Points of Connection and Separation of the Text and the Play on the Example of Wilde's and Zadar's *Star-Child*

Točke spajanja i razdvajanja teksta i predstave na primjeru Wildeovog i zadarskog *Zvjezdana*

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ABSTRACT | Understanding adaptation as a two-way process in which the original medium and the medium of adaptation interact with each other, the paper analyzes the relationship between the fairy tale *The Star-Child* by Oscar Wilde and the puppet play *The Star-Child* by the Zadar Puppet Theater, directed and adapted by Milena Dundov. The two works are connected by a series of common elements that they approach and use in some places similarly, but more often differently. The key point of difference, in addition to the differences in the media, is the temporal, spatial and especially social context in which the fairy tale and the puppet show were created. The paper analyzes the similarities and, particularly, the differences between the two works, and attempts to notice the second part of the two-way influence — the adaptation's influence on the source.

KEYWORDS | The Star-Child, Oscar Wilde, Puppet Theatre Zadar, puppetry, adaptation

Introduction

In the early spring of 1995, the Zadar Puppet Theatre premiered the play *The Star-Child*, based on the fairy tale of the same title by Oscar Wilde. The director and author of the adaptation, Milena Dundov, turned the play into a very interesting dialogue with the source template, at the same time remaining true to it and moving away from it. If we combine this thoughtful "approaching departure" with Regina Schober's idea that "media [should] be discussed not as independent and self-contained entities, but rather as highly interconnected nodes in a larger network of medial, cultural and receptional actors,"[1] the space for analyzing the relationship and the two-way dialogue between Wilde's and Zadar *Star-Child* opens up for us.

Adaptation as a Two-Way Process

Theatrologist Patrice Pavis sees adaptation as the transformation of "a work from one genre in which it was written to another genre (for example, from a novel to a theatrical piece)."[2] According to him, the focus lies on the play, that is, "on the narrative content (story, plot) that remains preserved (more or less faithfully, sometimes with significant deviations)."[3] "During this semiotic transfer operation," Pavis explains, "the novel is transformed into dialogues […] and primarily into stage actions that utilize all the means of theatrical representation (gesture, image, music, etc.)."[4] Observing the adaptation from the perspective of performing arts, the theatrologist therefore sees it as a result — a one-way process in which the source remains untouched and passive — the adapter, on the other hand, chooses the angles of new readings and inscriptions.

Unlike Pavis, translation theorist Regina Schober views adaptation as a process "that occurs between two media — the source medium and the adaptation medium"[5] and in which "connections are established between two different modes of representation."[6] In this relation, adaptation "must be regarded as

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1   Regina Schober, "Adaptation as connection — Transmediality reconsidered," in *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen (London — New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 98.

2   Patrice Pavis, *Pojmovnik teatra* (Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 2005), 21.

3   Pavis, *Pojmovnik teatra*, 21.

4   Pavis, *Pojmovnik teatra*, 21.

5   Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 92.

6   Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 89.

a much more complex assemblage of cross-influences rather than a seemingly unidirectional procedure between two media,"[7] Schober concludes. The idea of bidirectional influence and dialogue between the source and adaptation opens up space for reflections on the relationship between the two media, as well as the rarely analyzed potential impact of adaptation on the source within the puppetry medium. Through these two aspects, the relationship between the literary and performative aspects of *The Star-Child* will be analyzed.

Before the actual analysis, it is necessary to identify the points and threads that connect the two media. Irina O. Rajewsky believes that the media "share certain fundamental elements such as rhythm, sound, temporality and so on."[8] Schober agrees with her and adds that without these common elements "it is impossible to recognize medial differences and thus to define the distinctive quality of media in the first place."[9] Precisely these shared elements will assist us in analyzing the relationship between the fairy tale and the play. They will serve as links connecting the source and the adaptation, while, at the same time, their differences will separate them, allowing us to highlight both the faithfulness of the adaptation to the original and its divergence from it. Within this process, I will step beyond the boundaries of the source and adaptation into the space of context, where another aspect of dual influence will emerge — the impact of adaptation on the source.

Points of Connection

As Rajewsky suggests at the end of the quoted sentence, "[…] and so on,"[10] common elements between different media are not standardized, but depend on the original medium and the medium of adaptation. Also, they are represented differently in different media. Elements that are primary in one medium are marginal in another or appear at the level of suggestion, which Schober demonstrates with the example of rhythm which, "cannot be the same in music and poetry, but is highly media specific, and therefore bound to its material quality as well as to its aesthetic and cultural context."[11] In the case of

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7 Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 92.

8 Irina O. Rajewsky, "Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate about Intermediality," in *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, ed. Lars Elleström (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 65.

9 Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 92.

10 Rajewsky, "Border Talks," 65.

11 Schober, "Adaptation as connection," 92.

The Star-Child, it is not about poetry and music, but about prose and performing arts, more precisely fairy tales and puppetry, therefore some elements in one medium will be clear and literal, while in the other they will be read through descriptions, symbols and metaphors.

Before analyzing the common elements of the two media, I will analyze the context in which the works were created. After that, I will focus on the general links between fairy tales and puppetry. The narrative layer is the basis of the fairy tale and one of the driving elements of puppetry and will occupy an important point of analysis, after which I will focus on the development of the plot and characters. Visual aspects are closer to adaptation, but they are also present in the content layer of the original medium, sound and music appear in both media, while humor, social and political elements may or may not be present. In this analysis, the language of the original and the adaptation will not be compared, since the adaptation is based on the Croatian translation.

Creation Context of the Text and Performance

There is "a wide range of reasons why adapters might choose a particular story and then transcode it into a particular medium or genre,"[12] writes Linda Hutcheon. In the case of *The Star-Child*, the source and the adaptation are distant both spatially and temporally, thus the motives behind the creation of the two works are fundamentally different.

Oscar Wilde published the fairy tale *The Star-Child* in 1891 in England. In *The Star-Child*, Wilde interprets the characteristics of success and failure and power and impotence through an aesthetic key, equating success and power with beauty. This key to reading is also present in his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which was published in the same year, as well as in Wilde's larpurlatist view of art, which was in line with the then current aestheticism.

Milena Dundov staged the play *The Star-Child* in 1995 in Zadar, Croatia, near the end of the Homeland War (1991—1995), in which the city suffered great damage and many Zadar residents were wounded, imprisoned or killed. Just a few months after the premiere, the military operations Bljesak and Oluja will end the war. In a city exhausted by tragedies, fears and war losses, the divisions between success and failure and power and powerlessness gave way to a universal division between good and evil, far removed from Wilde's larpurlatist environment. With that alone, Dundov, together with the author of

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12 Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 20.

the visual layer of the play, Mojmir Mihatov, rejected Wilde's division between beauty and ugliness, and wrapped the play's main conflict between good and evil in veils of dark grotesqueness and ugliness.

In these different contexts, there are also different motives for writing or staging works of art, to be discussed at the end of the present text. Nevertheless, regardless of the contextual distance, the adapter did not go further, but chose the performance expression closest to the original medium — puppetry.

Fairy Tales and Puppetry — Partners in Similarities and Differences

A fairy tale can be defined as a prose work of "fantastic or adventurous character"[13] filled with "action in which the characters strive for a certain goal, overcoming numerous obstacles along the way."[14] Understood in this way, a fairy tale is a genre that recognizes children's interests very well, and finds the perfect performance platform in puppet expression. Puppetry today, like a fairy tale, mainly addresses children, and in its wideness and openness, it offers numerous opportunities for the stage realization of fantasy and action, abstraction and mystery, and the stage revival of all the elements of the fairy tale. Therefore, puppetry is the natural performance environment for fairy tales, which is used abundantly in Croatian theatre, where a large percentage of puppet shows are adaptations of fairy tales. Milena Dundov was also on that trail, turning the fairy tale *The Star-Child* into a puppet show, and stepping into a multi-layered dialogue between the text and its stage adaptation.

There are a number of elements that directly place Wilde's text in the fairy tale genre. From the opening words "Once upon a time,"[15] through the narrative framework, universal division into power and powerlessness, discrete fantasy instead of reality, constant action and characters polarized into good and bad, to the time that is not defined in the text, but implies universal past that flows into temporal universality.

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13 Milivoje Mlađenović, *Odlike dramske bajke. Preoblikovanje modela bajke u srpskoj dramskoj književnosti za decu* (Novi Sad: Sterijino pozorje i Pozorišni muzej Vojvodine, 2009), 70.

14 Josip Kekez, "Usmena književnost," in *Uvod u književnost*, ed. Zdenko Škreb and Ante Stamać (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1983), 133.

15 Oscar Wilde, *The Selfish Giant and Other Stories* (London: Alma Classics, 2015), 210.

The play also opens with a fairy-tale beginning, though not in a verbal, but in a visual and aural aspect, with the swaying of branches, guided by the sound of the cold winter wind wrapped in the dark gray of an almost empty stage. That beginning will largely define the play's relationship to words and the narrative layer.

Spatially, the text spreads through the typical fairy-tale exteriors, from the forest to the city and the palace, while the space in the play is only suggested by the plot and left to the imagination of the audience. In this way, the director avoids the visual default offered by the theater as a medium, which conflicts with the abstraction and symbolism of fairy tales.

The symbolism in the text is transferred from the idea itself and is drawn into the dialogues, such as "'Into a house where a heart is hard cometh there not always a bitter wind?' he asked,"[16] while the play focuses on the visual layer of the performance.

On the other hand, Wilde's *Star-Child* flirts with the anti-fairytale in several aspects, especially in the political allusions that are woven through the opening dialogue of the animals and round off the story: "Yet ruled he not long, so great had been his suffering, and so bitter the fire of his testing, for after the space of three years he died. And he who came after him ruled evilly,"[17] and we can also find an escape from fairy-tale universality in Christian elements such as the mention of a specific Christian saint ("They put their trust in the good Saint Martin, who watches over all travelers, and retraced their steps, and went warily […]").[18] Some of these elements, such as animal dialogue and political allusions, did not find their place in the play, whose plot seems cleaner, clearer and more fairy-tale than the source.

Stripping-down of the Plot

The basic thread of the fairy tale is the cognitive journey of the titular Star-Child, who turns from a beautiful and infinitely cruel young man at the peak of his own callousness into a scoundrel despised by his surroundings. Having touched the moral bottom, the hero sets out in search of his mother, who along the way renounced his own goodness, that is, beauty. Wilde enriches the basic thread with several "animal" branches, like the opening overture, which

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16 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 216.
17 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 238.
18 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 212.

opens up the possibility of connecting the title character and his ruthlessness towards animals with their metaphorical potential. On the other hand, Milena Dundov renounces the substantive backwaters that would distance her from the basic thread and its point — the transformation of the Star-Child from evil to good. In this purified body of the stage text, there is no place to connect the basic story with backwaters and political allusions or to write metaphors in individual episodes, but the whole is immersed in purified symbolism, universality and modernity, that is, timelessness.

The stripped-down plot in the play faithfully follows the plot in the fairy tale, and both are built around a solid structure consisting of two phases. After the first phase and the gradation of evil to the culmination, there follows a cognitive journey towards good, formed through three points of temptation leading to the final goal. And the goal is nothing else but a new beginning where good cancels out evil. This type of cognitive journey is common in classical puppetry, and Dundov retains it in the play, further underlining its circular structure with the wheel on which the Magician tortures the Star-Child, cleansing him of his sins.

By getting rid of "redundancies," Dundov accelerates and superficially shapes the Star-Child's growth, since it in no way affects the basic idea. She also cleans the play of humorous notes, which will be discussed more in the final part of the analysis.

With content refinement and focus on a single thread, the play managed to keep the clarity and comprehensibility that a literary work can potentially lose in the transition to a performance medium. Namely, unlike a book, in which we can go back, repeat different parts and connect them afterwards, "[…] re-read or skip ahead […] hold the book in our hands and feel, as well as see, how much of the story remains to be read,"[19] in the play "we are caught in an unrelenting, forward-driving story,"[20] therefore the plot must be cleaner and clearer.

Although visuality is much closer to puppetry than to literary expression, in Wilde's source work there is a whole series of images that were not realized in the play, such as "[…] the Earth seemed to them like a flower of silver, and the Moon like a flower of gold"[21] or "There fell from heaven a very bright and beautiful star."[22] Although this seems somewhat unexpected at first glance, the departure from visual concretization can again be explained by the differences in the two media. While literature offers the reader visual suggestions, and the

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19 Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 23.
20 Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 23.
21 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 213.
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descriptions take on different shapes and colors in different readers, theater is much more visually concrete, that is, as Patrice Pavis says, "the stage fictionalization completely 'cements' the textual fiction."[23] Therefore, by realizing the mentioned images, the play would be buried in visual concretization, thereby moving away from universality. At the same time, it would move away from the visual atmosphere that carries the whole.

There is another element partially separating the source and the adaptation. This is repetition, which is a frequent and important element in fairy tales and functions as gradation, underlining the flow of time, shaping the rhythm, connecting different places in the text, and so on. Repetition in a theatrical performance can have all these functions, but also the unwanted one — monotony. Therefore, Dundov does not renounce it in the play, but approaches it carefully. She avoids the repetition that appears in the text ("Often did the Woodcutter," […] "Often did the old priest"),[24] and in the torture scenes the Star-Child ends up on the reel differently each time to break potential predictability as a key to monotony. On the other hand, Dundov shapes the tranformation of the Star-Child from beautiful to ugly and vice versa in the same way, in order to connect and thus underline these two key points in the play.

Blind Faith in the Word, Even When It Is Minimized

In contrast to the literary source, which cannot escape from words, Milena Dundov minimized the verbal layer as much as possible in the play, reducing Wilde's text to the necessary words and sentences and, as Teodora Vigato writes, "retained only hints of the plot, and told the stage story with dynamic stage pictures."[25] The main reason is the fact that to the puppet dialog does not come naturally, that is, as the Slovenian puppet director Edi Majaron puts it, the puppet "is certainly not a babbler, but is most powerful precisely in non-verbal communication, in action, as they say."[26] At the same time, the fairy tale itself, in the words of Ljubica Ostojić, "opened up the possibility of converting linguistic into scenic signs and a new aesthetic and ethical approach."[27]

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23 Patrice Pavis, *Pojmovnik teatra*, 379.

24 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 218.

25 Teodora Vigato and Vedrana Valčić, *Poetski putevi zadarskog lutkarstva* (Zadar: University of Zadar and Puppet Theatre Zadar, 2018), 53.

26 Edi Majaron, *Vera u lutku* (Subotica: Otvoreni univerzitet, Subotica: Međunarodni festival pozorišta za decu i Novi Sad: Pozorišni muzej Vojvodine, 2014), 113.

27 Vigato and Valčić, *Poetski putevi zadarskog lutkarstva*, 54.

The economization of the text in the play can be precisely seen from the following comparison. The texts reads "And his companions followed him, for he was fair, and fleet of foot, and could dance, and pipe, and make music. And wherever the Star-Child led them they followed, and whatever the Star-Child bade them do, that did they. And when he pierced with a sharp reed the dim eyes of the mole, they laughed, and when he cast stones at the leper they laughed also. And in all things he ruled them, and they became hard of heart, even as he was."[28] At the same place in the play, we see the Star-Child riding his friends, only to be followed by a succinct verbal explanation "They are all my servants […]." In addition to its great verbal clarity, this example can also show the way in which the content layer is built in the play, which is even better explained by the next example.

After the unpleasant whistling sound, the background movement and the actor's behavior clearly evoke the atmosphere and situation of the cold winter wind, this is followed by the sentence "And a cold winter wind." In this way, the verbal layer does not bring meaning, but only corroborates it. With this approach, Dundov cancels the dominance of words, but at the same time casts doubt on the content strength and clarity of sound and image. Namely, in the play, there is no dialogue, gradation or conflict between the visual (and auditory) and the verbal way of conveying information, but there is exclusively verbal explanation of the visually and auditorily shaped content. This doubt in the semantic power or clarity of the visual and auditory layers, that is, this absolute faith in only the verbal layer, is strongly present in Croatian puppetry. The reasons for this lie in the fact that puppet theater is still to this day based on words, so the audience did not have the opportunity to learn to read the non-verbal layers, that is, to write their own meanings into them. Therefore, when entering into non-verbal communication, the directors either go for the literal or for additional verbalization.

From Characters Towards Types

Murray Smith considers "characters crucial to the rhetorical and aesthetic effects of both narrative and performance texts because they engage receivers' imaginations through what he calls recognition, alignment, and allegiance."[29]

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28 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 219.
29 Murray Smith, *Engaging Characters: Fiction, Emotion, and the Cinema* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 5.

Contrary to his opinion, one of the essential characteristics of puppetry, especially classical and traditional puppetry, is that the heroes are usually types, not characters. Through typification, the puppet moves away from individual destinies and stories towards general and universal, typical stories. In this way, puppetry moves away from performability precisely towards a fairy tale, in which the protagonists bring about universal truths, ask universal questions, deal with universal problems, and, therefore, they themselves strive for universality. However, heroes in fairy tales do not have to remain typified, but can be transformed into characters, which was done in part by Oscar Wilde.

Although he inserted the Star-Child into a universal black-and-white story about power and powerlesness, he did not stop at the typification of the title character, but took several steps into concretization and characterization. This can be seen, for example, in the description of his visual changes, which can be read as characteristic, since in this fairy tale, visuality, that is, appearance, serves as a mirror image of character. "And every year he became more beautiful to look at, so that all those who dwelt in the village were filled with wonder, for, while they were swarthy and black-haired, he was white and delicate as sawn ivory, and his curls were like the rings of the daffodil. His lips, also, were like the petals of a red flower, and his eyes were like violets by a river of pure water, and his body like the narcissus of a field where the mower comes not."[30] Unlike Wilde's, the Star-Child in the play does not go through gradual changes, but changes only twice — from beautiful to ugly and vice versa. In this way, Dundov remained faithful to the traditional puppetry approach to the characters, but she also universalized the story, reducing it to a pure struggle between good and evil within us and around us.

Both in the text and in the play, all the other characters are in the function of the title character, divided into black and white, but while in the text, which is built in the space of the reader's imagination, there is a host of characters, in the play Dundov rejected all those who are not necessary.

Visuality as the Key Differentiation Point

The key mode of communication in the play The Star-Child has been shifted from the verbal to the visual layer. After all, "the performance mode teaches us that language is not the only way to express meaning or to relate stories. Visual and gestural representations are rich in complex associa-

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30 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 217.

tions,"[31] writes Linda Hutcheon. Visual elements gain additional importance in the puppetry medium, in which their possibilities are multiplied, while, on the other hand, excessive verbalization numbs the puppets, who live on stage primarily through movement.

In the visual layer, there was a crucial differentiation between the source and the adaptation. In his text, Wilde created a series of very precise and concrete descriptions ("And the old man touched the door with a ring of graved jasper and it opened, and they went down five steps of brass into a garden filled with black poppies and green jars of burnt clay,"[32] making the fairy tale visually playful and colourful and expanding it spatially from the forest to the city, the fortresses, and beyond. On the other hand, the author of the visual layer of the play, Mojmir Mihatov, reduced the colors to shades of gray, that is, gloominess, creating "an atmosphere in which the ugliness of the world is redeemed from damnation and it is possible to drive the curse away with kindness."[33] He created the scenography from dirty sheets and rags that formed screens in motion. Moving away from spatial concretization, this scenography in motion shaped and suggested the gloom of the atmosphere, the feeling of hopelessness and constant movement and searching. Also, it announced the projects which Kruna Tarle and the group "Fasade" would realize a few years later, where, leaning on object theatre, scenography elements became integral parts of a dynamic interplay, abstract in meaning, and in constant change.[34]

The characters also went through a process of visual cleansing, which kept them in the space of black and white, that is, gray, typological division. Mihatov's choice of grotesque masks, or half-masks, as a puppet expression also contributed to this typification. Polish puppet director and theoretician Wiesław Hejno defines the mask as a typical expression, that is, as "frozen in one system, a sum of non-verbal information about the character, its archetype of sorts, embalmed from the text of the play — which, after all, is only a record of experience, imagination, references and the processing of requirements for the use of the stage and the actor."[35]

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31 Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 23.

32 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 227.

33 Ljubica Ostojić, "Prvotni kaos scenske materije. ZD 'Zvjezdanu' — Grand prix" *Narodni list*, September 15, 1995, 3.

34 More in: Igor Tretinjak, "Poetski svijet Krune Tarle — u susretu živog i neživog," in *Dani Hvarskoga kazališta : Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu*, ed. Boris Senker, Lucija Ljubić and Vinka Glunčić-Bužančić, vol. 46 No. 1 (Zagreb-Split: HAZU and Književni krug Split, 2020).

35 Vjeslav Hejno, *Umetnost lutkarske režije: Praksa. Razmatranja* (Subotica: Otvoreni univerzitet, Subotica: Međunarodni festival pozorišta za decu, Novi Sad: Pozorišni muzej Vojvodine, 2012), 171.

Throughout history, the mask has played an important role in the typification of characters, as, for example, in commedia dell'arte, which is also important for the historical development of puppetry. Some of the Zanni moved to the puppet stage and turned into typical puppet folk heroes, such as Pulcinella, who also kept the black half-mask and transformed into a series of puppet "relatives" from Polichinelle and Punch onwards.[36]

The mask contains intrinsic ambiguity — on the one hand, it functions as a neutralizer of the face, directing attention to the body (in motion), on the other, in its "puppet-like" manner it directs attention to its own frozen expressiveness. In the play *The Star-Child*, the bodies of the performers, their appearance and movements are completely in the function of serving the mask. It is especially well matched with the use of grotesquely large and pronounced palms with long fingers. Those long, stiff palms, almost ossified, dominate the visual layer of the play, underscoring the key role of hands in providing for existential needs. At the same time, hanging woodenly from their bodies, they act like the roots of the trees that surround and overhang them in the fairy tale and that tie them to the space from which they had sprung.

The masks, the palms, the jute cloths in which the characters are dressed, all of these constitute a key departure from the play in relation to the original text. Namely, the highly aestheticized world filled with carefully decorated miniatures of Oscar Wilde was cleaned out by Mihatov, who then wrapped it in veils of ugliness and grotesqueness, about which Jakša Fiamengo says that "in these dolls, actual actors 'extended' to the expression of dolls, it was not possible to make out whether they were human or just sad moral stumpers of the world who only resemble some kind of anthropomorphic beings maundering around the stage, waving their hypertrophied limbs and drowning in their monstrosity."[37] This image is further underlined by Ivo Nižić's lighting, which "is no longer an accompanying decor, but [the lighting] becomes a full participant in the creation of the expressiveness of the characters and events,"[38] and, thanks to this, "the fine art from the initial chaos of the stage material transformed into pure and functional sculpturality and animation of the entire stage space."[39]

Although in the Croatian (puppet) space, the grotesque is most often built from humor and caricature, in this play it springs from Mihatov's recogniz-

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36 More in: Henryk Jurkowski, *Povijest europskoga lutkarstva: I. dio Od začetaka do kraja 19. stoljeća* (Zagreb: Međunarodni centar za usluge u kulturi, 2005), 90—104.

37 In: Seferović, *Kositreni vojnici hrvatskog lutkarstva* (Zadar: Kazalište lutaka Zadar, 2001), 50.

38 Vigato and Valčić, *Poetski putevi*, 53.

39 Vigato and Valčić, *Poetski putevi*, 53.

able poetics of the ugly, and it serves the function of gradating hopelessness, meaninglessness and undefined but omnipresent longing. This striking and provocative grotesque ugliness moves the play *The Star-Child* away from the larpurlatistic world of Oscar Wilde and the neutrality of the fairy tale into a stage text deformed by the weight of the reality context.

Music Paradoxes

While the visual layer underlines the hopelessness and the post-apocalyptic atmosphere, the wistful music of Ivo Nižić (who shares both the name and surname with the light designer) "which partly emerges from local folk old-church and similar workshops […] offering pungency and warmth, tearing the atmosphere and the blessing the respite and the morbidity of the world in which we are immersed up to our necks, whether we like it or not."[40] Therefore, the music is not created in agreement and harmony with visual aspects, but in dialogue, perhaps even in conflict with them, which indicates its own dramaturgical independence and stands as a sort of defense of the staged fairy tale against the darkness of gray that is encroaching on the visual plane.

At the same time, in the songs at the beginning of the play, the amount of words and the singers' incomprehensibility silence the content layer, placing emphasis on the rhythm and atmosphere of the play. In those moments, the play points to the unreliability of the verbal layer as a transmitter and bearer of the layer of meaning, which creates an interesting conflict with the part of the verbal layer that confirms the meaning of the visual layer.

Auditivity is not only present in the play through music, but also through sounds. Thus, the already mentioned sound of cold and unpleasant wind opens the play and penetrates it in several places, harmonizing with the text, but also with the visual layer, inscribing into itself the burden of circumstances and the world in which the characters find themselves.

It is precisely with the sound elements that the director and the author of the music provide perhaps the most information about the time frame — from the period of the year (winter) to the historical context (old church overtones), which is an interesting decision in terms of performance, since music, that is, sound, is the most abstract form of art and thus we reach a peculiar paradox of (sound) abstraction suggesting (time) concretion. With this move as well,

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40 In: Seferović, *Kositreni vojnici hrvatskog lutkarstva*, 50.

Dundov seems to be dancing between abstraction and concretion, not allowing any element to fully dominate. With this dance on the edge the play also goes a few steps deeper than its own source into the undefined and universal. In the end, the question arises of why the play strives for universality the whole time?

Influence of Adaptation on the Source

The key reason for the play's progress towards universality can be found in the context of its creation. As it was said at the beginning of the analysis, the play was created and premiered at a time when the war wounds in Zadar were still bleeding and when the final showdown was being prepared. In this clear war context, life was reduced to a basic division into good and evil, so the Zadar viewers had no need for any clarification or any additional specific facts. This universal duality does not call for any of the social and political allusions that Wilde wrote into the animal overture, while the humor, with the miniatures of which he occasionally spiced up the plot, seems meaningless here.

The specific context in which the play *The Star-Child* was created affects the source with its abstraction, exposing the additions that Wilde wrote into the fairy tale as superfluous, or, at least, not necessary, that is, as dead ends that fall under the force of the division into good and evil. After watching the play, the Christian elements, animal miniatures, specific descriptions of the exterior, and humorous passages fade from Wilde's fairy tale. And while the play peels the excess layers from the fairy tale, moving away from it and driving it in its own particular direction, the rejoining of the springs and tributaries finally takes place at a common dark point. "Yet ruled he not long, so great had been his suffering, and so bitter the fire of his testing, for after the space of three years he died. And he who came after him ruled evilly,"[41] wrote Wilde, and these are the same words with which Dundov ends the play. Wilde inscribes this gloomy and depressing end within his own temporal and spatial context and experience, removing the veil from fairy tale lands and getting closer to reality, while Dundov's end, in a way, heralds the swamp of gray that will remain after the war and that will infinitely distance the reality from any dream of a better future.

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41 Wilde, *The Selfish Giant*, 238.

Conclusion

The analysis of the relationship between the fairy tale *The Star-Child* (1891) by Oscar Wilde and the play *The Star-Child* (1995) by the Zadar Puppet Theatre, adapted and directed by Milena Dundov, shows one of the ways in which the adaptation can be faithful to the original and significantly different from it at the same time. We see the key to this disparity in the different contexts of the creation of the two works, which determined the most important departure of the play from the text — which is on the visual level. This departure ensured the play's relevance in the wartime circumstances in which it was created, but also opened the possibility of its influence on the text. Namely, no matter how much the text remains unchanged on a formal level, the reduction of the play to a basic thread wrapped in gray veils indicated that some of its parts are unnecessary.

In addition to the differences between the source and the adaptation, this analysis points to the specifics of fairy tales and puppet theater within their own media as well as their mutual links, regardless of the specifics of the media from which they come. Also, by penetrating into the dark and gloomy grotesque, it points to great possibilities, and thus the need for new, fresh and different puppet readings of great works, be they classical fairy tales or canonical works.

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Točke spajanja i razdvajanja teksta i predstave
na primjeru Wildeovog i zadarskog *Zvjezdana*

SAŽETAK | Shvaćajući adaptaciju kao dvosmjeran proces u kojemu izvorni medij i medij adaptacije međusobno djeluju jedan na drugog, u radu se analizira odnos između bajke *Zvjezdan* Oscara Wildea i lutkarske predstave *Zvjezdan* Kazališta lutaka Zadar u režiji i adaptaciji Milene Dundov. Dva djela povezuje niz zajedničkih elemenata kojima pristupaju i koje koriste na nekim mjestima slično, no češće različito. Ključ različitosti je, uz razlike u medijima, vremenski, prostorni i posebice društveni kontekst u kojemu je nastala bajka, odnosno lutkarska predstava. Rad analizira sličnosti i posebice razlike između dvaju djela te pokušava uočiti drugi dio dvosmjernog utjecaja — onaj adaptacije na izvor.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI | Zvjezdan, Oscar Wilde, Kazalište lutaka Zadar, lutkarstvo, adaptacija

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