

Radical changes are taking place in 21<sup>st</sup>-century drama in Slovenia, as well as elsewhere in Europe and the Western world. The relationship between the dramatic text and the stage is becoming more and more complex, swinging from the text to the theatrical event. Several of the approaches or perspectives on the dramatic text are intertwined, interchange and produce new challenges for both playwriting and performance.

Already at the end of the 1960s, we witnessed the so-called performative turn (Erika Fischer-Lichte), which further influenced the emergence of postdramatic theatre (Hans-Thies Lehmann) or a new aesthetics of the performative (Erika Fischer-Lichte). In the field of playwriting, the 1980s and 1990s brought about no-longer-dramatic theatre texts (Gerda Poschmann) or postdramatic texts. The renaissance of playwriting has been discussed in the context of in-yer-face theatre, which marked the 1990s in the UK and influenced the development of drama throughout Europe. After 2000, a new mode of writing for the theatre began to emerge, which Birgit Haas calls *dramatisches Drama*, “dramatic drama” in English. These are theatre texts that are once again based to a greater extent on dialogue and a recognisable and at least partially coherent dramatic action. At the same time, they are characterised by an accentuated political/socially engaged point of view. New names have been used to describe these plays beyond postdramatic theatre, such as neo-dramatic (Anne Monfort) or post-postdramatic theatre (Élisabeth Angel-Perez), in which the author maintains one’s presence through lyricisation and episation. Contemporary dramaturgy thus exposes us to the deconstruction of the opposition between representation and presentation. At the same time, despite the disruption of the fictional textual cosmos, it nevertheless establishes a powerful process of redramatisation and the injection of the dramatic and the dramaturgical into the postdramatic fabric of the plays.

Researchers discussed these questions at the Amfiteater Academic Symposium, which took place in Ljubljana in October 2021. Based on these reflections and research, we have created this thematic issue of the journal, which raises four fundamental themes:

1. How do we analyse a theatrical event for which the text is only a starting point and is essentially determined by an autopoietic feedback loop? How do we approach these performance texts at all?
2. To what extent is postdramatic theatre really a break, or can its break with representation be traced back to the tradition of metadrama?

3. How radically does postdramatic theatre break with some of the fundamental elements of drama theory (e.g., with dramatic character)?

4. What are the characteristics of form and contents in plays written by the youngest generation of the so-called millennials?

Aleksandra Jovičević, who researches contemporary performance texts, opens the first topic. She argues that such analyses must consider both the changes in the textual template in the performance and the active role of the audience, who co-creates this hypertext. This reflection is complemented by studies of individual productions or performance practices by Zuzana Timčiková, who writes about authenticity in devised theatre in Slovakia, by Zala Dobovšek, with a detailed analysis of Žiga Divjak's *The Bailiff Jernej and His Rights*, which uses the approaches of documentary theatre, and by Hana Strejčková, with an investigation of site-specific author's drama.

Lada Čale Feldman opens the second theme as she discusses the contradiction between representation and presentation in postdramatic theatre and wonders whether a departure from representation could be found already in metadramatic texts of the past. She points to striking similarities between contemporary texts (Pascal Rambert's *The closure of love* (2011) and Tim Crouch's *The Author* (2009)) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Calderón's *The Great Theatre of the World*. The second theme is further analysed by Krištof Jacek Kozak, who deals with the echoes of classical tragedies in the post-postdramatic texts of Elfriede Jelinek, Stefan Hertmans and Vinko Möderndorfer, and Lara Jerkovič, who deals with the dramatic form and ethical dimensions of Simone Semenič's *the feast*.

Jure Gantar outlines the third theme with a reflection on dramatic character, which in postdramatic theatre is disintegrating or becoming more and more fragmented, yet in postdramatic comedy seems not entirely the case. Pavel Ocepek also analyses the different themes in contemporary playwriting as he explores the theme of sexuality in Simona Semenič's plays. Hanna Veselovska analyses the influence of social networks and their use in playwriting.

The fourth theme is first discussed by Lucija Ljubić and Martina Petranović with an analysis of the poetic tendencies in contemporary Croatian drama. Varja Hrvatin, Maša Radi Buh and Jakob Ribič describe the image of the young generation of Slovenian playwrights, and Benjamin Zajc compares Slovenian playwrights of this generation (Iza Strehar) with Croatian (Dino Pešut) and Serbian writers (Gorana Balančević).

The thematic part is complemented by two discussions, each of which in its own way completes the picture described above. Matic Kocjančič analyses the productions of Sophocles's *Antigone* on Slovenian professional stages, thus extending the article by Krištof Jacek Kozak. Luka Benedičič, on the other hand, reopens the theme of the

ethical and political dimension of theatre by attempting to link Brecht's notion of Gestus with ritual and taboo.

We add two essays to the discussions. The first, on current Macedonian drama and its staging possibilities, is by Ivanka Apostolova Baskar. In the second, Bulgarian theatre and literary scholar Ljudmil Dimitrov reflects on his encounters with Slovenian drama in translation and the reasons for his selection of works.

Contemporary theatre writing and theatre are characterised by the coexistence of different practices, ranging from postdramatic or no-longer dramatic writing to post-postdramatic or simply dramatic writing. In this coexistence, different approaches influence each other, alternate in the works of individual authors and are transformed again and again as they are transferred to the theatre stage. The latter, especially with the audience's active involvement, is also repeatedly revealed as a phenomenon that eludes definition and evades theoretical discourse. Drama, theatre performance and theory are thus constantly posing new challenges to each other in a dynamic that is what makes our field of research so exciting. This issue unpacks many of these issues and draws a complex picture of playwriting over the last twenty years.

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