development of a certain dramatic personage, and metaphysical constants in the world (which is significant, especially for volume 2). Her interpretations are anchored in the European context, and the drama texts are usually treated comparatively. The book concludes with presentations on the dramatists Peter Božič, Dane Zajc, Gregor Strniša, Rudi Šeligo, Dušan Jovanović, Ivo Svetina, Andrej Hieng, Tone Partljič, and Drago Jančar—canonic authors of the second half of the twentieth century. Younger authors, born after 1950, are entirely omitted.

New media have brought new forms of historicizing Slovene drama and theater. In 2007, the Internet theater website Sigledal was launched (by Samo M. Strelec and Tamara Matevc). In addition to informational pieces and coming events, it contains an e-encyclopedia of the Slovene theater, repertoires, materials from performances, and digital collections. It offers fresh and up-to-date information on young authors and drama texts that have appeared, something traditional literary history does not yet include. Students in literary and performance studies take part in making the webpages, getting an opportunity to develop their academic writing skills. Since the portion of book publications of drama texts, as compared to poetry and prose, is negligible, e-publishing has significantly increased access to drama texts, making this one of the portal’s great benefits. The same is true of the web portal Preglej, which





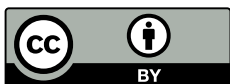
functions in the framework of the Glej Theater. Simona Semenič manages it, and it is intended to increase interest in Slovene drama writing. Thus it furnishes space for readings and creative discussion among young, lesser-known writers, theater people, and the public. Young dramatists can publish texts on the website.

Besides the field of (theorized) history of drama and theater, there has been a series of studies on different aspects of Slovene drama, some of which have at times been overlooked by established literary history: Katja Mihurko Poniž and Mateja Pezdirc Bartol have considered Slovene women dramatists. Katarina Podbevšek has written on the aesthetics of stage elocution in the Slovene theater. Andrej Leben has been interested in recent (Slovene) drama in Austrian Carinthia. Janja Žitnik Serafin has studied Slovene émigré drama and its cultural place in Slovenia proper. Bogmila Kravos has examined drama in Trst. Igor Saksida and Milena Mileva Blažič's topic has been youth drama. The series *Zbrana dela slovenskih pesnikov in pisateljev* (The collected works of Slovene poets and prose writers) has included the works of Dominik Smole (edited by Goran Schmidt), Primož Kozak (edited by Dušan Voglar), Zofka Kveder (edited by Katja Mihurko Poniž), and Miran Jarc (edited by Drago Bajt). New readings of the classics are also of interest, in particular of Ivan Cankar's continually relevant dramas. Examples are studies by Denis Poniž, Blaž Lukan, Mateja Pezdirc Bartol, and Irena Avsenik Nabergoj.

The collection *Slovenska dramatika* (Slovene drama, edited by Mateja Pezdirc Bartol 2012) offers insights in current questions in the field from the international symposium *Obdobja 31*. It is the first lengthy collection devoted entirely to research on Slovene drama. Its 392 pages contain forty-seven contributions by established and new researchers just beginning their careers. The convergence of generations and institutions in Slovenia and from around the world lends the collection a broad and varied character. The articles are methodologically diverse. Their contents shed light on the role of Slovene drama in different historical periods and in a broad socio-cultural context. They analyze the relationship between text and performance in the Slovene theater; compare Slovene drama texts with texts from Slavic, European, and world drama; interpret Slovene drama texts from a linguistic and stylistic standpoint, the poetics of a given author or period; a text's significant motifs and themes, and dramatic genres and sub-genres; they examine the role and meaning of translations of Slovene dramas and stagings abroad. Some of the contributions are devoted to the analysis of stage speech and changes in the elocutionary aesthetics in the Slovene theater, Slovene drama and other media, children's drama, didactics and methods of teaching Slovene drama, and publishing and promoting it. If drama has frequently been marginalized within the field of literary studies, the collection demonstrates that research is flourishing. Certain texts of by young dramatists give reason for optimism about drama production as well.

#### 4 Conclusion: drama as a manner of viewing

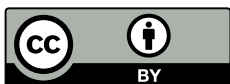
To paraphrase a statement by the English theater specialist Alex Sierz about new English drama in the so-called in-your-face theater, we can sum up the history of



Slovene drama of the last half century, as researched and interpreted by the those we have presented, in the following way: Drama was like a kind of image factory that produced ways of viewing that in turn influence the culture at large. Provocative culture aided in airing out the concept of national identity over the past five decades. It appears that we are now attempting to replace this very image factory, which left a strong imprint on Slovene culture and the state during this time, with other (“multimedia”) factories producing ever newer simulacra of seemingly provocative images. The status of drama within an already reduced field of literary production in post-socialist Slovenia is today very exposed (this exposure is most evident in the radical reduction of book editions of contemporary Slovene drama). However, drama can draw strength from innovative and energizing ways of viewing, which have an impact on culture in general. This is what must be learned from drama history as reflected and interpreted by the history and theory of drama and the theater. Thus drama will show that the path away from dramatization of novels and the “telenovelization” of theater leads back to intensive dialog between drama writing, the theater, and contemporary society.

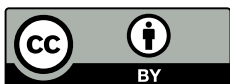
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*V ang. prevedel Timothy Pogačar.*



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