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Abstract

Within the Slovenian context, dramatic writing has repeatedly returned to the realms of absurdity and grotesque. Lado Kralj highlights this observation in his influential essay "Contemporary Slovenian Drama", where he asserts that, modernism or one of its streams, namely, the drama of the absurd, gradually established itself in post-war Slovenian drama. This drama stems from the fundamental assumption, incompatible with socialist dogma, that reality is absurd and senseless. Interestingly, authors of such dramatic works often did not perceive themselves as contributors to the theatre of the absurd. They navigated in the direction of a dramatic technique that was simultaneously Gogolesque, absurdist as seen in the works of Daniil Harms and Aleksandr Ivanovich Vvedensky, and surrealist akin to the early plays of Roger Vitrac and his *Victor or Children in Power*. Moreover, theory, particularly through the lens of the famous historian of Slovenian drama Taras Kermauner, began interpreting it as "ludist" modernism.

In the essay, Toporišič examines how the specific forms of carnivalesque and paratactic absurdism that emerged and were developed in some of the most intriguing and complex comedic mechanisms in the works of Emil Filipčič, Milan Jesih, Pavle Lužan, Franček Rudolf and Andrej Rozman Roza have behaved in Slovenian drama in the new millennium. He explores how contemporary absurdist plays – often employing comedic techniques while embracing genre hybridity, including elements of the grotesque – deconstruct the concept of a unified self. Additionally, the author investigates how they blur the line between the real and the fictitious and destabilise subjectivity itself. All of these aspects, as scrutinised by Jure Gantar, who in his essay "The Death of Character in Postdramatic Comedy" evaluates Elinor Fuchs's terminology and theses regarding the death of character, seem to suggest that "character is also fading away in postmodern comedy" (87).

Keywords: absurdism, contemporary Slovenian drama, repetition, death of character, postdramatic, Simona Semenič, Milan Jesih

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For his outstanding contributions to the field, he was awarded the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Republic in 2013 and the Grün-Filipič Award for achievements in Slovenian dramaturgy in 2017. Dr. Toporišič is the author of six scholarly monographs: *Between Seduction and Suspicion: The Relationship Between Text and Performance in Slovenian Theatre in the Second Half of the 20th Century* (2004), *The Vulnerable Body of Text and Stage: The Crisis of the Dramatic Author in the Theatre of the 1980s and 1990s* (2007), *The Levitation of Drama and Theatre* (2008), *Intermedia and Intercultural Nomadism* (2018), *Dangerous Relations: Dramaturgy and Theatre in the 20th and 21st Century* (2021), and *Dramatic Writings of the Century: From Ivan Cankar to Simona Semenič and Beyond* (2023). Additionally, he has authored numerous essays and book chapters on literature and theatre.

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Paratactical Absurdism and (No Longer) Dramatic Comedy from Jesih to Semenič and Beyond

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Summary¹

The essay examines how specific forms of carnivalisation and paratactical absurdism behave in the works of Emil Filipčič, Milan Jesih, Pavle Lužan, Franček Rudolf, Andrej Rozman Roza, Matjaž Zupančič, Rok Vilčnik, Simona Semenič and Iva Slosar. It explores to what extent contemporary absurdist plays, which often employ comedic tactics alongside elements of grotesque and other genres in their hybridity, deconstruct the notion of a unified self, blur the line between reality and fiction and destabilise subjectivity itself. This all suggests, as Jure Gantar explores in his discussion on the death of character in postdramatic comedy, drawing from Elinor Fuchs's terminology and theses on the death of character, that "character is also dying in postmodern comedy". In terms of Alenka Zupančič's terminology and arguments, the author assesses to what extent these comedies move "very close to the basic core of nonsense" but approach it in a specific way. How they do not attempt to show nonsense as such, which is an impossible task, but proceed from the following thought and insight: "Comedy is very well aware of and practises the following line: we encounter nonsense where and when some meaning surprises us" (Zupančič 78)

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