



**From Theatre Experiments  
to National Institutions:  
Lado Kralj and Dušan  
Jovanović between  
1968 and the 1980s<sup>1</sup>**

Od pozorišnog eksperimenta  
do nacionalne institucije:

Lado Kralj i Dušan  
Jovanović između 1968.  
i osamdesetih godina

The article analyses the developments in Slovenian theatre between 1968 and 1985. It follows the careers of Dušan Jovanović, playwright and director, and Lado Kralj, director and professor of comparative literature, as members of the generation that entered the public sphere around 1968 and went on to radically change the Slovenian theatre of the 1970s and 1980s. The analysis shows that the main goals of the student movement—freedom of speech and of artistic expression as well as social change—were also at the heart of the artistic revolution that started in 1969 before it was developed by experimental theatre groups (Glej and Pekarna) and finally adopted by theatre institutions (the Mladinsko Theatre and the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana).

DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ, LADO KRALJ,  
SLOVENIAN THEATRE,  
EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE,  
THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

U radu se bavim historijom slovenačkog pozorišta od 1968. do 1985. godine skicirajući razvojne puteve Dušana Jovanovića, pisca i režisera, i Lada Kralja, režisera i profesora istorije književnosti i pozorišnih studija. Obojica su predstavnici generacije koja stupa na scenu 1968. i unosi radikalnu promenu u slovenačko pozorište sedamdesetih i osamdesetih godina 20. veka. Kroz analizu će se pokazati da su osnovni ciljevi studentskih demonstracija – sloboda govora i umetničkog izraza, kao i društvene promene – i ciljevi umetničke revolucije koja je počela s *Pupilijom* 1969. godine i razvila se u eksperimentalni teatar (Glej i Pekarna), kako bi osamdesetih godina ušla u nacionalne institucije (Mladinsko pozorište i Slovenačko nacionalno pozorište Drama Ljubljana).

DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ, LADO KRALJ,  
SLOVENAČKO POZORIŠTE,  
EKSPERIMENTALNO POZORIŠTE,  
STUDENTSKE DEMONSTRACIJE

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## INTRODUCTION

Dušan Jovanović and Lado Kralj were probably the most important figures in the Slovenian theatre experiment of the late 1960s. Jovanović directed the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre throughout 1969 and Kralj co-founded the Pekarna Theatre in 1971; together, they founded the Glej Experimental Theatre in 1970. In 1978, they both entered prestigious national institutions as artistic directors: Kralj joined the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, where he stayed until 1982; Jovanović joined the Mladinsko Theatre, where he worked until 1985.

They both took theatre experiments to their limits and then turned away from them: Jovanović showed his vision of experimentation in *Igrajte tumor v glavi in onesnaženje zraka* (Play a Tumour in the Head and Air Pollution); Kralj practiced experimentation in Pekarna, which he closed in 1978 after he realised that it had turned into a therapeutic group obsessed with the psychological frustrations of its members. At that point, they both changed the institutions they had entered: Kralj, working at Drama, ‘tried to carry out an authentic aesthetic revolution and met quite a resistance from the authorities’ (Toporišič and Troha: 2); Dušan Jovanović turned the Mladinsko Theatre into the most interesting Yugoslavia theatre of the 1980s.

What was the view of theatre practice held by Kralj and Jovanović, judging by their work from the 1960s to the 1980s? How did it change over time, as the decade of the student revolt gradually transformed into a time of the downturn of socialism?

The answers to these questions can help us understand how the student generation of 1968 carried out its revolutionary ideas by taking on key positions in the Slovenian theatre system. However, before

we look into the specific features of the theatre scene, we should revisit the historic moment of 1968.

### **THE STUDENT MOVEMENT**

The student movement was a series of protests around the world through which young people demanded social change. It took place both in the Western and the Eastern bloc. While students in Paris protested under slogans such as *Soyez réalistes, demandez l'impossible* (Be Realistic, Demand the Impossible), students in Belgrade demanded social equality. The movement also resonated among young artists. In Yugoslavia, their fight against social realism, which was supported by the leading ideology, was also a fight for modernism and new artistic genres from the West.

Ivo Svetina, who was twenty years old at the time, published his literary programme *Ročni praznik* (Celebration of Hands) in the journal *Tribuna* on 23 October 1968:

*I do not write in the name of provocation. My writing itself is a provocation. [...] History and tradition are mother and daughter. The mother seduces politicians, the daughter, poets. The mother has lost her charm long ago and the daughter is an innocent prostitute. I provoke national heritage, national treasures, I do not like museums. These old faces from the seventeenth century who tremble at the sound of a typewriter are pathetic. [...] Provocation is action. The provocateur is an activist; a rebel against peace is a general. The poet is an agent of war.*  
(Quoted in Dolgan: 165)

Later on, he demands complete freedom of artistic expression: 'I am against all literature that stands for any one social class, formation

or group. Literature is a reflection of the nation's freedom and self-reflection only through the individual who deeply feels and lives this freedom and self-reflection.' (Quoted in Dolgan: 166–67)

The method of young artists was not based on a clear social programme, but rather on a modernist approach of disillusionment and absurd. During the May 1971 occupation of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, Milan Jesih, too, wrote a manifesto:

*The house of being is SILENCE, VACUUM is her shepherd. In the valley of Doom lives the shepherd and in this valley there is a house. And we are all on a pilgrimage to the valley of Doom. This is what we live for. In accordance with the logic of this valley, which can also be dubbed Death, is the teleology of our existence and the existence of everything there is. (Quoted in Dolgan: 200)*

Such demands provoked a response of mainstream writers and cultural ideologists that was published in *Delo*, the most widely read Slovenian daily at the time, under the title *Demokracija da—razkroj ne!* (Democracy Yes—Disintegration No!). This was a protest against the fact that such literature was financed by public money (see Dolgan: 171–72). Let us now focus on the developments in the theatre.

### **PUPILIJA, PAPA PUPILO PA PUPILČKI**

*Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (Pupilija, Pappa Pupilo and Little Pupillos) was the first and only theatre production of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre. Premiered on 29 October 1969 in Ljubljana, it was a collective production directed by Dušan Jovanović that turned out to be a complete shock for the audience, as it understood theatre as an event that

is co-created by the performers and the audience, offering what Kralj later on discussed in terms of a different life experience.

The most controversial scene was the slaughter of a white hen at the end of the performance. A series of reviews and articles appeared in the press and a heated debate arose around the question of freedom of artistic expression. Jože Snoj, for example, wrote the following:

*To hell with you, members of the ad hoc theatre group Pupilija Ferkeverk. I wish I had never met you. [...] I protest in the name of the white hen that you slaughtered on Wednesday night in front of a full auditorium. Moreover, you did it consciously and without a utilitarian purpose, which is a symptom of a criminal deviation. [...] At the same time I fear that, for similar reasons and in front of a live audience, you might someday murder an innocent child. (Snoj: 5)*

Despite his rage, however, Snoj admitted that, in a way, the production managed to highlight the lack of moral values in a modern world.

The management of the Križanke theatre reacted immediately and was no longer prepared to host the performance. The attacks from the cultural establishment had a double effect: it was more difficult for the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre to find a venue and workspace, while the reaction made their production into a Yugoslav and international hit. They performed on the Ljubljana student campus, joined by an audience of 1200 people who attended even though there was no real promotion. The same holds for the reprise in Maribor that was also recorded by the Croatian national television station. Later, they performed in Zagreb (24 and 25 March 1970), in Rijeka and again in Zagreb at the Festival of student theatres. They also appeared in Belgrade at the review of amateur stage companies, where *Pupilija* won the prize for the most

experimental production. A television station from Western Germany recorded parts of the show, and the Slovenian national television station recorded the whole performance. The Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre fell apart soon after, but some of the members continued to work under the leadership of Matjaž Kralj. The last performance, presented at the Edinburgh Arts 75 in May 1975, was Matjaž Kralj's *You Must Be Quicker Than Your Mind, Love*.

Ivo Svetina, a member of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre who took part in the *Pupilija* performance, found a connection between the production and May 1968 in Paris: 'Seeds that were planted in May 1968 in Paris, when civil society was born, have also ripened in Slovenia.' One of the results was Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, which 'was a search for the human need to create a different, parallel reality, the reality of art.' (Svetina: 77)

### **DUŠAN JOVANOVIĆ**

The leader of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre was Dušan Jovanović. Jovanović was a bit older than the others and his drama *Norci* (The Madmen) was in the repertoire of the Stage 57 theatre, the most renowned experimental theatre in the 1960s, just before it was silenced by the authorities. Nonetheless, Jovanović developed his theatrical credo precisely through *Pupilija*. Forty years later, he remembered the play as follows: 'With *Pupilija I*, at first unknowingly, drank the sweet potion of brotherhood. I became an adherent of a tribe. [...] I tried to implement this Pupilija syndrome later on in new theatre environments and on different levels.' (Jovanović 2009: 92)

And what was this Pupilija syndrome? *Pupilija* was an artistic reaction to the false harmonious image of society and its mainstream art.

It was not Art with a capital A. According to professional standards it was simply amateur theatre, but it brought about the liberating power of parody and of ritual, and the desire of unlimited freedom.' (Jovanović 2009: 91) Jovanović thus came up with a form of theatre that builds on parody and moves the boundaries of what is acceptable in making theatre, in writing, as well as in political provocation.

Jovanović also always tried to establish a tribal atmosphere, although he was rarely successful in that regard. 'An actor is a member of a trade union which defines him and his social role, the role of an employee... I came to this conclusion after I tried to change a professional ensemble into a social group, to introduce a participative process into theatre.' (Jovanović 2009: 93) Here, Jovanović talks about his artistic leadership of the Mladinsko Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s, but let us examine his professional career a little bit more closely.

Jovanović directed his first performances in professional theatre in 1968 (the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor) and 1969 (the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana). On 1 March 1969, he staged *The Memorandum* (*Vyrozumění*), a play by Václav Havel. Just a few months later, on 7 October 1969, his own play, *Znamke, nakar še Emilija* (Stamps, and then Emilija), was staged at Drama, directed by Žarko Petan. This example of the theatre of the absurd features a fight between two secret service groups that are chasing a stamp collection that is supposed to feature a code. The action is constantly relativised, as Philatelist could be either a super-agent or just a man who wants to get a woman (Emilija). Similarly, Emilija and her husband could be either a married couple or just a couple of agents. At the end, Emilija kills everybody, lies down and calls the headquarters for someone to come and get her. Instead of agents, though, only three hens arrive, which is a radical satirical comment on Yugoslav secret service agencies. As a case of social



parody, the play was very successful. It ran for ninety nights over two seasons and won a prize at the 1970 MESS festival in Sarajevo (see Kranjc: 384).

### **THE GLEJ EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE**

On 25 June 1970, the premiere of *Kaspar* by Peter Handke marks the beginning of the Glej Experimental Theatre, a theatre company which was formally established a week later, using as its name the word *glej*, ‘to watch’, to stress its commitment to a different artistic approach. The members of the executive board were Dušan Jovanović, Lado Kralj, Samo Simčič, Lučka Simonič, Zvone Šedlbauer, Iztok Tory and Matjaž Vipotnik. Kralj remembers these beginnings as follows: ‘The idea of putting together a new alternative theatre group formed at the end of 1969, when I was approached by Dušan Jovanović and Zvone Šedlbauer. Soon after that, Igor Lampret, Marko Slodnjak and Iztok Tory joined the group. The ensemble was recruited quickly and spontaneously from the students at the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television.’ (EG Glej) Dušan Jovanović worked at Glej predominantly as a director. He directed some of its key performances there, including *Victor, or Power to the Children* (*Victor ou les enfants au pouvoir*) by Roger Vitrac (22 January 1971), *Spomenik G* (*Monument G*) by Jovanović and Bojan Štih (28 January 1972), *Kdor skak, tisti hlap* (*He Who Jump a Serf*) by Rudi Šeligo (26 January 1973), *Živelo življenje Luke D.* (*Long Life the Life of Luka D.*) by Pavle Lužan (23 January 1974) and *Pogovor v maternici koroške Slovenke* (*A Discussion in the Womb of a Carinthian Slovenian Woman*) by Janko Messner, Tomaž Šalamun and Jovanović (5 October 1974).

Let us focus in more detail on *Monument G*, the play which, together with *Pupilija*, marks the end of traditional theatre in Slovenia. With

*Monument G*, Jovanović staged a play by Bojan Štih. He wanted to implement Jerzy Grotowsky's poor theatre and repeat the experience of the Pupilija Ferkeverk group. He started with twelve actors who were asked to confront the text and act in reaction to it. In the end, only Jožica Avbelj stayed and was joined by the musician Matjaž Jarc. She was the only one who, as Jovanović recalls (2009: 95), 'reacted to my stammering instructions autonomously: she confronted the characters and expressed herself in relation to them'.

Glej produced a new form of theatre that was based on the theatrical event. This was a Yugoslav phenomenon. 'At approximately the same time Atelier 212 was formed in Belgrade, Theatre ITD in Zagreb, and we all displayed tendencies that were completely different from those in theatre institutions. We realised that compromises were no longer possible, as this would have led to an aesthetic and ideological defeat.' (EG Glej) There was a clear connection between these views and the student revolt that demanded social revolution and the transformation of all traditions.

The next milestone in Jovanović's career was the production *Žrtve mode bum-bum* (Victims of the Bang-Bang Fashion), premiered on 16 October 1975 at the Mladinsko Theatre. Jovanović himself wrote the text and directed the play. Together with his play *Igrajte tumor v glavi in onesnaženje zraka*, which Ljubiša Ristić staged in Celje on 9 January 1976, this was a turning point in Jovanović's career. In 1978, he took over the Mladinsko Theatre, which he quickly turned into the most innovative theatre in Yugoslavia.

*An official notice was sent to all the Slovenian theatres that the anniversary of something needed to be commemorated, probably that of the liberation or the victory over fascism. Smole called me and gave*

*me a completely free hand. I was to write a text and stage it. In his conspiring and sly way, however, he let me know that he expected nothing conventional from me. (SMG: 121)*

The result was a text for a glamorous hostess, a female and a male choir that was based on an overview of military fashion from the Middle Ages to the present day. This was complemented by chanted ‘entries from the Dictionary of Standard Slovenian, pertaining to thematically related concepts (fighting, socage, the Scourge of God, fear, man, suffering, work, home, birth, death, love)’. In between, there were ‘generic scenes: military scenes, name calling, reports, processions of the wounded and the maimed’. The process of making the play was also innovative:

*We started studying towards the end of the season and sat at the table for over a month. At reading rehearsals, we painstakingly sought for the right sound image for each chorus. [...] After the holidays we continued with improvisation and set production. The premiere was triumphant and the ideological grudges were extreme. Most often, we were reproached for the fact that all the uniforms (even those of the partisans) were made equal in the neutral discourse of fashion jargon. (SMG: 121)*

Andrej Inkret wrote a review of the play in which he summarised his impressions as follows: ‘This is a thoroughly vivid innovative production with great artistic zeal, sharp and without prejudice, colourful and brilliant, game-changing and ruthless. And above all, it is a production that is refined in the use of modern theatrical speech, a production where the poetry exceeds the narrow boundaries of “light” cabaret or satire.’ (SMG: 133) The production was a hit, with seventy-three nights in the repertoire.

A year later, Ristić staged *Tumor* in Celje. The text is an ironic take on theatre experimentation. Director Dular, dramaturge Palčič and their actors occupy the Slavija Theatre and throw out all the traditionalists. The image of theatrical laboratory is self-referential and fruitless. Jovanović explained his disillusionment with theatre experimentation in an interview from 1990: 'All these experiments are fruitless, they are marginalised and usually carried out by young people. One cannot exist in such a situation for long, so it is imperative to leave it and set off on a march through the institutions, in an attempt to change their bureaucratic nature and the people who work in them.' (EG Glej) The cooperation with Ristić marked the next period, when Jovanović became the artistic director of the Mladinsko Theatre.

#### **THE MLADINSKO THEATRE**

When Dušan Jovanović became the artistic director of Mladinsko Theatre, his most famous play, *Osvoboditev Skopja* (The Liberation of Skopje), was staged as well. Written in 1976 and 1977, the play opens up taboo themes of socialism and gives a boost to the dynamic political theatre of the 1980s. Engaged in a struggle for social as well as aesthetic change, it fulfils one of the main goals of the 1968 generation.

The play is constructed out of the protagonist's fragmented memories of the final months of the Second World War in Skopje, when he, Zoran, was six years old. It is an autobiographical play that goes beyond the author's memories in order to explore the theme of the impact of historical events on the individual. The audience is shown a complex family life with the partisan Dušan, Zoran's father, who is absent and only arrives at the end as a liberator, and members of the resistance in Skopje. In contrast, there are a number of female protagonists

who try to survive in difficult circumstances. Lica, Zoran's mother, thus prostitutes herself with a German officer in order to get food for her family, while his aunt, Lenče, gives piano lessons to a Jewish girl who is deported in the middle of the play. Life is shown as being far more complex than it was presented by the official ideology after the war. One of the most illustrative scenes is Act 3, Scene 5, entitled 'Orgy': in the apartment of Zoran's family, the mother is dancing half-naked for the German officer, the Doctor is dictating Lenče a list of provisions sent to the Partisan army in the basement, Grandma Ana is chain-smoking, while, next to her, her drunk son Georgij, completely ruined by torture, is singing a traditional Macedonian song; Zoran is observing all this, unable to grasp the meaning of the antagonisms at work.

At the end, the play explains the trauma of Jovanović's generation in a dialogue between Zoran and his father:

*Zoran: One night I woke up at three o'clock from a peaceful sleep, without the shadow of a dream. I was woken by some unexpected realisation: I felt I had suddenly discovered the meaning of my life. At first, it was like the soft, gentle transformation of blood into clotting mud. Starting in the tiniest blood vessels at the extremities of my body; under my nails, in my toes, my lips, at the base of my nose. Then the coagulation spread through all my veins.*

*At that very moment, I had a peculiar feeling that I could destroy this experience, annul it, and wipe it out. By disappearing. By flying away. By coming unstuck and leaving behind the trammels of my body. The capillary vessels in my brain became filled with this clotted blood and the neurons began to die one after the other. Then the arteries hardened,*

*the heart stopped, died and burst in a great milky jet, which spurted out and filled all of space.*

Dušan: *My son, I don't understand you.* (Jovanović 1985: 76)

Directed by Ljubiša Georgijevski, the play was premiered in Drama on 7 November 1978. It was invited to the Sterijino pozorje festival in 1979, where Jovanović won the prize for the best contemporary drama. It is interesting that three productions of *Osvoboditev Skopja* were shown at the same festival—in addition to the one in Ljubljana also one in KPGT from Zagreb and one in Skopje.

There are two other productions that are even more important for the development of Slovenian theatre, both directed by Ristić; these are *The Persians (Persai)* by Aeschylus, premiered on 9 December 1980, and *Missa in A Minor* by Ristić, premiered on 21 December 1980. According to Tomaž Toporišič, these are the most important performances of the 1980s because they put the Mladinsko Theatre on the European map. 'In the breakthrough production of the *Missa in A Minor*, Ristić placed a completely individualistic montage of fragments of *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich (Grobница za Borisa Davidoviča)* by Danilo Kiš along with pieces by Lenin, Trotsky, Proudhon.' (SMG: 90) In terms of approach, Ristić's play is reminiscent of Jovanović's *Žrtve mode bum-bum*. As he himself said in an interview for the magazine *Teleks*: 'There is no individual interest of the writer, director or actor. We all invest into the production everything we are, know and have.' (Quoted in SMG: 90) It was a very popular play, but also a very controversial one. As Marko Juvan points out, its main feature was a mixture of political issues and an avant-garde approach: 'The political theatre of the 1980s attempted to turn away from the theatre conventions of the "socialist bourgeoisie" and to surpass the

aesthetic formalism of “socialist modernism” by using an open drama form, collective acting, montage of documentary material and fiction, and an avant-garde notion of Gesamtkunstwerk.’ (Juvan: 549) *Missa in A Minor* won international acclaim: ‘the *grand prix* of the BITEF festival in 1981, awarded for the first time in its history to a “domestic” performance’, as well as ‘an exhaustive review by Heinz Kluncker in *Theater heute*, a leading European theatre magazine, which proclaimed *Missa* to be the biggest event of BITEF, a leading European festival of new theatre at the time, ultimately placing Ristić, *Missa* and the Mladinsko Theatre on the map of European theatre’ (SMG: 94).

### **LADO KRALJ**

Kralj was not an active member of the Pupilija Ferkewerk Theatre, but the group was closely connected to Pekarna, the experimental theatre which he established together with Ivo Svetina in 1971. As he explains in an interview with Primož Jesenko: ‘*Pupilija* influenced Pekarna already with several people whom Bara Levstik gathered for the new theatre. [...] Its power was that it showed the life situation, the experience of a generation. The innovation that was partly adopted by Pekarna was to show the special features of a specific generation.’ (Kralj and Jesenko: 27) It is precisely this longing for a different life experience that is the legacy of the student movement.

### **PEKARNA**

Glej and Pekarna co-existed, but Pekarna tried to be more radical in its following of ritual theatre. As Kralj puts it: ‘When a piece was selected it was presented to the whole group and everybody debated about

how it could be constructed and who was going to take which part.' (Kralj and Jesenko: 14) Moreover, the work was based on the engagement of the actor. 'If an actor does not want to perform a certain part of the text, you make a revision together and leave him or her the parts which he or she will confront productively. The actor was definitely more important than the author or its rights. We did not care about those.' (Kralj and Jesenko: 16)

The turning point for Pekarna was again a production directed by Ristić. Premiered on 1 October 1974, *Tako, tako* (So-So) consisted of a number of fragments about marginalised people written by the Serbian author Mirko Kovač. Those miserable lives were understood as a social critique and a criticism of the Communist Party. Ristić also experimented with casting, as he 'put three older men on stage: one was almost homeless and the other two were pensioners'. They were 'positioned in one of the four cubes on stage, discussing their daily routines, drinking wine, basically playing themselves' (Kralj and Jesenko: 19). A similar approach was used almost a decade later by Romeo Castellucci in the productions of *Societas Raffaello Sanzio*. No wonder that Pekarna attracted a lot of attention at the international theatre festival in Nancy.

After *Tako, tako*, the productions of Pekarna lost some of the initial strength of the group, and in 1978 Kralj and Svetina decided to close the theatre. There were also other reasons for this decision, from the fact that actors demanded pay to the fact that the collective organisation of work was no longer a priority for everyone.

### **THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL THEATRE DRAMA LJUBLJANA**

The 1970s were a decade of increased ideological repression in Slovenian culture, which resulted in a crisis of the Slovenian National Theatre



Drama Ljubljana, the most important institutional theatre in Slovenia. Between 1971 and 1977, Drama was directed by Janez Šenk, who tried to negotiate new work conditions with the three directors, Mile Korun, Žarko Petan and France Jamnik, who in the end left Drama. Other Slovenian directors boycotted the theatre and Šenk had to hire directors abroad, which proved to be more difficult than he had thought. As a result, Drama ‘was not selected for the competition programme at Sterijino pozorje for almost a decade’ (Kranjc: 387). The other Ljubljana theatres, the Ljubljana City Theatre and the Mladinsko Theatre, became more innovative and interesting.

The manager who was appointed to overcome this crisis was the famous actor Polde Bibič. At his inauguration, he stressed that he needed an artistic director who would bring a new aesthetic as well as a new repertoire (see Kranjc: 428). This artistic director was Lado Kralj, appointed on 22 May 1978. As he remembers: ‘Concerning Drama as an institution, I was merely interested in how it worked. Polde Bibič, whom I did not know personally, invited me. We had to go to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and to Josip Vidmar to be approved. After that, I was in a way let into Drama.’ (Kralj et al.: 208–209)

Kralj began to implement his ideas immediately and results followed quickly. As early as the season 1978/1979, a production of *Tango* by Sławomir Mrożek had quite an impact, although it was a student production directed a very young Janez Pipan. *Tango* was invited to the Borštnikovo srečanje festival. *Osvoboditev Skopja* marked the season and was invited to Sterijino pozorje. Kralj introduced new authors to the Drama repertoire. The most controversial ones were those who had already been introduced by Glej or Pekarna, such as Peter Handke, Edward Bond, Harold Pinter, Václav Havel, Dario Fo, Jovanović, Peter Božič, Dimitrij Rupel, Dane Zajc and Drago Jančar. Kralj invited Korun, Petan

and Jamnik to return to the theatre and added some of the directors from his experimental phase, namely Georgij Paro, Zvone Šedlbauer, and Božo Šprajc. Productions were invited to Sterijino pozorje more than once; they won prizes in Novi Sad, at MESS, in Dubrovnik and elsewhere.

Kralj's last season was marked by the staging of the first play by Jančar, *Dissident Arnož in njegovi* (Dissident Arnož and His Band). Premiered on 22 January 1982 and directed by Šedlbauer, the production tackled the conflict between the intellectual and society. The production was very successful: Jančar won the Grum Award for the best play of the year and one of the awards at Sterijino pozorje.

Kralj's decisions were controversial, leading to a number of conflicts. The transcripts of the programme board meetings that could show us how his decisions were contested have been lost, but we have his own recollections. 'The whole mandate they were carefully checking my work. There was the programme board, with people from different political organisations. These members even cried at meetings to secure their agendas,' he says in an interview. Kralj also explains why he left Drama and became a freelancer: 'I had had enough of fighting with the authorities. I even had to defend myself, together with Boris A. Novak, the dramaturge at the time, in front of a judge when one of the actors accused us of working against the brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav nations.' (Kralj et al.: 209)

## CONCLUSION

So, has the student movement of the long 1960s had an impact on the development of Slovenian theatre? It seems that it has, as a generation of authors and directors was formed around it that introduced a new kind of creative process and a different understanding of theatre.

The focus on the final product was replaced by a focus on the process, on theatre as an event that happens between the actors and the spectators. A group of young people that gathered in the Glej Experimental Theatre and the Pekarna Theatre was marginalised for almost a decade, but entered the institutions in 1978, first the rather small Mladinsko Theatre, which was originally established to serve young audiences, and then the most important theatre in Slovenia. It is not surprising that Kralj and Bibič had to defend themselves before the highest political body, the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and the most influential theatre ideologue, Josip Vidmar. In their work, both Jovanović and Kralj followed their social and aesthetic aspirations, advocating for freedom of speech and criticising the regime. ‘The theatre was very important in a political sense back then. And that was what interested me most at the time,’ Kralj explains (Kralj et al.: 209)

The revolutionary spirit of 1968 is present in the work of both Jovanović and Kralj, as well as in the work of their generation. As Kralj puts it: ‘To know the power, to test it... In a way we were encouraged to do that by professor Pirjevec, who urged us to enter the institutions and subvert them from the inside.’ (Kralj et al.: 210)

Nonetheless, the views defended by Jovanović and Kralj did have support in the historical moment. With the death of Josip Broz—Tito in 1980, a significant process of social change began which eventually led to the end of socialism and Yugoslavia. The belief held by Jovanović and Kralj that the theatre should be a social forum where alternative social ideas can and should be discussed corresponded to the need of the audience for social and political change. Thus their long march through the institutions was a successful one. It presented a turning point in the development of Slovenian theatre and the legacy of those changes is palpable even today. ♡

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## Povzetek

Članek se osredotoča na vprašanje, kako je generacija ustvarjalcev, ki je dejavno sodelovala v študentskih nemirih med letoma 1968 in 1971, kasneje delovala v slovenskih gledališčih. So bili njeni pogledi na gledališko umetnost, ki so pomenili radikalni prelom z literarnim gledališčem in pripeljali slovensko gledališče prek gledališkega eksperimenta v sedemdesetih letih 20. stoletja do političnega gledališča osemdesetih let, podobni osnovnim ciljem študentskega gibanja? Analiza se osredotoča na poklicni poti dramatika in režiserja Dušana Jovanovića ter režiserja in pozneje teatrologa Lada Kralja, ki sta bila bržkone najvidnejša predstavnika generacije 1968 v slovenskem gledališču.

Njuna gledališka pot je bila povezana s skupino umetnikov in umetnic, ki je v gledališču poskušala uveljaviti glavne cilje študentskih nemirov, zlasti radikalni prelom z obstoječim redom in z življenjsko izkušnjo prejšnje generacije. V gledališču se to kaže kot uveljavljanje ritualnega gledališča, kolektivnega načina dela in premikanja mej svobode. Vse to nakaže že prelomna predstava *Pupilija papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (1969), ki jo je skupaj z drugimi zakrivil Dušan Jovanović. T. i. pupilski sindrom kasneje razvijata Jovanović in Kralj s sopotniki v Eksperimentalnem gledališču Glej in v Gledališču Pekarna, ob koncu sedemdesetih let pa skoraj istočasno vstopita v institucionalna gledališča. Jovanović tedaj postane umetniški vodja Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča, kjer vpeljuje kolektivni način dela s profesionalno ekipo, obenem pa z Ljubišo Ristićem, Janezom Pipanom in ostalimi osrednjimi režiserji tega obdobja vzpostavi gledališče kot družbeni forum, kot izrazito politično gledališče, ki je prevladovalo v osemdesetih letih. Enako stori Lado Kralj, ko leta 1978 prevzame umetniško vodenje ljubljanske Drame. Na repertoar postavi sodobne in v političnem smislu

kontroverzne avtorje (med katerimi so Peter Handke, Edward Bond, Sławomir Mrożek, Václav Havel, Dario Fo, Dušan Jovanović, Peter Božič, Dimitrij Rupel, Dane Zajc in Drago Jančar). Poleg tega pripelje nazaj v Dramo najbolj inovativne slovenske režiserje (med katerimi so Mile Korun, Žarko Petan, Franci Križaj in Janez Pipan), s čimer Dramo ponovno uveljavi kot eno od inovativnih jugoslovanskih gledališč. Študentsko gibanje je tako pustilo globoke sledi v razvoju slovenskega gledališča vse do danes.

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