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THE ADAPTATION OF IVANA ŠOJAT'S MODERNIST NOVEL *UNTERSTADT*

Abstract

Written in 2009, *Unterstadt* is a modernist novel by Ivana Šojat, an Osijek-based author, prone to writing about topics she discovers in the archives. The novel is a familial saga portraying four main female characters throughout different generations; it is a narrative of dreams, hopes, philosophies, and tragedies related to the lifetime of each respective generation. Likewise, it is a story of faith and free will of the protagonists who have testified to a change in politics on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, from World War I up to the initial decades of the twenty-first century. Thus, the novel is intertwined with the intermezzi of silence and tales untold because of the fear that affected each generation of the family. Very well-received and acclaimed by the critics and readership alike, *Unterstadt* was also adapted into a theatrical play, dramatized by Nives Madunić Barišić and Zlatko Sviben, in the production of the Croatian National Theater in Osijek. It premièred on July 29, 2012, the first day of the annual Osijek Summer of Culture manifestation. As the production was extremely demanding, the paper will examine the novel's adaptation into an awarded masterpiece of the Croatian theater in view of the contemporary theory and practice of dramatization and theatrical adaptation, complemented by the elements of New

Historicism, fragments of Miroslav Krleža's play *In the Camp (U logoru)*, and authentic historical documents dating from World War I up to the present day.

Keywords: Ivana Šojat, modernist novel, *Unterstadt*, familial saga, World War I, Croatian theater, contemporary adaptation, New Historicism, Miroslav Krleža

Introduction

Having selected the critically and theoretically intriguing subject matter of adaptation, the case of Ivana Šojat's *Unterstadt: A Novel About an Osijek Family*, the authors used a comparative method and a potentially interesting approach to detect, analytically extend, and relevantly circumstantiate the similarities and differences between the novel and its revisions throughout the adaptation process. Thus, while focusing on the subtle nuances that establish the resemblances and alterations between the original and its variations, the paper aspires to provide a more in-depth study and a supportive textual evidence of how the novel's characters, plot, and setting were incipiently adapted into a radio play and subsequently readapted into a theatrical production.

Premièred on June 29, 2012 at the Osijek Summer of Culture manifestation (Biskupović), the *Unterstadt* theatrical performance is frequently a brutally sincere, (neo-) historical, and local story about a city, family, and an individual that quadri-generationally portrays the tragic destinies of the Osijek Swabians, Essekers, and Jews. As such, it was supplemented by authentic music, Vladimir Geiger's documents on the plights of the Danube Swabians (693-722), and the parts of Miroslav Krleža's play *In the Camp* to graphically and sonically personify the characters and reveal the tragedy of their semi-centennial pogroms (Ljubić 11-16).

Clearly, these interpolations in the *Unterstadt* play serve to move the audience and arouse their compassion toward the victimized Danube Swabian and Jewish *dramatis personae*, tortured and silenced by the wheel of history. The interpolations are based on historical events, such as the previous difficult experiences of the Swabians and Jews in Galicia, once an Austrian land and presently a part of Ukraine, the Allies' bombardments, executions, and property confiscations committed by the Partisans in Osijek's Municipal Garden neighborhood, the deportations of Danube Swabians and Jews to the labor camps at the Tenja

turnpike¹, Krndija and Valpovo, their travails during the Way of the Cross², and the like.

What is more, following its première in Osijek's Croatian National Theater on October 5, 2012, *Unterstadt's* successful theatrical transformation and the theatergoers' enthusiastic reception of the novelistic saga on the systematic postwar repression of the Osijek-based Danube Swabian families was made easier due to the positive reception of the novel, although the novel was neither pompously announced in the Croatian media nor suggestively promoted as a future trend-setting bestseller (Ljubić 11). Yet, in 2010 in the literati circles and among literature connoisseurs, awards ceremonies were eagerly expected because the novel was nominated for almost all significant Croatian literary awards, that is, the Fran Galović Award (best book on a regional topic), the Ksaver Šandor Gjalski Award (for novel of the year), the Josip and Ivan Kozarac Award (for book of the year), the Vladimir Nazor Award (the annual literature award), and the regional Meša Selimović Award (Nikčević; Novak 130–44), as well as those given by the newspaper *Jutarnji list* and T-portal. Quite expectedly, the novel won most of them, and is currently being translated into the Macedonian, Bulgarian, and Italian language, whereas a chapter is also being translated into German.

Worth emphasizing, however, is the fact, which we also circumstantiate by virtue of this paper, that there was absolutely no guarantee that *Unterstadt*, adapted first by Nives Madunić Barišić into a radio drama, and ultimately by Zlatko Sviben and Bojan Marotti into a theatrical production, would be an equally effective hit as its high-quality prosaic source, for each of them represent a separate auctorial oeuvre, that is, a rendition correspondent to the rules of the medium of their own (Ljubić 11, 16). Still, for those involved in the adaptation studies, it might be quite interesting to detect the presence and purpose of the Euripidean elements that Marotti added to the play, such as the motif of disideologization and the point of view of female characters toward a subordinated minority in a belligerent atmosphere, as well as Sviben's Krležian sequential

¹ Established by the Independent State of Croatia at the site of the former Mursa Mill, a concentration camp in Tenja, in the vicinity of Osijek, was operational in 1942 as a stop for the Jewish detainees prior to their final deportations to Auschwitz or Jasenovac. According to Živaković-Kerže, approximately 3,000 inmates were incarcerated there.

² Translated from the Latin *Via Crucis*, the Way of the Cross symbolizes in Croatian the Bleiburg repatriation tragedy, that is, the Partisan forced death marches and massacres over approximately 60,000 Axis-associated Croatian soldiers and civilians that occurred from May to August 1945 (see Dizdar 117–96).

additions of departures and returns, and of the mother complex as it appears among the war traumata.

1. From a Novel to a Cathartic Theatrical Production, Via Radio Play

Clearly, both the director Zlatko Sviben and the dramaturge Bojan Marotti have considerably adjusted and amended Nives Madunić Barišić's radio dramatization³ to adapt *Unterstadt* into a demanding, ensemble theatrical play. Theirs was a successful, but in the Croatian context still an isolated attempt to augment its authenticity, provoke intertextual associations, and successfully stage a contemporary Croatian novel. Consequently, in addition to the text taken from Ivana Šojat's novelistic source and the documentary fragments from Vladimir Geiger's materials on the postwar plights of the Danube Swabians, the adaptation contains select scenes from Euripides (*Hecuba*, *The Trojan Women*), parts of Miroslav Krleža's drama *In the Camp*, Nikola Šop's astral verses (*Australia*), Josip Broz Tito's addresses, and the lyrics of several songs from the historical period to which the play refers.

Based on the observations expressed by the author Ivana Šojat herself (Alajbegović), the paper compiles and illustrates the extensive adaptation process, production interventions, and the respective roles of its main protagonists (see Table 1).

³ Based on the novel's source text, Nives Madunić Barišić's version, commissioned by the Croatian National Theater in Osijek, dates back to 2011–12 (see Šojat).

Major role incumbents in the adaptation process and theatrical production					
Ivana Šojat	Nives Madunić Barišić	Zlatko Sviben	Bojan Marotti	Miljenko Sekulić	Igor Valeri
novelistic source text	prosaic radio dramatization	dramatization editing and sequencing, original Šojat's sentence add-ins, period-authentic political platitudes	Croatian and German proofreading, dramaturgy	mise en scène (barbed wire in front of the theatre building, entrance sentinel requesting passes, actors' foyer monologues)	composition and music selection
detailed, suggestive conversations with the actors with regard to their psychological character portraiture	(incipiently) a five-character, single-night vigilance	stage action provoked by the (un)reliable, politically ideologized photographs and newsreel projections from the past	Euripidean supplements (<i>Hecuba</i> , <i>The Trojan Women</i>)	a tripartite scenographic stage division, with a phantasmagoric central section,	period-authentic scenic music (antiwar songs, German songs, partisan songs)
	a spectral retrospective method	inserts (Vladimir Geiger's documentary fragments on the Danube Swabians, Miroslav Krleža's <i>In the Camp</i> excerpts, Nikola Šop's poetry (<i>Australia</i>), Josip Broz Tito's addresses)		a dichotomic symbolism of the concentration camp (onstage railroad tracks)	
		introduction of the former Osijek-based actors, the protagonists of a cultural and theatrical tradition (Aleksandar Gavrilović, Veljko Maričić, and Živana Stokić)		projection of pictorial material (photographs donated by the German People's Union – National Association of Danube Swabians in Croatia, Museum of Slavonia, and those from private collections)	

Table 1
Major role incumbents in the adaptation process and theatrical production

Textual evidence from Šojat's auctorial exemplar of the 2010 *Unterstadt*, signed with her former last name (Šojat-Kučić) and thoroughly revised on September 7, 2012 for the sake of an Osijek-based Croatian National Theater performance, very frequently demonstrates a versatile typology of Marotti's and Sviben's individual adaptational interventions and stage directions in Madunić Barišić's radio play. Therefore, already in 2010, Šojat herself called Madunić Barišić's opus a "dramatization of the novel" (*dramatizacija romana*), Marotti's dramaturgic intervention is styled "a dramaturgy of the language" (*dramaturgija jezika*), whereas Sviben's directorial contribution reversely became "a novel of dramatization" (*roman dramatizacije*) (Šojat-Kučić 1).⁴ The novel itself is figuratively designated as a vivid reflection of the lifestyle pertinent to the part of Osijek known as Unterstadt (*Donji grad*), a legacy of the deceased Danube Swabian ancestors, a chronicle of the stations on the symbolic Way of the Cross of an ethnicity, and a mimesis of a familial photographic album.

Deriving inspiration from a similar Rijeka-based "total theater" experience, that is, from a previous directorship and polyphonic inscenation of Nedjeljko Fabio's *Practicing Life: Chronysteria (Vježbanje života: kronisterija)*, Sviben admittedly desired to adapt Šojat's novel and Madunić Barišić's radio dramatization into a theatrical play that would also emotionally thematize the lost civic identities, both the individual and the familial ones, while performatively engaging even the videographed audience in the theater's foyer. Likewise, enthused by Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography (La chambre claire: note sur la photographie, 1980)*, the quotes from which he used in the *Unterstadt* play itself, Sviben accentuated a providential pictorial indication as one of the lucid melodramatic leitmotifs and action motivators, especially in an epiphanic sequence of Katarina Pavković's final, therapeutic *déjà vu*, a recognition of mildness and naïvety in her mother's juvenile likeness and the acceptance of their true identity. Simultaneously, this *coup de théâtre* moment also signifies a crucial adaptational distinction with regard to Šojat's prosaic original, a kind of Sviben's Barthesian *punctum*, as the novelistic Katarina Pavković sells the parental house and departs from her hometown, while the theatrical Katarina Pavković, preparing her mother's obituary, is not only shocked but also purified at the moment of discovery of one of the maternal childhood photographs.

Talking about the adaptation process, Sviben highlights its ludic nature:

First of all, a novel has a narrative structure, and is therefore much closer to a motion picture, while drama is something completely different. Concerning the very work on *Unterstadt*, I initially received Nives Madunić Barišić's dramatization, which simply followed the novel, and, based on it I added my conception and adapted the text for a scenic performance, so I think that we have eventually succeeded in making something. Yet, I have to emphasize that this text does not possess a real dramatic structure, but this was not the aim. Simply, for the sake of the overall setup, we adjusted the whole story; we added certain necessary things; we played. . . (“Kazalište nije medij”)⁵

Graphically, as contrasted from the previous Madunić Barišić's radio dramatization, the minor theatrical additions or amendments are written in a different, reduced font size within the italicized square brackets (*[]*), while the major ones are captioned (in the underlined small caps), framed, and right-centered. Preceded by an “almost equal to” sign (\approx), provided are even the alternative expressive variants, as are the optional deletion suggestions, written in subscript in the dramatic text (Šojat-Kučić 2–3).

Along with the facultative, purely explanatory notes and parts from Krleža's *In the Camp*, the play contains voices of a female Swabian internees' choir, of a mixed partisan and pioneer choir, the notorious voices of the ex-Yugoslavian State Security Administration (known in Serbian as the *Uprava državne bezbednosti*, UDBA), as well as the angelic, pioneering character of Slaven, the character of grandfather Dragan from Konjuh, whose name is purposely spelled in the Cyrillic script, Snježana, and Josip Broz Tito. Furthermore, Klara's character recites the German expatriates' song *Ohne Heimat geblieben, vom Hause verjagt* (Šojat-Kučić 6), as well as the song of the inmates, *Auf Krndiens Hügel steht ein Kreuz auf der Höh'* (Šojat-Kučić 14), while the partisan song *Mi smo mlada vojska Titova* (Šojat-Kučić 34) is performed by a pioneer choir, as is the *Konjuh planinom* (Šojat-Kučić 36), accompanied by grandfather Dragan for that particular

⁵ In original: “Roman prije svega ima narativnu strukturu i zbog toga je mnogo bliži filmu, dok je drama nešto posve drugo. Što se tiče samog rada na *Unterstadtu*, isprva sam dobio jednu dramaturgiju koju je uradila Nives Madunić-Barišić i na osnovi te dramaturgije, koja je jednostavno slijedila roman, dodatno sam uradio svoje viđenje i prilagodio tekst za scensko izvođenje, i mislim kako smo, na koncu, ipak uspjeli nešto napraviti. No moram istaknuti kako ovaj tekst nema pravu dramsku strukturu, ali nije prema tome niti išlo. Jednostavno smo za potrebe cjelokupne postavke cijelu priču prilagođavali, dodavali određene nužne stvari, igrali se. . . .” (“Kazalište nije medij”).

occasion. These interventions help create a tragic effect of disillusionment and discomfort of the audience, whereas irony is achieved, for instance, by Snježana's declamation of the former Yugoslavian pioneer oath (Šojat-Kučić 35-36), but even more so by an added telephone conversation ascribed to Tito himself, as follows:

Send me urgently, via Bela Crkva to Vršac, one of the best, strong brigades . . . possibly the Krajina one. I need it to cleanse Vršac of the Swabian inhabitants. Keep this a secret. . . . (Šojat-Kučić 58)⁶

The Germans have not deserved to live in our country, and we will evict them all! We have to solve the issue of Germans' eviction, for it is, comrades, a permanent peril to our county. For the time being, all the incapacitated individuals aged 16 to 60 shall be grouped in labor battalions and be used for various works (Šojat-Kučić 59)⁷

One should launch at once the colonization of our population to areas from which the Germans have been expelled. That is . . . the Serbs should be immediately settled on the German estates. . . . The Serbs, Montenegrins, . . . Lika denizens . . . the poor ones . . . and honest families (Šojat-Kučić 60)⁸

2. Dramatic Context

Ivana Šojat's *Unterstadt* was written in 2009 and published by the Zagreb-based *Fraktura* publishing house. This modernist antiwar novel is set in Osijek, in a period extending from World War I to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is a family saga told through the eyes of four generations of women. *Unterstadt* tells a chronicle of the relentlessness of history and its repercussions on the city of Osijek and the lives of ordinary women and their families who have experienced several war and postwar periods on the territory

⁶ In original: "Pošalji mi hitno preko Bele Crkve za Vršac jednu od najboljih, jakih brigada . . . eventualno krajišku. Potrebna mi je da očistim Vršac od švapskih stanovnika. Držite ovo u tajnosti. . . ." (Šojat-Kučić 58).

⁷ In original: "Nemci nisu zaslužili da žive u našoj zemlji i njih ćemo sve iseliti! Pitanje iseljavanja Nemaca mi moramo rešiti, jer je to, drugovi, večita opasnost za našu zemlju. Zasada će se sve sposobno od 16 do 60 godina svrstavati u radne bataljone i upotrebljavati za razne radove. . . ." (Šojat-Kučić 59).

⁸ In original: "Kolonizaciji našeg stanovništva namesto isteranih Nemaca treba odmah pristupiti. To jest, . . . na nemačka imanja odmah naseljavati Srbe . . . Srbe, Crnogorce, . . . Ličane, . . . i to siromašne i . . . poštene porodice" (Šojat-Kučić 60).

of Eastern Croatia. As such, it is a story of Katarina Pavković, a restorer, who comes back from Zagreb to her hometown of Osijek to visit her terminally ill mother, Marija for the first time in eighteen years; nonetheless, her comeback is belated, since her estranged mother had already passed away.

Katarina meets Jozefina Bittner, an old lady who was her late grandmother Klara Schneider née Meier's, and her mother Marija's friend. Jozefina is an eyewitness to history and becomes her guide through the lives of Katarina's ancestors. When Katarina discovers a hidden box full of photographs, she learns about her family and the reasons why her parents had such an emotionally difficult relationship, why her grandmother Klara spoke to the dead, and why her mother was so insecure and full of precaution not to give Katarina a chance to ask any question about the past. She also finds out about her great grandmother, Viktorija Meier, née Richter, and her great grandfather, Rudolf Meier's marriage. Rudolf, a gambler and a womanizer, suffered from depression, having been a soldier on the Galician front in World War I.

As the plot unfolds, Katarina also learns about her grandmother's sister, Greta Meier, an actress and a black sheep in the family, too avant-garde for her time and for a small town like Osijek. Greta always harbored her own forward opinions and was an independent thinker, particularly in times of crisis. That was exactly the reason why her own mother and brother abandoned her. She anticipated the changes to be brought by World War II, and argued with her brother, Antun Schneider about Hitler's ideology in Croatia and about Nazism, its idea of supremacy of the Aryan race, as well as about the consequences it could inflict, especially concerning the Jewish question. Greta was not willing to wait for the aftermath of history with her eyes shut, so she joined the partisans, having shocked her mother, and her brother, Adolf Meier, who glorified Nazism and joined the Hitler troops in Osijek. Yet, both Greta and Adolf perished in World War II; Greta was shot and killed as a partisan traitor, and Adolf died as a Nazi.

Jozefina, on the other hand, speaks about grandmother Klara's loss of her husband, Peter Schneider, who openheartedly joined the Cultural Association (*Kulturbund*) in the belief that this was his duty as a German and a means to preserve his German identity. He was taken away on the very same night on which Viktorija and Klara ended up in the Valpovo labor camp, together with Klara and Peter's three children, Antun, Elza Richter, and Marija Pavković née Šnajder; little Elza perished in the camp, which marked Klara's life forever. After

being released from the camp, as members of the German minority, Viktorija, Klara, Marija,⁹ and Antun become less than second-class citizens, facing civil rights deprivation, property confiscation, and injustice in the postwar Yugoslavia. After the war, they return to Osijek, but cannot reside in their own homes because they are occupied by the victors. Thus, the new owner, Marko, an epileptic immigrant from Kordun and a political commissioner of the Communist Party, ironically rents Viktorija, Klara, Marija, and Antun a room in their own old house.¹⁰ The horrific, humiliating situation drives grandmother Viktorija to insanity.

Katarina's father, Stjepan Pavković experienced a similar story. He lost his parents, the Steiners, in a camp, but he was saved by the Pavkovići, the neighbors who adopted him and gave him their own family name. Stjepan and Marija met in school and decided to marry, after which Marija and Klara moved to Stjepan's house. Antun, Marija's brother, fled to Argentina when he was eighteen years old.

Toward the end, Jozefina tells her own tragic story, that of the loss of her husband and daughter, who also died in a labor camp, and of her later life in a part of the house that was used as a sty before the war, which became her only home ever since. Thereby, Katarina learns that her real family name was Steiner, not Pavković, which was merely used as a shield from social injustice. With such a pseudonym, Katarina's parents desired to protect her from questions and mockery and help her to have a normal life.

Through Jozefina's assistance, Katarina learns the truth about her parents' families and how the historical events have changed them for good; furthermore, she comes to terms with her own mistakes, such as the abortion she had and the loss of her partner who died during the Croatian War of Independence, as well as her lifelong frustration because she believed she was an unloved child. Eventually, Katarina discovers the deeply kept secrets about the family's identity and traditions; moreover, by virtue of these accounts, she manages to heal her long-unattended wounds and traumata. Thus, *Unterstadt* is equally a story of a regained individuality, a novel about the dealing with the past, and an epiphany in a familial epic of forgiveness.

⁹ At the time of Viktorija and Klara's labor camp internment, Katarina's mother, Marija was just a baby (see Šojat 2, 5, 7-8, 10-12, 30-31, 45-46, 64-67, 69).

390 ¹⁰ It was the very room that once belonged to the late Elza (see Šojat 2, 5, 10-12, 67, 79).

3. Historical Background

Having decided to write a novel about the German national minority in twentieth-century Osijek, the author Ivana Šojat researched the newspaper collection (*hémérothèque*) of the Museum of Slavonia with the great help of the Museum's librarian, Marina Vinaj. Šojat admits that this is how she learned about the zeitgeist between the two world wars in this territory, and obtained useful information and photographs of the members of the Osijek-based German and Austrian minority (*Deutsche Gemeinschaft*), such as the monograph titled *The Labor Camp of Valpovo 1945–1946: Documents (Radni logor Valpovo 1945.–1946.: dokumenti)* edited by the historian Vladimir Geiger, which also helped her reconstruct the period between the two wars. Namely, the Labor Camp of Valpovo, established by the Yugoslavian communist régime on the location of the old Valpovo's brick factory, detained approximately 3,000 Austrians and Germans accused of a presumed collaboration with the Nazis. Officially known in German as the *Arbeitslager Walpau*, it was surrounded by barbed wire and watch towers. An estimated number of casualties amounts to 1,076, all of them victims of starvation and typhoid. The site was marked by a monument erected in 2003.

When the word came out about the topic of Šojat's research, some of the members of the German national minority called her to share their own experiences and stories, adding context to the future literary text. This paper relies on similar, new historicist methodology, which amply relies on the usage of documents, newspapers, and photographs (Greenblatt 1–14) in the interpretation of history. In a personal interview conducted by the coauthor, Dina Koproščec on February 8, 2017, Šojat asserted that it was a great experience for her to discover these untold truths about people who suffered in silence. Even prior to World War II, Germans had been an ethnic minority, but they were respected and played a great part in the cultural and intellectual life of the city of Osijek. A point of reference in the book is actually an eyewitness to these times, that is, an ordinary woman named Jozefina, who lived through World War II and is testifying to a history that is to change her life and the lives of other protagonists again; however, her storytelling cannot be scientifically researched. Namely, as a weak character unable to change her circumstances, Jozefina heralds the narrative thread and presents a testimony based on her own remembrances of a history of losers, of those who do not compile history textbooks, to put it in new historicist terms.

4. The Mechanics of Theatrical Adaptation

Nives Madunić Barišić dramatized the novel into a play, and then Zlatko Sviben, in collaboration with Bojan Marotti, adapted Madunić Barišić's dramatization into a theatrical production for the Croatian National Theater in Osijek. In fact, the idea for the adaptation was firstly excogitated by the Croatian Radio, dedicated to adapting contemporary Croatian prose. Madunić Barišić read the novel and contacted her editor at the Croatian Radio with the idea to adapt the *Unterstadt* novel into a radio drama. The concept originally envisaged the development of five accounts in five episodes, in which the five main female characters, that is, Viktorija, Klara, Marija, Katarina, and Jozefina, would tell their respective stories. It was very well received, and the author, Ivana Šojat liked it. Simultaneously, it was the beginning and the first step of transmediality – a connection between the novel, a radio drama, an adapted text, and a theatrical performance. Thus, the Croatian National Theater in Osijek decided to commission an adaptation of the novel, and Šojat, a poet, fiction writer, and literary translator, recommended Madunić Barišić, as she had already made an excellent radio adaptation of the text.

In an interview conducted for the purpose of this paper by Dina Koproščec, one of the coauthors, Madunić Barišić describes the process as an experience in which she decided to adapt the novel as a collection of memories, a testimony of ghosts. The main idea was to adapt the novel as if the story were told on a single night, during a wake. Through the night, Jozefina would tell the family's history to Katarina while revealing the untold secrets. The basis of the adaptation would be the protagonists, that is, their emotional stories in a realistic framework.

The lexical issues connected to the language of the Danube Swabians were a great challenge. Since the novel talks about the generations of Germans in terms of a people and race, the *Volksdeutsche*, the main characters use a very recognizable Osijek Croato-German idiom, that is, the *Osijeker Deutsch* dialect (*Essekerisch*). According to Ljubić, the *Essekerisch* is “a version of the German language created through the contact of several German dialects with the non-Germanic languages, spoken in the city of Osijek at the time” (12)¹¹. As the adapter tried to find a way to make the vernacular expected and realistic, all the dialogues had to be consequently rewritten. Since the *Essekerische* expressions were not

¹¹ In original: „inačicom njemačkog jezika koja je nastala u kontaktu više njemačkih narječja s negermanskim jezicima koji su se govorili u Osijeku“ (Ljubić 12).

used in the novel so frequently, the idea was to employ them in the play more prominently. A great assistance in this respect was provided by Velimir Petrović, a former professor of the Osijek-based Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the author of the *Essekerisch* dictionary, who assisted when it came to lexicon and syntax.

A decision was also to be passed on how to achieve a theatrical spatial and temporal continuity, how to make the *dramatis personae* vivid amidst a turmoil of history, and how to present on stage a whole century in the lifetime of a family, that is, to give a theatrical review of a family. Although the novel is a starting point for a new text, and “when we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works” (Hutcheon and O’Flynn 6), a dramatization is almost never truly faithful to its original, so the biggest challenge is how to verisimilarly keep the novel’s main idea in the dramatic form: “It is as much a creative work as it is an auctorial writing” (Madunić Barišić).

When the dramatization was almost done, in the fall of 2011, the Croatian National Theater in Osijek asked Sviben to direct the play. In turn, Sviben asked Marotti to co-adapt the drama. Since they had been given an adaptation of *Unterstadt* made by Madunić Barišić, they convened their meetings two or three times per week, working sometimes into the late hours of the night, exchanging ideas and contemplating concepts (Marotti). In April of 2012, prior to the commencement of the first reading rehearsals, Sviben effectuated several modifications in the adaptation that were the most meaningful ones, according to his opinion. For example, the director inserted a conflict between Jozefina and Katarina that was demonstrated as a memory, that is, as a familial and political fray and a different lifestyle perspective.

5. The Importance of Photography

According to Sviben, the main idea of the play was to use photography as an association which will help Katarina realize who her ancestors were. The origin of the idea was Roland Barthes’ book *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), in which the author examines the meaning of photography from philosophical aspects. What is more, Barthes wrote the book shortly after his mother passed away, that is, when he was in a very depressed and elegiac mood, for he had been living with her for most of his life. Since he found a photograph

depicting his mother accompanied by her brother when they were children, Barthes instantaneously experienced peace, serenity, and epiphany, having recognized his mother as a little girl. Katarina experienced a similar epiphany when she saw her mother as a baby on a family photograph.

In fact, Sviben decided to make photography a leitmotif of the play. Furthermore, he insisted that every scene from the past, regardless of how deeply rooted in history it was, that is, every photograph and every recollection in a performative and action sequence, should begin with a picture, in a PechaKucha style (Marotti). The French would call it *tableaux vivants*, yet in a two-dimensional performative form, so that in the end of a scene the initial picture or photograph should be repeatedly projected.

Therefore, during the theatrical performance, the audience could watch a projection of a thematically related, PechaKucha-styled photographic show, designed by Željka Fabijanić Šaravanja. As Barthes penned it, “Photography has the same relation to History that a biographeme has to biography” (28). Hence, in the novel, Katarina’s grandmother Viktorija begs the intruders, who later happen to be presented as the new proprietors of her own house after World War II, to allow her to at least pick the photographs on her own, as the photographs do not resist. Moreover, the usage of photographs ensures that “the relationship between Jozefina and Katarina remains in the foreground, while other relationships remain in the background . . . protruding, almost jumping from behind, and all this is happening through photography” (Marotti).

6. Macabre Iconography and Versatile Weltanschauungs

Inspired by the poem “Anđeo mrtvih” by the Croato-Montenegrin bard Viktor Vida,¹² the director, Zlatko Sviben, has also introduced the character of the Angel of Death, “an ambassador of photographs and a song of purity” (“Unterstadt”),¹³ who is constantly onstage, and whose role is to interconnect the spirits of the living ones with those of the deceased.

In the second act, Sviben inserted a scene from the third act of Miroslav Krleža’s drama *In the Camp* (*U logoru*), that is, a part in which the allegedly insane old lady Romanowicz-Russcukova is to be hanged in the camp and curses

¹² The poem was published in the collection, *The Universe of a Person* (*Svemir osobe*, 1951).

394 ¹³ In original: “poslanik fotografija i pjev čistine” (“Unterstadt”).

her executors prior to her demise. It is important to acknowledge and delineate the intertextual connection between this sequence and the referenced part in the *Unterstadt* novel with a historic-cultural fact; namely, the play *In the Camp* also premièred in the Croatian National Theater in Osijek in 1937. Spatially, the scenographer, Miljenko Sekulić organized the scene in three parts, having it divided in a present-day space, a historical space, and a space of those who have passed away. This scene was very demanding and difficult to play.

Equally, there are several inserts from Euripides' tragedies *The Trojan Women* (*Τρωϊάδες*) and *Hecuba* (*Εκάβη*) that the director included in the play to prove Euripides' viewpoint on war, that is, to provide a perspective of both victors and losers, and connect it to the female roles in *Unterstadt*. The play ends with a catharsis: Katarina dresses her mother, and the Angel of Death recites verses from Nikola Šop's 1961 collection of poems *Australia* (*Astralije*), which was Bojan Marotti's idea accepted by the director Sviben, because it leaves hope for a new beginning, which Katarina, as the main character, needs so desperately.

The play's premièred took place on July 29, 2012, that is, on the first day of the annual Osijek Summer of Culture manifestation, in the Citadel (Tvrđa). It was so well received by the audience that two more performances were scheduled immediately thereafter. Moreover, the play won the *Teatar.hr* portal's audience award in 2012, the Croatian theatrical award for the best directorial achievement, and the 2013 Dubrovnik Summer Festival's Orlando award as the best theatrical and musical production. The ambience and the sounds of a piano played by the score composer and music arranger Igor Valeri made it unique in the Citadel's open space. The two main actresses delivered two strong roles – Sandra Lončarić Tankosić as Katarina and Branka Cvitković as Jozefina.

In her review of the play, published in the *Vijenac* journal, Sanja Nikčević suggested that Sviben, unlike the sentiment-driven Šojat in her prose, “ejected emotions and warmth because he wanted (and produced) a pronouncedly political Brechtian theatrical play”.¹⁴ Namely, in his anti-Proustian maxim, Brecht warned that one should not be so empathic and romantic, as not to diminish his or her realization of what is happening around him or her and, while so doing, his or her capacity to react.

¹⁴ In original: “izbacio emocije i toplinu jer je želio (i napravio) izrazito političku predstavu na tragu Bertolta Brechta” (Nikčević).

On the other hand, Lucija Ljubić stated that the affirmed Sviben provided the audience with his own perusal of the *Unterstadt* novel (13). Thus, the main difference between a novelistic auctorial Weltanschauung and a directorial one was that Šojat tried to tell an intimate family story illustrating the tragic destiny of the German national minority in Osijek, while Sviben was focused on history that ruined their lives, from the vortex of World War I up to the Croatian War of Independence. Finally, Ljubić considers that the director has “successfully accomplished the demanding task of transferring prose onstage, yet with lots of deflections from the novel and with a strong desire to tell an authentic, Osijek-based story – a theatrical one and that of his own” (13–14).¹⁵

Conclusive Thoughts, or Adaptation as a Challenge

The 2012 *Unterstadt* descriptor, slightly modified in August 2013 for the 64th Dubrovnik Summer Festival program booklet to also mention the addition of Nikola Šop's *Australia* verses and Euripides' sequences, specifies, among other things, that

the commissioned dramatization by Nives Madunić Barišić was edited by Zlatko Sviben, adapted to a hypothesized performance sequence, and complemented in many ways [with the sentences of the original, the parts of Krleža's drama, the songs of the epoch, platitudes and illusions, as well as with the materials on the (post)war destiny of the Danube Swabians as the losers of war, mostly from the contributions by Vladimir Geiger]. (Šojat-Kuči 1)¹⁶

The descriptor acknowledges that a previous dramatization was referred to in this specific adaptation, which renders the issue of adaptation even more intricate. As an artistic oeuvre, an adaptation is a difficult process that may produce a completely new esthetic piece, quite similar to the written template, but it also

¹⁵ In original: “. . . [z]ahtjevan zadatak prenošenja proze na scenu redatelj je obavio uspješno, ali s mnogo otklona od romana i sa snažnom željom da ispriča autentičnu, osječku priču – kazališnu i svoju” (13–14).

¹⁶ In original: “. . . [n]aručenu dramaturgiju Nives Madunić Barišić Zlatko je Sviben uredio, pretpostavljenom slijedu izvedbe prilagodio, te u mnogočem dopunio [rečenicama sámoga izvornika, dijelovima Krležine drame, epohnim pjesmama, floskulama i tlapnjama, kao i građom o gubitničkoj (po)ratnoj sudbini podunavskih Nijemacā, glavninom iz prinosā Vladimira Geigera]” (Šojat-Kuči 1).

contains subjective views on an adapted literary piece, as well as the adapter's experiences and ideas. As such, adaptation is a phenomenon of contemporary theater.

The case of *Unterstadt* underlines Milivoj Solar's assertion that a novel shapes the truth of an individual, which testifies to the truth of a nation (141). Moreover, since the novel is a consolidated scion of the myth, it may tell many different stories through adaptation. For instance, in 2015, the Zagreb-based Youth Theater premiered the play, *Elza Walks through the Walls* (*Elza hoda kroz zidove*), a duo drama by the author Ivana Šojat, which is actually an adaptation of Klara's story from *Unterstadt*, directed by Ivan Planinić and produced by Jure Matulić as their graduation performance at the Academy of Dramatic Art.

To conclude, when adapting a novel, an adaptor has to consider acting (and actors), scene, music, lights, dance, and theater capacity. Thus, cooperation between an adaptor, director, and writer (or a playwright) may in fact improve and exalt all their individual visions, which actually happened with *Unterstadt*. As exemplified by *Unterstadt*, such an endeavor may be very complex since, as this case shows, four authors were deeply involved and all four of them contributed to the play. Being an adaptation, *Unterstadt* displays an "overt relationship to another work or works" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 6). It evokes memories and guides us toward the unknown truths, unspoken fears, and traumata. At the same time, it is brutally shocking and realistic for the audience from the onset as young partisans authoritatively greet and usher the audience while checking their tickets. Proceeding from the very entrance to the theater, the pale-faced actors mingle with the theatergoers, some of them even dictating to the tape recorders prior to the commencement of the play. A photographic PechaKucha projection is installed in the hall, and the overall atmosphere is intentionally cold, uncomfortable. Thereby, the Brechtian theatrical "estrangement effect" is perfectly accomplished.

Essentially, this specific play was dramatized three times on three different locations: firstly, for the Osijek Summer of Culture; secondly, as a play for the Croatian National Theater in Osijek; and thirdly, for the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. In the words of Sanja Ivić, an ideal dramatization, even if it deprecia- tively is a "sturgeon of second-rate freshness," that is, a recognizable narrative structure with the already known characterizations and a predictable message decryption (40), should consist of the basic elements of a story and of the so-

called “penetration into the deep layers of a novel,” to dramaturgically represent to the audience what an author wants them to perceive (192–93). As such, each adaptation is, perhaps paradoxically, a completely innovative effort, intrinsically connected to a stage or to a theater of its new performance (Ivić 42–43). Thus, in a good theatrical performance of a specific adaptation, in a getaway dubbed “a noble escape of the theater into the novel” (“Sanja Ivić”), it is not of utmost importance if the adaptation has blindly followed a literary template. Rather, it is crucial to fully comprehend the artistic process of creating “reality” and construct new histrionic worlds on that track. Nonetheless, these theatrical universes border to the text of a novel by virtue of their invisible edges, which may only be sensed (Perry 1312–15).

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ADAPTACIJA MODERNISTIČKOGA ROMANA *UNTERSTADT* IVANE ŠOJAT

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Unterstadt (2009.) modernistički je roman osječke autorice Ivane Šojat koja inspiraciju za svoja djela često traži u Arhivu. Roman je obiteljska saga koja se bavi prikazom četiri glavna ženska lika, pripadnice četiri generacije jedne osječke obitelji. Priča je to o snovima, nadama, filozofijama i tragedijama koje su proizlazile iz vremena u kojemu je živjela svaka od četiri generacije. Ujedno, to je priča o vjeri i slobodnoj volji protagonista koji svjedoče o političkim promjenama na teritoriju bivše Jugoslavije, od Prvog svjetskog rata do početka dvadeset i prvog stoljeća. Roman je isprepleten interludijima sačinjenim od tišine i priča neispričanih zbog straha koji je opterećivao svaku od generacija. *Unterstadt*, u rukopisu podnaslovljen kao „roman o jednoj osječkoj obitelji“, dobro je primljen i od publike i od kritike, te je potom adaptiran u dramski tekst, a dramatisacija Nives Madunić Barišić i Zlatka Svibena izvedena je u produkciji s Hrvatskim narodnim kazalištem u Osijeku. Predstava je doživjela praiizvedbu 29. srpnja 2012., prvoga dana Osječkog ljeta kulture. Budući da je produkcija bila iznimno zahtjevna, rad će se baviti problematikom procesa adaptacije romana u nagrađivano djelo hrvatskog teatra. U metodološkom smislu, rad će se osloniti na suvremenu teoriju i praksu dramatisacije i dramske adaptacije, uz elemente novog historizma. U procesu adaptacije, izvorni tekst obogaćen je fragmentima drame *U logoru* Miroslava Krležu te autentičnim povijesnim dokumentima koji datiraju od vremena Prvog svjetskog rata do danas.

Ključne riječi: Ivana Šojat, modernistički roman, *Unterstadt*, obiteljska saga, Prvi svjetski rat, hrvatsko kazalište, suvremena adaptacija, novi historizam