

Communication Aspects of Theatrical Performance: Between Code and Reception in Milan Begović's „The Adventurer at the Door”

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ABSTRACT

*This paper examines Milan Begović's drama *The Adventurer at the Door* through a communication-oriented analysis of theatrical performance and critical reception. Departing from the understanding of theatre as a communicative event, the study approaches stage production as an interaction between performative codes, media discourse, and audience interpretation, in which meaning is produced and negotiated within the public sphere. The paper focuses on a comparative analysis of two major Croatian productions of the play: Ivica Kunčević's staging at the Gavella Drama Theatre in Zagreb (1980) and Nenni Delmestre's production at the Croatian National Theatre in Split (1990). Combining comparative performance analysis with an analysis of newspaper criticism, the study treats theatre reviews as forms of media-mediated public communication that actively shape reception frameworks and symbolic constructions of meaning. The analysis demonstrates that the two productions articulated fundamentally different communicative strategies. Kunčević's staging privileged psychological introspection, ambiguity, and symbolic suggestion, encouraging an open and contemplative mode of reception. Delmestre's production, by contrast, foregrounded expressive intensity, visual monumentality, and existential clarity, generating a more direct and affective reception framework. In both cases, critical discourse played a decisive role in framing the performances and stabilising their public interpretation. The article concludes that the meaning of *The Adventurer at the Door* is not generated solely on stage, but emerges within a communication triangle formed by theatrical performance, media discourse, and audience reception. By foregrounding the communicative dimensions of theatrical production and reception, the study contributes to a broader understanding of theatre as a form of public communication rather than a purely aesthetic practice.*

Key words: theatre as communication, critical reception, media discourse, Milan Begović, Croatian modernism

Introduction

Milan Begović's drama *Pustolov pred vratima* (*The Adventurer at the Door*, 1925) is widely regarded as one of the most important works of Croatian modernist drama^{1,2}. Since its premiere in 1926 at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, the play has attracted sustained attention from theatre practitioners and critics, while repeatedly provoking debate regarding its dramaturgical structure, symbolic language, and performative potential. Owing to its modernist poetics, complex dramaturgy, and pronounced metatheatrical and psychological layers, *The Adventurer at the Door* has remained open to divergent interpretations across different historical and cultural contexts¹.

This article explicitly approaches theatrical performance as a communicative event involving multiple actors within the public sphere: the playwright, director, performers, media, and audience. From this perspective, meaning is not generated exclusively through stage performance, but emerges through interaction between performative codes and their mediation and interpretation in public discourse. Newspaper theatre criticism is therefore treated not merely as an aesthetic commentary, but as a form of public and media-mediated communication that actively participates in framing, circulating, and stabilising the meanings of theatrical works.

Within this communication-oriented framework, the paper focuses on a comparative analysis of two major Cro-

atian stage productions of *The Adventurer at the Door*: Ivica Kunčević's production at the Gavella Drama Theatre in Zagreb (1980) and Nenni Delmestre's production at the Croatian National Theatre in Split (1990). These productions are widely regarded as the most representative contemporary Croatian interpretations of Begović's play and provide a suitable corpus for examining how different staging strategies generate distinct reception frameworks within the public sphere.

The primary objective of the study is to identify differences in directorial concepts, character interpretation, and scenographic solutions, and to analyse how these elements were articulated and evaluated through newspaper critical discourse. By treating critical reception as a communicative process rather than a secondary reflection of performance, the analysis shifts the focus from purely aesthetic evaluation toward the examination of how theatrical meaning is publicly constructed, interpreted, and legitimised.

In addition to newspaper reviews and relevant scholarly literature, the study draws on archival materials and available video recordings of both productions, which enable a detailed reconstruction of performative strategies and their communicative effects. By analysing performance and reception together, the article seeks to demonstrate how *The Adventurer at the Door* functions not only as a dramatic text and theatrical event, but as a communicative phenomenon situated within a broader interaction between performance, media, and audience.

Begović's Dramatic Oeuvre

Milan Begović (1876–1948) occupies a central position in Croatian twentieth-century drama^{1,2}, not only as a playwright but also as a cultural actor whose works consistently engaged with the communicative dynamics of modern society. His dramatic oeuvre encompasses a wide range of genres and stylistic approaches, from modernist psychological drama to historical plays and social comedy, reflecting both his aesthetic versatility and his sensitivity to changing modes of public expression and reception.

A defining feature of Begović's drama is its strong focus on psychological conflict and interpersonal communication^{1,4}. His plays repeatedly stage situations in which meaning is produced through dialogue, silence, desire, and misunderstanding, foregrounding the instability of identity and the fragility of social roles. In this sense, Begović's modernism is not limited to formal experimentation but is deeply invested in exploring drama as a medium of communication that articulates tensions between private experience and public norms.

Among his most significant works is *Bez trećega* (Without a Third, 1931), widely regarded as the peak of his psychological dramaturgy^{1,3}. The play addresses jealousy, possession, and emotional dependency within marriage through a radically reduced cast and an intensified focus on verbal and affective exchange. Frequently compared to the dramas of August Strindberg and Henrik

Ibsen, *Bez trećega* demonstrates Begović's ability to condense complex emotional dynamics into a communicatively dense dramatic form. Its strong reception on Croatian and European stages, as well as its recognition with the Demeter Award, indicates the play's effectiveness in engaging both critics and audiences within the public theatrical sphere.

Begović's social comedy *Amerikanska jahta u splitskoj luci* (An American Yacht in the Port of Split, 1930) exemplifies a different but equally important communicative strategy. Through satire and irony, the play exposes the mechanisms of social self-representation and collective illusion in a provincial environment fascinated by external symbols of prestige. Here, comedy functions as a mode of public communication that negotiates social values and cultural aspirations, a quality that contributed to the play's favourable reception at its premiere at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb.

Historical and ideological tensions also play a prominent role in Begović's drama. In *Gospođa Walewska* (Madame Walewska, 1906), set during the Napoleonic era, personal passion and political loyalty intersect, producing conflicts that resonate beyond their historical setting. Similarly, *Božji čovjek* (God's Man, 1924) stages a moral and spiritual crisis through the figure of a monk torn between religious devotion and corporeal desire. In both cases, Begović uses dramatic conflict as a means of communicating broader ethical and existential dilemmas to the audience.

Across his oeuvre, Begović consistently combines realistic and symbolic elements, creating a dramaturgical language that invites interpretation rather than fixed meaning. His engagement with modernist theatrical thought (particularly the Pirandellian questioning of truth, identity, and theatrical illusion) is evident in many of his plays^{3,4} and becomes especially pronounced in his later works. These strategies position Begović's drama within a broader European context of modernist theatre that treats performance as a space of reflection on representation itself.

Beyond drama, Begović was also an accomplished novelist, poet, librettist, theatre administrator, director, translator, and professor. His prose works, such as *Giga Barićeva* (1940) and *Dunja u kovčegu* (Quince in a Suitcase, 1921), further demonstrate his sustained interest in psychological depth and social communication, particularly in relation to questions of gender, identity, and emotional experience. Together, his dramatic and prose writings form a coherent cultural project oriented toward articulating modern subjectivity within a changing public sphere.

Begović's work has been the subject of extensive scholarly reception within Croatian literary and theatre studies¹⁻⁶. Particularly influential are the studies of Boris Senker, who analysed Begović as a "man of the theatre" and mapped the aesthetic and performative dimensions of his dramatic world, as well as later contributions by Frano Čale, Morana Čale Knežević, Lada Čale Feldman, and Martina Petranović. These studies have situated Begović

within modernist dramaturgy, metatheatrical practice, and the staging of the unreal. From a communication-oriented perspective, this body of scholarship also illustrates how Begović's plays have been continuously reinterpreted and recontextualised within changing critical and cultural discourses.

Two major scholarly conferences dedicated to Milan Begović, the international conference *The Literary and Theatrical Work of Milan Begović* (Vrlika, 1996) and the conference *The Reception of Milan Begović* (Zagreb and Zadar, 1996), further confirm the sustained academic interest in his work. Their proceedings document the evolving reception of Begović's drama and underscore its relevance within both national and European cultural frameworks.

The Importance of *The Adventurer At The Door* and Its Theatrical Life

The Adventurer at the Door occupies a distinctive position in Croatian drama due to its modernist dramaturgy, symbolic language, and sustained openness to reinterpretation. From a communication-oriented perspective, the importance of the play lies not only in its aesthetic qualities but also in its capacity to generate shifting meanings through performance and public reception. The play repeatedly activates a communicative tension between reality and illusion, intimacy and public representation, thereby inviting directors, critics, and audiences to negotiate its meaning within specific historical and cultural contexts¹.

The premiere of *The Adventurer at the Door* in 1926 at the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb, directed by Branko Gavella, was accompanied by a divided critical response. While some contemporary critics recognised the play as a culmination of Begović's dramaturgical ambitions, others perceived it as overly experimental or psychologically implausible. These early reactions demonstrate that the play entered the public sphere as a communicative event marked by interpretative instability, in which critical discourse played a decisive role in shaping reception frameworks and evaluative criteria.

The dramatic narrative centres on Agneza, a gravely ill woman who enters into a pact with Death in her search for idealised love and fulfilment. Through a sequence of dream-like and phantasmagorical episodes, the boundaries between waking life and illusion are progressively blurred. Begović employs dream imagery as a central dramaturgical device, enabling the articulation of subconscious desires and anxieties while simultaneously challenging conventional modes of realist representation. This dramaturgical strategy situates the play firmly within European modernism and renders it particularly receptive to psychoanalytic and metatheatrical interpretation^{3,5}.

The international theatrical life of *The Adventurer at the Door* between the two world wars further underscores its communicative potential beyond the national context. The play was staged in major European cultural centres, including Rome, Vienna, Prague, and Oslo, where it was

received as a work aligned with contemporary avant-garde theatre. A key moment in this international reception was Anton Giulio Bragaglia's production at the Teatro degli Indipendenti in Rome in 1928^{5,7}. This staging not only achieved considerable critical and audience acclaim but also functioned as a powerful act of cultural mediation, introducing Begović's drama into transnational theatrical networks and interpretative discourses.

Bragaglia's production, subsequently performed across Italy and on a South American tour, contributed to framing *The Adventurer at the Door* as a modernist work characterised by symbolic imagery, refined lyricism, and bold structural experimentation. Contemporary criticism emphasised the play's capacity to communicate existential and emotional tensions through a theatrical language that transcended local or national specificity. From a communication perspective, this phase of the play's reception illustrates how theatrical meaning can circulate across cultural boundaries through performance, critical discourse, and institutional validation.

Despite this early international success, *The Adventurer at the Door* experienced a period of relative marginalisation in the Croatian theatrical repertoire after the Second World War. It reappeared on Croatian stages in the early 1960s and was adapted for film, but it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the play achieved renewed prominence through two major stage productions: Ivica Kunčević's staging at the Gavella Drama Theatre in 1980 and Nenni Delmestre's production at the Croatian National Theatre in Split in 1990. These productions reactivated the play within a new communicative environment shaped by changing aesthetic sensibilities, media practices, and audience expectations.

Within Croatian theatre culture, *The Adventurer at the Door* has thus functioned as a paradigmatic modernist text whose meaning is repeatedly reconstructed through performance and reception. Its theatrical life demonstrates how a dramatic work persists not as a fixed entity but as a communicative process, continually renegotiated through staging strategies, critical discourse, and audience interpretation. In this sense, the productions analysed in this study exemplify the play's enduring capacity to generate new reception frameworks and to engage contemporary publics through shifting modes of theatrical communication.

Methodology: Communication-Oriented Analysis of Performance and Critical Reception

The methodological framework of this study combines comparative performance analysis with the analysis of critical reception, approached explicitly from a communication-studies perspective. While grounded in theatre historiography and performance analysis, the methodology is guided by an interest in how meaning is produced, mediated, and interpreted within the public sphere

through the interaction of theatrical performance, media discourse, and audience reception⁶.

The empirical corpus of the study consists of two major Croatian stage productions of *The Adventurer at the Door*: Ivica Kunčević's production at the Gavella Drama Theatre in Zagreb (1980) and Nenni Delmestre's production at the Croatian National Theatre in Split (1990). These productions were selected because they represent two distinct interpretative strategies and because their premieres generated extensive critical discussion in the daily press, making them suitable case studies for analysing reception as a communicative process.

The first methodological step involved the collection and examination of archival materials, including theatre programmes, production documentation, press reviews, photographic records, and available video recordings of both performances. These sources enabled a reconstruction of key performative elements—such as staging strategies, spatial organisation, acting styles, and scenographic codes—that function as communicative signals addressed to both audiences and critics.

The second step focused on analyzing newspaper criticism as a form of media-mediated public communication. Reviews published at the time of the premieres in major Croatian daily newspapers (*Vjesnik*, *Borba*, *Večernji list*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*) were analysed alongside later retrospective critical texts. In total, three reviews were examined for the Zagreb production and three for the Split production. Rather than treating these texts as secondary commentary, the analysis approaches them as elements of critical discourse that actively frame performances, construct reception frameworks, and contribute to the symbolic production of meaning in the public sphere.

The third methodological step consisted of a comparative analysis of directorial approaches. This analysis examined differences in interpretative focus, dramaturgical interventions, scenographic concepts, and work with actors, with particular attention to scenes and characters that most clearly reveal divergent staging codes. Through this comparison, the study identifies how different performative strategies give rise to distinct communicative meanings and reception patterns.

Throughout the analysis, concepts such as discourse, reception framework, and symbolic construction of meaning are used as analytical tools rather than as components of an extensive theoretical model. This selective use of terminology ensures that the focus remains on concrete communicative processes through which theatrical meaning is articulated, mediated, and evaluated.

Finally, the reception and impact of each production are assessed through indicators such as the number of performances, festival awards, and patterns of critical response. This multi-layered methodological approach allows the study to demonstrate how *The Adventurer at the Door* operates not only as a theatrical text and performance, but as a communicative event whose meaning is

negotiated within a dynamic triangle of performance, media, and audience.

Analysis of Ivica Kunčević's Production

Gavella Drama Theatre, Zagreb, 1980

Ivica Kunčević's production of *The Adventurer at the Door*, staged at the Gavella Drama Theatre in 1980, represents a decisive moment in the modern reception of Begović's drama¹. From a communication-oriented perspective, this production can be understood as a carefully structured performative message that translated the play's modernist dramaturgy into a set of stage codes designed to guide audience interpretation and critical response.

Kunčević's directorial approach was primarily oriented toward the exploration of the play's internal, dream-like dimensions, with a strong emphasis on psychological nuance and metatheatrical ambiguity. Rather than offering a realist representation of events, the production foregrounded subjectivity and introspection, encouraging the audience to interpret the stage action as a symbolic projection of the protagonist's inner experience. In communicative terms, this strategy established a reception framework in which meaning was produced through suggestion, affect, and associative imagery rather than through narrative clarity.

The scenography, designed by Zlatko Kauzlaric Ataç, played a central role in articulating this communicative strategy. The set evoked a salon interior enriched with symbolic elements such as mirrors and stylised furniture, creating a space that oscillated between recognisable social reality and psychological interiority. The minimalism and visual restraint of the scenography functioned as a system of visual signs that directed attention toward the protagonist's emotional state and reinforced the production's dream-like atmosphere. In this sense, scenography operated as a key semiotic layer within the overall communicative structure of the performance.

The role of Agneza was interpreted by Biserka Ipša, whose performance was widely praised for its subtle balance between erotic suggestion, emotional vulnerability, and existential anxiety. Ipša's acting style relied on restraint and internalisation, producing a character whose transformation unfolded gradually and ambiguously. From a communication perspective, her performance invited the audience to engage in an interpretative process shaped by uncertainty and emotional resonance, rather than by explicit psychological explanation. This interpretative openness became one of the defining features of the production's reception.

Kunčević's work with the ensemble further reinforced the coherence of the performance's communicative code. The actors' movements, gestures, and interactions were carefully calibrated, often approaching a choreographed quality that emphasised rhythm and fluidity over dramatic confrontation. This performative discipline contributed to the perception of the production as a ritualised theatri-

cal event, in which individual actions functioned as symbolic signals within a broader system of meaning.

The production achieved significant recognition, with a total of thirty-six performances between November 1980 and April 1982, and was later adapted as a television drama directed by Kunčević for Croatian Television in 1981. The television adaptation extended the communicative reach of the performance beyond the theatre space, introducing the production into a different media environment and further stabilising its interpretative framework within public discourse. From a communication studies perspective, this transition from stage to broadcast medium illustrates how theatrical meaning can be preserved, transformed, and disseminated through media mediation.

Contemporary newspaper criticism consistently interpreted Kunčević's production as a refined and intellectually controlled staging that successfully translated Begović's modernist text into a contemporary theatrical language. Critics emphasised the production's psychological depth, symbolic coherence, and resistance to realist explanation, thereby reinforcing the reception framework proposed by the staging itself. Through critical discourse, the performance was publicly framed as a paradigmatic modernist interpretation of *The Adventurer at the Door*, a framing that has remained influential in subsequent discussions of the play.

Taken together, Kunčević's production demonstrates how a specific configuration of staging strategies, performative codes, and media reception can generate a stable communicative meaning within the public sphere. Rather than merely illustrating Begović's text, the production actively constructed an interpretative model that shaped how the play was understood, evaluated, and remembered in Croatian theatrical culture.

Analysis of Nenni Delmestre's Production

Croatian National Theatre Split, 1990

Nenni Delmestre's production of *The Adventurer at the Door*, staged at the Croatian National Theatre in Split in 1990, represents a markedly different communicative strategy from Ivica Kunčević's earlier interpretation. While Kunčević's staging privileged introspection, restraint, and ambiguity, Delmestre approached Begović's drama as an explicitly expressive and emotionally charged communicative event, foregrounding existential gravity and visual symbolism as dominant interpretative codes.

Delmestre's directorial concept centred on the figure of Agneza as a mature woman confronting the accumulated weight of unfulfilled desires and existential disappointment. Cast in the role was Zdravka Krstulović, whose age and stage presence decisively shaped the communicative framing of the character. Unlike Kunčević's Agneza, presented as a fragile and dream-like figure, Delmestre's Agneza emerged as a woman acutely aware of her life's limitations and losses. This interpretative choice reposi-

tioned the dramatic conflict within a reception framework oriented toward existential realism rather than psychological reverie.

Scenography, again designed by Zlatko Kauzlarić Atač, played a crucial role in articulating this shift in communicative emphasis. In contrast to the intimate, salon-like space of the Gavella production, the Split staging employed monumental and abstract visual elements—large staircases, towering walls, and sharply illuminated surfaces. These scenographic choices functioned as powerful visual signs, symbolising emotional isolation, internal barriers, and the oppressive weight of time. From a communication perspective, the scenography did not merely provide a setting but actively constructed a symbolic environment that guided audience interpretation toward themes of confinement and existential struggle.

Krstulović's performance was characterised by emotional intensity, vocal strength, and psychological clarity. Her Agneza communicated resolve and despair in equal measure, articulating the character's inner conflict through pronounced gesture, controlled physicality, and a direct emotional address to the audience. This acting style reduced interpretative ambiguity and offered a more determinate communicative signal, encouraging spectators to read the play as a confrontation with lived experience rather than as an abstract dream narrative.

Delmestre's direction of the ensemble further reinforced this communicative clarity. Movement, gesture, and spatial relationships were stylised and often exaggerated, producing a heightened theatrical language bordering on expressionism. Rather than inviting the audience into a contemplative interpretative process, the production confronted spectators with emotionally charged images and sharply delineated symbolic situations. In communicative terms, this strategy prioritised immediacy and affect, shaping reception through emotional impact and visual memorability.

The critical reception of the Split production reflected this shift in staging codes. Newspaper criticism consistently framed Delmestre's interpretation as bold, uncompromising, and visually striking, emphasising its expressive power and existential seriousness. Critics highlighted the production's departure from realist convention and praised its ability to translate Begović's drama into a contemporary theatrical idiom that resonated with the social and emotional climate of the early 1990s. Through this critical discourse, the production was publicly positioned as a decisive reinterpretation of *The Adventurer at the Door*, distinct from earlier stagings and emblematic of a new reception framework.

Despite a smaller number of performances compared to Kunčević's production, Delmestre's staging achieved significant festival recognition and left a lasting imprint on Croatian theatre culture. From a communication-studies perspective, its impact demonstrates how a performance can generate strong symbolic meaning and public visibility even without prolonged repertoire presence, provided that its

communicative strategies are effectively reinforced through media discourse and institutional validation.

In sum, Delmestre's production illustrates an alternative model of theatrical communication, one in which expressive intensity, visual symbolism, and existential clarity replace introspection and ambiguity as dominant modes of meaning-making. Together with Kunčević's earlier staging, it confirms the dramaturgical openness of *The Adventurer at the Door* and its capacity to sustain divergent communicative interpretations within different historical and cultural contexts.

Comparative Analysis of Directorial Visions and Reception Frameworks

A comparative analysis of Ivica Kunčević's and Nenni Delmestre's productions of *The Adventurer at the Door* reveals two fundamentally different communicative strategies^{1,2} through which Begović's drama was articulated, mediated, and publicly interpreted. Although both productions were grounded in the same dramatic text, they generated distinct reception frameworks shaped by divergent staging codes, performative emphases, and patterns of critical discourse.

Kunčević's production established a communicative model based on restraint, ambiguity, and psychological introspection. Through minimalistic scenography, controlled acting, and a dream-like atmosphere, the staging encouraged an interpretative mode that privileged emotional resonance and associative meaning over narrative clarity. Critical discourse surrounding the production consistently reinforced this reception framework, framing the performance as a refined modernist interpretation that resisted explicit explanation. In this case, media criticism functioned as a stabilising communicative mechanism, aligning audience expectations with the production's symbolic and introspective codes.

By contrast, Delmestre's production articulated a markedly different communicative approach, centred on expressive intensity, visual monumentality, and existential confrontation. The staging employed strong visual signs and emotionally charged performances to convey meaning more directly, reducing interpretative ambiguity and foregrounding affective impact. Newspaper criticism reflected and amplified this strategy, framing the production as bold, uncompromising, and visually powerful. Through critical discourse, Delmestre's interpretation was publicly positioned as a decisive re-reading of Begović's drama, aligned with contemporary social and emotional sensibilities.

From a communication-studies perspective, these differences demonstrate how theatrical meaning is not inherent in the dramatic text itself but is produced through a dynamic interaction between staging strategies and media-mediated reception. In both cases, critical discourse did not merely describe the performances but actively participated in constructing symbolic meaning, legitimising

interpretative choices, and shaping collective understanding of the play.

The comparison further highlights how different communicative codes generate distinct patterns of audience engagement. Kunčević's production invited contemplative interpretation and interpretative openness, positioning the spectator as an active co-producer of meaning. Delmestre's staging, by contrast, addressed the audience through emotionally direct and visually assertive signals, prioritising immediacy and shared affect. These contrasting modes of address illustrate the play's dramaturgical flexibility and its capacity to accommodate multiple communicative readings within different historical contexts.

Importantly, both productions achieved cultural significance not solely through their artistic qualities but through their successful insertion into public discourse. Their meanings were consolidated through media visibility, critical evaluation, and institutional recognition, including festival awards and subsequent references in theatre historiography. From this perspective, the theatrical life of *The Adventurer at the Door* can be understood as a sequence of communicative events in which performance, media, and audience interact to produce and renegotiate meaning over time.

This comparative analysis thus confirms that the reception of Begović's drama cannot be adequately explained through performance analysis alone. Instead, it must be approached as a communicative process in which staging strategies and critical discourse jointly shape the public interpretation of theatrical works.

Conclusion

Performance, media, and the production of meaning

This study has examined Milan Begović's *The Adventurer at the Door* through a communication-oriented analysis of two major Croatian stage productions and their critical reception. By combining comparative performance analysis with an examination of newspaper criticism as media-mediated public discourse, the article has sought to demonstrate how theatrical meaning is produced, framed, and stabilised within the public sphere.

The analysis of Ivica Kunčević's and Nenni Delmestre's productions has shown that the same dramatic text can generate fundamentally different communicative meanings depending on the staging strategies employed and the reception frameworks activated through critical discourse. Kunčević's production articulated a communicative model based on ambiguity, psychological introspection, and symbolic suggestion, while Delmestre's staging foregrounded expressive intensity, visual monumentality, and existential confrontation. In both cases, these interpretative codes were reinforced, negotiated, and publicly legitimised through media criticism.

From a communication-studies perspective, newspaper reviews functioned not merely as descriptive or evaluative

texts but as active agents in the construction of symbolic meaning. Through critical discourse, performances were positioned within specific interpretative frameworks that shaped audience expectations and contributed to the long-term cultural memory of the play. The reception of *The Adventurer at the Door* thus emerges as a dynamic process involving interaction between performance, media representation, and audience interpretation.

The findings of this study confirm that the meaning of Begović's drama is not produced solely on stage. Rather, it emerges within a communication triangle formed by theatrical performance, media discourse, and audience reception. This communicative interaction enables the play to be continually reinterpreted and recontextualised

across different historical moments, aesthetic paradigms, and media environments.

By foregrounding the communicative dimensions of theatrical performance and reception, this article contributes to a broader understanding of theatre as a public communication practice. It demonstrates that the study of theatrical works benefits from an analytical approach that integrates performance analysis with communication-oriented perspectives on media, discourse, and meaning-making in the public sphere. In this way, *The Adventurer at the Door* is shown to function not only as a modernist dramatic text, but as an enduring communicative event whose meanings are continually produced and negotiated through performance and reception.

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KAZALIŠNA IZVEDBA IZMEĐU KODA I RECEPCIJE: KOMUNIKACIJSKI ASPEKTI PUSTOLOVA PRED VRATIMA MILANA BEGOVIĆA

SAŽETAK

Rad analizira dramu *Pustolov pred vratima Milana Begovića* iz komunikološke perspektive, polazeći od shvaćanja kazališne predstave kao komunikacijskog događaja u kojem se značenje proizvodi u interakciji izvedbenih kodova, medijski posredovane kritike i publike. Kazališna izvedba promatra se kao javni komunikacijski čin, a novinska kritika kao oblik medijski posredovane javne komunikacije koji sudjeluje u oblikovanju recepcijskih okvira. Rad se temelji na komparativnoj analizi dviju značajnih hrvatskih inscenacija drame: predstave u režiji Ivice Kunčevića u Dramskom kazalištu Gavella u Zagrebu (1980.) i predstave u režiji Nenni Delmestre u Hrvatskom narodnom kazalištu u Splitu (1990.). Analizom izvedbenih strategija i kritičke recepcije pokazuje se da su te dvije predstave proizvele bitno različite komunikacijske modele i recepcijske okvire. Kunčevićeva inscenacija naglašava psihološku introspekciju, ambivalentnost i simboličku sugestivnost, dok predstava Delmestre ističe ekspresivnost, monumentalnost i egzistencijalnu jasnoću. U oba slučaja novinska kritika ima ključnu ulogu u diskurzivnom uokvirivanju i stabilizaciji značenja predstava u javnom prostoru. Rad zaključuje da se značenje Begovićeve drame ne proizvodi isključivo na sceni, nego u komunikacijskom trokutu izvedba - mediji - publika, čime se kazalište potvrđuje kao specifičan oblik javne komunikacije.

