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Yana Meerzon

Concretization–Transduction–Adaptation: On Prague School Legacy in Theatre Studies Today

In his article “Literary Transduction” Lubomír Doležel argues that the major achievement of semiotic aesthetics as formulated by the Prague Linguistic Circle is “the study of literary communication” with the focus on the processes of “continual transmission as a necessary condition of preservation” of the literary texts (DOLEŽEL 1988: 166–167). Doležel introduces the concept of “transduction” as the process that refers to the text’s transmission between media, the transmission with some necessary transformations. Doležel borrows Felix Vodička’s theory of reception, his concept of “concretization”, and Jiří Levý’s views on translation as the methodological ground to discuss transduction as the route of literary evolution based on the instances of critical reception and adaptation (DOLEŽEL 1988: 167–169).

Following Doležel’s arguments, this article outlines the fundamental postulates of Vodička and Levý’s theories. It describes Patrice Pavis’s views on theatrical *mise-en-scène* (PAVIS 1982, 1985) as an example of Vodička’s concretization and Levý’s translation in theatre. It proposes to take Vodička and Levý’s ideas further in order to analyze the processes of *intermedial* and *intra-medial adaptation* focusing on the figure of *the receiver as the reader* of the original text and his/her functions *as the adaptor and the creator* of a new text, the text of adaptation. As this article demonstrates, adaptation, one of the most popular practices in today’s theatre and film, functions as a form of concretization or transduction that can take place either within

- a singular artistic media as an *intramedial adaptation* (Doležel’s literary adaptation) – a realization of an original work within the same media and

the new artistic, linguistic and socio-cultural circumstances of the target audience, the audience of the adaptation; the practice of rewriting canonical texts or building a performance text based on the original documents and true stories. Creating an intramedial adaptation involves strategies of working with the original material, including *omission* when “structural or textual material is removed”, *addition* when “structural or textual material not in the source text is introduced in the adaptation”, *marginalization* when “thematic issues are given less prominence in the dramatization”, *expansion* when “thematic issues suggested in the source text are given more prominence in the dramatization”, and *alternation* when the “themes, textual style, narrative events, and details are modified” (HAND 2010: 17); or within

- several performative media such as an *intermedial adaptation* – a realization of an original work in the new artistic media and genre, which involves *transposition*, *commentary* and *analogue* (WAGNER 1975 222–227; MCFARLANE 1996; HUTCHEON 2006a; SANDERS 2006; CARTMELL; WHELEHAN 2010). Adapting the original material to the demands of the chosen new media and social-cultural circumstances of the new target audience, the intermedial adaptation can be seen as the activity of the directors, dramaturges and actors, i.e. the interpretation of the text within a certain *mise-en-scène* or the practices of collective creation that use literary works or the works of fine arts as the point of departure to create their own performance texts.¹

In other words, this article argues that Felix Vodička’s reception theory with a focus on the socio-historical context of the receiver allows one to recognize the significance of the receiver/adaptor’s subjectivity, his/her biographical and socio-historical context as the major determining factors of historical concretization, receiver’s critical activity, and adaptation practices today. Taking as a point of departure Jan Mukařovský’s views on *the figure of the author as a dual entity* comprised of one’s biography as it is informed and influenced by the author’s historical, social, cultural, and linguistic context (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 161–180), and Vodička’s view of the author as a literary fact “perceived as an integral structure”, a sum of literary devices and components, as well as “a dynamically organized system with a dominant tendency” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 124), this study asserts the position of the artist/adaptor as re-enforcing the subjectivity of the author creating a new literary or theatrical work. It argues that the practice of theatre adaptation asserts the

1 Marco de Marinis introduced the term “performance text” in his work *The Semiotics of Performance*. This term refers to the complex nature of a theatre performance that consists of many equally important layers of on-stage meaning forming components, such as text, acting, design, lighting, sound, audience’s active involvement in creating the action on stage and in the auditorium, and so on.

current tendencies in literature and art to move away from Roland Barthes' famous post-Structuralist postulate of the death of the author. At the turn of the millennium, adaptation, the marker of the stylistic and genre shifts, declares the return of the subject/the author-adaptor both as the object of the work of art's semantic concern as well as the focus of the scholars' aesthetic inquiry. The practice of adaptation as the process of concretization not only provides a work of art with its new artistic life, it gives the adaptor a chance to affirm his/her creative subjectivity.

Accordingly, the process of adaptation would need to shift its emphasis from an Original Text versus Adaptation Text binary (Figure 1), to a more dynamic *Original = Adaptor/Receiver Activity = Adaptation* formula (Figure 2).

Figure 1

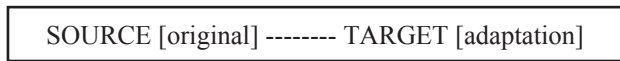
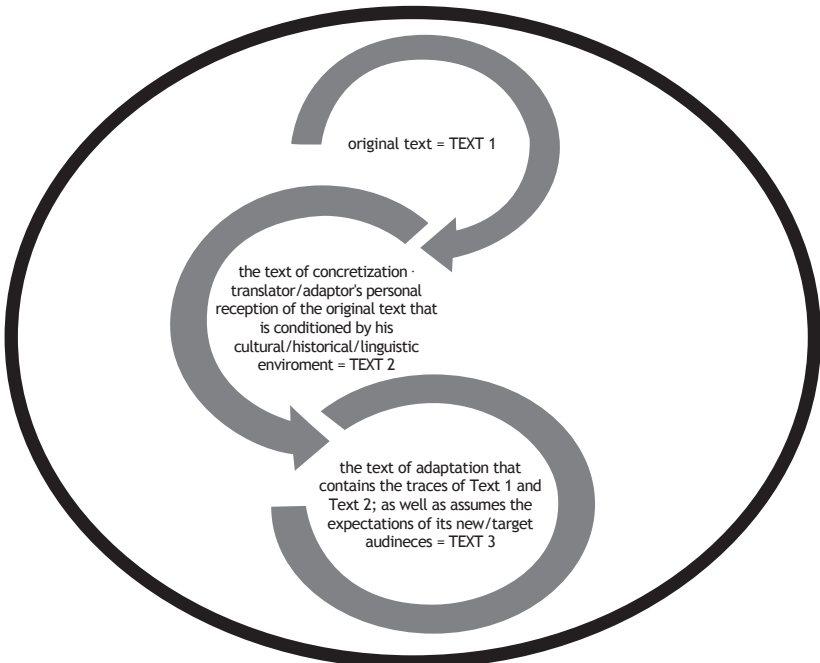


Figure 2



As the proposed scheme demonstrates, adaptation involves the receiver–adaptor in three steps of active engagement with the original:

- 1) The reader-adaptor reads the text, creating its image in his/her mind; then
- 2) the original text undergoes the process of mutation when the adaptor formulates his/her view on the text’s structure and its semantics; finally
- 3) the adaptor expresses his/her image of the original text, his/her view of the social psychological and artistic issues evoked by the text through creating a new work, adaptation, targeted now for the new socio-historical strata. This new text (an adaptation proper) enters a dialogue with the original. It is shaped on the wide scale of textual and performative transformations: varying from adaptations as calques of the original on one side of the spectrum, to adaptations only as reflections of the original on the other.

Consequently, one can argue that adaptation as a transposition of the original material from its source position into a new position is conditioned not only by the obvious formal differences between the two media or between the two historical contexts that contextualize the material’s intentions and structure, but most importantly by the subjectivity of each particular adaptor, i.e., his/her concretizing activities. As Grygar states, the work of art is equally hooked into the creative activities and experience of the author and the reader, who “consciously and subconsciously juxtaposes his own world and the world depicted in the work; only when he begins to find some points of contact with it does the work acquire higher value for him – what we commonly call ‘comprehension’” (GRYGAR 1982: 204). In this context, therefore, the discourse of (in) fidelity flourishing in adaptation studies becomes inappropriate, because it denies adaptation the status of artistic relevance and presupposes the *a-priori* dominant position of the original work over its new concretization, i.e. an adaptation proper.

Accordingly, this study proposes to re-focus the concept of concretization as the activity of the reader/mediator between the source text and its adaptation, to the functions of the receiver as the adaptor of the source text to the target text. It also wishes to discuss the questions of how and to what degree a given adaptation reveals the subjectivity of its author/adaptor as the filtrating, selecting and communicating agent of the target text; how and to what degree a given adaptation speaks to its target audience; and finally, how and to what degree a given adaptation embodies the artistic laws and aesthetic norms of a particular epoch that the adaptor chooses to engage with in his/her work.

Felix Vodička's Historical Concretization

Felix Vodička's 1941 study entitled "The Concretization of the Literary Work" serves as the foundation to the Prague Linguistic Circle's theory of reception (DOLEŽEL 1988; STRIEDTER 1989; GALAN 1982, 1984; JAUSS 1982). In his article, Vodička expands the ideas of the Polish Phenomenologist Roman Ingarden on the processes of reception or concretization. He recognizes *historical concretization* as a collective action, which designates "the reflection of a work in the consciousness of those to whom it is aesthetic object" (VODIČKA 1975: 110); and thus he "emphasizes the role of the work in its reception", as well as the changeability and the continuity of the reception (DOLEŽEL 1988: 169).

According to Vodička, a work of art can be concretized many times and in different ways, each taking place in a new historical period and social context. In the process of reception, as Vodička argues,

not only can [the work of art's, YM] schematic places be concretized, but also can the structure of the entire work if it is projected against the background of the structure of the immediate literary tradition. A work constantly changes under changing temporal, local, social and even individual conditions.

(VODIČKA 1975: 110)

Historical concretization distinguishes a work of art as an artistic sign and projects it "onto the collective systems of aesthetic norms and values understood as codes" (STRIEDTER 125); and hence for Vodička "every work becomes a potentially endless series of concretized aesthetic objects" (GALAN 1976: 465). Vodička's literary theory includes three major postulates of the Prague School methodology: "the examination of the immanent series of the literary works themselves", "the study of the works' genesis", and the readers' reception (GALAN 1982: 170). In his thinking, Vodička pays some special attention to the questions of the work's genesis and reader's reception. As Galan explains, "genetic Structuralism [...] explores above all the aesthetic norms, and only secondary the biographic or social circumstances, which facilitated or hampered the execution of literary tasks of the period" (GALAN 1982: 170). Vodička's 'old fashion-ness' appears in his tendency to bypass "the analysis of the works themselves" in order to study "the works' reception" (GALAN 1982: 170). As Galan insists, if "the study of genesis centres on the influenced work, the study of reception centres on the influencing work: the former examines the conditions for the conception and birth of the work, the latter the conditions of its afterlife" (GALAN 1982:171). In Vodička's practice, "it is a mat-

ter of shifting perspective, not of distinct approach, which indicates the kind of enterprise the critic happens to be engaged in” (GALAN 1982:171).

At the same time, in his semiotic formulation of concretization, Vodička carefully distinguishes his position from that of Ingarden. To Ingarden, a work of literature is a fixed textual entity that acquires meaning during the reader’s act of reception, which is predetermined by the reader’s own social and historical context. Ingarden recognizes the work of literature as a multilayered unity defined by four general *strata*: the stratum of sound, the stratum of meaning, “the stratum of represented objects and that of schematic aspects through which the represented objects manifest themselves”, and the stratum of “temporal extension” (GALAN 1976: 465). These four layers of formal structure create what Ingarden calls the “spots of indeterminacy” in the work of art: its ontological elements and its inner structure. More importantly, these spots reveal those informational and stylistic gaps within the literary work that surpass the author’s artistic vision and objectives. Only in the act of reading, the process of personalized reception, and only over time these spots can be filled with meaning. Hence, the “spots of indeterminacy” can be realized only through the “individual concretizations of the readers’ aesthetic experience” and thus they allow a reader to expand the meaning of the work beyond its inner intentionality. “As a state of potentiality, through concretizations as an aesthetic object [a work of art, YM] attains the final ‘polyphonic harmony’, its actual Gestalt” (GALAN 1976: 465). Accordingly, to Ingarden the history of literary evolution becomes the story of collective and personal concretizations of the particular works of literature. To Ingarden,

the work’s basic (intentional) scheme – comprised of the strata of sound, of meaning, of represented objects and of schematic aspects through which the represented objects manifest themselves – must be filled by means of individual concretizations in readers aesthetic experience.

(GALAN 1982: 163)

Taking Ingarden’s views of concretization as his point of departure, Vodička recasts his theory further, along the lines of Jan Mukařovský’s study of aesthetic norms and expectations. In his article “Intentionality and Unintentionality in Art” (1943), Mukařovský highlights the interrelationships between a work of art as an autonomous sign and its receiver. Both the actual fact of seeing a work of art and the complex of personal and collective emotions dominating the semiotic code of a particular perceiver govern the reception. Following Mukařovský, Vodička

does not [...] locate the conditions of concretization in the ontological status of the literary work, in its ‘essential’ skeleton that is brought to ‘life’ in and through the act of reading. [...] In Vodička’s view, the grounds of concretization are discovered, not in the incomplete makeup of the work of art, but in the continuous regrouping of norms against the shifting background of which the literary public responds, or fails to respond, to each literary work.

(GALAN 1982: 163)

In his reception theory, Vodička shifts Ingarden’s phenomenological discussion of the reader’s function to fill the spots of indeterminacy in the text’s inner structure to the questions of the historical evolution of literature:

Like Mukařovský, Vodička privileges structural relations rather than separate terms, the background of norms rather than the foreground of single works, the social rather than the individual character of literary facts, the dynamism and change of structure rather than its *stasis* and fixity, and, finally, the intrinsic tension rather than the stable harmony of the literary work viewed as a sign. In fact, all that Vodička’s reception history does is to move the focus of inquiry away from the immanent order of literary development toward the literary and social consciousness which contains the works of literature when they are perceived as aesthetic objects.

(GALAN 1982: 165)

Hence, Vodička maintains the dynamic nature of concretization that takes place within the social, temporal and individual circumstances of each receiver in a given period of time. The process of concretization, therefore, takes place within “1) the collective conditions for a concretization; 2) the individual act of aesthetic perception and its result, the aesthetic object; and 3) the communication of aesthetic experience within the collective” (STRIEDTER 1989: 127).

Secondly, Vodička assigns the special function to a *literary critic* in the processes of aesthetization of reception. Vodička’s critic fulfils the three major steps of concretization. In his/her inquiry about the value of a work of art, this critic functions as a reader of a particular work, an interpreter of its structures, and a conveyer of its meaning. In Vodička’s scheme, the process of reception culminates in a number of stabilized or articulated concretizations, such as critical reviews, scholarly articles, memoirs or letters. This process of critical reception as the mediation of meaning across contexts becomes crucial to “initiate the process of transduction” (DOLEŽEL 1988: 170). As Vodička explains, “the critic’s role is to establish the concretizations of literary works, incorpo-

rating them into the system of literary values” (VODIČKA 1975: 112). In this process the product of reception acquires the status of an aesthetic object and the works of the past enter into the literary reality of the receivers’ present:

A new concretization always means a regeneration of the work; the work is introduced into literature with a fresh appearance, while the fact that an old concretization is repeated (in schools, for example) and no new concretizations arise in evidence that the work has ceased to be a living part of literature.
(VODIČKA 1975: 128)

In this statement, Vodička lays down the methodological ground work to explain how the adaptation is created, and what role it plays in the development of literature or the evolution of the canon.

Doležel takes this statement further: as he writes, “texts produced in the activity of critical reception are metatexts, i.e. non-literary texts about literary texts”, they are the modes of transduction and serve as the tools for the development of critical and theoretical thought (DOLEŽEL 1988: 171). The major axis of concretization as aesthetic reception is literary transduction, i.e. a transformation of an original text into another literary text, either in the form of adaptation, mutation, re-writing, or translation (DOLEŽEL 1988: 171). In this aspect, Vodička’s critic, who produces a utilitarian meta-text of a review or a theoretical study, turns into an independent artist – an *author-adaptor* – someone who creates a new artistic or critical text, which in its themes and structure reveals the traces of the original (the product of concretization) and also discloses its own artistic patterns.

Doležel’s view of the *receiver as the active creator/adaptor* of the new target text stems from Vodička’s reception theory as well. Speaking of the subjectivity of the author as a literary and social-historical construct, Vodička’s theories shift from the “psychological taxonomies” of his early essays to the pure Structuralist views of the figure of the author in “the metonymic sense, as a unity created by the works of an author in their totality” (VODIČKA 1975: 126). As an adept of the structural aesthetics, Vodička recognizes the figure of the author separate from one’s biography and thus one’s subjectivity. This “author” is a literary category that undergoes its own concretizations of time; and thus the

individual works make up parts of [the author’s, YM] structure, which is likewise subject to different evaluations and also requires concretization. This structure, too, is influenced by the general character of the period norm

and [...] must be situated in the period context [...] Analogue to the structure of an individual work, the structure of the author is not to be apprehended as a sum of its elements but as a dynamically organized system with a dominant tendency. This organization, however, is not firmly established but comes into being through concretization.

(VODIČKA 1975: 126–127)

The artistic concretization is limited by constraints of an individual perception. It is “realized in the development of the immediate artistic tradition, where a subjective conception of the stories is emphasized in opposition to an objective one” (VODIČKA 1975: 118).

The processes of concretization, however, do not necessarily serve to explain the evolution of the form as such, they rather aid in the understanding of the evolution of the social/historical context that in its own turn conditions the appearance of a particular work of art. To Vodička,

the historian of reception must move beyond the investigation of the literary consciousness, the site of the context of literary norms, and examine the wider realm of the social consciousness as well. Here a socio-logically-oriented analysis comes to the historian’s aid.

(GALAN 1982: 164)

The adaptor, therefore, much like Vodička’s critic/receiver, functions as the reader and the interpreter of the source text as well as the creator of another one. The adaptor’s creative motions include the subtracting and contracting, extending and contracting, amplifying and trans-coding of the original texts.

Secondly, the analysis of the work of art taken within its socio-historical context liberates the critic from studying the work in the context of its author’s biography and personal influences, the theoretical proposition in line more with the Russian Formalists and French Post-Structuralists’ views on the functions of author in literature. As Vodička explains, seen at the background of a particular literary tradition and its development, every individual concretization must be analyzed for its subjectiveness and objectiveness to the particular period elements:

All the possible concretizations of an individual reader cannot become the goal of understanding, but only those that reflect the encounters between the structure of the work and the structure of the literary norms of a period. [...] the continual conformation between the work and the actual to reconstructed values of the literary norm gives rise to that analytical process in which

some individual components are esthetically deautomatized, others are perceived as ineffectual, and others completely oppose the norm. (VODIČKA 1975: 118)

In his other article “The Individual and Literary Development”, written in 1943–45 and published in 1966, Jan Mukařovský views the unique position of the artist in the dialectical dichotomy of a concrete individual and as a “reflection of the structure of [his/her] work on the perceiver’s mind”, something that becomes valuable for literary analysis when this shadow is contextualized by the artistic expectations of a particular time period as well as when it is positioned in “confrontation with the artist’s actual psychophysical personality” (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 164). Mukařovský ‘corrects’ Vodička’s view of concretization by introducing two inseparable constants of the process of perception: the idea of the aesthetic norm as a flexible and ever-changing criterion of literary evolution and thus literary perception, and the given anthropological constant of a particular individual acting as a receiver of the work of art. Mukařovský locates the second constant of perception within

man’s physical and also partly mental constitution which stays the same in different social milieux at different times. [...] Such necessary anthropological preconditions are, for the temporal arts, the regularity of rhythm, which is, according to Mukařovský, founded upon the periodicity of blood circulation and of breathing, and, for spatial arts, the constituents of symmetry such as the right angle, the vertical and the horizontal, which arise from the upright position of the human body. (GALAN 1982: 177)

In his search for the universal mechanisms of human reception, Mukařovský, much like Vodička, occupies the space between Formalist and post-Structuralist thinking. In his view, the task of the “axiological universalism is to determine, not the qualities demanded by the evolutionary momentum of the given art, but the qualities which transcend that momentum, those features which permit the work to exert its influence long after it played out its ‘evolutionary’ role” (GALAN 1982: 179). The position of the author seeking the perfection of his/her expression identifies the work of art’s intention and allows the work to “resonate across cultures and centuries” (GALAN 1982: 180). As Mukařovský explains, the author’s figure consists of two aspects as “the personality that asserts itself in a specific work and the actual personality” of the artist (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 165).

The last 50 years of theatre practice and theory illustrate how timely Mukařovský and Vodička's thinking would have been had it been available to the West. For example, the search for "theatre universals" started with the theoretical thinking of the 20th century historical Avant-Garde, and specifically with Antonin Artaud's theatre utopia, which found its echoing in Eugenio Barba's experiments with Theatre Anthropology and Peter Brooks' practices of the intercultural theatre. Today, this search for theatre universals is continued in the widely flourishing studies of cognitive mechanisms that determine one's processes of creation and perception. It is curious, therefore, that in their theory of reception as the combination of social conditions and the human/anthropological constant, both Mukařovský and Vodička recognized "personality [as] the point of intersection on which converge all the external influences that can affect literature, and, simultaneously, the point of departure from which they penetrate literary evolution" (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 229). To Mukařovský specifically "the sole outside factor affecting literature directly is the individual person, for all the series of culture and society can enter into contact with literature, and with each other, only through the mediation of the individual" (GALAN 1984: 191). As he would further write, "the history of literature is a struggle between the inertia of the literary structure and the forcible impingements of personalities, while the history of poetic personality, the poet's biography, amounts to the artist's struggle with the inertia of the literary structure" (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1977: 233). The successful artists of the epoch will "discern the direction of artistic development but deflect and bend it to suit their needs" (GALAN 1984: 192).

Vodička's desire to remove the subjectivity of the critic as a psychophysical biographical construct, the product of his/her historical time period, from the processes of concretization indicates his own theoretical position within the evolution of the 20th century theoretical thought. In his definition of the *author* as the metonymical entity and as a set of literary devices, Vodička prepares Roland Barthes' view of a literary text as "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" and his undertaking of the *author's functions* "to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them" (BARTHES 1977: 146).

In his post-Structuralist revolt against *the subjectivity of the Author*, Barthes liberates the text from the implied intentionality and allows the receiver a chance for free interpretation.² As he writes, "once the author is removed,

2 According to Roland Barthes, "the removal of the Author [...] is not merely an historical fact or an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text. [...] The temporality is different. The author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a before and an after. [...] the modern scripiter is born simultaneously with the

the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (BARTHES 1977: 147). In his view of the reader as the only maker of the text’s meaning, Barthes echoes Vodička’s theory of concretization. As he further suggests,

a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not [...] the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.
(BARTHES 1977: 148)

Barthes’s reader, in other words, functions as Vodička’s receiver/critic. He/she presents a floating entity, which “cannot any longer be personal” (BARTHES 1977: 148). This reader is “without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted” (BARTHES 1977: 148).

Jiří Levý on Translation as Concretization

A representative of the next generation of the Prague School thinkers, the historian of literature and the theoretician of translation, Jiří Levý engages in dialogue with Felix Vodička’s theory of concretization in order to theorize his own views on the mechanisms of translation. Similarly to Vodička, in his 1963 article “The Translation of Verbal Art” Levý proposes to take the concept of concretization as the active involvement of the receiver-translator in the act of reading and interpretation of the original. Although he opts to

operate with a more limited definition of the concept of actualization than Vodička, who conceives of it in much broader terms encompassing such diverse phenomena as theatrical staging (“in dramatic texts staging means actualization”), or critical evaluation, or translation (“the problem of translation is basically the actualization of a work in the context of another language and another literary tradition”);
(LEVÝ 1977: 222)

text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written here and now” (BARTHES 1977: 145).

Levý goes a step further when he proposes to recognize the independent role of a receiver as a creator of his/her concretization, i.e. the new text in translation. Levý's model of translation articulates the active position of the translator as a receiver of the source text and as a creator/mediator of the target text. In his model, Levý points out three participants [Figure 3]: the author, the translator and the new foreign receiver.

In this model,

Figure 3

Sender 1(Author) – (TO/Original Text) – Receiver 1/Sender 2 (Translator) – (TT/Translation)
– Receiver 2 ('Foreign' Reader)

the author produce[s] the original text (TO), the translator acts as its receiver, and then he, in turn, becomes the sender of the target text (translation) (TT) sent to potential receivers reading in a language different from that of author. The target text is both equivalent to, and different from, the original text.

(DOLEŽEL 1990: 172)

In addition, Levý underlines the importance of the primary activity of a translator as a receiver of the original and as a translator/adaptor of it to the needs of the text's new linguistic, historical and cultural environment or *the horizons of aesthetic expectations* of its new audiences. His schema of translation is based on "the relationship among three main components: the objective text of the work and its dual actualization by the reader of the original and the reader of the translation" (LEVÝ 1977: 226). This new text (translation), according to Levý, originates at the intersection of several cultural, historical, economic and linguistic contexts that contextualize the original text and its audiences and the new text and its own new audiences. As he writes,

the translator is first of all a reader. The text of a work functions aesthetically and is socially realized only when it is read. The work comes into the hands of the reader and the translator in the form of a text, and during the process of perception it functions as objective material that is transformed through the individuality of the perceiver–reader. This moment in the process is defined as the reader's actualization (or concretization).

(LEVÝ 1977: 221)

Hence, Levý emphasizes the subjectivity of the receiver/translator, i.e. his/her individual political, historical, cultural and artistic context in the process of concretization. As he states,

the process of [the reader's, YM] perception culminates with the actualization of the text, that is, with the formation of an image of it in the mind of the reader. The difference between the plain reader and the translator lies in the fact that the translator expresses his conception through language. He goes one step further to a linguistic materialization of the semantic values of the work.

(LEVÝ 1977: 223)

Levý's translator provides his/her personal view of the original work of art in his/her own new text (translation). This new text is now conditioned by this receiver/translator/author's own historical, cultural and linguistic position.

Speaking of the original text's openness for translation, Levý insists that "there are some literary works stylistically organized more 'nationally' than others, whose stylistic physiognomy is more 'international'" (LEVÝ 1977: 224). He cites the 19th century Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinskij, who stated once that "Krylov's fables are untranslatable, and for the foreigner to appreciate fully the genius of our great fableist, he would have to learn Russian and live for a time in Russia to become acquainted with the Russian way of life" (BELINSKIJ in LEVÝ 1977: 224). On the other hand, Belinskij argues that the texts of Nikolaj Gogol would be much more open for the foreign reader: "[A]s a painter predominantly of everyday life, of prosaic reality, the national peculiarity of [Gogol's, YM] literary context would be the very thing that would most fascinate the foreign reader" (BELINSKIJ in LEVÝ 1977: 225). Belinskij did not live to see Anton Chekhov's work come to the fore; but following his logic it becomes clear why Chekhov's plays and short stories have enjoyed such a rich history of translation and adaptation across the globe. It is not surprising that Chekhov's plays rooted in the everyday life of Russian provinces and focused on an ordinary man's need to be heard provided, to use Levý's expression, enough 'international' points of reference and thus became almost the compulsory check point for many 20th century playwrights to measure their own dramaturgical skills.

However, in his study of the translation methodologies, Levý does not discuss the processes of the text transfer as it is practiced by the receiver/translator. His focus remains not the figure of the translator but the text of translation, *the process of transduction* itself, which is not completed until it reaches its target audience, the reader of the translation. As Levý states, "the proc-

ess of translation does not culminate in the translated text [...]. The translation, like the original work, acquires a social function only when it is read. [...] The reader of the translated work formulates the third conception of the work” (LEVÝ 1977: 225). In other words, Levý closely follows Vodička when he views the process of translation as the mediation of several socio-historical and linguistic contexts. As he writes,

the translator’s point of departure should not be the text of the original but rather the ideational and aesthetic values contained therein. His goal should not be the translated text but rather the specific content that the text transmits to the reader. This means that the translator must take into account the reader to whom he is translating.
(LEVÝ 1977: 225)

Accordingly, the subjectivity and the creative impulse of Levý’s translator are limited by the utilitarian functions of the translation. Seen as a device of transfer, the objective of translation, as formulated by Levý, is to simply move the original work of literature across cultures and historical periods. At the end of his article, Levý goes a step further and thus, usefully for theatre practice and studies, proposes to expand his theory of translation as an artistic mode of concretization beyond literature and to consider theatrical performance, for example, as a mode of concretization or translation. By analogy with translation as “a realization of a work in a new language; and a critical evaluation as an interpretation”, Levý recognizes theatrical event as a form of “the realization of a dramatic text through the medium of the theatre” (LEVÝ 1977: 222). Levý’s ideas on translation found their echoing in the works of French theatre semioticians, namely in Patrice Pavis’s study of *mise-en-scène* as a mode of theatre translation.

Patrice Pavis’s *Mise-en-scène* as Concretization and Translation

In his 1983 study “Production et réception au théâtre: la concrétisation du texte dramatique et spectaculaire”, Patrice Pavis employs the concept of concretization to define theatrical event as a communicative model that relies upon numerous transformations of the dramatic text. Similarly to Vodička and Levý’s views of concretization as a three-step process leading to creating a new text, i.e. translation proper, Pavis renders theatrical *mise-en-scène* as the three-step process of concretization. In his thinking, Pavis assumes the “position of the spectator facing the stage”, so he can examine the mechanisms of concretiza-

tion that make the spectator's "effort to constitute meaning by his act of reception" (PAVIS 1982: 70).

However, Pavis reminds his reader that unlike literary concretization theatre staging takes the form of multiple inter-semiotic transpositions. As he explains, "this characterization [a theatrical *mise-en-scène*, YM] is the act of reading [the act of multiple transpositions of the text on stage, YM] through gesture, as illustrated by bodies and voices; a scenic enunciation of the text's reading and of the preparatory dramaturgical analysis" (PAVIS 1985: 254).³ In theatre, therefore, the spectator is invited to engage with the dramatic text through the prism of the perspective of reception intended by the playwright or the play's internal perspective – its intentionality (PAVIS 1982: 84); and via a number of on-stage concretizations: such as "the reading of the script – by a single reader; the scenic transposition made manifest by the *mise-en-scène*; and the link between this reading and its scenic enunciation" (PAVIS 1985: 254). The *mise-en-scène* itself constitutes the primary concretization of a dramatic text produced by a theatre director and his/her team. This particular process of on-stage concretization belongs to the level of *scenic enunciation*, i.e. acting. The actor's presentation or concretization of his ideal image of the character in the realm of his/her stage performance takes place within the actor's own psycho-physical peculiarities. The actor's consciousness is filled with thousands of free-floating images, one of which should be studied precisely. In semiotic terms, this world of images becomes the actor's initial concretization of a literary figure. It is the invaluable source with which an actor constantly consults while preparing a part and presenting it on stage.

Stage figure, a single element of the tripartite structure of an acting sign – actor/stage figure/dramatic character – functions as the actor's subsequent concretization of a literary figure within the realm of his/her body and the space of the stage (VELTRUSKÝ 1976). In the tripartite structure of an acting sign (actor/stage figure/dramatic character), the actor signifies the "I" of an actor; the stage figure signifies the function of an actor as both an originator of the action and its product; and the dramatic character signifies "the vehicle that generates the aesthetic object as a dynamic image in the minds of the perceiving audience" (QUINN 1989: 76). In theatre, therefore, the actor takes on the function of a translator creating a new text or a stage figure, which in turn carries on the functions of a translation. In order to become a work of art, to fulfil and perform an aesthetic function, the actor's stage figure must be completed by the audience's processes of concretization. The reception/interpretation of a theatrical text depends on the spectator who brings his/her collective and individ-

3 Translations of the French original text into English are mine.

ual expectations to the performance hall. The critic provides the third type of concretization: the review, a verbal rendering of the *mise-en-scène* functions as the inadequate equivalent of a theatrical production (PAVIS 1985: 249–250). As Pavis puts it, the processes of “reception can be only understood if we take into account two historicities [...]: that of the work within its literary and social context, and that of a receiver in his own time, and within the system of ideological and aesthetic expectations” (PAVIS 1982: 72). Defined by the ambiguity of theatrical relationships that embraces the activity of the dramatic author/dramatic text as the sender of the original text, the activities of a producing team (including director and actors who create a theatre performance) as a translator of the dramatic text, and the activity of a spectator who acts as a foreign receiver; theatre reception is similar to that of reading text. The spectator’s activity is similar to that of the reader, who is engaged in deciphering a given text by “staking out his choices of signification” (PAVIS 1982: 79). The reader/spectator is “called upon to recognize an order, to make a choice between interpretations, to write a ‘text within the text’, to play off the latent meanings” (PAVIS 1982: 79).

Hence, following Roman Ingarden’s phenomenological view on potentials of the individualized concretization of the work of art as the process of filling up its structural and semantic gaps, Pavis renders the processes of concretization in theatre as predetermined by the structural and stylistic intentionality of the dramatic text and its *mis-en-scène*. “The reading is more or less delivered up by the work itself, [...] it cannot be totally invented by the reader”; the reading inscribed within the text may consist of a number of elements such as

- 1) a system constructed via criticism; 2) a self-reflective image of the work in the work itself; 3) a literary manner of marking the work with one’s own ‘signature’ within the production; 4) an image of the receiver of the work and of his mode of reception, a ‘guiding’ of the reception.
- (PAVIS 1982: 79–80)

Speaking of the particular mechanisms characterizing reception processes in theatre, Pavis reminds his reader that “the iconization (*mise en vue*) of the word” on stage is fundamental to theatrical concretization. On stage, the text is immanently “revealed in all its fragility, constantly menaced as it is by gestuality which might at any time interrupt its emission, and which always guides the spectator in the rhythm of his reception” (PAVIS 1982: 80).

In his 1992 study “Toward Specifying Theatre Translation”, Pavis invites further discussion of theatrical concretization as an active element of *mise-en-scène* in translation. He sees concretization of a foreign text in theatre as “a

hermeneutic act” that opens up to the receiver, who must adopt a much more active position toward the performance. In theatre, the text in translation must be interrogated from the position of “the final situation of reception”, so the translator should take into consideration the point of view of the target language and target audience (PAVIS 1992: 138). This hermeneutic act of translation as interpretation of the source text presupposes a number of concretizations that include textual concretizations, dramaturgical concretizations, stage concretizations, and finally the concretization of the perceiving audience. As Pavis states, “it would not be an exaggeration to say that the translation is simultaneously a dramaturgical analysis [...], a *mise-en-scène* and a message to the audience, each unaware of the others” (PAVIS 1992: 142). Focusing on the figure of the translator and the processes of concretization involved in the translator’s work, Pavis explains that the translator acts from

the position of a reader and a dramaturge (in the technical sense): he makes choices from among the potential and possible indications in the text-to-be-translated. The translator is a dramaturge who must first of all effect a macrotextual translation that is a dramaturgical analysis of the fiction conveyed by the text.

(PAVIS 1992: 139)

The dramaturgical reading of the source text involves comprehending its fundamental structures, including the development of plot and spatial/temporal conditions provided by the original play. The process also relies on making a foreign text visible and audible in the new language, i.e. “available for concretization on stage and by the audience” (PAVIS 1992: 141).

Moreover, as Pavis writes, the dramaturgical/translator’s concretization of the text serves as the feeding ground to the director. It functions as “necessarily an adaptation and a commentary. The translator-as-dramaturge must provide in the text [and so on stage, YM] an array of information that the original audience needs to understand situation or character”. Every theatrical translation, in the end, must be “clearly and immediately understood by the audience”, it must be “adapted and fitted to our present situation” (PAVIS 1992: 141). Hence, to Pavis much as to Levý, the creativity of the translator in theatre is limited by the same utilitarian functions of the creativity of the receiver/translator of a literary text. His focus remains the series of concretizations that define the journey of the dramatic text across cultures, languages, and semiotic systems, from page to stage [Figure 4].

Figure 4 (PAVIS 1992: 134)

T0 → T1 → T2 → T3 → T4

T0 – original text of source culture	T1 – textual concretization, translation	T2 – dramaturgical concretization	T3 – stage concretization, <i>mise-en-scène</i>	T4 – receptive concretization of the target culture, the critics’ reviews
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In this scheme,

[t]he original text (T0) is the result of the author’s choices and formulations. [...] the text of the written translation depended [...] on the initial, virtual situation of enunciation of T0, as well as on the future audience who will receive the text in T3 and T4. This text T1 of the translation constitutes an initial concretization. [...] The dramaturgical analysis and stage T2 of the translation process must incorporate a coherent reading of the plot as well as the spatiotemporal indications contained in the text, the transfer of stage director, whether by way of linguistic translation or by representing them through the *mise-en-scène*’s extra-linguistic elements. [...] the dramaturgical text can thus be read in the transition of T0. A dramaturge can also act as interpreter for translator and director (in T2) and can thus prepare the ground for a future *mise-en-scène* by systemizing dramaturgical choices. [...] The following step – T3 – is on stage testing of the text that was translated initially in T1 and T2: concretization by stage enunciation. This time the situation of enunciation is finally realized: it is formed by the audience in the target culture.

(PAVIS 1992: 134–136)

The major participant of this scheme is the audience member, who acts as the “recipient concretization or enunciation”; “this source has always to be rediscovered and reconstituted anew” (PAVIS 1992: 136). In other words, the process of concretization as theorized by Vodička leads to the theory of translation as described by Levý and initiates the theory of theatrical *mise-en-scène* as seen by Pavis. It becomes the act of translation, which “includes with the recipient concretization” and

stresses the importance of the target conditions of the translated utterance, which are specific in the case of the theatre audience who must hear the text and understand what has led the translator to make certain choices, to im-

agine a particular ‘horizon of expectations’ (Jauss) on the audience’s part, while counting on their hermeneutic and narrative competence.
(PAVIS 1992: 142)

Finally, in his view of translation in theatre as a mode of concretization, Pavis approximates Gérard Genette’s theory of “transtextuality” built on Bakhtin’s principles of “dialogicity” and Kristeva’s “intertextuality”.⁴ In his 1982 study *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*, Genette defines transtextuality as the dialogic and thus nurturing presence of two or more texts within the frame of the new one that relate to each other on the principles of “quotation, plagiarism and allusion” (STAM 2000: 65), and so operate in some possible modes of intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, architextuality and hypertextuality. Widely used as the analytic tool to study adaptation, Genette’s transtextuality functions as a primary device and outcome of adaptation proper. It invites seeing adaptation as a hypotext, something that is caught up “in the ongoing whirl of intertextual references and transformation of the texts generating other texts in the endless process of recycling, transformation and transmutation, with no clear point of origin” (STAM 2000: 66).

Adaptation as Concretization, Translation and Transduction

The pleasure of adaptation, as Lubomír Doležel states and as this study argues, rests with the author/adaptor’s creative utterance. This utterance originates in the dynamics of transduction (or concretization), it

underlies such complex phenomena as literary tradition, intertextuality, influence, intercultural transference [...] Transducing activities include incorporation of a literary text [...] into another text, transformation from one genre into another [...], translation into foreign languages, literary criticism, theory and history, literary education. [...] Text transforms ranging from quotation or metatheoretical are produced in the diverse channels of transduction.

(DOLEŽEL 1988: 168)

Transduction allows one to re-think the subjectivity of the artist/adaptor and focus on the adapted text as the expression of the adaptor/author’s historical, social, cultural and biographical persona. In a way, this approach allows for the

4 Cf. Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Problemy poëтики Dostoevskogo* (Moskva: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1979) and Julia Kristeva’s *Sēmiōtikē. Recherches sur une sémanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, coll. “Tel Quel”, 1969).

re-launching of the positivist methodology of literary criticism with its focus on the author's artistic intention as postulated by his/her biographical context. Still as Doležel demonstrates, Vodička's theory of concretization helps to understand the mechanisms of *literary adaptation* that unfold within several target-points: such as the original text read or concretized by its first readers, the text's second concretization done by the adaptor (subjective interpretation), the text's third concretization produced by the target-reader, the consumer of the adaptation proper (DOLEŽEL 1988: 171).

Like translation, adaptation involves an in-depth analysis of the text. Unlike translation, however, adaptation is not necessarily created from the perspective of the target audience; it is created from the personal position of the artist/adaptor and serves this artist as a creative vehicle. Adaptation is free from the responsibility to meet the collective aesthetic expectations/horizons of expectations of the target audience. It is produced to reveal the personal and artistic concerns of the adaptor. Moreover, adaptation as a type of artistic concretization is not necessarily marked by the need to "fit our present situation", it serves the author/adaptor his/her stylistic and ideological intentions (STAM 2000: 73–75), whether this adaptation keeps textual fidelity to the original, and whether it satisfies the collective norms and expectations of the target audience. Such adaptation follows Levý's model of translation with a focus on the translator, whose position is not necessarily influenced "solely by the external cultural milieu, but also by his own personal biases" (LEVÝ 1977: 223). It adds the figure of the adaptor as the filtrating, selecting and communicating agent of the new text of adaptation, thus making Levý's schema of translation as "the relationship among three main components: the objective text of the work and its dual actualization by the reader of the original and the reader of the translation" more complex (LEVÝ 1977: 226). This model presupposes the function of adaptor not as the "closing of the text gesture", but as the mechanism that allows a better understanding of the text's inner structure, its political and social functions, as well as its ideological intertextuality motivated by the particular context of this text's making. As Galan observes, the Prague Linguistic theory of reception "suggests that [the translator–adaptor's] critical readings, too, are individual concretizations to be discarded by the next generation of readers upholding a new set of literary norms" (GALAN 1982: 167). The work of French post-Structuralists, including the writings of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, proves this point. By discarding the value of the author – as a biographical construct or as a literary entity consisting of the set of literary devices – French theoreticians went beyond Vodička's findings on concretization. For example, Michel Foucault in his 1969 article "What is an Author?" formulated his generation's frustration with the tradi-

tion of literary studies to directly connect the subjectivity of the author with the semantic and stylistic preoccupations found in his/her works. In order to avoid such questions of inquiry as “who is the real author?”, “have we proof of his authenticity and originality?” and “what has he revealed of his most profound self in his language?” (FOUCAULT 1977: 138), Foucault, similarly to Vodička, proposed to differentiate between the biographical I of the author and his presence in the text as “a function of discourse” (FOUCAULT 1977: 124), an object of appropriation, anonymous entity, “a complex operation whose purpose it to construct the rational entity” (FOUCAULT 1977: 127), and “a particular source of expression” (FOUCAULT 1977: 128). The text itself, as Foucault suggests, should be now studied in its evolving historical context, “not only [as] the expressive value and formal transformation of discourse, but [as] its mode of existence: the modifications and variations, within any culture, of modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation” (FOUCAULT 1977: 137); all of which would constitute the process of adaptation as concretization and transduction. In his dual perspective on the figure of the author, however, Foucault takes a less radical stand to that of Barthes’, asking not to fully dismiss the individuality from the critical discourse but rather to reconsider the author’s significance, the subject, in the text. “We should ask,” Foucault writes, “under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the subject appear in the order of discourse; what position does it occupy; what functions does it exhibit; and what rules does it follow in each type of discourse?” (FOUCAULT 1977: 137–138). Foucault ends his article with a typical post-Structuralist twist, asking “what matters who’s speaking” at all (FOUCAULT 1977: 138).

Two generations later, at the turn of the millennium, one can observe the return of the author/adaptor’s subjectivity as a biographic individual and as manifested in the dramatic and performative texts set of this author’s individual stylistic devices as well as his/her social and political concerns. The practices of adaptation, theatre of verbatim, and the return of history (historical evidence, facts, and actual figures) in theatre testify to the cyclicity of literary evolution and prove the relevance of Vodička’s views on concretization as the process of historical reception, no matter which generation of critics, artists, translators or adaptors are involved in making literary and theatre history. The model itself changes together with the shifting priorities in the aesthetic focus of a particular historical period, and thus the study of reception mechanisms is often bound to become the gesture of mapping out and recording the changes in the literary tastes and aesthetic norms of the perceiving public (GALAN 1982: 168). Hence, Galan insists on Vodička’s false premise to remove the subjectivity of the critic from the process of evaluation: “A historian or a crit-

ic cannot just collect, collate and classify facts from literary history or from the history of literary theory; willy-nilly, he must select, evaluate, in short, interpret them” (GALAN 1982: 169). Vodička’s desire to remove the subjectivity of the critic, as a psychophysical biographical construct, the product of his/her historical time period, from the processes of concretization simply indicates his own historical position in the evolution of theoretical thought, the position between Russian Formalists and French post-Structuralists.

In her definition of adaptation, Linda Hutcheon, the Canadian theoretician of literature studies, approximates Vodička’s view of concretization when she argues that “the phenomenon of adaptation *as* adaptation” is based on one’s “desire to retell (intentionality) and the pleasure of the retelling (audience response)” (HUTCHEON 2006b: 160). Adaptation as a dynamic process similarly to biological evolution emphasizes the processes of “homology as a similarity in structure [...] indicative of [the source text and its adaptation] common origin”, the figures of replication.

Stories, in a manner parallel to genes, replicate. The adaptations of both evolve with changing environments. The story of a gypsy named Carmen changed when it moved from Mérimée’s nineteenth-century France to Joseph Gai Ramaka’s twenty-first-century Senegal, but the story remained both visible and understandable in its new context.
(HUTCHEON 2006b: 160)

In her argument Hutcheon follows Genette and differentiates between form and mode, as she quotes Mary Ryan’s work on intermedial narratology, stating that in the world of the increased intermedial communication, one needs “to learn to think through or with the new medium, not just use it” (HUTCHEON 2006b: 161). What remains missing from the discourse is the methodology of this thinking that involves the intermedial and intramedial transformations, i.e. the work of the adaptor. Hutcheon introduces the subjectivity of the adaptor’s position. To Hutcheon *the adaptor-author’s subjectivity* stems from the “reader response theory and spectatorship theory [that] have taught us that readers and audiences are never passive receivers but are in their own right co-creators of works” (HUTCHEON 2006b: 164). Thus, adaptation is a logical outcome of the postmodern paradigm; and it presupposes Barthes/Focault’s death of the author.⁵

5 In the context of contemporary re-writes of the dramatic canon (the work of Howard Barker, Mark Ravenhill, Patrick Marber, Jason Sherman, Janusz Glowasky, Václav Havel, Derek Walcott or Sarah Kane, to name a few), the nostalgia for grand narrative indicates not only the age of postmodern *simulacra*, it also marks the search for more refined techniques of theatrical mimicry, which forces

Adaptations are “re-mediations” or rather

translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images). This is translation but in a very specific sense: as transmutation or transcoding, that is, as necessarily a recoding into a new set of conventions as well as signs. (HUTCHEON 2006a: 16)

In theatre and performance studies, this process of refocusing adaptation has recently begun with the theatre practitioners and theatre scholars shifting their analytical gazes from the figure of *a theatre director* as an *auteur* of a theatrical performance to the figure of *a dramaturge* as a facilitator of the performance’s semantic canvas, be the mode of performative expression predominantly verbal or not. For example, the American dramaturge and theatre director Susan Jonas speaks of “reactive or subversive adaptation strategies, such as: re-contextualization, interpolation, interruption, transposition, simultaneity, reversing gender and sexual preference” she employs in order to

create production texts that are dramaturgical dialogues with source material. In brief, by using the canon as a point of reference or a point of departure, we can consider where we came from, where we are now, and how we got there. I do not rewrite plays to obscure history, but to observe and criticize it.

(JONAS 1997: 245)

Jonas describes the process of adaptation as the ensemble work, when the company is called to create together a new performance text using a canonical dramatic work as their point of departure. The company is led by the dramaturge-director who occupies the position of Vodička’s literary/cultural historian and reviewer. This dramaturge supplies the historical information about the work and its context, asking the company to investigate the actors’ relationships with the given historical text and explore the potentials of the new dramaturgy, a combination of the original motives and the company’s new approach to it. As Jonas explains, her own creative process of adaptation/concretization is based on her personal political position and active role as “a facilitator, organizer, mentor, editor, and most significantly, as the maker of milieu, responsible for creating an environment in which each participant is excited to explore issues personally and politically” (JONAS 1997: 246).

contemporary writers to seek dialogue with the past, specifically with the tradition of realistic theatre.

Furthermore, in his pedagogical exploration of teaching adaptation techniques in the classroom, Richard Berger suggests that adaptation must be recognized as a form and a process of reception (BERGER 2010: 33). Berger indicates two steps of interpretation and reflection, which he uses in the classroom when teaching adaptation as a practical seminar (BERGER 2010: 34–38). The first step involves students' response to what they think the chosen work is about, its themes. "This phenomenological approach allows the students to problematize the whole notion of a fixed 'source' text" (BERGER 2010: 34). The second step involves the students' analytical engagement with their own adaptations and those of their peers. The students are asked to reflect upon the adaptation theory and methodologies in application to their work and also to categorize the new products within the classification of adaptation, such as faithful/fidelity adaptation (transposition from one media, i.e. literature, to another, i.e. drama, film, or performance); adaptation as commentary; adaptation as analogue; adaptation as intertextuality; adaptation as *heteroglossia*; and adaptation as participatory (BERGER 2010: 39–43). As it becomes clear, however, even those theoreticians and pedagogues of adaptation, as Berger, who acknowledge the importance of the personal input of the adaptor–receiver, end up in their own artistic or teaching practices to focus on the comparative practices between the source and the target text, not on the mechanisms of adaptation as such, nor on the automatism of the figure of the receiver/adaptor/artist.

In conclusion, it is important to indicate that at the turn of the millennium, the subjectivity of the author both in his/her biographical, semantic and stylistic presence is returned. The practices of intermedial and intramedial adaptation, theatre of verbatim, and the return of history (historical evidence, facts, and actual figures) on stage testify to the cyclicity of the evolution in theatre aesthetics and prove the relevance of Vodička's views on concretization as the process of historical reception. This historical reception becomes the basis of such important theatrical activities as translation, transduction and adaptation of the original material to the new performative context. Moreover, the position of an adaptor as an independent artist that proposes in his/her adaptation an artistic concretization of the source text through the means of personal interpretation and the creative act identify the particulars of today's adaptation with its focus on the subjectivity of the adaptor and his/her creative process of making a new artistic product. Hence, adaptation can be defined not as "a derivative" form of individual expression, but as "the reflection of some external reality" (GRYGAR 1982: 200). As a particular creative act, a form of art, adaptation

originates in the process of self-awareness, the self-creation of man as a social being as well as an individual who forms his relations to the external world [...]. Even though in some cultural periods the artistic personality may disappear in the anonymity of the tribe or specialized group, its leading role in the origin of arts and the development of artistic consciousness is indisputable.

(GRYGAR 1982: 200)

Contesting Vodička's theory of reception, his desire to remove the subjectivity of the receiver as a psychophysical biographical construct from the act of concretization as the meaning forming activity, Grygar proposes to seek the balance and thus not to prioritize between the individual act of creation and the aesthetic norm that contextualizes this act. In the process of historical reception, or concretization, one (the receiver, the adaptor, the artist) faces the issue of creative hierarchy and thus must choose either "to side with the norm (continuity, permanence, inertia) or with the individual act (discontinuity, changeability, originality, unexpectedness)" of creation (GRYGAR 1982: 200). After all, as Galan states, "a historian or a critic cannot just collect, collate and classify facts from literary history or from the history of literary theory; [...] he must select, evaluate, [and] interpret them" (GALAN 1982: 169). Using the concept of concretization as the cognitive and creative mechanism of transformation, it is possible to discuss the instances of translation, transduction and adaptation as originating in the adaptor's habitual aesthetic and cultural discourse. Concretization used as an umbrella concept to identify the methodological issues of adaptation marks the artistic search in today's dramatic writing. The work of an artist-adaptor, who uses the means of dramatic writing as a venue to showcase his/her own personal acts of reading, interpretation and creativity, identifies adaptation in theatre today as the instance of literary and performative concretization, transduction and mutation.

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Summary

Yana Meerzon: Concretization–Translation–Adaptation. On Prague School Legacy in Theatre Studies Today

In his 1963 article “The Translation of Verbal Art”, Jiří Levý engages with the task to theorize the mechanisms of translation. Levý stresses the complex task of translator as a receiver of the original document, and as a creator of its new textual concretization (the text of a translation) in another language. Levý constructs his theory of translation in dialogue with Felix Vodička’s study “The Concretization of the Literary Work”. Similarly to Vodička, Levý proposes to take the concept of concretization as the active involvement of the perceiver–reader or the

perceiver–artist in the act of reading, interpretation and creative engagement with the original, but he opts to “operate with a more limited definition of the concept”; and thus defines a theatrical performance as “the realization of a dramatic text through the medium of the theatre; a translation as a realization of a work in a new language; and a critical evaluation as an interpretation” (LEVÝ 1963: 222). Following this analogy, I propose to define the process of adaptation – another form of concretization of the material – as a realization of an original work either within the new performative medium, intermedial adaptation, or within the same performative medium, intramedial adaptation, as a realization (actualization or concretization) of an original work within the same media and the new artistic, linguistic and socio-cultural circumstances of the target audience. This article aims to begin the process of refocusing adaptation studies from its emphasis on the binary Original Text versus Adaptation Text to more dynamic formula: original adaptor/receiver activity = Adaptation. It aspires to study the figure of the adaptor/receiver and his/her cognitive and artistic activities, as well as to re-examine the methodological and artistic mechanisms found in the adaptation as the process of concretization.