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Abstract

The paper delves into the activity of Leopold Kordeš (1808-1879) in the years before the March Revolution in the Habsburg Empire and until 1850. It does so through the prism of the newspaper *Carniolia* (1838-1844), which, in the German language, was the first to materialise the (proto)critical treatment of theatre activity in Ljubljana. By following Kordeš in his roles as writer, editor and organiser, the article emphasises his pioneering initiative to establish a permanent Slovenian theatre in 1848 and closely examines his interference with the authority of Janez Bleiweis and the reasons why Kordeš, as the creator of the first germ of a platform for critical writing about theatre in Ljubljana (and in Slovenia), got caught in the flow of not remembering and eluded the canonical reception of personalities in Slovenian history.

Keywords: Leopold Kordeš, *Carniolia*, theatre report, protocriticism, national political goals, contours of a shared narrative, dynamics of national relations, Janez Bleiweis, entering of Slovenian expression onto the stage, *Illyrisches Blatt*, language as a national attribute, linguistic choice, initiative for a permanent Slovenian theatre stage 1848-1850, retreat

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Protocritic Leopold Kordeš Between Inception and Impossibility

Primož Jesenko

Summary

The paper discusses the emergence of the intention to write theatre criticism on Slovenian territories in the second half of the 19th century. The early inception of critical writing about theatre in Ljubljana in the middle of the 19th century did not follow the criteria of a systematic critical discourse. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's theoretical reference, *The Hamburg Dramaturgy* (Hamburgische Dramaturgie), served as a foundation. However, the realisation of it was put on stage by the contemporaneous German theatre community in a way that tended to stall theatre reflection. The cultural context in Ljubljana before 1848, dominated by the figure of Janez Bleiweis, was hardly bearable for Leopold Kordeš, but this relationship was never truly and directly specified. From 1838 until 1850, the years of his activity in Ljubljana, Kordeš launched and consolidated the protocritical criteria standard of writing about German theatre in Ljubljana and Celovec, which was taken after the German journalistic model. Kordeš and Bleiweis, however, operated in parallel, without connection; in accordance with different sociopolitical aims and regarding aspirations and their approach to writing, they remained irreversibly separated. In 1849, Kordeš's voice and presence permeated the written texts of other authors, such as Jožef Babnik and Vincenc Ferreri Klun, who – in dealing with German theatre performances of the old custom – consistently denied and rejected the surpassed stage authority. Due to the diametrically different embeddedness in time and society, contact between Kordeš and Bleiweis was not possible. With his use of the German language, the intuitively strong Kordeš awakened an automatic aversion from the (proto)cultural league in Ljubljana. This is another reason why the stream of non-remembrance snatched Kordeš from the circle of Slovenian historical personalities. The fact is that Kordeš – after the loosening of national divergences from the March Revolution in 1848 onwards – immediately presented the first thoroughly organised proposal for the Slovenian national theatre. However, this ensured no advantage or priority whatsoever: the precedential landmark competence was to remain in the slow hands of pragmatic Slovenian nationals under Bleiweis. As of 1850, Kordeš had

found his way only in stoic withdrawal; next to the “father of the nation”, Bleiweis, he was gently pushed out of the canon. The Slovenian Age went on.