

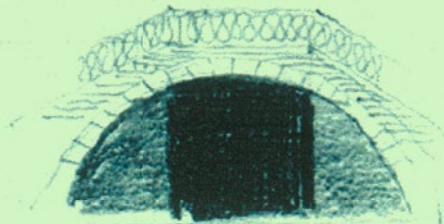


ADAPTATION IN
THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE



Bosnian Literary Adaptations on Stage and Screen

Sanja Garić-Komnenić



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Adaptation in Theatre and Performance

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The series addresses the various ways in which adaptation boldly takes on the contemporary context, working to rationalise it in dialogue with the past and involving the audience in a shared discourse with narratives that form part of our artistic and literary but also social and historical constitution. We approach this form of representation as a way of responding and adapting to the conditions, challenges, aspirations and points of reference at a particular historical moment, fostering a bond between theatre and society.

Sanja Garić-Komnenić

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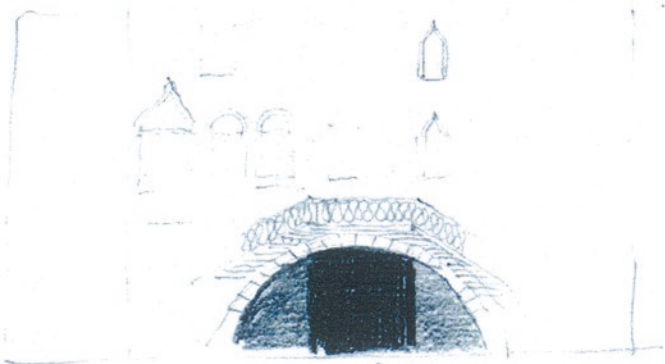
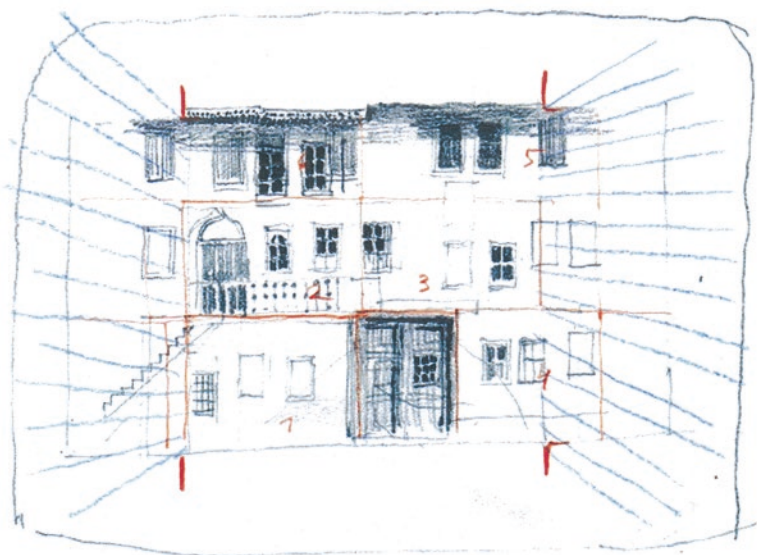
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Selimović's characters and I have been friends for a long time. There were times when they spoke to me as if they were living my experiences. Selimović's prophetic words offered me clues about how to read the mad book of history. *Bosnian Literary Adaptations on Stage and Screen* is the result of these imaginary conversations and my academic pursuits in film and theatre studies.

My work on this book started long before the idea for it was formed. When our lives were shattered by those who favoured myth over truth and shelling cities rather than accepting their complexity, *The Open Society Foundations* offered dignity to Bosnians in exile, supporting us in our academic pursuits. Freed from the worries of daily survival, I found sanctuary in the library—the only place at the time that allowed me the autonomy to shape my own life.

Bosnian Literary Adaptations on Stage and Screen would not be possible without the generous professional development fund available to the faculty of the *British Columbia Institute of Technology*. The funding allowed me to travel to Sarajevo to conduct research in local film and theatre archives and libraries. I spent endless hours drinking coffee with my fellow Sarajevans, discussing topics ranging from artistic decisions about adaptations to the autonomy of the University of Sarajevo. Back in Vancouver, I tried to justify coffee drinking as work to my school's administrators, alluding to Brecht's concept of pleasure, hoping they would buy it.

Locating sources and contacting the right people was a breeze, thanks to my high-school gang. My friends, who refused to believe that counting

percentages of ethnic blood has anything to do with friendship, have, all these years of coming and going, made me feel that Sarajevo is still my home. Dušanka, Maja, Daria, Mustafa, and many others make me proud of my generation.

Roaming the corridors of my alma mater and browsing the shelves with their dust-covered books, I found familiar covers that had fortunately escaped the zealotry of the arsonists.

The staff of the *Sarajevo National Theatre* opened the doors to their archive, where I found valuable material from the 2003 staging of *The Fortress*.

I was inspired by the dedication of Ines Tanović at *The Film Centre Sarajevo*. With very little support and scant donations, she has for years been saving rolls of film in the archive, which had been destroyed in the war. She spared me many hours of bureaucratic hassle by opening up the archives to me.

Maja Salkić of the SARTR theatre made it easy for me to access material in the theatre's archives.

Back in Vancouver, I had to face the blank page and discovered that writer's block can only be overcome by writing it away. My generous friend, Gene Homel, came to my rescue when the first draft was ready for his sharp eye. He resurrected many a missing *the* and *a* and purged the text of many *theaters*.

When I faced the insurmountable task of formatting the manuscript, my computer-whiz friend, Safet Alispahić, took matters into his hands and, in exchange for spanakopita and home-made cakes, spent hours teaching me how to use something called "*macros*," which apparently rule the world of the text.

My husband, Mladen, helped me speed up the writing process by finally learning how to cook, and my grandsons, Oliver and Rafi, counteracted this by being the cutest possible distractions.

My daughters, Ana and Nadja, patiently read through my revisions and, in our long conversations at the dinner table, expressed the faith of youth that this world can still be saved. My son, Jan, who believes that soccer and history should be taught as one subject, made me realise that chance shapes our lives.

This book is a result of events and encounters that shaped both the text and my life. My mother, Mevlida Karadža, the greatest loving influence in my life, raised the bar for women in our family and proved with her own experience that books are not only dear friends but can also save lives by absorbing the shrapnel of an exploding grenade, proving that chance is the supreme commander of our histories.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Bosnian Literary Adaptations on Stage and Screen reconciles theoretical approaches to adaptation with theatrical and cinematic practices. The book is informed by scholarship in film and theatre adaptation theories and is grounded in a comparative approach that focuses on the interplay of sign systems and codes¹ unique to screen and stage.

The comparative approach draws from relevant works in film and theatre semiotics and linguistics but avoids the limitations of those approaches. Investigations in film and theatre semiotics and linguistics will be discussed in the context of selected examples of literary adaptations. Solutions that amplify a unique integration of the cinematic tracks, on the one hand, and theatre codes, on the other, are explored through the process of adapting two literary sources written by Meša Selimović. The book will propose

¹ In the framework of this investigation, the terms language and code will be distinguished based on hierarchy. Film and theatre communication process involves a multiplicity of coding by virtue of various communicative channels, acoustic or visual. Each of the codes has its autonomous rules for the combination and selection of its units. At the higher level of integration, the units belonging to various codes are combined to create a complex interplay of codes.

potential approaches to adapting the novels *The Fortress* and *The Island*² for screen and stage, respectively.

The choice to adapt *The Fortress* and *The Island* is guided by the principles of relevance and universality. Selimović is a renowned writer from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the two novels are representative of his literary opus. *The Fortress* and *The Island* address the universal themes of war and exile, which resonate with contemporary audiences.³ *The Fortress'* vivid local characters and setting—eighteenth-century Bosnia—do not preclude a contemporary reading of the adapted text. The novel's prophetic contemplations on history as a repetition of cycles of violence transcend its specific Bosnian context. The story revolves around Ahmet Šabo, a Sarajevan who had recently returned from the war in Chocim in contemporary Ukraine, where he fought for the Ottoman Empire. The Ahmet of the novel has many facets, while a screen adaptation can focus on Ahmet the ex-soldier, incapable of forgetting the horrors of war; or Ahmet the rebel, who cannot be silent when facing the insidious machinations of the powerful; or Ahmet the poet, who refuses to be implicated in dangerous political games. The novel offers various readings, which are not mutually exclusive. I will explore the approaches to adapting the novel for screen having in mind what Jan Kott points out in the context of staging the complex world of Hamlet: "One can select at will. But one must know what one selects, and why" (1964, p. 150).

The Island stages a closed world of essentially dramatic characters. It is a novel about ageing, its characters, an old couple, trapped on an island of their own making. The seemingly uneventful plotline teems with existential dramatic situations. The dialogue stages and demasks the characters' strategies of hurting the other to tend to their own existential wounds. Unlike *The Fortress*, *The Island* invokes an unspecific time-and-place

² *The Fortress/Tvrđava* was first published in 1970 (Sarajevo: Svjetlost) and *The Island/Ostrvo* in 1974 (Beograd: Prosveta). *The Fortress* was translated into French in 1981 (trans. Jean Descet and Simone Meuris, Paris: Gallimard). In 1983 *The Island* was translated into English (trans. Jeanie Shaterian, Toronto: Serbian Heritage Academy of Canada). The English translation of *The Fortress* (trans. Edward Dennis Goy and Jasna Levinger-Goy) was published by Northwestern University Press in 1999. I did not include other translations of Selimović's works.

³ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there have been many adaptations of *The Fortress* for stage and screen. The following are some notable adaptations: The Sarajevo National Theatre (1971 dir. Jovan Putnik); The Mostar National Theatre (1988, Darko Lukić and Ahmet Obradović); The Sarajevo National Theatre (1993, dir. Ahmet Obradović); The Sarajevo National Theatre (2003, dir. Sulejman Kupusović). The novel *Death and the Dervish* was adapted for screen in 1974 (dir. Zdravko Velimirović). *Death and the Dervish* was adapted for stage by Borislav Mihajlović–Mihiz (1970).

context: the nameless island,⁴ except for its Mediterranean ambiance, could be interpreted as an everyman's island of loneliness. On the other hand, *The Fortress* is firmly situated in a specific cultural context. Although the plot is situated in eighteenth-century Ottoman Bosnia of the Ottoman Empire, the novel has been read as a not-so-veiled critique of the communist regime in Bosnia, which was part of Socialist Yugoslavia when the novel was published. Possible interpretations of the novel are informed by a body of texts that responded to, criticised, or reflected the ideology of the regime. The specific political, psychological, and autobiographical context of the author as well as the political moment when the book was published are essential for the adaptation process. In Robert Stam's reading of Bakhtin, the notion of *chronotope* applied to the adaptation of a literary source to screen would require a film to be "a historically situated utterance" (2000, p. 117), in which the textual and the contextual are interwoven.⁵ The adaptation will need to occupy this delicate place and to oscillate between authenticity and universality.

The Fortress poses a challenge for screen adaptation on account of its distant time frame. A range of questions about the cultural context of the adaptation and its transposition and reception are considered. A number of approaches will be contemplated to make the adaptation relevant for the contemporary viewer. The *chronotope* of the novel, eighteenth-century Venice and Sarajevo, could, in the film's discourse, be transported to post-war Sarajevo in the early twenty-first century. Audiences are likely familiar with the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, and a contemporary reading of the novel inevitably conjures the Sarajevo of that war.

In an adaptation, the time frame of *The Fortress* could be changed, which would in turn necessitate a radical reimagining of the novel's characters and its narrative structures. The proposed approach rejects the fidelity-criticism stream in adaptation studies. However, in adapting the two novels, I will seek a balance that reflects Mieke Bal's metaphor of "friendship":

The difference between loyalty and fidelity, seen through the metaphor of friendship, is the different critical attitudes they foster. Instead of judging

⁴In the novel, the unnamed island is actually the island Brač in Croatia. It can be inferred from the toponym Vidova gora (Vidova Mountain) mentioned in the novel.

⁵Stam adds that the concept of chronotope is "even more appropriate to film than literature" as "literature plays itself within a virtual, lexical space [while] the cinematic chronotope is quite literal, splayed out concretely across a screen with specific dimensions and unfolding in literal time (usually 24 frames per second), quite apart from the fictive time-space constructed by specific films" (Stam et al. 1992, pp. 217–218).

one work, usually the adaptation, on the basis of a slavish subjection to its precedent or “source” with a normative posture that obscures its own standards, I consider the two-way intership between the two works a more productive source of insight because a detailed analysis can bring to light aspects of both source and adaptation that can converse with each other. (2017, p. 212)

The proposed approaches to adapting the Selimović novels are situated within the considerations of adaptation as “an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation” (Stam 2000, p. 66) or, to borrow Dennis Cutchins’ metaphor, adaptation is like:

tossing a boll on a windy day. Once the ball leaves the thrower’s hands, it is subject to the winds and likely to end up someplace different than the thrower intends. This is not to say that the thrower does not have intentions; it simply acknowledges that those intentions are not the only factors in the ball’s eventual landing spot. (2017, p. 89)

A stage adaptation of the novel *The Island* faces the obstacles of its fragmented structure and its noncontinuous time and space organisation. The novel is composed of nineteen novellas, forming a loose causal connection, and needs to be radically changed, with many sections omitted and new ones added. Solutions that situate adaptation theories and practices in the context of what works best for each art form will be considered.

Chapter 2 offers an overview of adaptation theories and practices. This book attempts to bridge the theory and practice of adaptation, which guided the selection of research sources. The most valuable for this purpose have been the testimonies of film and theatre practitioners and their contemplations about the creative process. The cited segments from interviews with theatre practitioners and filmmakers illuminate the choices they made, their rationale, and the stages in the process of adaptation. This book offers a glimpse into film and theatre practices in Bosnia and the wider region of ex-Yugoslavia since most examples of adaptations used are the works of local practitioners.

Chapter 3 identifies the stages of film and theatre adaptation. The discussion is guided by the view that screenwriting handbooks and academic studies in adaptation and dramaturgy have a lot in common. They share an emphasis on the tight structure of the plot, starting from the initial situation developing in a certain direction and leading to the inevitable outcome. The plot structure reflects conflict and tension inherent in both film script and drama. However, conflict and tension are conceptualised

according to the demands of genres and periods. Conflict and tension are not necessarily manifested on the surface level but are the inherent driving force that imposes its logic on the structure of a film script or a play. Informed by various theories of dramatic conflict and tension, the proposed adaptations centre around dominant conflicts, whether manifested on the surface level or not. The chapter outlines the stages of adaptation: the selection of relevant segments of the adapted text, its condensation, the heightened dramatisation, and the creation of added scenes. This approach argues for the adaptation to abandon the adapted text and create a new structure that has its own logic and coherence. Theorising about the stages of adaptation is continually placed in the context of adapting *The Fortress* for the screen. The chapter suggests possible directions the adaptation could take, all of which demand a radical change of the novel's structure and characters. Scholarly works from dramaturgy and literary criticism, primarily works of Selimović's literary critics who illuminate relevant aspects of the reception of his works, are incorporated into the analysis of *The Fortress*.

Chapter 4 offers a model for the segmentation of the basic units of film and theatre. The proposed segmentation is informed by Metz's application of linguistic methodologies in discovering film's "universal grammar." In *Cognitive Semiotics of Cinema*, Warren Buckland (2000) offers a fresh view on Metz's exploration of the functioning of film language and an illuminating examination of Noam Chomsky's Transformative Generative Grammar. Informed by these approaches, this chapter explores a possible segmentation of film and theatre language that has its correlatives in the units of segmentation of natural language above the level of the sentence. This book attempts to identify the units of film and theatre language in the segments that correspond to the communicative act in natural conversation. Also, the study relies on the concepts of lexical semantics proposed by Jurii Apresjan, who singled out elementary situations, which could apply to film language, which correspond to Charles Fillmore's notion of grammatical predications. Fillmore's definitions of predication and argument are of more use than grammatical notions of subject and predicate. The application of these linguistic models has proven helpful in the classification of elementary film predications, which could illuminate the very functioning of film modalities. Again, the usefulness of the theoretical considerations is constantly tested by contemplating possible predicative relations in the adaptations of the two novels.

Chapter 5 attempts to illuminate the functioning of dialogue in film and theatre by incorporating approaches to dialogue from relevant branches of linguistics and the philosophy of language. The position that dialogue in the novel is fundamentally different from that in drama is challenged as the close reading of the dialogue in *The Island* reveals relevant similarities to dialogue in drama. Terminology stemming from speech-act theories is systematically applied to the dialogue segments of the novel. Oswald Ducrot's distinction between the elements of the deep and surface structures in communication informs the analysis of the dialogue in *The Island*. In *Dire et ne pas dire*, Ducrot elaborates on the speech-act theories of the Oxford School and focuses on the concepts of illocution and perlocution, which are reflected in the distinction between the linguistic component and the rhetorical component of the utterance—*présupposée* and *sous-entendu*. The close reading of the dialogue in *The Island* reveals the functioning of the discursive laws similar to those that govern communication in natural language. The novel's dialogue and the accompanying narration uncover the characters' motivations and their discursive positions. This section draws from Bakhtin's exploration of the concepts of dialogue and monologue in the context of Dostoevsky's novels. The chapter concludes that the embedded-in-narration dialogue and open dialogue of the novel are not fundamentally different. This offers useful guidance for selecting and rewriting the novel's dialogue in the adaptation.

Chapter 6 outlines a possible transformation of the segments of *The Island* into theatre discourse. It is based on the view that both narration and dialogue are incorporated into performance. The proposed arrangement of stage configurations is conceived as a testing ground for the concept of predication, discussed in Chap. 4. In the proposal for the adaptation, two simultaneous stage configurations are juxtaposed to heighten dramatic tension, which exposes the extreme situations of the characters and their utter isolation from each other and the world. Such an approach invokes the theatre of the absurd since the protagonists, through the pointed intervention in the adapted text, could be rendered in the manner of Ionesco's Mr. and Mrs. Smith. However, the chapter only outlines a possible direction for the adaptation and does not attempt to create a complete script.

Chapters 7 and 8 present a brief overview of cinematic and theatrical practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mostly in Sarajevo during and after the war in the 1990s. The focus of the historical overview is the adaptation practices in theatre and film productions in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

though some relevant works from other regions of ex-Yugoslavia are included. An overview of the artistic output in this part of Europe exposes the significant shift in the cultural context in the 1990s, reflected in the region's artistic practices.

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Adaptation and the Adapted Text

When the Bosnian theatre director Haris Pašović adapted Nigel Williams' *Class Enemy* (2008 East West Theatre Sarajevo), he transposed it from “the South London classroom in the early 1980s, to Sarajevo around 2007.”¹ The Sarajevo performance mirrors the anger of the youth of London in the 1980s and sharpens its conflicts by placing them in the post-war Sarajevo of traumatised teenagers, shouting out their ennui to deafen the insufferable noise in their heads. The adaptation is a part of the perpetual process of recreating texts or forming a “deep generating series” of interconnected discourses situated “within the ‘differentiated unity of the epoch’s entire culture’” (Bakhtin qtd. in Stam 2000, pp. 64–5). Thus, Pašović's *Class Enemy* is read against a whole matrix of texts such as Williams' other works, Thatcherism, and post-war Sarajevo in film, theatre, literature, and media. In an interview for the BBC, Pašović comments on the violent world in which the characters and the young cast of his *Class Enemy* grew up. Abandoned by society and exposed to violence and war trauma, the characters are dysfunctional and resort to violence to express their anguish. In the interview for *The Scotsman*, Pašović

¹“The original play, placed in the South London classroom in the early 1980s, is transported to Sarajevo around 2007. The original cast of six high-school boys is transformed into seven characters—three girls and four boys. The free adaptation, while keeping the original spirit and main themes, is grounded in the new European reality at the beginning of the 21st century” (Class Enemy n.d.).

comments on the appeal of the original play: “In this play, Williams went to the very core or the source of human violence, where all elements play together to create a violent event” (Brave art: Haris Pašović’s *Class Enemy* 2008). The Sarajevo performance brings the adapted text to the Bosnian post-war context, and through the music of hip-hop and a mixed-gender cast, Pašović contemporises Williams’ play.²

Through a similar recontextualisation, in his adaptation of *Hamlet*, Haris Pašović replaced Elsinore with the Ottoman sultan’s court in Istanbul (East West Theatre Company, Sarajevo 2005).³ In the performance, Pašović depicts a “fractured world” not unlike Shakespeare’s:

Pašović wants his production, which is showing at the Sarajevo National Theatre, to speak to both Muslim communities and the wider world. ‘Every time has its own Hamlet,’ he says. ‘It’s palpable today that, as Shakespeare said, the time is out of joint. We live in a fractured world.’ (Arendt 2005, p. 6)

In 2002, Pašović staged *Romeo and Juliet* in front of the Bosnian Parliament. Romeo is a Muslim, and Juliet a Christian, in this spectacle, which has been “read” in the context of the poignant war story of a real couple, a Bosnian Muslim and a Bosnian Serb, who were killed in the early days of the war in the 1990s, as they were trying to escape from Sarajevo. Such recontextualisation confirms Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan’s view that “adaptations do not occur within a global context without some fascinating local variations” (2007, p. 8).

Cross-cultural adaptations exemplify creative practices of transpositions from one cultural context to another. As Pašović’s adaptations illustrate, a

²“Unlike Williams’s original play, Pašović’s version features both male and female characters—anything else, he says, would be unrealistic under modern conditions. He used some young ex-offenders as advisers on the production and he involved a pair of young hip-hop artists from a small town in Bosnia, who had been beaten up by a bunch of officially-sanctioned thugs after singing songs criticising the mayor on a local radio station. ‘I was outraged by that story,’ says Pašović. ‘So I called them up and invited them to come to Sarajevo to be part of this project. To beat up young people because of their songs—I felt that was not permissible, even in Bosnia in the 21st century’” (Brave Art 2008).

³Pašović has produced a *Hamlet* that is relevant for the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to Pašović, the production offers “an exceptional freshness and up-to-datedness, and at the same time [is] very theatrical in its oriental colors, lights, sounds and dynamics. Yet, it is the world filled with mysticism and danger. The story and the names are not changed, save the titles (sultan) and Turkey instead of Denmark and cultural references. *Hamlet* is universal, and could have happened at the Danish, Elizabethan, Ottoman or any other royal courts. We share the same problems and dilemmas” (*Hamlet* n.d. EastWest Center Sarajevo).

specific sociopolitical, cultural, and psychological context shapes the adaptation process. Theatre and film productions in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the war in the 1990s have primarily centred on depicting and criticising entrenched ethnic and religious divisions. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, “the cultural scene entirely... disintegrated” (Bakal qtd. in Radosavljević 2013, p. 227). Before, it was one cultural space, “very well integrated,” where remarkable collaboration was taking place, especially in the 1980s, when “only the sky was the limit” (Bakal, p. 226). When the art scene broke apart, “the epoch’s entire culture” took a sharp turn. The war became the central traumatic event, significantly marking the creative output. Film and theatre adaptations in the region have formed a body of “interconnected discourses” regardless of the nature of the adapted texts; stage and screen discourses formed a circle of intertextuality, adding a shared traumatic reading to various adapted texts.

This study will incorporate insights and testimonies of theatre and film practitioners from Bosnia and Herzegovina and artists from other cultural contexts. The focus will be on the following questions: Is there a correlation between what is happening in theatre and film and theorising on adaptations? Are academic theories secondary to creative practices? How can theoretical considerations be relevant to theatre and film practices? Or is there a sort of creative symbiosis between theory and practice?

To answer some pressing questions, the very notions of theory and practice need to be reconsidered. Writers, theatre and film directors, and creative teams engage with the adapted text, and a necessary part of this process is theoretical considerations. The collaborative nature of work in adaptations calls for a rethinking of approaches in all stages of adaptations. As academics deconstruct adaptation processes, they reverse the creative process by going back from the adaptation to the adapted text, creative teams take the opposite direction—starting from the adapted text, they walk a misty road, its final shape only visible at the destination. Reconciling the methodologies of academics and creative practitioners seems natural, as both scholars and screenwriters “approach[...] their tasks from a deconstructive perspective” so “that theorizing adaptation is in itself a form of adaptation” (Snyder in Leitch ed. 2017, p. 6, 10).

However, the starting point of the process of adaptation is problematic. Some artists are merely inspired by the adapted text while others stay closely tied to it. As Ivo van Hove of Toneelgroep Amsterdam company testifies, “I try to X-ray a text, and from there we start” (qtd. in Laera 2014c, p. 54) and “I try to see the poetry of a text, and equally the poetry

of a stage” and “the text is the only thing that I have, nothing else. That’s the material” (p. 55). Similarly, the members of the Handspring Productions use puppets to “articulate the silent, invisible components of the source material, and yet remain, in Kohler’s words, ‘very tied to the content of the play’” (qtd. in Laera 2014c, p. 23). On the other hand, Ong Keng Sen of TheatreWorks Singapore reveals that his approach is a sort of collaboration with the author of the literary text:

I’m actually trying to create a world with Shakespeare. Shakespeare is a proposition and, for me to inhabit his world, I have to re-make it into my world. So I create a world with his original narrative, even though that’s not the first because he was re-writing from other sources. I am actively creating a world for me. (qtd. in Laera 2014a, p. 174) However, some artists are merely inspired by a text to create a new one, a text only musing on the inspiration at the final stage.

Although contemporary theories of adaptation reject the concept of fidelity, the question of how far one could go in “deviating” from the literary source is often disputed. When detailing his experience staging *Hamlet* for the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade, Goran Stefanovski (2017) mocks conservative critics, calling them the “Shakespeare police.” Stefanovski reflects on the artistic decisions he and the dramaturg made when staging their *Hamlet*. He asks, “Who is Hamlet today in the age of the collapse of [...] humanism?” He affirms that “a new text negotiates meaning and receives meaning by the way it is handled” (19:00). He radically reduced the number of characters and centres the performance on Hamlet. Stefanovski’s version of the Shakespeare play is autoreferential; the play is “looking at itself in the mirror” in this Belgrade production of *Hamlet*, played by Nikola Glogovac. The adaptation took risks: the new king is younger than Gertrude’s son; there is no Horatio to bear witness as there is no corrective memory. In his response to the “Shakespeare-police” criticism, Stefanovski affirms that no text is sacred. In his adaptation, “*Hamlet* has been negotiated as the genre of tragic farce” (Stefanovski 2017).

Many theorists would perhaps justify Stefanovski’s approach. There is a consensus between practitioners and scholars that adaptations that are too faithful to the source hinder the creative process. Brian McFarlane uses the term “inhibiting literariness” (1996, p. 64) and observes that “[t]he obsession with fidelity has led to a suppression of potentially more

rewarding approaches to the phenomenon of adaptation” (p. 10). It seems that problems with a lack of loyalty to the adapted text lie elsewhere. It is not about the degree of the departure from the text but the very choice of what to preserve and what to change. Problems often arise when in adaptations, retrograde ideas lurk back at the adapted text. Deborah Cartmell is critical of some film adaptations of Shakespeare, not because they are not “loyal” to Shakespeare’s plays but because such film adaptations “pay homage to Shakespeare’s alleged conservatism and superiority” (Cartmell 1999a, p. 24).

Adaptations of literary sources involve complex processes that go beyond fidelity and resist a simple evaluative approach. Sometimes, a rejection of fidelity can be a more rewarding approach. Cartmell points out “that literary studies lag far behind other disciplines in refusing to entertain the notion that a film can better its literary original” (1999b, p. 144). Practitioners in adaptations often share this view.

For example, Ken Gelder, in “Jane Campion and the Limits of Literary Cinema” (in Cartmell and Whelehan eds. 1999), disputes the conventional view that the complexity of great novels cannot be sufficiently transposed to film. To contradict this view, Gelder quotes the screenwriter Laura Jones, who addresses the criticism of Jane Campion’s 1996 adaptation of Henry James’ novel *The Portrait of a Lady*. Jones “imagin[es] Henry James to be ‘turning [in his grave] with pleasure’ at the film version [...] For Jones, novel-to-film adaptation involves an initial loss and a subsequent gain: ‘You empty out in order to fill up’” (p. 157). Gelder affirms the complexity of comparing novels to their film adaptations by pointing out that “a film can actually become something more than a novel” and that “a certain kind of productive entanglement occurs between the ‘literary’ and the ‘cinematic’.” However, the author warns “that this entanglement works to limit possibilities, too ...” (p. 157).

Often screenwriters do not shy away from “correcting” deficiencies in plot structure or characterisations in the adapted text. The screenwriter Andrew Davis, in a tongue-in-cheek manner, comments on adapting “great writers”: “Because they are such great writers and so much better than me, but I do think that some of them need a bit of help” (in Cartmell and Whelehan 2007a, p. 249).

Even when practitioners approach the adapted text with reverence, the departure from the source is inevitable in the creative process. Miguel Escobar, in conversation with Ki Catur “Benyek” Kuncoro, defines the artist’s approach to adaptation as shifting Wayang “with deeply

knowledgeable irreverence” (in Laera 2014b, p. 122). Kuncoro reflects on his adaptations of Wayang Kulit,⁴ “the oldest and most respected performance tradition in Java” (p. 121), and asserts that “he has never changed Wayang beyond recognition” (p. 122). Escobar sums up the artist’s two-fold approach to adaptations: “As a kind of radical and polemical intervention, and [...] as strategic adaptability, a necessary skill used to comply with flimsy commissioners’ demands and the circumstances for which the Wayang is being created” (p. 124).

There is solid common ground between theories and practices of adaptations. The concept of fidelity is thoroughly reconsidered in both camps while various classifications of adaptations are processed in creative practice. Productive dialogue on the use of specific terms illuminates the rationale for various artistic decisions that otherwise might be seen as an artist’s intuitive choice. For example, the term “appropriation” is often used in a negative context in relation to adaptation. Ong Keng Sen rejects the term appropriation, as it “seems to suggest that you are not affected by the original at all,” while “being affected keeps me going and I can see it continuing in my work” (p. 177). However, scholars often use the term “appropriation” in contrast to adaptation to allow creative freedom and avoid constant comparison with the original work. On the other hand, some scholars like Laera reject the distinction between adaptation and appropriation,⁵ and propose “a taxonomy of adaptation as intertextual practice” to categorise various approaches along the axes of time and space: the terms *interlingual* versus *intra-lingual*, *intersemiotic*, *intermedial* versus *intra-medial*, *intergeneric* versus *intra-generic*, *intercultural* versus *intra-cultural*, and *intra-temporal* versus *inter-temporal*. Within the latter category, Laera includes actualisation when the adaptation is situated in “more recent times,” removed in time from the adapted text (pp. 5–7).

Linda Hutcheon identifies three elements of adaptation: “An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or work; A creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging; An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” (2013, p. 34).

⁴Wayang Wayang Kulit is an Indonesian traditional art form of shadow puppetry.

⁵“However, I find it more useful to think of adaptation as a synonym of appropriation because it is too problematic to draw the line between a ‘faithful adaptation’ and an ‘unfaithful appropriation’ (faithful or unfaithful to what, anyway?)” (In Laera 2014d, p. 5).

The terms transposition, creative interpretation, and remodelling⁶ are just some of the terms prevalent in contemporary approaches to adaptation. Although categorisations of adaptations, as Deborah Cartmell observes, “are limitless” (1999a, p. 24), such classifications often offer important insights into case studies. They provide a useful framework for practitioners who, in the process, reflect on their creative approaches and might accept or reject certain terms proposed by adaptation theories. For example, Laera proposes the terminological distinction between *interideological* and *intraideological* transpositions; the latter maintains the ideological frame of the original text while the former is critical of the ideology (pp. 7–8). Laera borrows the terms *domestication* and *foreignisation* from translation studies. She is critical of some stage practices that domesticate sources to please the audience because such approaches “can easily become entangled in conservative discourses, reinforcing dominant views and the status quo” (p. 8). *Foreignisation* is related to the concept of transnational adaptations. However, Ong Keng Sen finds that *transnational performance* “has a triumphal quality to it, because it seems to be transcending something.” He favours the term intercultural as it “seems to be more directly dealing with cultures. As individuals we do carry cultural traits which we constantly try to repress or erase, but they are so much a part of us” (pp. 168–169).

Ong Keng Sen’s preference for the term intercultural reflects Francesco Casetti’s view on adaptation as recontextualisation. The author argues that adaptation practices “should not simply focus on the structure of those texts—their form and content—but on the dialogue between the text and its context. Evidently, adaptation is primarily a phenomenon of recontextualization of the text, or, even better, of reformulation of its communicative situation” (Casetti 2004, p. 83).

One might say that any form of intercultural adaptation is recontextualisation, in which a new communicative situation is established, with the nuances that the new cultural context brings. The change of setting, such as replacing Elsinor with the Ottoman court, like in Pašović’s adaptation, reflects a change in the parameters of the communicative situation. Still, the essence of the dramatic situation has not changed: the characters inhabit “a fractured world”; the Ottoman setting does not merely stage an

⁶The Noh theatre practitioner Udaka Michishige sees “‘adaptation’ as ‘remodelling’ [kai-zou], a term which describes the development and polishing of one’s technique over the years” (in Laera, ed. 2014, p. 82).

exotic Hamlet but situates the adapted text along a contemporary fault line, through the nuanced and measured references to the Bosnian war. Also, Fortinbras is a woman in Pašović's production, which reveals fissures in the monolithic world of power structures.

Leitch points out that a shortcoming of most attempts at categorisation is overlapping and that most attempts to categorise adaptations "overlook [...] the slippery slope between adaptation and allusion and offer no place to draw a line between them" (2007, p. 95). Leitch provides a rare terminological precision of the categories of adaptations by expanding or clarifying previous taxonomies. He elaborates on the distinction between revisions and adjustment: When adaptations "transform their sources in ways that go beyond adjustment, the results are revisions," and "revisions seek to alter the spirit" of the adapted text (pp. 106–107). He also adds the category of *colonising* adaptations, which see "progenitor texts as vessels to be filled with new meanings" (p. 109). He rejects the use of the term strictly in the context of cross-national adaptations and instead asserts that "adaptations need not reach across national boundaries to display a colonizing interest" (p. 110). Among his ten categories of adaptation along the axes of the closeness to the original, the category of *analogues* relates to films that only invoke a previous text. One example in this category is *My Own Private Idaho* (Gus Van Sant 1991), which could be considered a spin-off of Shakespeare. The film "combines several scenes that clearly echo Shakespeare's plays about King Henry IV" but with a very different "language, mood, and direction" (p. 114). Leitch concludes that the suggested categories of adaptations are fluid (p. 123).

Apart from classification concerns, theorising on adaptation often attempts to establish the criteria for evaluating adaptations. Among the evaluative criteria are those related to commercial and critical success. However, commercial success and positive criticism often do not go hand in hand. The separation of the two aspects of the reception of artworks could be placed in the context of Charles Morris' distinction between the value of aesthetic sign systems as both *consummatory* and *instrumental* (1971, p. 429). The latter is about a value that the interpreter assigns to the art object, which offers the viewer a resolution to "a conflict of values" (p. 429). Therefore, the new text is an independent work of art and is subject to the codification unique to aesthetic codes. The value of the aesthetic object is sought in the interdependence of all its parts, its very structure, central to its reception. To use Rudolf Arnheim's wording, "the structural theme of the work [...] the skeleton, [...] holds the key to its

basic meaning” (1971, p. 32). Rather than comparing the adapted text and its adaptations, a more productive approach is to look for the structural logic of the new text and to evaluate whether the solutions are random or reveal a coherent world of the new work of art. “A film’s overall coherence” is, therefore, a more suitable criterion for evaluating film adaptations in which “cinematic elements need to be synchronised with a script’s narrative logic so that a film achieves coherence on many different levels” (Desmond and Hawkes 2006, p. 232). For example, Leitch (2007) establishes the criterion of coherence when analysing Billy Morrisette’s *Scotland, Pa.* (2001) and concludes that the new text “translates Macbeth into black comedy” but fails to “create a coherent new world for Shakespeare’s story of ambition, murder, and revenge” (pp. 117–118).

This study will propose an approach to adapting the two Selimović novels that seeks to establish a coherent world of the new aesthetic discourses while contemplating the presented categories of adaptations in the light of their applicability to the creative process. The main question is what approaches to adaptation could offer an effective methodological frame for transposing *The Fortress* to screen and *The Island* to stage. In adapting *The Island* for the stage, if the favoured choice is the *intertemporal* approach, this will result in engaging in the process of actualisation. The performance could transform the novel’s metaphor of the island into the metaphor of exile, a sort of couple’s *ex-Ponto*, from where they can only lament the impossibility of returning home. The novel’s focus on each man as his island can have an alternative interpretation in the performance: the couple cannot go back to Sarajevo; they have burned their bridges and can only keep sending letters to Sarajevo, their Rome, trying to recover the apartment they lost in the war. Ivan blames Katarina for their missed opportunities. This *recontextualisation* of the “adapted text”⁷ places the adaptation in the larger context of writings about present-day Sarajevo, and the aesthetic choices are influenced by extratextual considerations. A possible criticism of this sort of *domestication*,⁸ to use Laera’s terminology, could be that the existential angst of the characters in the novel is forced into the rigid frame of Balkan politics.

⁷Hutcheon, Linda proposes that the term “adapted text,” “the purely descriptive term” be used instead of the competing terms “source” and “original” (Hutcheon with O’Flynn 2013, p. 12).

⁸Laera warns that “domestication and actualization can easily become entangled in conservative discourses, reinforcing dominant views and the status quo” (2014d, p. 8).