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Susan Sontag's war production of Samuel Beckett's play

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Abstract

When Susan Sontag staged *Waiting for Godot* in besieged Sarajevo in 1993, several dramaturgical changes were made to Samuel Beckett's play. Within the framework of memory studies, the thesis explores why and how the war affected the production and looks into the significance of the event as a part of the cultural resistance towards the aggressor. This has consequences on both the reading of the play and for the understanding of the role of art in times of crisis.

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1 Introduction

I was six and a half years old when the war in Bosnia started. It was on TV, everyone was talking about it, but nobody quite understood what it meant. I saw UN armored vehicles passing by our house in March 1992, and I thought UN would surely protect us if anything bad happens. But then, on the 23rd of April 1992, armed Serb paramilitaries entered our home at Ilidža, the suburbs of Sarajevo, and knocked the old wooden phone off the wall with a Kalashnikov rifle. They came back two days later. On April 25th, together with my family I was cast out and lined up in front of our house. My mother was seven months pregnant with my brother. Other neighbors were around or watching from their windows, it was embarrassing. I did not know who these people in uniforms were, except that they had guns, beards, and caps with a little flag on them. Nor was I aware of what we did wrong. I did not know then that hundreds of thousand of other people across Bosnia were also forced out of their homes, many of them brutally killed.

My father remembers 25th of April 1992 as the day when he lost his freedom, his home, his job, and his peace forever. I remember it as a day full of fear, confusion and sadness that we had to leave home, but I was much more worried about who was going to take care of the German shepherd puppy who stayed behind us. We were ordered to leave, without having any time to pack or bring anything with us, but I managed to put on my favorite jeans jacket, bring my favorite book, and my stuffed dog, which looked like Lady from Walt Disney's animated movie *Lady and the Tramp*. I understood very well that we had to leave, but I hoped we would go back home soon. I was not aware until much later that *they* were going to kill us in front of our house, and that we were saved by a Serb neighbor, a member of the military police.

After our rescue, we headed towards the besieged zone where we stayed until the end of the war, which arrived much later than anyone had hoped for. The siege of Sarajevo lasted for 1425 days – that makes it the longest military siege in the history of modern warfare; longer than the 900 days siege of Leningrad in the Second World War. The Sarajevo siege is not only known for its length, but also for the brutal atrocities: 11 541 citizens, including 1600 children, were killed, and the entire city – the capital of Bosnia – was destroyed. Serb forces

cut off utilities for 380 000 people, who were hiding, hoping and waiting for help. In that situation Susan Sontag came to stage a production of the archetypal play about waiting, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

This event received extraordinary local and international media attention, because a world renowned writer and intellectual was in the middle of the war zone in a small country in the Balkans in 1993, with the determination to stage a play – and not any play, but the one which strongly reflected the situation of the besieged citizens. What is still not completely transparent and known is that Sontag's staging of this play was far from an isolated theatre event in Sarajevo. The cultural life of the city was brewing, as incredible as it may sound, in those completely dehumanizing conditions. The citizens were not suffering passively; they worked hard on preserving their dignity. For instance, the Sarajevo String Quartet performed its hundredth wartime concert on 5 February 1994, when 66 people were killed and 199 wounded in the Markale massacre. When it comes to visual arts, 177 exhibitions were held in six galleries in the city. In the theatres, 182 performances premiered and over two thousand shows were performed and seen by more than half a million people. (Diklić 2004: 10) However, Sontag's production of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* had a special resonance with the citizens because the performance reflected their current condition.

My thesis will be a study of the production of this play and its resonance for the citizens in Sarajevo. It deals with both the aesthetic and ethical aspects of the event while going through several underlying layers: personal, political, historical, literary, linguistic, theatrical and psychological. To understand the unique impact of this production we first need to look into the diverse elements that comprise it. The complexity of the subject is presented in Chapter 2, which explains the background of the event and brings together its leading characters: Susan Sontag, the war in Bosnia, Samuel Beckett, and the play *Waiting for Godot*. Two major questions arise when putting these segments into perspective: (1) whether this production influenced the reading and interpretation of Beckett's play; and (2) what significance this production had for the citizens during the time of its staging. They will be explored through Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

Because of the personal war experience, I could relate to the sentiment and memories of the citizens revealed in my source material. Since I am a native speaker, I have had direct access to testimonies available only in Bosnian language; the same applies to the interviews

conducted with the actors from the production. However, material in English is not translated to Bosnian and vice versa.

This thesis also provides new source material. Preserving a memory from oblivion in form of a written document is an important contribution for other scholars to use in further research. The corpus of this thesis consists of textual, visual and oral material, which is presented in detail in Chapter 2.

Because of the material's heterogeneity, intertwinement of perspectives, and the main object of analysis dealing with memory and representation, this dissertation is situated within the framework of memory studies, discussed in the same chapter. Literature review closes Chapter 2 by presenting and reflecting upon the importance of essays, articles and books that are used during the course of thesis work.

The interpretation of the production is highly dependent on understanding the city, its culture and its people. Therefore, in Chapter 3, we turn to the historical overview of the capital, with the intention of creating a firm background before discussing the details of the event in question. Not only was the production situated in this sociohistorical locale, but the main metaphor that forms the base for the analysis also has its origin in how the citizens relate to and identify with their city.

With the first of the two research questions in mind, we start Chapter 4, where the phenomenon of theatre during the war is presented with special attention directed at Sontag's production of *Waiting for Godot*. To answer this question – whether this production influenced the reading and interpretation of Beckett's play – we first need to examine what the reasons for this influence might have been. Was there something uncommon about the setting of the play? Were there any changes made to the original text and the stage directions? How many people were on stage? Was the production process like any other or was there something unorthodox about it? Did the war disturb the rehearsals and the performances in any way?

The answers to the aforementioned questions help in acquiring the overall picture about the production through Chapter 4. This prepares the ground for the more specific and detailed analysis in Chapter 5. In this part of the thesis, titled "Performing the City", Sontag's

engagement, the city of Sarajevo, the circumstances of the production, the war trauma, and Beckett's text merge together, opening the possibility for a different reading of the play. At the same time, we come closer to answering the second research question – what significance this production had for the citizens during the time of its staging. We will here explore how reality is presented on stage, and whether a city could be viewed as a body. In Chapter 5 we will also consider the parallels between the characters of Beckett's play and the participants of the Bosnian war. Throughout the analysis, we should keep in mind that war was a major disruption of normality, and that the everyday trauma the citizens were experiencing had a crucial impact on how the play resonated.

In Chapter 6, we will see why and in what respect this was an important event, what it meant on multiple levels, and what it means for us today. The different issues from Chapters 2-5 are discussed to provide the answers to the central thesis questions, as well as draw the necessary conclusions about the role of literature/theatre/art in times of extreme crisis.

2 Background and Theory

2.1 The Event

As stated in the Introduction, this thesis is a study of an aesthetic event that took place within a dramatic moment in close history, namely the Bosnian war, which started in 1992 and lasted for almost four years. The event in question is a production of a famous play, *Waiting for Godot*, written by one of the most influential writers of the 20th century, the Irish playwright, novelist and theatre director, Samuel Beckett, who is also one of the key writers of the Theatre of the Absurd. The production was mediated and conducted by the noted American intellectual, author, filmmaker and political activist Susan Sontag.

Sontag travelled to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in April 1993. Her first trip to the city under the siege was to visit her son, writer David Rieff, who was reporting from the war zone, and she wanted to show support and solidarity with the Bosnian people. After witnessing the horror and absurdity of destruction during her two weeks in Sarajevo, Sontag wanted to go back to the capital, and “pitch in and do something” (Sontag 1993: 1) to help the citizens. Although she was aware that theatre work seemed like a small contribution and could not possibly relieve the suffering, directing a play was one of the things she could do. During this visit to Bosnia she had met people from the theatre field who could help Sontag realize her idea to produce a play for the citizens with the local actors.

In July 1993, Sontag returned to the besieged city to stage a production of *Waiting for Godot*. The choice of play was not accidental. In her New York Review of Books essay, “Godot comes to Sarajevo”, which she wrote in September 1993, shortly after her return home from the second trip to Bosnia, Sontag described her experience in the capital, the production process, the context and the circumstances in which the performance was staged. In the essay she stated that “Beckett’s play, written over forty years ago, seems written for and about, Sarajevo.” (Sontag 1993: 52). What is the connection that Sontag saw between Sarajevo during the war and Beckett’s play?

2.1.1 Waiting for Godot

A whole critical industry thrives around Beckett and *Waiting for Godot* – it seems to be one of those cult texts that many people have not read, but gladly quote from, knowing it is “something about waiting of that which never comes”. In this play, which is a tragicomedy in two acts, originally written in French, and then translated to English by its author, two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, endlessly wait for someone called Godot, who never arrives. However, instead of Godot, two other men arrive: the master Pozzo and his slave Lucky. One more character, A Boy, comes in to deliver a message that “Mr. Godot won’t come this evening but surely tomorrow.” (49) Even though it was written in the winter between 1947 and 1948, *Waiting for Godot* was not published until 1952, in French. It was first performed in Paris in 1953. The English version premiered in 1955 in London, followed by English publication in 1956. The play has had numerous interpretations, from philosophical and political, to religious, even homoerotic, and autobiographical.

2.1.2 Beckett

Beckett’s life could be looked upon as before and after writing *Waiting for Godot*. Sontag’s staging of *Godot*¹ in a war zone makes it necessary to look at Beckett’s interesting, but neglected war experience. From reading Deirdre Bair, the first scholar who wrote a biography of Samuel Beckett (1990), we can see that the years prior to writing his most famous piece were everything but easy and pleasant; they were filled with tension, even boring to madness at times. Three stages are of particular importance during that period: the author’s years in Paris until August 1942; the time spent in hiding in Roussillon 1942-1945, and the immediate post-war years, 1946-48.

In October 1940, Beckett became a member of the French Resistance movement. He was collecting, translating into English, and turning into microfilm the information he received; he also served as a courier for the information group called *Gloria*. In August 1942, the whole

¹ From this point on, *Waiting for Godot* and *Godot* are interchangeable. Sontag uses both when referring to the title of the play in her essay “Godot Comes to Sarajevo” (1993). This is reflected in my thesis.

operation collapsed, because one of the unit's members was an informer and betrayed them to the Germans – almost all agents were killed or got arrested in one day, only a handful managed to escape. With false papers and without money, Beckett and his wife Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil left Paris in October 1942 and started their journey to the unoccupied zone in the south of France. (Bair 1990: 336)

The little village where Beckett stayed in hiding for three years during the Second World War felt like a “prison [...] without walls”. (Bair 1990: 345) In many ways, living there was worse than the tedious and painful 700 km journey from Paris to Roussillon – it consisted of endless waiting and danger. Beckett and Suzanne first lived in a cramped, untidy hotel, then in an unheated house on the edge of the village. As Marjorie Perloff writes in her essay “In Love with Hiding”: *Samuel Beckett's War* (2005): “Bedbugs and mice were everywhere, and they (Beckett and Suzanne) had to go outdoors, not only for the privy but also for drinking water.” Apart from the endless walks and playing chess, *waiting*² became the central activity. (Perloff 2005: 7) Enemies and friends looked alike – villagers never knew who might strike or bring news. Beckett concentrated on writing as a way of preserving sanity. *Watt*, his last novel written in English, is the result of strenuous effort from this period. (Bair 1990: 346)

Waiting for Godot was written just after the end of the war. Perhaps Sontag's juxtaposition *Godot*-Sarajevo-war is not so surprising; she saw the connection between the characters waiting for Godot in the play, and Sarajevo with around 380 000 people waiting for salvation that never seems to come. Deirdre Bair also explores the connection between the three years Beckett spent in Roussillon in hiding during the Occupation, and the immediate post-war years when his creativity blossomed. *Waiting for Godot* comes from this fruitful period: it was written between October 1947 and January 1948, the period Beckett himself called “the siege in the room”. (Bair 1990: 367)

Perloff looks into the connection between Beckett's hardships during the war and writing *Waiting for Godot*. She writes that six years before Beckett's most productive period had been “an elaborate nightmare”. (Perloff 2005: 2) The word *war* itself, however, “appears nowhere in *Godot*”, Perloff notes, “but the very absence of the word has an odd way of insuring its prominence.” (2) In his essay *Trying to Understand Endgame* (1958), Theodor Adorno

² Waiting – the original title of *Waiting for Godot*. (Perloff 7)

writes: “The name of disaster can only be spoken silently” (Adorno 126), and this statement could be connected with Perloff’s noting the absence of the word ‘war’ in *Godot*, which points to its actual prominence. “[A]ll of this reveals more than would be possible if a “revealer” were partisan,” states Adorno. (126)

In the atmosphere of existentialism and the war having been too close in time to seriously reflect upon it, perhaps it is not so strange that the first wave of critics in France made no connection between the everyday life during the war and the play. Beckett was only read as “addressing man’s alienation and the human condition.” (Perloff 2005: 3) From *Godot’s* publication in 1952 until the premiere in 1954 in London, this generally held opinion about the “meaninglessness of the universe”³ had gone into Anglo-American culture as well. Hugh Kenner, literary theorist and critic, points out in *A Reader’s Guide to Samuel Beckett* (1973) that

“It is curious how readers and audiences do not think to observe the most obvious thing about the world of this play, that it resembles France occupied by the Germans, in which its author spent the war years. How much waiting must have gone on in that bleak world [...]”
(Kenner 1973: 30)

This statement can be read as parallel to Sontag’s claim that *Waiting for Godot* “seems written for and about Sarajevo” (1993: 52) – just like France was occupied by Germans, Sarajevo was surrounded by the Serb nationalist forces. Curiously, the relationship between the play and the actual situation in the city is both thematic and symbolic; the *waiting* of the protagonists is dark and endless, perhaps also humorous – those who wait must entertain themselves to make their time pass.

2.1.3 The Bosnian War

The war in Bosnia provides an important background for analyzing this specific production of Beckett’s play. The production cannot be taken out of the context of the war and the siege because it is *within*, and *for* this historical site and setting that Sontag staged the play. The

³ Eric Bentley on *Waiting for Godot* in *The New Republic*, 1956. *Samuel Beckett, The Critical Heritage*, p. 106.

Bosnian war is the greatest catastrophe in Europe since the Second World War. The Bosnian Serb forces, backed up by the Serb Yugoslav Army, targeted the Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) and Croat civilians which resulted in more than 100 000 fatalities of all ethnical backgrounds, tens of thousands of raped women, and more than 2.2 million displaced people.

In the beginning of the 1990s the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia broke apart by Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia declaring independence. The Serb nationalists were against the idea of breaking the union apart; their goal was the centralization of Yugoslavia dominated by Serbs. The Bosnian Serbs leader, Radovan Karadžić, threatened the annihilation of the Bosnian Muslims if Bosnia declared independence. After the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence from Yugoslavia in March 1992, the Serb controlled Yugoslav National Army attacked and besieged Sarajevo on April 5, 1992.

Despite of nationalistic tensions between political parties in the preceding decade, the beginning of the war came as a shock for the citizens. Bosnia was the most multicultural part of former Yugoslavia; its capital stood as a synonym for European values, religious tolerance, secularism and multi-ethnicity. The reason for the conflict was complex because of the intertwining of ethnicity with religious and national identity, but its essence was the growing Serb nationalism.

Sarajevo was besieged for 1425 days⁴, which is the longest siege of a city in the history of modern warfare. From the beginning of April 1992 until the end of February 1996, the citizens could not defend themselves; they were waiting and hoping for western help. Supplies of food were minimal and basically acquired through humanitarian aid. There was no heating, running water or electricity, and yet, under these today incomprehensible circumstances, Susan Sontag managed to direct and stage a production for the local audience. Still, what was so special about an eccentric American writer coming to a small, war-torn country in the Balkans to stage not any Beckett's play, but *Waiting for Godot*?

⁴ We get this number if we calculate the sum of the days from the beginning of the siege on April 5, 1992, until the official lifting of the siege, February 29, 1996. The Dayton Agreement, which ended the war, was signed on December 14, 1995, but the siege lasted until the end of February 1996.

2.1.4 Sontag

Susan Sontag was one of the most influential critics of her generation. She was born in 1933 in New York City, grew up in Tucson, Arizona, and finished high school in Los Angeles. At University of Chicago she studied philosophy, literature and history, and received her bachelor's degree. She continued her graduate studies at Harvard University, where she started studying literature before going into philosophy and theology. After completing her master of arts in philosophy, Sontag began doctoral research. She began and finished her literary career as a fiction writer, with the novels *The Benefactor* (1963), *Death Kit* (1967), *The Volcano Lover* (1992) and *In America* (1999). She also wrote extensively on topics such as photography, culture, illness and AIDS, communism and human rights. Sontag's greatest achievements are her works of nonfiction, starting with *Against Interpretation* (1966) and including *Styles of Radical Will* (1969), *On Photography* (1977), *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), *Where the Stress Falls* (2001), and *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003). She was a human rights activist and a veteran peace protester from the Vietnam War; Sontag visited Hanoi in 1968 and wrote about it in her essay *Trip to Hanoi* (1968). She was also the president of the American PEN Center, the international writers' organization dedicated to freedom of expression and advancement of literature, from 1987 to 1989. Her writings appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines in America and Europe, and her books were translated into thirty-two languages.

Even though Sontag also wrote and published for the stage, her works including *Alice in Bed* (1993), and an adaptation of Norwegian 19th century play, Henrik Ibsen's *Fruen fra Havet* (*Lady from the Sea*) (1888), she achieved a breakthrough in the theatre not with her own work, but with directing Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which attracted enormous media attention, both for her engaging in the conflict, and the choice of play to stage. Sontag considered her work in Bosnia, as she later told interviewers, one of the most important events in her life (Schreiber 201) and this overwhelming experience was a turning point in her career. (206)

Sontag was openly in favor of American intervention in Bosnia and she criticized the French intellectuals André Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Lévy for coming to Sarajevo for only twenty-four hours, holding a press conference and leaving. She could not understand the

passivity of the world's intellectuals; she saw herself in the tradition of writers George Orwell and Ernest Hemingway who fought in the Spanish Civil War. Sontag said: "People told me they thought I was crazy to come here [to Sarajevo], but they didn't understand that I couldn't not come here. Once I understood what was happening, it was the obvious moral choice. It was the only choice." (Schreiber 2014: 202) While staging the production, Sontag had not only risked her life, but had also become a friend of the city and its people. The citizens interpreted the engagement of a public person like Sontag as a sign that the West did not forget about them.

After six weeks of production under almost impossible living and rehearsing circumstances, with lack of virtually all everyday essentials and electricity, even props in the theatre, and lives of the actors, audience and Sontag herself in danger, the Sarajevo production of *Godot* premiered on August 17, 1993, 17 months into the siege, in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre (*Pozorište mladih*). It was performed twenty two times; the last performance took place on November 19, 1993. These performances in Sarajevo may have accentuated some aspects of the play which were invisible until staging in the besieged city, under the candle light, in front of the literally starved audience.

When analyzing Sontag's production, it is impossible to exclude any of the following components: the arrival of a figure such as Sontag to the middle of the war zone in Europe; the city of Sarajevo known for its multiculturalism and its vibrant history; Sontag's decision to stage Beckett's absurdist and existential play; the time in which this event was situated, more than a year after the beginning of the war and more than two years until its end; and the citizens on existential zero fighting to preserve their dignity. All these aspects interact together to produce the meaning.

2.1.4.1 From Local to International

The event cannot be separated from the time and space in which it was made, but it also resonates on a much larger scale and adds to the way we read, see and use Beckett. This thesis may further emphasize the experience of war in *Waiting for Godot*. The Sarajevo production

of *Godot* in 1993 had great significance both locally and internationally; locally because Sontag's engagement, as American and intellectual, served as evidence to the citizens that the rest of the world does care – even though, as Sontag wrote, she represented nobody but herself (Sontag 1993: 4) – and internationally because the message was sent out that something else apart from killing is happening in the city. As much as the production was a local event, made and consumed in Sarajevo, for the local audience and in Bosnian language, through Sontag's unique position as a director and mediator, it went out of those local frames and became a part of the world event.

It can also be seen as an English language event. Sontag's essay from 1993 serves as a unique piece of evidence, which informed the English-speaking world about the suffering of the people in Bosnia. She communicated and gave directions to the actors in English; some of them spoke English, and to those who did not, the others translated. Sontag commissioned a new translation/adaptation of *Waiting for Godot* from English to Bosnian; she wrote the Bosnian translation line by line into her English text, and also copied the English text into the Bosnian script. In ten days Sontag learned the words of Beckett's play in Bosnian by heart. (Sontag 1993: 55) English was the only possible means of communication and it also helped in hearing the voices of the citizens asking for help.

Although much has been written about the different aspects of the Bosnian war, the scarcity of the material related to this specific event may pose a challenge for the research. It is in the historical context that the different layers of meaning around the production are activated. I will look at the memory of performance as an artistic expression that took place during violent disruptions of normality, in this specific time – during the war, and in a very limited space – both within the siege ring, and inside the theatre. I will provide a textual analysis of the performance, mediated through Susan Sontag's essay, and analyze the remembrance of the performance by exploring its effects on collective memory.

As presented above, the subject is complex. In my analysis, I will look at several elements that comprise the event as a whole: the city of Sarajevo during the war; the role of Susan Sontag within this setting; the production of *Waiting for Godot* she had staged in the Youth Theatre; the circumstances under which this process was conducted; the text of Beckett's play; and the memories and testimonies of the people involved in the production. To be able to analyze the performance and understand the resonance it had with the audience, one must

try to acquire the accurate picture of both the living conditions during the siege, and the events related to the production itself.

The main theoretical impulse of this thesis may be outside of traditional Beckett scholarship, since the event I am analyzing is situated in a specific geographic and historical setting. On the other hand, perhaps this production conducted in particular circumstances will make space for possible new readings of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Within the relationship between the capital in war conditions and the text of Beckett's play, the special focus will be on the character of Lucky in connection to the city. To arrive to this aspect of the analysis, the production, the conditions and the network of people around it have to be thoroughly examined first.

2.2 Material

It is of course impossible to reconstruct a performance more than 20 years afterwards. In this case, the material we have is also of a sparse, but special kind. A fully filmed/video version of the Sarajevan *Waiting for Godot* does not exist; reviews and commentaries from the time of the production by all the persons who participated in it are not available either. The amount, condition and quality of the documents in the war archive could certainly be better. The often blurry pictures in the documentary film *Godot-Sarajevo* (1993), discussed below, are justified by the circumstances of filming – no electricity, tapes, or other basic equipment for filming were available during the war.

My research material can be divided into previously available, and new material. The already existing material includes written, visual, and oral records, the most important pieces of it being Sontag's essay, a direct product of working on *Godot*; the short documentary film *Godot-Sarajevo*; oral and written testimonies of the participants in the production – some of them not being exclusively about this particular production, but about theatre in war Sarajevo; and various photos. Oral memories of actors and other theatre workers recorded or collected in the post-war period helped in putting the jigsaw pieces together, and in reflecting upon the meaning of this event.

2.2.1 Textual

The first piece of textual material is Susan Sontag's essay "Godot comes to Sarajevo". This essay, dated as finished by Sontag on September 7, 1993, was published in the New York Review of Books on October 21, 1993. It was written after her return to the United States, as a reflection and comment on her stay and work during the summer in Sarajevo. *Waiting for Godot* premiered on August 17, 1993. We know that Sontag was present in the Youth Theatre then, as well as for the second day of the performance, August 18. She writes about it in the very end of her essay. Sontag was also present for the third day of the performance – when she was interviewed by Erika Munk, a theatre and performance theorist, who had also seen *Godot* in the Youth Theatre that day; her interviews will be presented below. After that, Sontag travelled back to the States.

From the interview with Munk we learn that Sontag had been in Sarajevo again in October. Munk writes: "In October, after Sontag had made a return visit to Sarajevo, we spoke briefly on the phone" (Munk 1993: 35), and her question to Sontag was: "How did the performance look when you saw it again after being gone for a month?" (35) From this we can conclude that Sontag's essay published in the New York Review of Books was apparently written immediately after she came home from Sarajevo, and before going back to the besieged capital again.

The essay is furnished with two photographs; the first one is of the cast of *Waiting for Godot*, together with Sontag, in the lobby of the Youth Theatre in Sarajevo, late July 1993. The photo was taken by Annie Leibovitz, American portrait photographer, and close friend of Sontag. The scan of this photo is included in the Appendix, see Figure 6. The second photo, taken by the world renowned photographer Paul Lowe, shows an older woman carrying a water bucket while balancing on an iron bar across the destroyed bridge. More on photos follows below, in the section on visual material. Sontag's essay is of great value, because it is a document about her engagement, which was regarded as a "political statement that could not have been more effective" (Schreibner 200). The essay "Godot comes to Sarajevo" was re-published in *Performing Arts Journal* in May 1994.

The second part of textual material are Erika Munk's writings from Sarajevo, which include two interviews – one with Sontag, the other one with the actors – and a longer essay, all published by the Duke University Press journal *Theatre*, fall 1993. “Only the Possible” is the title of the interview Munk had with Sontag on August 19, 1993, after an afternoon performance of *Waiting for Godot* where Munk was present. A small portion of the interview was conducted by telephone in October 1993. Munk's interviews provided details about the rehearsals, the cast and the production that are not available elsewhere.

“Reports from the 21st Century: A Sarajevo Interview”, is the title of the interview Munk conducted with the actors from the productions of *Alceste* and *Waiting for Godot*. It was done backstage at the Sarajevo Youth Theatre, on August 25, 1993. The actors share their experiences about making theatre in war, about the military pressure against men who are in the arts, and about productions of classic texts reworked in light of the situation the citizens were in. (Munk 1993: 9-12) The essay titled “Notes from a Trip to Sarajevo” is a 15 pages text, structured in seven parts and with several stills, one of them from the video documentary *Sarajevo: Ground Zero*, showing a still of a July 1993 rehearsal of *Waiting for Godot*.

The third part of textual material is a book by Davor Diklić, a Sarajevan born theatre director and professor of Theatre Studies in Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts. Diklić has compiled a book of testimonies and stories from the war with the title *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. Svjedočanstva*. (English: *Theatre in War Sarajevo 1992-1995. Testimonies*.) This unique collection of testimonies contains eight pages of foreword written by the author and thirty-three testimonies by actresses and actors, directors, professors, producers, journalists, scenographers, a psychiatrist, a painter, and a retired military general. All of these professionals were in one or the other way related to theatre activities during the siege of Sarajevo. The foreword provides a useful context, numbers, and terms while pointing to the importance of research and documenting the war theatre events. The testimonies of four actors from Sontag's production of *Godot* are part of this book; those are Izudin Bajrović (cast as Vladimir 1), Nada Đurevska (cast as Vladimir 2), Ines Fančović (cast as Pozzo) and Admir Glamočak (cast as Lucky). Testimonies are marked by painful and hopeful, humorous and witty recollections, varying from personal stories to more general assessments of life and theatre in the siege.

Diklić gave a questionnaire to the interviewees as a suggestion or a starting point for the talk, but the conversation usually “went its own way” (Diklić 2004: 14), except for one person who answered the questions in written form. According to Diklić, even the questions he posed during the interviews became irrelevant in the final outcome, so he has omitted them from the book to put the focus on the testimonies alone – he also did not want to interrupt the continuity of narration. (Diklić 2004: 14) The book was published in 2004 by Kamerni teatar 55 – Sarajevo and Most Art, Zemun.

2.2.2 Visual

The visual material is comprised of a film, videos and photos. The first piece of this material is a 35 minutes documentary film *Godot – Sarajevo*, made by SaGA Film Production Company – Sarajevo, in October 1993. The director Pjer Žalica and cameraman Ahmed Imamović followed Sontag’s work from the first day when she arrived to Sarajevo in summer 1993 until *Godot*’s premiere. In the producer’s own words, “They also followed the daily life of the actors and theatre personnel involved in the production. This film transcends the confines of a film about the play and is rather a panoramic view of life in Sarajevo during the war.”⁵ In this short documentary we can see the cut up scenes from the rehearsals, the performance, and everyday life of the actors in a kind of collage with the background music, Sontag’s statements, and parts of Lucky’s monologue. It is subtitled in English. As of now, the film is available only through purchase over SaGA’s internet page.

The second part of visual material is FAMA collection’s 1-2 minutes video interviews with some of the production’s participants⁶. FAMA, a “virtual bank of knowledge”, originated in Sarajevo, are considered the largest collection of multimedia projects about the siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996). Oral History is the video collection comprised of 50 hours of unedited and 30 hours of edited video material containing almost 1000 interviews that were conducted with more than 500 people who had been in Sarajevo during the siege. The range of the interviewees and topics covered is wide – the collection has captured the personal experiences

⁵ <http://www.sagafilm.com/Production/Documentaries/Godot-Sarajevo/>

⁶ Admir Glamočak (cast as Lucky), Haris Pašović (director and producer), Ognjenka Finci (scenographer and costumographer); links in Web Sources.

of politicians, doctors, generals, artists, teachers, children and ordinary citizens. The interviews are categorized chronologically, month for month, from March 1992 to March 1996. Survival questions for the interviewees are available on the FAMA website. Among the interviews I have seen, the following ones were of special importance for the thesis: with Admir Glamočak (Lucky), titled “An actor loses two kilos per performance”, dated August 1993; with designer Ognjenka Finci, titled “The premiere of *Waiting for Godot*”, August 1993; with theatre director Haris Pašović, titled “Susan Sontag in Sarajevo”, April 1993. The interviews were dated according to when the actual event has happened, and the interviewees tell their memories in connection to a certain event.

The third part of visual material is comprised of photographs that were taken at the time of the event, and photographs taken recently. Paul Lowe, the award winning photographer and teacher, has covered the breaking news and conflicts throughout the world, including the fall of the Berlin Wall, the genocide in Rwanda, the destruction of Grozny, and the war in Bosnia. Among the numerous photos he has taken in Bosnia⁷, there is a series of eight photos addressing the production process of *Waiting for Godot* in Sarajevo; Lowe has given his permission to reproduce some of the photographs necessary for this thesis (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). For instance, the picture of Sontag with the whole cast in their costumes is a unique image, nowhere to be seen as clearly as in Lowe’s photo included in the Appendix, see Figure 1. The other photos, like the one by Annie Leibovitz in the New York Review of Books previously mentioned (Figure 6), are used as support for interpretation, since this photo shows the cast in the lobby of the Youth Theatre, and the debris from shelling is visible in the background. All photographs are black and white. In addition to the photos from 1993, there is one photo from 2014, which shows the copy of the hand written repertoire of the Youth Theatre from 1993. Sarajevo Youth Theatre had a window exhibition, which was opened in May 2014, and I have taken the photo during my visit to Sarajevo in July. In this photo, Figure 17 in the Appendix, we can see a part of theatre activity and the dates of premieres in the Youth Theatre at that time, and we can count how many performances of *Waiting for Godot* were given in total between August and November in 1993. Finally, the photos taken in April 2015 by the Bosnian photographer Amar Bidžević show the site of the event, The Sarajevo Youth Theatre (Figure 7), the distances between the Youth and the National Theatre (Figures 8 and 11), Susan Sontag’s square (Figure 9 and 10), and the Holiday Inn Hotel

⁷ Paul Lowe’s gallery can be viewed at Panos Pictures web site, <http://www.panos.co.uk/>.

(Figure 15). They are important for placing the production of *Waiting for Godot* into the site-specific context.

2.2.3 Oral

During the course of thesis work, a need arose to interview some of the central participants from the performance, if possible. Few actors who participated in Sontag's staging of *Waiting for Godot* in 1993 still live and work in Sarajevo; some have left the country during or after the war, and some have died. I went to Sarajevo in winter of 2014, and during this trip, I got the opportunity to conduct first-hand interviews with two actors from Sontag's production. This was an enormous asset, since the interviews provided the source material that did not previously exist. This new, oral material consists of three interviews in total: in December 2014, I interviewed two actors – first Izudin Bajrović, who played *Vladimir I*; then Admir Glamočak, who played *Lucky* – and in January 2015, I had an interview with Nihad Kreševljaković, the director of the Sarajevo War Theatre (SARTR).

Both of the actors are highly successful and very respected actors in Bosnia today; they started their acting careers in the mid-eighties and were established professionals when Sontag started her *Godot* production. They appeared in numerous theatre performances, films, and TV series. Glamočak was appointed the first war dean of the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, where he currently teaches Acting. Bajrović was the Drama director in the National Theatre; he was teaching Acting at the Academy in Sarajevo from 1993-2007. He is now the member of the ensemble of the National Theatre.

I reached Bajrović (*Vladimir I*) through a friend, Almir Imširević, a playwright and drama teacher at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo. After the interview with Bajrović, I asked him if any of his colleagues from the production of *Waiting for Godot* would be interested for a talk. To my great surprise, he immediately called and asked Glamočak (*Lucky*) if I can get his contact; a moment later I got the mobile phone number to reach Glamočak for the next interview. Both interviews were conducted in Sarajevo, during my stay in December 2014, in Bosnian language. The questions were prepared in beforehand, grouped thematically in four general sections: *Then*, *Now*, *The Role*, and *Sontag*; each section had

several prepared questions, modified on the way. Preparation was done based on the written material: Sontag's essays and Erika Munk's interviews, and the 35 min documentary film *Godot – Sarajevo*. The interviews were recorded using Audacity software on MacBook Air. The questions for the interview with Glamočak have also been modified based on the information I acquired from the interview with Bajrović. I was also taking written notes during both of the interviews.

The interview with Bajrović was conducted on December 25, 2014. We met at the Alta Shopping Center, situated in Marijin Dvor, close to Holiday Inn, the hotel where Sontag stayed during her visit. The talk started at 17 o'clock. The formal talk lasted for one hour and four minutes; after recording, we had an informal conversation that lasted for about 30 minutes more. Some information Bajrović did not want to share if it was to be recorded.

The interview with Glamočak was conducted on Tuesday, December 30, 2014, at the club/café of the Academy of Performing Arts. It began at 13:15, and there are 46 minutes of recorded material. I was especially interested in his explanation of the role of Lucky.

Just before the interview with Glamočak started, I accidentally met a producer and director of *Sarajevo War Theatre* (SARTR), Nihad Kreševljaković, who was telling another professor about "the new documentary we are making about Sontag". This was a rather informal setting; professors, students, and many well-known persons from the theatre, film and television world were having a break in the Academy's café. I walked over, introduced myself to Kreševljaković, and told briefly about my research. We had an informal meeting on Tuesday, January 6th 2015, in the lobby/café of the *Sarajevo War Theatre*, where we talked about the importance of theatre under siege and Sontag's engagement. I also learned from him that there is a subject called *Teatar i film pod opsadom* (English: *Theatre and Film Under Siege*), taught at the Academy of Performing Arts by a director Dino Mustafić, and that one of the books they are using as part of the curriculum is the aforementioned book by Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995* (English: *Theatre in War Sarajevo 1992-1995*). The meeting started around 14:30 and lasted for almost one and a half hour. The talk was not recorded, but I took written notes. The new documentary film about Sontag and her role as intellectual figure at the end of the XX century that Kreševljaković mentioned earlier should be finished in May or June 2015.

I have transcribed and translated to English the portions of the interviews that were the most relevant for the thesis. The interviews are of utmost value; they have helped in forming a more precise picture about the production process, cooperation with Sontag, conditions in which the cast rehearsed; they contributed to my understanding of the actor's respective roles. After the interviews, I realized the importance of documenting the memory of not just this particular event, the production of *Waiting for Godot* staged by Sontag, but cultural activity as a whole during the war in Sarajevo.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The topic of this thesis could have been researched within several different frames, such as literature and literary studies, anthropology, history, trauma theory, performance and theatre studies; also in translation studies and sociolinguistics, if the focus was solely on the language aspect of the event, such as translation of Beckett's text to Bosnian, different layers of meaning, semantics, communication, and interaction in English and Bosnian between Sontag and the actors etc. The most suitable was to choose the discipline within which all the different aspects of my thesis could be appropriately addressed and taken into consideration without excluding another, equally important point, and which would provide the space for analysis, while allowing the intersection of vocabularies. The overall meaning sprouts from the interaction between the different elements, which, simply put, would be Sontag-Beckett-Godot-War, but the closer look reveals a tightly intertwined and dependent network that transcends the scope of study within only one field. Therefore, the aesthetic event, articles, testimonies, as well as secondary literature, will be seen through the lens of memory studies.

In "Creating a New Discipline of Memory Studies" (2008), Henry L. Roediger and James V. Wertsch give a definition of memory studies as currently a multidisciplinary field – with a goal to become interdisciplinary in the future – that reaches into various traditions to look into the forms and functions of representing the past. (Roediger and Wertsch 2008: 9) The range of the disciplines that comprise memory studies is rather wide; it includes anthropology, literature, history, philosophy, sociology, and many others. Wulf Kansteiner argues in his "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies" (2002) that memory studies have a problem with concepts and methodology; for instance,

metaphorical use of psychological and neurological terminology is often present, which, according to Kansteiner, misrepresents the social dynamics of memory. (Kansteiner 2002: 179). Terms such as false memory, unconscious memory and state-memory, to name but a few, “probably exist, and will emerge, also in history, sociology and other disciplines.” (Roediger and Wertsch 2011: 10) However, memory studies represent an impressive contribution to research in humanities. (Kansteiner 179)

The notion of memory is central to so many different fields, but a unifying discipline under which the diverse meanings of the term could be studied did not exist until the emergence of memory studies in the 1990s⁸. Because this field is still in development, a systematic set of methodological tools, both qualitative and quantitative, is yet to be created, and meanwhile the methodology is “borrowed from various social sciences and adapted to new purposes.” (Roediger and Wertsch 9) It seems that the main strength of the memory studies is its multidisciplinary, and the main criticism is aimed towards the lack of systematic and concrete methodological tools. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is a very wide usage of the term *memory*. For example, memory is a prime topic for the field of psychology (recollections of stressful situations, eyewitnesses) (Roediger and Wertsch 13), but also for history (building of national identity, different interpretations of a war), literature, architecture, and media. All these disciplines deal with representations of events. For Kansteiner, studies of memory usually focus on a representation of a specific event situated within particular chronological, geographical and media settings. (Kansteiner 2002: 179) Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead in the Introduction to the *Theories of Memory: A reader* (2007) write that “[i]n common contemporary usage, ‘memory’ may be understood as *any* mechanism through which [...] experiential learning takes place.” (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 2) We can look at the memory of a certain event as the object of a study, and as a mechanism of learning; however, it is always embedded in a wider context.

Some of the major perspectives through which memory has been defined and discussed are: collective memory, Jewish memory discourse, and trauma. These topics are covered in Part II: “Positionings” in *Theories of Memory: A Reader*, edited by Rossington and Whitehead. They point out that “[...] memory emerged as an important theoretical focus in the discourse of Holocaust studies. A strong interest in *traumatic memory* arose in the early 1990s, centered

⁸ Rossington and Whitehead, 10.

on Cathy Caruth's edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995)". (Rossington and Whitehead 2007: 7) Traumatic memory was of special interest for this thesis, since the citizens in Sarajevo during the siege went through a major war trauma.

The word *trauma* comes from Greek, and it literally means *wound*; as Cathy Caruth writes in her seminal work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), trauma is "originally referring to an injury inflicted on a body", but "in its later usage, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud's texts, the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind." (Caruth 1996: 3) In this sense, the city of Sarajevo, together with its citizens, was visibly – and invisibly – wounded. This is one of the crucial points of comparison with the character of Lucky from Beckett's play; Lucky has wounds from the rope around his neck, and he is a slave to Pozzo, his master and tormentor. The visible wounds for Sarajevo are the destroyed city, killed and injured people; some of the invisible wounds manifest themselves through Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). According to the definition of the American Psychiatric Association, PTSD is a response to an event "outside the range of usual human experience" (Caruth 1995: 3), and its symptoms usually occur after a period of delay, which Freud termed *latency*; Caruth states "Freud seems to describe the trauma as the successive movement from an event to its repression to its return." (Caruth 1995: 7)

In relation to this, I wanted to point out that most people who survived the siege, the civilians or the members of the army, usually do not want to discuss the war or remember it, but when they talk about it now, twenty years after the end of the war, the amount of details they are able to retrieve is impressive. Testimony is of utmost significance to the study of trauma, negotiation between the past and the present, as well as the process of reconciliation for the victims, survivors and witnesses. Dori Laub, Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University, psychoanalyst and a Holocaust survivor, writes about his own position as a witness in the essay "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle", which is part of the aforementioned Caruth's volume from 1995. Laub recognizes the different levels of witnessing in connection to the Holocaust experience, "the level of being a witness to oneself within the experience, the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others, and the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself." (Laub 1995: 61)

The first level comes from his autobiographical awareness as a *child survivor*, the term that I was able to identify with, since I lived in Sarajevo during the siege. Laub's term and the realization that this is also what I am, a survivor and a witness on several levels, made me reflect upon my own experience and see it as a possible resource, rather than a burden for the first time. I was almost seven years old when the war started, and more than ten when it ended; the memories from the war are clear and distinct. When looking into the memories of a child with the awareness and introspection of an adult twenty years after the war, one attempts to understand the mechanisms of one child's memory of trauma and find the ways of coping with it.

The second level for Laub is being a witness, or direct receiver of testimonies of others, in the sense that he was the interviewer of the Holocaust survivors. While working on this thesis, some of my intentions were to examine Sontag's production in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre, the resonance and impact the event had locally and internationally, and the memories around it. I did not see the staging myself because it was too far and dangerous to walk the route from home to the theatre, but I have heard and read about it, and as a child, did not react to the news about Sontag coming and staging a play. Although I was aware of the importance of an American writer coming to support the citizens, it was completely *normal* for me that this was happening in the city. Several years after the war, almost on everyday basis, I have been walking across the square in front of the National Theatre in Sarajevo – which was named after Susan Sontag in 2009 – without reflecting that this was a *memory site*. When the opportunity arose to interview the actors from the performance, it was difficult to position myself in the role of a receiver of testimonies. As Laub writes, I was “[...] part of the struggle to go beyond the event and not be submerged and lost in it” (Laub 1995: 62), all the time being aware that not everyone is open to talk about and share the war memories. I was interested in the actors' personal reflections twenty years after the war, their professional experience, reading Beckett, cooperation with Sontag, and the memory of their roles in the 1993 production. These oral histories are now invaluable because of the nature of research, and because the testimonies link the past with the present moment.

2.4 Literature review

The work that lays the foundation for the thesis is Susan Sontag's essay "Godot Comes to Sarajevo." (1993) This essay, published in the New York Review of Books, is a work which was examined both as an important piece of material, and used as a lens to look into the performance. Its publication details and context are presented earlier in the chapter under the heading "Material."

Sontag's essay is consisted of five parts. In the first part Sontag presents her experience with Bosnia, meeting the local people and theatre workers, cultural activities in the city under the siege, deciding to go back and stage the play, all while situating Sarajevo and Bosnia in the context of former Yugoslavia. In the second part she describes the process of casting the actors, the beginning of the production, as well as her work and tedious copying of the play line by line between the English original and the translation of *Godot* to Bosnian. This section ends with Sontag's explanation about the city's population, the Muslims in Sarajevo, and the aggressors' propaganda. The next, third part of her essay features a description of rehearsals and the difficulties that she and the cast had encountered: the darkness due to absence of electricity, the fatigue due to malnourishment, lack of food, and fear. Sontag also tells about the set, the props and the dramaturgical changes. In the fourth part of the essay, she brings in more details about the production, the jokes that waiting for Godot actually meant waiting for president Bill Clinton, the pluralism, the fates of the people, and what the city of Sarajevo represents for its citizens. The last, fifth section is dedicated to the great role that the media played in the Bosnian war, the attention that Sontag's engagement in Sarajevo received together with the production; the reality of the city, and in the end, the premiere of *Waiting for Godot* in August 1993.

This essay is the most detailed textual piece of evidence about the war production of *Waiting for Godot*, and as of this moment, its translation to Bosnian does not exist. It would be useful for the benefit of further research, teaching at Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, documentation purposes for non-English speakers, describing the phenomenon of theatre under siege as part of cultural resistance, that the essay "Godot Comes to Sarajevo" is translated to Bosnian.

While researching Sontag's engagements in Sarajevo, as well as details from her biography, several works were of great help: first and foremost, David Schreiber's *Susan Sontag: A Biography* in English translation by David Dollenmeyer (2014). The chapter titled "Theater at the Spiritual Front" covers the years between 1993 and 1997 that were of special interest for this thesis. Other articles include "Desperately Seeking Susan" by Terry Castle (2005), "I wish I had kicked Susan Sontag" by Kevin Myers (2005), "Against Postmodernism, etcetera: A Conversation with Susan Sontag" by Evans Chan (2001), and an essay titled "Sontag Bloody Sontag" by Camille Paglia from her book *Vamps and Tramps* (1994).

The next piece of literature of crucial importance for the thesis is certainly Samuel Beckett's tragicomedy in two acts, *Waiting for Godot* (1952). The first act was examined in contrast to the second, not to present the findings of that contrast as such, but because it was only Act I that Sontag chose to stage in Sarajevo. Therefore, Act I was studied in more detail. The examples and excerpts are taken from Faber and Fabers's edition *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (2006).

To understand in what way and to what degree Beckett's experience during the Second World War influenced his writing, one essay in particular was consulted – Marjorie Perloff's "In Love with Hiding": *Samuel Beckett's War*. (2005) In her biography of Samuel Beckett (originally written in 1978, Vintage edition from 1990), Deirdre Bair, the first scholar who wrote about his life, also explored the connection between the three years Beckett spent in a small village of Roussillon in hiding during the Occupation (1943-45), and immediate post-war years (1946-48) when his creativity blossomed. Beckett's war experience seems to have gone directly into his writing, even though the word *war* itself "appears nowhere in *Godot*", as Perloff notes. (Perloff 2005: 2) Among the numerous works consulted, Hugh Kenner's chapter "Waiting for Godot" from *A Reader's Guide to Samuel Beckett* (1988) was important for situating the play within the context of German occupation of France during the Second World War, as well as seeing Pozzo as a Gestapo official, (Kenner 1988: 30) which was useful while making the analogy of Pozzo as a leading Serb ultranationalist in the Bosnian War.

It is necessary to understand the city in order to understand the analysis and the comparison between the city and Beckett's character. Robert J. Donia is a noted historian whose work *Sarajevo: A Biography* (2006) was used to provide the capital's historical background. This

book gives in-detail descriptions of the city's history from its foundation to the aftermath of the Dayton agreement. To acquire the most accurate picture about the capital and its position during the war in Bosnia, several other works were consulted: Noel Malcolm's *Bosnia: A Short History* (2002); Laura Silber's and Allan Little's *The Death of Yugoslavia (BBC)* (1996); Misha Glenny's *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (1996); Kjell Arild Nilsen's *Milošević i krig og i Haag – en dokumentasjon* (2007).

With regards to critical/theoretical reading, several works were of particular importance. The book *Performance, Space, Utopia* (2013) by Silvija Jestrović, Belgrade born playwright, director and drama scholar, teaching at the University of Warwick, provided insight into the vastly under documented world of cultural activities during the siege of Sarajevo. A useful resource and a guide to further readings, this book was published as part of the series “Studies in International Performance.” Jestrović investigates theatricality and performativity of the cities Belgrade and Sarajevo: the former as a center of war machinery, and the latter for the war suffering. She writes about this in the Introduction titled “Cities of War, Cities of Exile.” The book has three parts that are divided into chapters; Part I is dedicated to Belgrade, Part II to Sarajevo, and Part III to the Cities of Exile. Part II was of special interest since it is dedicated to “Imaginarities and Embodiments” concerning Sarajevo. The author begins her interpretations of Sarajevo with a discussion on Sontag's production of *Godot*. Chapters 5, “City-as-Body” and 6, “Theatricality versus Bare Life” gave several references for further research.

A book by Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. Svjedočanstva*. (2004) (Engl. *Theatre in War Sarajevo, 1992-1995, Testimonies*; my transl.) is a collection of thirty-three testimonies from the war. The interviewees are the survivors and eyewitnesses who were directly involved in the theatre making during the siege of Sarajevo. This is a rather inaccessible piece of material, not only because it is in Bosnian, which narrows its audience to only those who can read the language, but also because it is published as a joint venture between two minor publishers, Kamerni teatar 55 from Bosnia, and Most Art from Serbia. The testimonies were not published in the English language version; therefore, all the translations from this book that appear in the thesis were done by me.

This book brings unique and invaluable material. It contains the rich personal recollections of experiences during the war. It serves both as a document of individual and collective

memories, as well as a resource for studying theatre under siege through the cultural resistance. Most of interviewees feel the term ‘cultural resistance’ cannot accurately describe and cover the importance of what they did in the cultural sphere during the atrocities. However, one fact clearly strikes from the book: survivors describe theatre during the war as a remedy, a therapy, a shelter; “truly a little miracle.” (48) More details about the book were presented in the section on “Material.”

From reading the testimonies collected in Diklić’s book we begin to understand that war experiences are great disruptions of normality. It is painful for the survivors to remember and cope with these memories. This trauma “challenges us to a new kind of listening” (10), as Cathy Caruth writes in her Introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995). From listening and analyzing the traumatic past, we come to greater understanding that leads to a process of reconciliation. The following works were consulted within the theoretical framework of memory studies: “Creating a New Discipline of Memory Studies” (2008) by Henry L. Roediger and James V. Wertsch; “Seven Types of Forgetting” (2008) by Paul Connerton; “Finding meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies” (2002) by Wulf Kansteiner; “From Collective Violence to a Common Future: Four Models for Dealing with Traumatic Past” (2011) by Aleida Assmann; several essays from the aforementioned volume edited by Caruth, among them “Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle” (1995) by Dori Laub.

Anna Sheftel’s “Monument to the international community, from the grateful citizens of Sarajevo: Dark humor as counter-memory in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina” (2011), and an ironic tourist brochure in war-time Sarajevo, *Sarajevo Survival Guide* (1993), were looked at to explore the claims that humor and irony were also important parts of keeping the dignity and contribute to cultural resistance during the war. The citizens’ dark humor as a coping mechanism during the war remind of seemingly absurd discussions and situations between Vladimir and Estragon.

3 Sarajevo

3.1 Pluralism through Time

In the spring of 1992, the Serb forces attacked simultaneously over big parts of the country, and several cities were besieged. Nevertheless, the siege of Sarajevo stands out in four respects, that is: the length of the siege, the international media presence, the cultural resistance in the city, and the multicultural nature of this resistance. All of these aspects resonate strongly within the topic of my thesis, and in this chapter we will outline the historical background for the cultural and multicultural resistance.

Today in Sarajevo we often hear the citizens telling with a certain pride about the multicultural and peaceful life everyone was privileged to enjoy there in the past, but to the greatest extent in the Yugoslav times, in the system which many think provided absolute equality for all the peoples. To support their claims, citizens point to the mosque towers, catholic and Orthodox Church domes, as well as the synagogue, all situated in a 200 m area of the Old town. This multiculturalism and living together regardless of their national or ethnical backgrounds was taken for granted, and considered the most natural thing by most of the city's inhabitants. The war came as a shock exactly because they firmly believed it could not happen in a country and city so mixed and secularized. However, this brief overview will give us the necessary insight into the history and background of the city.

Sarajevo has the epithet of a cosmopolitan city, and is often said to be at the crossroads between East and West. It has undergone a turbulent history: Bosnia was a medieval state until 1377, when Ban Tvrtko was crowned and Bosnia became a kingdom. The religion of the peoples who populated Bosnia then was Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, but there was also a third, independent church in the schism between the eastern and western practices, accused of heresy and dualism by the other two – the Bosnian Church (*Bosanska crkva*). People today – and especially since the war 1992-95 – still nourish the myth that it was the followers of the Bosnian Church who embraced conversion to Islam when the Ottomans conquered Bosnia in the middle of the 15th century; the fact is that “religious heterodoxy”, as

Robert J. Donia, a historian and author of the biography of Sarajevo (2006) writes, may have made South Slavs more receptive to it. (Donia 2006: 11)

The capital was founded in the 1450s; surrounded by four mountains, its position resembles that of an amphitheatre. The river Miljacka flows through the valley and divides the city in two. Baščaršija (Main Market) was the city center, the place where all the social activities took place through the centuries. According to Donia, “religious affiliation was the most significant determination of residence, social position, and political status in Sarajevo’s early years.” (20).

The most prominent groups of people, living closely together in Sarajevo, were Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and Jews. The Bosnian Muslims were not legally recognized as a separate nation until the 1960s (Donia 243), even though they are South Slavs who inhabited the area “as long as the other Slavic peoples of the Balkans” (Mottahedeh vii) and converted to Islam during the four centuries of Ottoman rule. Tone R. Bringa in her article “Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in “Multinational” Bosnia” (1993) explains the term *nation*, which requires special attention here because it shows how complex the notions of identity, nationality and ethnicity really are in Bosnia:

A key concept within socialist nationality policies is represented by the terms "nation" (*narod* or *nacija* in Serbo-Croat) and "nationality" (*nacionalnost*). Both terms are most commonly translated as "ethnic group" in Western literature. [...] [T]his led to some confusion among English speakers since one's nationality is a state assigned status [...] However, there is a hierarchy of nationality categories and the Slav term closest to the idea of "ethnic group" is *narodnost*. From a Marxist viewpoint *narodnosti* are smaller than *narodi*, do not have a working class of their own, and exist only in relation to a larger nation. However, a *narodnost* may gain political recognition as a *narod* as did the Muslims in Bosnia Hercegovina.

(Bringa 1993: 85)

However, the Bosnian Muslims were among the most secularized Muslim populations in the world, as Noel Malcolm notes in *Bosnia: A Short History*. (1996: 221) A survey from 1985 showed there were 17 per cent of religious believers in Bosnia, all in all. (222) This is to underline the absurdity of the destruction during the war, and to point to the fact that the aggressors had to build new monoethnic histories to justify their actions. The new Serb narrative was an ultra violent attack on the multicultural foundation of the late Yugoslav and the new Bosnian state.

Contributing to this multiethnicity, was the Austro-Hungarian period. The Austro-Hungarian Empire succeeded the Ottomans in 1878. The new authorities favoured the city's Catholic population – who were fewer than both Serbs and Muslims – and thereby established that unique equilibrium between the different religions.

3.2 Before the 92-95 War

When Susan Sontag came to Sarajevo, the cityscape was already to a large extent ruined by shelling. The buildings which were intentionally targeted included crucial institutions like hospitals, municipality buildings, parliament, TV and radio stations, but also cultural landmarks and buildings which symbolized the multiethnic past, like the National Library – Vijećnica. This was built by the Austro-Hungarians in 1894 in Ottoman style, and it thereby created a fusion between the old and the new city which was being raised by the new rulers. Situated between the river and the old town, it could be said to symbolize the central contrast of the city: the contrast between the Ottoman style which dominates the old town Baščaršija, and the Austro-Hungarian buildings which were built further down the bank of the river Miljacka.

It was from Vijećnica Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophia were driving, when they were shot by the Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip, June 28 1914, thereby provoking the First World War. After the Great War, Sarajevo lost all links with the Austro-Hungarian Empire and became part of the royal Yugoslavia – Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Sarajevo became “a forgotten city” (130), until fascism came in April 1941.

In 1945, after the Second World War, six republics united to create the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Between 1945 and 1991, Yugoslavia experienced post-Second World War enthusiasm, freedom and unity euphoria, the ‘golden days’ and dictatorship of Tito's socialism, as well as economic rise and subsequent painful decline. During the political

and economical turmoil which culminated into the wars in Croatia and Bosnia⁹, respectively, Yugoslavia disintegrated completely in the nineties. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro¹⁰, Macedonia and Kosovo – they all became independent states. This also led to a split of the linguistic continuum earlier known as Serbo-Croat.

The new socialist government recognized the main religious holidays, Christmas, Easter, Eid (Bayram), and the Serbian Orthodox Patron Saints day; the diversity was celebrated as long as it didn't hurt the idea of "brotherhood and unity" (the slogan *bratstvo i jedinstvo*). The state provided housing, safe jobs, good payments and sufficient holiday time; the period until the mid 1970s was known as the Yugoslav golden age.

Socialism introduced the discourse of equality, collective thinking and often forceful secularization. Both religious and ethnic differences between the South Slavic peoples were systematically suppressed and superficially blended. Meanwhile, the social-democratic system was slowly decaying, and national awareness came back even stronger as a result of disappointment in the broken Yugoslav dream. The roots of Yugoslavia's decline are to be found in the previous decades' economic and political issues, and immediately after the president Marshall Tito's death in 1980, the equality 'utopia' went to pieces. The already present tension in Yugoslavia continued escalating.

On these shaky legs Sarajevo hosted the winter Olympic games in 1984. For the purpose of hosting the guests, sportsmen, and journalists, the city built the Holiday Inn hotel, a huge yellow and brown cube structure, from which the četnik (Serbian ultranationalist) snipers were shooting at the demonstrators gathered in front of the National Assembly building only some years later, on April 6th 1992. (Donia 2006: 285) This hotel came to be a central building for many reasons. SDS quarters (*Srpska demokratska stranka*; Serb Democratic Party, the ultra nationalist party founded by Radovan Karadžić) held half of the hotel and had their meetings there, because the owner of Holiday Inn was an SDS sympathizer. (273) Later in the war, journalists reporting about the atrocities lived in it, as well as Susan Sontag. The rest of the

⁹ From this point on, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be referred to as 'Bosnia' only. This is one country, Herzegovina geographically divided by a mountain and laying mainly in the south. The name 'Herzegovina' originates from the title *herzog*, which means *duke*. Bosnia is the name of the river and the first mention of it comes approximately from the tenth century.

¹⁰ Montenegro and Serbia were federated until 2006, when Montenegro gained independence.

international community used it, among others the American embassy had a suite there until they moved to a separate building etc. Originally, the building was made to serve to sportsmen and stand for fair play values. From being politically neutral, it served as a foundation nest to the most violent ultranationalist movement, and then in the end the international body reported about the war from the same building.

The manifold resistance during the 1992-1995 war is founded in the strong sense of unity among the citizens as well as in their identification with the city. We will see that Sarajevo is the integral and crucial element for the analysis in Chapter 5. The city's background influences the setting of the production as well as dramaturgical decisions. Therefore it was necessary to look into the origins of the capital's pluralism and some of its landmarks.

How was the city defended during the war? Where was Sontag's production of *Godot* staged? What were the circumstances during the rehearsals? We will focus on these questions in the following chapter.

4 Theatre under Siege

4.1 Theatre in War Sarajevo

Sontag's production of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* was not an isolated theatre event during the war, but part of the phenomenon called *theatre under siege*. As already pointed out in Chapter 1, 182 performances premiered in Sarajevo during the war (Diklić 2004: 10), and we may wonder how it was possible to make theatre at all while people were being killed every day. On the one hand, it is almost unimaginable that there was any activity in the theatres during the siege and dehumanizing living conditions in Sarajevo, but on the other, it seems perfectly understandable that people felt the need to protect their integrity through creative work.

What kind of theatre was it, then? Where were over two thousand performances played, how did the actors manage, and who came to see them? Were the activities improvised in the sense that actors were amateurs and that people gathered in their basements or apartments, to kill time and find entertainment? Far from it. There were three professional theatres in Sarajevo that had to shut down in the first months of the war: The National Theatre – *Narodno pozorište*; Sarajevo Youth Theatre – *Pozorište mladih*, and the Chamber Theatre 55 – *Kamerni teatar 55*. These were the leading theatre institutions before the war, and they became even more crucial after the war broke out. A new theatre, SARTR (*Sarajevski ratni teatar* – Sarajevo War Theatre) was formed in May 1992 by gathering the scattered ensemble and theatre workers from the other three. The National Theatre was founded in 1919, and opened in 1921¹¹. In 1950, two theatres were founded: the Pioneer Theatre and the Puppet Theatre – about a decade later, in the sixties, the Pioneer Theatre formed its professional ensemble, and changed its name into Youth Theatre. In 1977, the two theatres – Youth and Puppet – were merged into Youth Theatre, with two independent scenes, Puppet and Drama¹². The Chamber Theatre was founded in 1955¹³.

¹¹ "Historijat." *Narodno pozorište Sarajevo*. Web. 23 Feb. 2014. [<http://nps.ba/Program.aspx?id=1&lang=BS>]

¹² "Historijat." *Pozorište mladih Sarajevo*. Web. 8 Feb. 2014. [<http://www.pozoristemladih.ba/#/history>]

¹³ "O nama." *Kamerni teatar 55*. Web. 10 Feb. 2014. [<http://www.kamerniteatar55.ba/o-nama/>]

Theatre during the war consisted of professional actors, intellectuals and theatre workers who recognized the need to maintain and continue the cultural life of the city. This awareness was crucial for defending the city from those who were firing down at civilians from the siege ring; Sarajevo is like a colosseum theatre, encircled by hills and Olympic mountains¹⁴, which turned it into an easy target. The citizens believed that only a primitive, hateful mind could be able to perform that kind of destruction. Apart from the armed forces, the “art forces” also contributed to the defense of the city.

How can art *defend*? Besides the coinage *theatre under siege*, there is another expression that usually follows when art during the war in Sarajevo is discussed; that is *cultural resistance*. These two syntagmas emerged from the intense cultural activities during the war. It is difficult to clearly define the expression *theatre under siege*. In its essence, it means that all theatre life and activity in connection to theatre was unfolding under military siege. From today’s perspective, twenty years after the war, we can claim that what the citizens had been doing during the period of immensely disrupted normality can be called *cultural resistance*. This was, conditionally said, considered as a ‘normal’ cultural activity by the cultural workers in the city. Making theatre during the war can be called resistance on several levels: resistance to attack, to death, to aggression, to siege, to chaos. These atrocities, as well as hope that the war would stop any moment, were part of everyday life. Returning back to work in the theatre seemed like the only option for the actors, the only reasonable choice. The cultural life of the city and life during the siege were unfolding at the same time.

Since there was no television or cinema, no other form of entertainment, theatre became a very attractive gathering place; it was suddenly opened and available to everybody – for common people, not just to the ‘chosen ones’, the cultural elite. The tickets were free. However, the role of theatre and its communication between the audience and performers is much more complex than the simple entertainment; this role has manifested itself anew, in the war reality. Ironically, there was no better time to make theatre than war years in Sarajevo: the audience was curious, receptive, in search for relief and shelter for the mind, body and soul.

¹⁴ Winter Olympic games were held in Sarajevo in 1984; those mountains are Jahorina, Bjelašnica, Igman, Treskavica, and Trebević. The most deadly attacks from the Serb ultranationalists were fired at Sarajevo from mount Trebević.

The line of division between the audience and the actors became completely fluid during the war; they were in the same position – in the same danger – and equally hungry. Usually, when a performance is about to begin, the lights are turned off and the audience is left in the dark – the next moment, the lights are on again, but this time they are aimed at the actors on stage. There was no electricity in theatres during the war; most of the performances were played in the candlelight¹⁵, which brought the actors and the audience even closer.

The geographic position of the aforementioned three theatres in the city center was decisive as to where the activities would gradually resume. It was safer to gather inside if the theatre location was more nested and cushioned between other buildings, and if the building itself was sturdier and better isolated. More isolation meant better protection from the sniper, the direct shell impact, and it minimized shrapnel injuries. Sontag attracted immense international media attention by staging *Waiting for Godot* in the Youth Theatre, and the audience was so interested to see the performance that there was not enough room to seat them all in the Youth Theatre. The natural decision would be to stage such an important performance in the oldest and the biggest house, which was the National Theatre, but this would have been too dangerous.

Nobody ever thought it would become life threatening to have a cultural building situated centrally in the city; in addition, there was a square at one entrance and a wide-open mountain view at the other. Any building with an easy view from the mountain was a potential target. Being inside or outside of it almost made no difference. The aggressor's targets included hospitals, residential buildings, the places that symbolized diversity and otherness: the National library¹⁶, mosques, museums, parliament, cultural institutions, and among them the National Theatre. Because of this theatre's difficult – rather open – placement, it was unimaginable to work in it during the war. The National Theatre was exposed to direct sniper and shelling view; it was too risky to walk in and fetch costumes or props from there, and even more dangerous for people to gather inside. But performances were staged less than one

¹⁵ The candlelights were the simple candles for daily use; it was was no fancy torche technology as it was developed from the Baroque theatre onwards. (see Koslofsky, Craig: *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe*, CUP: Cambridge, 2011.)

¹⁶ The National library, *Vijećnica*, built in 1894, used to be a City Hall; it became a National Library just after the Second World War. A symbol of the city; made during Austro-Hungarian rule in neo-Oriental style. More than 2 million volumes were burnt in the fire caused by Serb nationalist shelling in August 1992. Locals reported (an informal talk with a craftsman from Bašćaršija, the Old Town) that ashes and book pages were flying around for a few days following the event. Re-opened in June 2014.

hundred meters away, just across the theatre square, which was named after Susan Sontag in 2009.¹⁷

It is relevant to address the physical position of the Sarajevo Youth Theatre because it may sound incredible that two theatres were in such proximity to each other, and one of them worked but the other one did not, see Figures 8 and 11 in the Appendix. The Youth Theatre is visible as we cross the small cobblestone square in front of the National Theatre, at the end of the alley that connects them. The Youth Theatre is more shielded, and during the war, this nest-like placement meant greater safety. It lies between apartment and office buildings, a hotel, narrow streets and passageways. In spite of the building being devastated and the ensemble halved, the theatre was operating. It was not the only one – Chamber Theatre 55 is literally some steps away, separated by a tiny alley and a dark passage from the Youth Theatre. Most of the productions during the war were performed in the Chamber Theatre; this theatre has a thrust stage – the scene is encircled by the audience from three sides, which means that there is more closeness between the actors and the audience compared to the traditional, proscenium stage. The spatial experience changes from very open and large, to smaller and more intimate: from the mainstream, opera, drama, and ballet scene of the National Theatre, over a puppet and theatre 'for all generations' of the Youth Theatre, to the most intimate scene – to the innovative and explorative approach of the Chamber Theatre.

Already in the summer of 1992 some professionals from Sarajevo started several projects which marked a continuity of life and creativity in the city. According to Haris Pašović, Sarajevan theatre and film director and producer, during the siege, that “continuity for the citizens had as much meaning as having bread or medicine or water or anything else vital for basic human needs.” (Pašović “Susan Sontag in Sarajevo”)¹⁸ Pašović also said that the International Theatre and Film Festival Sarajevo, MESS, started the following year, at the time when he returned to Sarajevo from Belgrade, and *Alcestis* by Euripides was the first performance staged as part of that festival in the beginning of August 1993.

¹⁷ Coric, Haris. “Trg Susan Sontag u Sarajevu.” *Klix*. 19. Apr. 2009. Web. 15. Jan. 2014. [<http://www.klix.ba/vijesti/kultura/trg-susan-sontag-u-sarajevu/090419066>]

¹⁸ Short video interview with Pašović; part of the oral history project, FAMA. [<http://www.famacollection.org/index.php/tb-eng/TB-445>]

4.2 The Production of *Waiting for Godot* in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre

In April 1993 Susan Sontag came to Sarajevo for the first time and met Pašović; they agreed then that she should come to Sarajevo in the summer of 1993 and produce a performance of *Waiting for Godot*. “The performance was sometime in the middle of August 1993 and it made a big stir not only in Sarajevo but beyond. It was the first time that a cultural event in Sarajevo made it on the front page of Washington Post and also the first time the news got out that something else apart from dying was happening in Sarajevo.” (Pašović “Susan Sontag in Sarajevo.”) We will now turn to the process of production in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre.

4.2.1 Casting – gender blindness and number of actors

What troubled Sontag while casting for the roles of Vladimir and Estragon was that there were “more good actors available than parts” (Sontag 1993: 54), and she was aware how important it was for the actors she auditioned to be in the play. Sontag started the casting process a day after her arrival to Sarajevo in the summer 1993; there were many professional actors available, eager and motivated to work, which posed a challenge during the audition. They all knew each other from the period before the war started. While one of the actors I interviewed said the audition was proper and Sontag had to make some choices, the other actor laughed when the question was raised, because in his opinion the audition was only pro forma:

“She [Sontag] invited some of us actors for a talk, and that was a so called ‘casting’, which turned out to be ridiculous during those conditions.”

“Why ridiculous?”

“I think having a casting in Sarajevo in 1993 was really funny; we all knew each other very well, we could count on our fingers how many we were – but she wanted to fulfill the form, and it was done so. Susan had the chance to see the actors ... and so

we began working on the performance. From then on, everything was like any other production.”¹⁹

(Bajrović, 25.12.2014.)

It may seem to the participants that the production of *Waiting for Godot* was like any other when they reflect upon it more than twenty years later, but compared to the original text, significant dramaturgic changes were made regarding the number and the gender of actors who should appear on stage. First of all, there was a greater number of actors than Beckett originally intended and wrote in his play, and second – there were also women on stage, in contrast, again, to the original text, where Beckett suggests only male roles.

This is Beckett’s cast list:

Estragon

Vladimir

Lucky

Pozzo

A Boy

On the other hand, Sontag’s list looks more extensive and unexpected – but several Vladimirs and Estragons were not reserves, and a woman as Pozzo was not a mistake. All the actors were carefully chosen:

Estragon I: Velibor Topić, Estragon II: Milijana Zirojević, Estragon III: Irena Mulamuhić.

Vladimir I: Izudin Bajrović, Vladimir II: Nada Đurevska, Vladimir III: Sead Bejtović.

Pozzo: Ines Fančović

Lucky: Admir Glamočak

A Boy: Mirza Halilović

The question of feminism did not receive much attention in Bosnia in the beginning of the 90s; nobody disputed why a role originally written for a man was played by a woman, whether she was able to do it, or why women would be together with men on stage in a production of Beckett’s play intended for men only – and Sontag never made a point of it

¹⁹ Personal interview with Izudin Bajrović, cast as Vladimir I.

either. The decision that a woman should play Pozzo proved itself to be very effective on stage – not because a woman played a man’s role, but because of the actor’s qualities. In fact, Ines Fančović, who played Pozzo, was the only actress that Sontag knew she wanted to use in the production before the official auditioning started. (1993: 54) From her first meeting with theatre workers in Sarajevo in April 1993, Sontag remembered how Fančović sat in a corner of the room, silent and imperious, wearing a large broad-brimmed hat. (54) Some days later Sontag saw Fančović in a performance, and learned that she was the senior actress of the pre-siege Sarajevo theatre. After deciding to direct *Godot*, this actress was an obvious choice for the role of Pozzo; Sontag “immediately thought of her”. (54) With her strong and determined presence on and off the stage, Fančović was a real star, a grand dame of the Sarajevo theatre, “acting up a storm from day one”. (Munk 1993: 33) At sixty-eight, she was the oldest member of the cast, flamboyant and loud, exactly as Pozzo should be; also a great contrast to Admir Glamočak, a lean, agile man of thirty, who was cast as Lucky. It was for those characteristics that Sontag picked the actor – who happened to be a woman. Because of Sontag’s choice for the role of Pozzo, Pašović thought she would have a women-only cast, which was done in his production of *Waiting for Godot* in Belgrade in 1991. This was not Sontag’s intention; however, she wanted to state that a “woman can play the *role* of a tyrant”, rather than stating that “woman can also *be* a tyrant.” (Sontag 1993: 54)

4.2.2 Tripling the roles

After this first alteration, Sontag proceeded having a gender-blind casting, and she tripled the roles of the two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon – as opposed to Beckett’s original all-men cast and the expected five men on stage: Vladimir, Estragon, Pozzo, Lucky, and a Boy. There were a total of nine people on stage in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre, four of them women, which does not mean that women were randomly added to the already existing roles. Three pairs of actors played the roles of Gogo and Didi: two men, two women, and a woman and a man. No other roles were doubled or tripled – a man played Lucky, a woman played Pozzo, and an adult young man played the Boy.

Centrally, as Beckett had instructed, were the two men; on the left side of the stage were two women; and finally, on the right, a woman and a man. Sontag labeled the male couple

“Number One” – Vladimir and Estragon wore costumes with a full name in block letters and a number written in Arabic numerals. The second, man-woman pair had only the name initials: a capital V and a capital E. The third pair, the two women, did not have any special designations. Sontag also suggested the designs for the costumes, which looked like the uniforms of concentration camp prisoners.

The labeling of the male couple was a way of making their costumes look different from the other pairs. Sontag said the real reason why they were “Number One” and in the central position on stage was simply because they were the best, not because they were male. (Munk 1993: 35) This also corresponded to Beckett’s original, without making a statement or complying with him: “If the mixed couple were the best actors I would have put them in the center. But I found myself, despite my original intentions, reaffirming something in Beckett’s text by making the two men the main couple.” (Munk 35) Some, like Erika Munk, interpreted the gender-blind and tripled role casting as Sontag’s portrayal of a straight couple and two gay couples, one male and one female, but this was not her intention. On the other hand, Sontag wanted the mixed couple to behave as if they were married, without insisting on the sexual input – she thought it would not “add anything to the play.” (Munk 1993: 35)

There were three actors that Sontag liked, and there were two more roles. In Sontag’s words, it was then that she realized she “could have three pairs of Vladimir and Estragon and put them all on the stage at once.” (Sontag 1993: 55) Actors wanted nothing more than to work – so, Sontag’s practical solution was to triple the roles and give as many actors as possible the chance to perform. According to Sontag’s biographer, Daniel Schreiber, she did this “to emphasize the collective nature of the waiting” (2014: 203), and as Admir Glamočak, who played Lucky, said in the interview, “there were nine of us performing, but if Susan could fit ninety-nine persons on that stage, she would have!” (Glamočak 30.12.2014.)²⁰

Sontag’s intention behind this decision could have been to symbolically represent the multiple voices and mutuality of suffering. As she said both in the interview to Munk (Munk 1993: 32), and in her essay (Sontag 1993: 56), when Vladimirs and Estragons all joined together on stage, they reminded of the chorus in the Greek sense, which Sontag wanted. As Erika Munk notes, they would also become “a hungry, rebellious population” (26); as in the scene where

²⁰ Personal interview with the actor, 30.12.2014.

Pozzo eats his chicken and throws away the bones and the chorus of Gogos and Didis become Lucky and Pozzo's audience.

It could be said that these two dramaturgic decisions, tripling the roles and gender-blind casting, are intertwined and interdependent: by tripling the roles of Vladimir and Estragon, more casting spots were opened, allowing the space for further experimenting with gender-blind casting – since one of the roles had already been assigned to a woman, why could not Sontag have other women play the male roles? Therefore, it is difficult to discuss the gender aspect of the performance without including the 'number-aspect'. Regarding the 'number-aspect', there is another possibility for interpreting the tripling of the roles of Gogo and Didi. As in other instances (compare to Sontag's explanations for reducing the play to Act I alone, p. 56), deviations from the original text usually had practical reasons with symbolic results. While exploring the reasons for increasing the number of actors on stage, we see how difficult it becomes to state where the practical thinking starts to acquire symbolic meaning. Sometimes a decision made purely for practical reasons also conveyed a strong symbolic message, regardless of the initial intention to be only that: a change made for practical reasons.

4.2.3 Manhandling the Boy

Towards the end of Act I, after Pozzo and Lucky leave Vladimir and Estragon, the Boy comes in to deliver the message from Mr. Godot. He was there for some time but was afraid of the other two men. Vladimir and Estragon question him, Estragon more forcibly, and at one point, he shakes the Boy, demanding to hear the truth. (Beckett 48) Vladimir scolds Estragon, and proceeds to question the Boy, until he tells Vladimir that Mr. Godot will not come "this evening but surely tomorrow." (49) The Boy minds the goats for Mr. Godot, and he has a brother, whom Godot beats. Even though the cast list specifies 'A Boy', this role was usually played by adults.

Sontag's explanation for deciding to cast an adult young man for the role of a Boy is somewhat contradictory. In the New York Review of Books essay, "Godot comes to

Sarajevo”, Sontag explains her reason for casting an adult man as a Boy: there were no child actors available at the moment of casting, and she did not want to use a nonprofessional; since the actor was young-looking, it suited the role of the Boy. In the interview with Erika Munk, which took place about three weeks before Sontag finished writing the aforementioned essay, Sontag stated that she “could have had a child play the messenger” (Munk 34), but she *wanted* to use an adult, so that the others could manhandle him and express their disappointment when the boy comes to deliver the message that “Mr. Godot ... won’t come this evening but surely tomorrow.” (Beckett 49) The following statements show that it is difficult to reach a conclusion as to why Sontag chose this particular actor. The reasons seem manifold:

“Since no child actors were available and I dreaded using a nonprofessional, I decided to make the messenger an adult: the boyish-looking Mirza Halilović, a talented actor who happened to speak the best English of anyone in the cast.” (Sontag 1993: 55)

“For example, I could have had a child play the messenger, but I knew I wanted to use an adult because I wanted the others to be able to express rage. You can’t be aggressive or manhandle a small child, so you end up with quite another meaning when this messenger is a sturdy handsome young man in shorts. I wanted to get their anger at him, people are so angry here.” (Munk 1993: 34)

There were several motives for choosing Halilović for the role. It is clear that Sontag was determined that the others should be able to express their anger at the messenger who brings a message that nobody wants to hear. According to Sontag, he was young looking which suited the role of the Boy. His spoken English was also very good, which made communication in the group much easier. The issue of language will be addressed later in this chapter.

4.2.4 Nationalities

In relation to multiple voices and population, it is important to comment about the national question regarding the cast before turning to rehearsals. Foreign (non-Bosnian) journalists asked Sontag about the nationality of her actors: whether she knew their background or not, and if this played any role during the casting and their cooperation as a whole. Given the complicated reasons and various interpretations on why and how the war in Bosnia started, it

is important to point out that the cast was multiethnic – by pure chance, and not because Sontag intentionally chose to have Muslims, Serbs, and Croats in the performance together. Her actors were chosen based on the qualities which best suited their respective roles. The actors took their ethnic origins for granted – they were not only colleagues, but also friends – and Sontag never really learned who was exactly from which ethnic group. (Sontag 1993: 55) The population in Sarajevo is so mixed and secularized that it would make very little sense to delve into these particular actors’ ethnicities and/or nationalities and try to make a point of them being on stage together, as the Irish journalist, Kevin Myers wrongly suggested that Sontag did.

The obituary titled “I wish I had kicked Susan Sontag” (2005) opens with these words: “If ever a single person was living proof that intelligence is a meaningless quality without modest common sense, it was Susan Sontag who died last week.” (Myers, *The Telegraph*) Myers accused Susan Sontag for something she had never done: cast her actors based on a tripartite national key. According to Myers, Sontag intentionally chose a Muslim, a Serb, and a Croat for the play. In his own words:

“If memory serves – and possibly it doesn’t, no doubt clouded by guilt that I failed to put the wretched woman over my knee and give her a sound spanking – she had each of Beckett’s characters played by a Bosnian Muslim, a Bosnian Serb, and a Bosnian Croat.” (Myers, *The Telegraph*)

The effect, or the message of the production is multiethnic. This reflects the multiethnicity that is taken for granted in Sarajevo, as written about in Chapter 3. This is the point that Myers misses – Sontag did not strive to achieve this effect on purpose. She portrays Sarajevo’s multicultural and multinational background as a positive characteristic, which aggressors wanted to destroy:

“The population of Sarajevo is so mixed, and there are so many intermarriages, that it would be hard to assemble any kind of group in which all three “ethnic” groups are not represented – and I never inquired what anyone was. [...] I never learned the ethnic origins of all the actors. They knew them and took them for granted because they are colleagues – they’ve acted in many plays together – and friends.

The propaganda of the aggressors holds that this war is caused by ageold hatreds; that it is a civil war or a war of secession, with Milosevic trying to save the union; that in crushing the Bosnians, whom Serb propaganda often refers to as the Turks, the Serbs are saving Europe from Muslim fundamentalism.” (Sontag 1993: 55)

Myers seems to parody Sontag's embrace for this 'mixture' in Bosnian reality. He does not stop there; Myers' aggression towards Sontag culminates in the following statement: "My real mistake was not radioing her co-ordinates to the Serb artillery, reporting that they marked the location of Bosnian heavy armour. My own life would have been a cheap price to pay." (Myers, *The Telegraph*). To pinpoint the exact co-ordinates, as written in the end of Chapter 3, international guests and reporters, including Sontag and Myers, lived in the Holiday Inn hotel.

4.3 Rehearsal conditions

We need to remind ourselves that the whole city was ravaged from shelling, the theatre was shattered and in ruins. In simple words, infrastructure was destroyed, power and telephone lines broken; many major institutions, libraries, schools, museums, bridges, government buildings were demolished. Not a single building could be seen without holes in it; glass and debris were everywhere. Wires hung from above, pipes stuck out from the asphalt. Burnt vehicles, cars, trams, just stood in the streets. Holes, large from mortars and smaller from shrapnel and bullets completely altered the pattern of Sarajevo streets, windows and façades. Metal shipping containers were put beside and upon each other to protect the citizens from snipers, detonation or shrapnel pieces. Snipers would open fire each and every time civilians made the smallest attempt to cross the street – or rather run across it. Sandbags were mounted on garbage containers to provide protection when crossing the bridges. Many unarmed people died every day, and it was only a matter of luck; good or bad timing decided if someone was going to be saved, wounded, or – gone forever. Both the physical environment and the people were heavily traumatized.

After the initial shock from the beginning of the war in 1992, and realizing that the siege may not be lifted very soon, people started adjusting to these heavy conditions in the most imaginative ways. It is necessary to acquire an accurate picture of conditions in the city, because the lack of virtually everything, unavailability of essentials for living, difficulty moving through the city, are all directly linked to extreme working conditions in the theatre.

4.3.1 Electricity

Lighting proved to be one of the first obstacles during the rehearsals; not only that the actors could not read the scripts because it was too dark; they could barely see each other unless they stood very close. It was impossible for Sontag to see the subtle changes, such as Vladimir's – in this case, three Vladimirs' – false smiles in the beginning of Act I, when he “smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling, ceases as suddenly.” (stage direction, Beckett 13). She sat on a stool around three meters in front of them, and they appeared to her “mostly as silhouettes”. (Sontag 1993: 56) As if bad light was not enough, the nine scripts for the actors were done in carbon copies, typed once on a manual typewriter whose ribbon was old and worn; pages were loose since paperclips and binders were non-existent at that time in the city.

Shelling had destroyed the façade, lobby, cloakroom, and bar of the Sarajevo Youth Theatre, where Sontag produced and staged *Godot*. In her essay “Godot comes to Sarajevo”, Sontag writes that debris “still had not been cleared away” (1993: 55) in late June 1993, at the time she started having rehearsals there with the actors, and the damages were more than a year old. The actors rehearsed in the dark; the bare stage was usually lit by candles and supplemented by four flashlights that Sontag had brought with her (55), which was never enough – when she asked for more candles, the answer was always the same: there were none. Additional candles, Sontag later learned, were being saved for the performances. From where and how the candles were acquired was a mystery.

4.3.2 Hunger

In many respects the main obstacle besides the stage lighting, was the lack of food. Constant hunger and unwilling fasting had shattering consequences for the entire city population; people generally lost big amounts of weight in a short period of time. The actors who performed on stage and the citizens who came to see them were in the same position – malnourished, exhausted, constantly worried, and living in uncertainty. To complain to a

fellow actor about exhaustion, physical weakness and body pain before the performance, was just as absurd as complaining to someone in the audience – everybody shared the same experience.

Many memories from the war deal exactly with food, and are often retold as anecdotes in the post-war period. Every single testimony from Diklić's book of collected testimonies has a reflection or a telling about the lack of food. For instance, Bajrović (cast as Vladimir I) told in the interview, with a proud and shy smile, how Sontag brought him half a watermelon for his daughter's first birthday, 18th of August 1993, which was also the first day after *Godot's* premiere, and the other half was split between other actors. (Bajrović 25.12.2014.) It was a mystery where she got the fruit; Bajrović explained how that watermelon had greater value than a BMW at that time. Also, Sontag was different from any other director the actors worked with because “she stole and brought them bun rolls”.²¹ It is interesting that this is the first thing both actors I interviewed in Sarajevo said about Sontag – the memory of her making an effort to bring them some food, any food, even plain bun rolls, stolen from the breakfast buffet in Holiday Inn where Sontag stayed, is more important and maybe stronger than, for instance, the issue of language and understanding word for word every instruction Sontag gave. Their answers to the question if Sontag was in some way different from other directors they cooperated with, were very clear – and identical.

It is difficult to put in words what real and long lasting, chronic hunger means; it was not going to be solved by a simple walk to the kitchen for a piece of bread and a simple spread or a piece of cheese, a quick trip to the nearby supermarket for a yoghurt, an apple, a chocolate bar, or a fast-food option in the middle of the night. Indulging was not possible because there was nothing to indulge in; the so-called food from humanitarian aid was delivered strictly according to how many persons were in the family. There was not even salt and sugar, not to talk about fresh produce or a simple glass of tap water. The person who brought any food or cigarettes was looked upon as a miracle or a great benefactor. It was difficult for people to fully understand how this was happening, and even more difficult to explain to children that they could not get something they wanted, instantly, or in two days, or in a month – it simply could not be provided at all. This is why Sontag's gesture of bringing bread rolls to rehearsals was so much appreciated. The scene in which Vladimir gives a carrot to Estragon (Beckett

²¹ Said in personal interviews with Bajrović (25.12.2014.) and Glamočak (30.12.2014.), as well as in Glamočak, “Sir, Actors are Dying!” FAMA Collection. Web. 05. Jul. 2014.

21) is analyzed in relation to the problem of food deprivation in Chapter 5. This scene must have resonated strongly with the citizens.

Besides the lack of food, there was no tap water either. Water had to be fetched at special locations, often far from where people lived; the citizens were waiting queued up in these places in long lines. Everyone in the city, including the actors, had to go through a daily routine: the first task of the day was to walk to the water point, stand in queue for whatever long time it took to fill up the minimum of four 5 liter plastic canisters, walk back and bring the water to the family – then proceed with the rest of the daily tasks. Bajrović (Vladimir I), illustrates what kind of quest it was to get the water by explaining the difference between Sarajevo and New York theatre:

”It’s the same difference as the difference in significance between a four-liter plastic container here in Sarajevo and in New York. In New York, you buy it full of water and you put it in the fridge and use it up and throw it away. No story. Here we can make a production about finding and filling this container which would last for 18 hours and a half.” (Munk 1993: 13)

After standing in queue for water early in the morning, the actors had to find a way to reach the theatre, depending on where in the city they lived and how far from the theatre it was. There was no public transportation or taxis, and sniper alleys had to be avoided, which put additional time to the long walking – one had to stay in hide and wait until the sniper stops shooting. Some actors walked for a couple of hours to the theatre, some rode a bike to get to the rehearsals, and the same route had to be taken on the way back home. Sontag noticed their exhaustion. In spite of serious difficulties, the actors were motivated to work, as Sontag notes:

“I could not have asked for actors more zealous, more eager. The main obstacle, apart from the stage lighting, was the fatigue of the malnourished actors, many of whom, before they arrived for rehearsal at ten, had for several hours been queuing for water and then lugging heavy plastic containers up eight or ten flights of stairs. Some of them had to walk for two hours to get to the theater, and, of course, would have to follow the same dangerous route at the end of the day.” (Sontag 1993: 55-56)

4.3.3 Fatigue

All actors, except Ines Fančović (Pozzo), who was still “a stout woman” (Sontag 1993: 56) in spite of losing almost 30 kilos since the beginning of the war, were “visibly underweight and tired easily”. (56) Glamočak, who played Lucky, was down to 50 kilos, and could not, for instance, stand motionless with the suitcase because it was too heavy – even though the suitcase was empty. In Sontag’s opinion, the actors took a long time to memorize the text and this was also a symptom of their fatigue. Soon she realized it was not only the exhaustion that created problems in remembering the lines and made the actors appear distracted – on top of it was the constant fear, and distraction by the sounds of shelling. Every detonation was loaded with information: “Each time we heard the noise of a shell exploding”, writes Sontag, “there was not only relief that the theater had not been hit. The actors had to be wondering where it *was* landing”. (56)

In the interview with Bajrović (Vladimir I), I asked if there were issues with memorizing the lines during rehearsals. I recounted Sontag’s impression that the actors were slower and “their movements often inattentive and forgetful” (56), and asked for his comment. His response to Sontag’s explanation why the actors seemed to have had problems with the text was interesting because he did not think that slowness in memorizing had anything to do with fatigue: “It is each actor’s individual thing,” said Bajrović, explaining that someone memorizes text faster and with greater ease, and others do it at a slower pace. “That we were starved is a fact; but that we were full of energy is a fact, too.” (Bajrović 25.12.2014)

The actors continued rehearsing regardless of physical and emotional challenges they encountered on everyday basis, but one day it was especially difficult and they could not finish the rehearsal in spite of all the efforts. One of their actor colleagues, who specialized in Shakespearean roles, was killed on July 30th 1993; a shell fell just outside of his front door. The rehearsals usually started at 10, and Nada Đurevska (cast as Vladimir II), who was late for the rehearsals during the first few weeks, came at 14 o’clock with the news about the tragic death. The actor Željko Sparavalo was killed at 11 o’clock that morning. This death was additionally upsetting because until then no actor had been killed. (Sontag 1993: 56) When Sontag asked the actors if they wanted to continue the rehearsal, all but Bajrović said yes. Still, it did not prove possible: “But after working for another hour, some of the actors

found they couldn't continue. That was the only day that rehearsals stopped early", notes Sontag. (56)

4.3.4 Set and props

Sontag designed the set on two levels: the three couples were to be on the stage floor. Only sometimes one or more of Vladimirs and Estragons would go to the upper level, where a platform for Lucky and Pozzo was. They entered, acted, and exited from the right; Lucky and Pozzo did not come down. The platform was 1.20 meters high and 2.50 meters deep. Its front covered with translucent plastic sheeting was donated by the UNHCR²² the previous winter – the same kind that the citizens used to seal their shattered windows with. The set was “minimally furnished”, Sontag thought, “as Beckett himself could have desired”. (1993: 56) The tree was toward the left. Ognjenka Finci, the designer responsible for the scenery and costumes, said in the Oral History interview that in spite of all the circumstances and the opening words of the play “nothing can be done”, the performance was a success – and something was done. (Finci, “The Premiere of *Waiting for Godot*.”) The whole scenery was based on the relationship between light and dark, or light and shadow, because the only light available were the candles. “We worked with twelve candles and with foil that everyone knew as UNHCR’s, and with an improvised tree, which is an essential element in the play”²³, Finci explains.

Even these candles could not be found at all times. An English photojournalist made a precious gift on nine candles for the performance, and three were stolen immediately, which was very depressing for the actors. (Sontag 1993: 58) The lack of virtually everything in the city proved to be a significant problem also while finding props. Sontag wrote that she sometimes thought they were not waiting for Godot, or Clinton – they were waiting for their props. (57) Many small things were missing and were not easy to find, like Pozzo’s cigarette holder as a substitute for the pipe, or a whip. Two days before the premiere, there was no

²² “United Nations Refugee Agency”, or short for The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR.

²³ Finci, Ognjenka; designer. “The Premiere of *Waiting for Godot*.” Oral History Interview. *FAMA Collection*, August 1993. Web. 07. Jul. 2014.

carrot for Estragon to munch on either – they had to practice with dry bread rolls that Sontag brought them. First they could not find a rope, and then after three weeks of rehearsals, Fančović still did not have the right length of the rope and other props that were a must for Pozzo. “The bowler hats and the boots for Estragons materialized only in the last days of rehearsal” (57), writes Sontag, and explains that the scarcity of everything in Sarajevo was not the only reason props could not be acquired. She concluded it was also because of the “southern” (or Balkan) *mañana*-ism (*mañana*, Spanish for *tomorrow*). She was told every morning for three weeks: “You’ll definitely have the cigarette holder tomorrow.” (57) Some shortages were also the result of rivalry between the different theatres. The set and costume designer, Finci, tells how desperate Sontag was getting because the whole situation began to look and feel hopeless; small things posed big challenges – not even a picnic basket could be found. (Finci, “The Premiere of *Waiting for Godot*.”) Suddenly, everything was solved in the last week. The costumes came just the day before the opening.

4.3.5 Language

Upon her arrival to Sarajevo, Sontag knew no Bosnian (at one point and in 1993 called “the mother tongue”, *maternji jezik*, since it was difficult to call the language “Serbo-Croatian”²⁴ any more). Rather, her knowledge was limited to basic greetings and saying thanks. The play was going to be performed in Bosnian, for the local audience, and the instructions were supposed to be given in English. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, in approximately ten days Sontag knew the text of *Waiting for Godot* in Bosnian:

“I had brought with me an English-Serbo-Croatian dictionary, paperback copies of the play in English, and an enlarged photocopy of the text into which I copied in pencil the “Bosnian” translation, line by line, as soon as I received it. I also copied the English text line by line into the Bosnian script. In about ten days I managed to learn by heart the words of Beckett’s play in the language in which my actors were speaking it.” (Sontag 1993: 55)

²⁴ Linguistically, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian belong to the same language group. It is the political and national, rather than linguistic division that separates them. There are differences in dialects and standard, but differentiation between the three is not that great that people from Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Zagreb cannot understand each other. However, offences are taken if someone says in Serbia that they speak Croatian, or if Bosnians are told that they speak the blend of Croatian and Serbian. For instance, great tensions concerning the language and the writing system (Latin vs. Cyrillic) are present in the years after the break up of Yugoslavia, until the present day. It can be compared to telling a Norwegian that he/she actually speaks or writes Danish, not Norwegian.

Three out of the nine actors knew no English at all, and Sontag thought it was very helpful to have Mirza Halilović, the actor who played the Boy, as her interpreter, so she could communicate with everybody at the same time. I was curious about the issue with language, so I asked in the interviews if there were any problems in overall communication and how the small nuances in Sontag's directing went through. The actors I spoke with had different opinions about this. One of them thought that language posed no problem at all: "Of course we spoke English," was his statement, and the other said "[w]e were not the very best with English at that time, so Mirza (Halilović) helped with translating."²⁵ With some actors Sontag communicated directly, without the mediator, and in some cases assistance was necessary.

4.4 Dramaturgical changes

There were three major alterations from the original text: tripling the roles, including women in the cast, and reducing the play to Act I. The topics of multiple Vladimirs and Estragons, as well as women cast were presented earlier in this chapter. Discussed below is the last of these major changes – why stage only Act I of *Waiting for Godot*, what were Sontag's reasons, and how this decision could be interpreted. This decision was made during the rehearsals, after Sontag realized that Act I was going to be much longer than it usually is: alone, it was supposed to last for about 90 minutes. Sontag had the intention of doing Act II with only one pair of Vladimir and Estragon, the male couple, who in her opinion were the best out of the three pairs. (Munk 1993: 35) Even with one pair and speeded up Act II, the play would be two and a half hours long.

As written previously in the chapter, the theatre was shattered by shelling and for obvious reasons could not operate to its full capacity; debris was not cleared up, there was no water or electricity, and toilets, lobby, and cloakroom were as good as non-existent because of their condition. In addition, summers in Sarajevo can be extremely warm and dry, up to 35 degrees Celsius, and the premiere was scheduled for the 17th of August – late summer. As much as people were somewhat protected being inside the theatre, which was a sturdy, concrete

²⁵ Personal interviews with Bajrović (25.12.2014.) and Glamočak (30.12.2014.)

building, it was dangerous if the theatre or neighboring buildings suffered a direct hit. Sontag thought it was not realistic to ask the audience to sit squeezed together for two and a half hours on a hot day in high summer, in a small, badly lit theatre, with possible danger lurking, without water or toilets which could be used during the break, or ventilation. It seemed like an impossible task; people would be very uncomfortable.

The actual production was probably not longer than 90 minutes. The premiere was scheduled for 14 o'clock, and at 16 o'clock the same day the production had its second premiere. *Godot* was performed twice a day on several other occasions; for instance, August 28th, at 13 and 15 o'clock, September 5th, at 14 and 16 o'clock, as well as September 10th, at 13 and 15 o'clock. (See Figure 17.)

The main consequence of tripling the roles of Vladimir and Estragon was a lengthy Act I. Mainly because of the unexpectedly long first act, inadequate space and performing circumstances, Sontag realized she could not do the whole of *Waiting for Godot*. It can be said that the first, concrete reason for staging only Act I was of a practical nature. Sontag additionally justified this decision with the following explanation:

“The very choices I had made about the staging which made Act I as long as it was also meant that the staging could represent the whole of *Waiting for Godot*, while using only the words of Act I. For this may be the only work in dramatic literature in which Act I is itself a complete play.” (Sontag 1993: 56)

Indeed, Act II may appear like a repetition of Act I; as Mercier wrote, it is “a play in which nothing happens, twice.” (1990: 74) The place and time of Act I are: “A country road. A tree. Evening” (Beckett 11); and for Act II: “Next day. Same time. Same place.” (53) On the other hand, Act II is more brutal – harder, more desperate, an underlined confirmation of Act I, in Sontag’s words: “Everything is worse. Lucky no longer can speak, Pozzo is now pathetic and blind, Vladimir has given in to despair.” (1993: 56) Apart from practical thinking, it could be said that there also were aesthetic and ethical reasons to exclude Act II. This reasoning is more abstract and therefore more difficult to label; the debris from the shelling, the heat, and the cramped space were concrete obstacles and reasons why to cut out Act I – but suddenly, not staging Act II began to mean *more* for the morale of those who were waiting in real time. Perhaps staging *Waiting for Godot* in this altered form meant speaking about futility and hopelessness, while providing the hope at the same time. Sontag writes:

“*Perhaps* I felt that the despair of Act I was enough for the Sarajevo audience, and I wanted to spare them a second time when Godot does not arrive. *Maybe* I wanted to propose, subliminally, that Act II might be different.” (1993: 56) (My italics.)

This minuscule possibility, a small opening and suggestion that there is still some hope left for the citizens was, ethically, the most important dramaturgical decision.

4.5 The Performances

The production started in mid-July 1993, and *Waiting for Godot* opened after five weeks of rehearsals. During almost a month and a half of working on the production, the rehearsal was interrupted only once – when a colleague actor was killed in the end of July. The demanding rehearsals lasted for 10-12 hours each day. *Godot* opened on a Tuesday, August 17, 1993. The premiere was at 14 o’clock, and the second performance at 16 o’clock the same day; only matinees were played in Sarajevo at that time because it was too dangerous to walk out and be in the street after dark. People had to walk to the theatre, and take the same dangerous route back home. The city had been under siege for 17 months when *Godot* had its premiere in Sarajevo. The tickets were free, and more people than could fit in the auditorium lined up in front of the stage door, trying to come in. Sontag writes that many people were turned away that day. (Sontag 1993: 59) Actors were not paid for their engagement, and neither was Sontag:

“I didn’t receive a penny, I paid all my own expenses, I volunteered a month and a half of my life, the actors are working for nothing as is every person on the staff, the tickets are free, and it’s Sarajevo. This is a very extreme case of a not-for-profit production.” (Munk 1993: 34)

The auditorium could usually admit 500 persons but they would hardly be able to see from the far back rows anything that was happening on the stage lighted with only twelve candles. Instead, around a hundred people were seated at the front of the stage and very close to the actors, “on a tier of six rows of seats made from wood planks” (1993: 56), as Sontag reports. Fančović (cast as Pozzo) said that the audience was practically sitting on stage. (Diklić 2004: 81) The last scenes of the documentary *Godot-Sarajevo* show the spectators who also sat on the stage floor in front of the tiers, and stood tightly packed around – it could be said that

they almost became a part of the performance. The audience were, simply put, of all kinds of social backgrounds: the locals who could attend the performance, members of the cultivated audience, fellow actors and theatre workers, as well as international journalists. As mentioned earlier, there was no functioning lobby, water, or toilets for the audience; it was very warm to be seated this way, and still – so many people wanted to see the performance, and they did not manage to enter the theatre.

Beckett was known for being strict and specific about productions of his plays, and Sontag made major changes in the Sarajevo production – tripling the roles of Vladimir and Estragon, having women play men's roles, and reducing the play to Act I alone – which was the reason why the Beckett Foundation did not allow further performances of *Waiting for Godot* in this altered form. According to Glamočak (Lucky), the Foundation gave permission for twenty performances of *Godot* to be played in Sarajevo in 1993. (Glamočak 30.12.2014.) This was an exceptional decision because of the special circumstances and situation in which the play was produced.²⁶

Fančović (Pozzo) remembers that *Godot* was played around twenty times with great success, and that MESS (International Theatre and Film Festival Sarajevo) was later invited to a festival in London dedicated to 50 years celebration of Victory over Fascism, organized by Vanessa Redgrave and her brother. Pašović, who was the director of MESS at that time, travelled to London to propose *Waiting for Godot* for this festival. This is when the Beckett Foundation forbade further performances, not only in London, but also in Sarajevo (Diklić 2004: 82), because of the clauses which state that Beckett's text must be played integrally according to Beckett's stage directions. (Diklić 91)

In May 2014, the Sarajevo Youth Theatre opened *A Window Exhibition: Theatre Under Siege 1992-1995*, where notebook copies of a hand-written repertoire list were displayed together with photos, posters, and newspaper articles. I saw the exhibition in July 2014 and took photos of the items displayed in the front theatre windows, pinned on a large blue panel. According to the theatre's repertoire list from 1993, *Waiting for Godot* was performed twenty two times in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre. The premiere and the second premiere were on the 17th of August 1993, and the last performance was played on the 19th of November 1993.

²⁶ I have written to the Beckett Foundation to cross-check and receive first-hand information about this, but as of this moment I am still waiting for the reply.

5 Performing the City

As presented in the previous chapter, the Sarajevo production of *Waiting for Godot* was conducted under unfavourable circumstances. War had an enormous destructive impact: lives were swept away and the city was almost unrecognizable. The theatre in ruins and the lack of basics crucial for everyday functioning created a special working environment. The workers in the theatre, director, dramaturge, set and costume designer could not be provided with the proper creative space and support. The actors were constantly hungry and they had to fetch the drinking water before coming to rehearsals, walk long distances to the theatre and back home, which made them very exhausted and not fit for the demanding staging process. They worked with Sontag in the dark, under the candlelight and some flashlights. In addition to this, snipers were constantly lurking, and the fear from shelling often prevented the citizens from coming out of their shelters.

Sontag's staging of *Godot* was not the only performance or cultural activity which took place in the besieged city, but it was the one which echoed the most in the media. It meant a lot for the citizens and actors that it was written about *Godot* in Washington Post, since the only news that the world received about Bosnia at that time was that people were being killed every day. This production of *Waiting for Godot* very fast became an image of the situation in which the Sarajevans found themselves: everything was hopeless, nothing could be done – as Vladimir and Estragon repeat numerous times – and they were waiting. Reflecting upon the production, Sontag wrote that there was one obvious play for her to direct and that *Godot* seemed written for, and about, Sarajevo. (Sontag 1993: 52) Fančović (cast as Pozzo) stated that besides *Godot* being a great performance, “it also completely reflected our condition in Sarajevo”. (Diklić 2004: 82) There were 300 000 people waiting for the same Godot. Perhaps Sontag, with her privilege to come in and out of the city, was a kind of a messenger, a mediator between Vladimirs and Estragons of Sarajevo, and their Godot.

5.1 Godot in political context: Production

What did it mean for the play to be produced at this particular sociohistorical locale? It was argued earlier that the play might have acquired political meaning due to the special circumstances in which it was produced, namely, the ethnic cleansing, the siege, the constant danger of sniper fire and bombing, destroyed living conditions – absence of electric power and water etc. The citizens of Sarajevo have clearly had the existential experience of waiting. Sontag’s production was both a humanistic and a political act; since directing in theatre was one of the things she could do, staging a play was her way to express solidarity with the citizens. The play overwhelmingly mirrored the everyday reality of life in the besieged city. Nevertheless, it pointed to the political situation as well. Political engagement can be said to exist on two levels here: one, in the fact that Sontag chose to “pitch in and do something” (Sontag 1993: 52) – that she participated at all; in addition – she stepped on the side of the victims, and two, that she chose this play in particular, a play which is not an especially political play. David Bradby writes in his book about the different productions of *Godot*: “The significance of the production lay simply in the doing of it, not so much in the artistic solutions chosen” (Bradby 2011: 167) – that is to say, the act of staging the play and the media attention it had attracted, as well as the message this activity had sent were more important than what dramaturgic decisions and interventions Sontag made on the way – cutting to the first act alone, having three pairs of Vladimir and Estragon, as well as having a gender-blind cast.

But what is, and what is not considered *political theatre*? In his essay *On Political Theatre* (1975), Michael Kirby argues that not all theatre is political and that those who claim the opposite confuse the terms ‘political’, ‘social’, and ‘economic’. If the play – the play’s content – does not directly address politics or is concerned with government, or supports a political party, it is not a political play. “Most plays make no political statement”, Kirby concludes. (129)

According to Webster’s definition of “political”, which Kirby cites, “theatre is political if it is concerned with the state or takes sides in politics.” (129) Following this definition, we see that political theatre is different from other theatre in being “a performance that is *intentionally* concerned with government, that is *intentionally* engaged in or *consciously* takes

sides in politics.” (129) In case of Sontag’s production of *Waiting for Godot* in Sarajevo, political interpretation is rather context dependent – the play had been performed under, and because of special circumstances. Despite his involvement in the French Resistance, Beckett himself had rejected all possibilities for political interpretations of *Waiting for Godot*, as Elin Diamond writes in her article *Re: Blau, Beckett, and the Politics of Seeming*. (Diamond 2000: 39) Sontag ignored this rejection and made a political statement by choosing this specific play and using its content to mirror the situation of citizens living in the besieged city; she intentionally pointed to the “absence of political will” (Sontag 1993: 59) of NATO to put an end to war in Bosnia. As much as *Waiting for Godot* is far from a political play and transcends any frames in which many directors wanted to place it, political meaning was read both by spectators in Sarajevo and by those who were critical of the production (Camille Paglia; Kevin Myers, as written in the previous chapter). For Kirby, “political concern and engagement must be in the *work*, not in the mind of the observer” (Kirby 130) – but again, the circumstances under which Beckett’s play was produced had created the background for possible political interpretation.

5.2 New Layers of Meaning

Through this chapter we will explore in what way the citizens have been waiting, and what could have been the manifestations or embodiments of Godot. The main analogy made in the analysis is between Beckett’s characters and the war participants. Most characters are presented as metaphors of collective abstract notions, such as the city (*who* or *what* comprises and defines the city?), the aggressor (the aggressor is not a singular entity), and the people (in this case, plurality or voices: religious, national and political affiliations, different ages etc.). Beckett’s characters could be seen as the following metaphors: Lucky as The City, Pozzo as The Aggressor, three pairs of Vladimirs and Estragons as The People: friends (the male couple, VE I), married couple (the mixed couple, VE II), mother and daughter (the female couple, VE III), and, in the end, The Boy as the director, Susan Sontag.

The relationship between the text, the production, and the city is a complicated and complex one – as Sontag pointed out while explaining why she decided to do just the first act of *Godot*,

and to have three Gogos and Didis: “I don’t consider this a truncated production, I consider it first of all a production conceived for Sarajevo.” (Munk 1993: 32) The production was, almost literally, tailored for the city, which is why the city’s background before the war, the limitation of space through the siege, extreme circumstances and disruption of normality during the war cannot be ignored while analyzing and making the analogies between Beckett’s characters and the real life situation during the war in Sarajevo. Beckett’s text was brought to the audience in Sarajevo through Sontag’s production, and the conditions in the city, together with the inhabitants, have in return enhanced some layers of the play’s meaning.

Some of these layers of meaning perhaps would not be seen if the strong interdependence between the text of the play, the city, and the production did not exist. A production cannot be staged without a text, but if this production was not conducted in Sarajevo, under special circumstances, the reading of the text would be different. Two consequences emerge from this interdependent relationship: 1) the production activated certain hidden (new?) layers of meaning in the text, opening the possibility for reading and seeing the play from a new perspective; and 2) if it has not changed the way the citizens – the audience – look upon themselves and interpret their own situation, the production has certainly contributed to such a change.

5.2.1 Cultural Resistance or Survival?

Living and working in and through the war conditions was not considered a cultural or spiritual resistance at the moment it was unfolding. The new reality required fast adjustments. The citizens and the theatre workers experienced these everyday activities rather as pure survival, a coping mechanism, but it has gradually developed the greater, symbolic dimension as well as the meaning of resistance later. There was a general shift in atmosphere from the very beginning of the war, through the time *Godot* was staged (the city had been besieged for 17 months at that moment), and until the war’s end. Exact phases cannot be labeled, but from the initial shock that the war broke out, and from the disbelief, helplessness and depression, the attitude slowly shifted to spiteful, opposite of passive, and almost resilient. According to the interviewees (personal interviews with the actors from the production, Bajrović and

Glamočak), as well as several testimonies in Diklić's book, there was a point when the citizens started getting used to seeing death and war as part of their everyday life – as brutal as this may sound – and they strived to resume the normality, given the conditions.

During the performances, the audience and the actors felt they *were seeing and performing themselves*, in their own conditions. When looking into the memories of participants in the production, the impression is acquired that this specific event in the theatre meant more than others. The following pages will explore the role that the production and the performances had in (re)presenting reality. The city provided a platform for a manifestation of Beckett's play through Sontag's production, and the performances provided the space for cathartic experience.

The connection between the characters in the play and the voluntary or involuntary participants of the war was briefly addressed above; what follows is an overview of the first act given through explanations of the aforementioned metaphors. This overview should give a frame for entering the detailed discussion about characters and specific situations with examples from the play. *Waiting for Godot* will now be read through the lens of the Sarajevo war narrative.

5.2.2 Waiting and War

Before turning to analysis, we should remind ourselves that the general response to the play in the years after the Second World War was to place it in the context of intellectual currents that were dominating the discourse at the time. The suffering, loss and destruction during the war and post-war years created a general atmosphere of estrangement and living without purpose. The French intellectual world was dominated primarily by Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism. For Sartre, "existence is prior to essence" (Sartre 1196); nothing determines the choices we make – humans live alone, in a world devoid of all values, free and responsible for their actions. Beckett created in this atmosphere in post-war Paris, and his "oeuvre has several elements in common with Parisian existentialism" (Adorno 119), but still,

Sartre's philosophy was not essential for Beckett's work – Beckett belonged to the literary, and Sartre to philosophy circles.

In his essay *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1960), Martin Esslin labels the plays of Beckett, Adamov, and Ionesco as “anti-plays” (Esslin 3), because they break the expected stage conventions. Logic, time and place of the action – including the action itself – are never clearly stated. Even though their works largely differ and they have never created a formal group, these dramatists are placed together because of the mutual trait in their plays, the element of *the absurd*: “Absurd is that which has no purpose, or goal, or objective”, as defined by Ionesco. (Esslin 1960: 4) Another divorce from traditional theatre was the use of language – the deviation from conventional syntax and experiments with vocabulary were the main feature in the Theatre of the Absurd. In *Godot*, absurdity is expressed through waiting as a non-event, constant repetitions, dialogue between Vladimir and Estragon, absence of action and development, Lucky's speech, reversal of roles between Pozzo and Lucky, hopelessness, as well as the overall sense of tragicomedy in the play. Vivian Mercier has called *Godot* “a play in which nothing happens, twice.” (Mercier 74)

However, what makes the play universal (Perloff 2005: 10-11) is the experience of *waiting*, not the experience of war. As written in Chapter 2, *Waiting for Godot* comes from the post-Second World War years, and even though the play is not *about* the absurdity of war and Beckett's personal war experience, it is difficult to completely exclude the possible connection between the play and war. Beckett made the play timeless by not referring to the Occupation as a specific event. On the other hand, no spectator for forty years could have imagined that a situation corresponding point by point with the one in *Godot* would ever happen in real life – and suddenly there were audience in Sarajevo, as if imprisoned in the play, sharing the waiting, sharing the war. Because of the production of *Godot* in the war zone, we can now further explore the relationship between the situation in the play and the wartime situation.

5.3 Parallels

Even the words of the play's title, *Waiting for Godot*, resonate with multiple meanings – since the expression “waiting for Godot” was usually interpreted as waiting for something which will not arrive, or waiting in vain, in the same way it seemed that the war would never end. The citizens were constantly waiting: for electricity, humanitarian aid, a child who came out to fetch water or bread, news from the family they had not seen or heard from for several months, for father to come back from the front line... and for their Godot. Nobody could offer a solution or an answer to questions which were posed a hundred times in a single day: “When will this war end?”, “When are we going back to our real home?”, “Is it tomorrow?” For these reasons, the first thematic parallel between the world of the play and the world of besieged Sarajevo is *waiting*.

In the play the reader learns that Vladimir and Estragon have known each other for many years (Beckett 51); their relationship could be the one between two best friends, a married couple, or a parent and a child. When tripling the roles into three couples of Vladimirs and Estragons on stage, Sontag developed their roles with these patterns of behavior in mind. In the interview with Sontag, Munk suggested her interpretation of gender-blind casting: she thought they were a straight couple and two gay couples, one male and one female, but Sontag did not “think it was necessary or interesting for same-sex couples to be gay”. (Munk 1993: 35) Vladimir and Estragon could be any individual, and the multiplied roles could represent any *collective*.

Perhaps more interesting is the dynamics between Vladimir and Estragon; they are supportive of each other, get easily angry or upset with each other, maybe they would be “better off alone, each one for himself” (Beckett 52), but they never part – they are bound together. Not only are they bound by life and memories, but also by waiting and the emptiness of what lies ahead. Beckett presents the couple as people who are on existential point zero, and have nothing more to lose but each other. Estragon says to Vladimir: “There are times when I wonder if it wouldn't be better for us to part” (17), and Vladimir replies to him: “You wouldn't go far.” (17) The same can be said about the people in Sarajevo – they were bound by isolation and siege, to the city and to one another. Therefore, the second parallel is made

between Vladimir and Estragon of the play, and Vladimirs and Estragons of the city of Sarajevo.

Vladimir and Estragon do not know what Godot looked like; when they first see Pozzo and Lucky, they mistake Pozzo for Godot:

Estragon: [Undertone.] Is that him?

Vladimir: Who?

Estragon: [Trying to remember the name.] Er...

Vladimir: Godot?

Estragon: Yes.

Pozzo: I present myself: Pozzo.

Vladimir: [To Estragon.] Not at all!

Estragon: He said Godot.

Vladimir: Not at all!

(Beckett 23)

Whoever or whatever this personage or power is, it never becomes clear throughout the entire play, but Godot's arrival means help and relief – even the news about his appearance mean hope. This is the third parallel in theme between the play and the city – the citizens were waiting, just like Vladimir and Estragon, and what exactly they were waiting for is *unknown*. Still, there were some guesses and wishes as to what Godot could do for them.

The following parallel between the play and the city is perhaps the most relevant for this analysis: a curious relationship between Pozzo and Lucky can be recognized in the protagonists of the Sarajevan siege. Pozzo treats Lucky in a brutal manner, and the relationship between them is usually read as the one between a master and a slave. Lucky is loaded with burden, carrying a heavy bag, a picnic basket, a folding stool and a greatcoat; he carries all Pozzo's things for him, obeys him and serves him, while Pozzo controls Lucky with a rope and a whip. The tormented Lucky has sores around his neck from the rope; Pozzo is a selfish bully who sentimentally breaks out in tears because Lucky, his "good angel, is killing him". (34) Their master-slave relationship will be explored in more detail in this chapter in connection to the city, and who had the control over it during the siege.

5.3.1 City as Body

Is it possible to make a parallel between the character of Lucky and the city of Sarajevo? Most citizens speak about Sarajevo as if the city was an actual person; they get angry and disappointed with it, they cannot leave it or live without it; they weep and fight together with it. How did this city continue to exist while being destroyed? What did it mean for its citizens to live there during the siege? Why do the inhabitants observe, address, and relate to the city in this manner? Even more important – how does this dependent relationship between the citizens and their city, seen as one unit, connect to the character of Beckett’s play?

In the chapter “City-as-Body”, Jestrović discusses the different layers that may define this *body*: architecture, material culture, public space etc. She also poses a question: “What makes a city a *city*?” The first response could be that the city is primarily made of its citizens; then of the two-fold interaction: the exchange between the citizens within a collective, and the exchange between that collective and their environment – the city and its culture. Therefore, the citizens reflect and *identify* with their city. The primary connection between Sarajevo and Lucky is embedded within the concept of *city as body* – both Lucky’s body and Sarajevo’s visual landscape were visibly wounded from the outside.

If the buildings, the spaces, the bridges and towers are the outward: the visible body of the city, then the citizens could be the inward: its psyche and its soul. Simon Sadler, a Situationist and a psychogeographer, writes: “The self cannot be divorced from the urban environment”, and “it had to pertain to more than just the psyche of the individual if it was to be useful in the collective rethinking of the city.” (1998: 77) This becomes clearly visible in the case of Sarajevo, where the individual, the collective and the city are, to quote Jestrović, “all intrinsic parts of a fragile ecology that depend on each other for survival.” (2013: 130) It could be said, with this in mind, that Lucky became the city first through identification [citizen(s) – city], and then through anthropomorphization [city – body]. In the process of anthropomorphization²⁷, human form or character is attributed to anything not human – in this case, the city is related to as if it were a human being. The parallel between Lucky and Sarajevo will now be explored through personification as a literary device.

²⁷ “anthropomorphize.” *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2011. Web. 2. Mar. 2015.

5.3.2 Lucky the City

The power element between Pozzo and Lucky turns the relationship into the “one of master and slave or servant.” (Calder 2001: 57) Pozzo uses the rope to control Lucky; he calls Lucky “pig” and “hog” (Beckett 30, 31), orders him about and constantly yells at him – Lucky receives an overall ruthless treatment. In this power relationship, Lucky has usually been interpreted as a slave who obeys all Pozzo’s requests with a “dog-like devotion”. (Mercier 1990: 53) In the play, Lucky speaks only once, and this is when Pozzo orders him to think; through the ensuing monologue he shows his “ludic urge to perform” (Jestrović 2013: 132), as well as his paradoxical freedom. While delivering his speech, he is “representing the intellect.” (Fletcher 1978: 41) It has been argued that Lucky is a “slave-philosopher” (Calder 2001: 72); he was tied with a rope and treated brutally, but he was still “[...] free in his mind: that, for a philosopher, is luck enough.” (Calder 2001: 94) Lucky is the tragic character who suffers the most in the play, but who is also the most resilient and intellectually superior to his tormentor whom he had served for about sixty years; Pozzo says to Gogo and Didi, “Guess who taught me all these beautiful things. [Pointing to Lucky.] Lucky!” (Beckett 33)

When Beckett was asked why Lucky was named that way, he replied: “I suppose he is Lucky to have no more expectations...” (Bair 1990: 407) Disillusioned, wounded but not completely broken or hardened, Lucky’s *thinking* undermines the power relation to “his” aggressor. His obedience degrades Pozzo’s role as the ultimate master – Pozzo says he wants to kill Lucky; Lucky starts weeping; Estragon attempts to dry Lucky’s tears with Pozzo’s handkerchief, but Lucky kicks him so hard that he starts bleeding; Lucky picks up the handkerchief and gives it back to Pozzo.

The analogy between Lucky and the city has not always been there. The role of Lucky started acquiring a new interpretation at the beginning of Sontag’s production of *Waiting for Godot* in Sarajevo. This reading of the role was not her idea; it came from Admir Glamočak, who was cast as Lucky. Glamočak said to Sontag: “I’m performing the city.” He explains the connection:

“I told Susan Sontag, who had her own vision of this character, that by performing Lucky, I will be performing the city. She replied that that could not be played, but I knew and felt that Lucky as a victim had tragic dimensions in common with Sarajevo. For me, Lucky sublimated what I was experiencing and what I was seeing and hearing: he was my child, my spouse, my friend – in short, my city. In a condensed and simplified way, he was, thus, the expression of Sarajevo. That’s why Lucky has been one of the best roles I’ve ever played. Lucky was the metaphor of Sarajevo and its citizens.”

(Diklić 2004: 93)

What did Glamočak mean by stating that he will be *performing the city*? How did this reading of besieged Sarajevo through Lucky occur? The process might have unfolded in three stages; that is, the actor had to:

1. identify with the city
2. undergo a subtle transformation process: put this identification through the prism of Lucky, and contextualize Lucky within the besieged city
3. be the vehicle for the role of Lucky – *perform the City*.

The juxtaposition *city-Lucky* could be said to result in *City*, with capital C. This is to differentiate between Sarajevo alone and Sarajevo as Lucky, and also to present the aforementioned process as *city-Lucky-City*. The first *city* means the city proper; *Lucky* is Beckett’s character; and the third component, the *City* is the product of reading Sarajevo through *Waiting for Godot* – and through contextualizing Lucky. This is not a universal or any Lucky of *Waiting for Godot*; this is Lucky in Sarajevo – in the end, in this analysis, *Lucky is Sarajevo*.

As seen in his explanation about performing Lucky, the points of comparison between the city and Lucky were clearly visible to Glamočak. In Jestrović’s translation, he states that he “knew and felt that Lucky [...] had tragic dimensions in common with Sarajevo”; that Lucky “sublimated” the city; and that Lucky was the “expression [...] and metaphor of Sarajevo and its citizens.” (Diklić 2004: 93) In the original text, in Bosnian, Glamočak says:

“Laki je za mene bio *koncentracija* onoga što sam proživio, vidio i čuo [...]”; “For me, Lucky was the *concentration* of what I experienced, saw and heard”²⁸ (Diklić 2004: 93),

²⁸ Glamočak’s testimony in Diklić’s book *Theatre in War Sarajevo*.

and in Jestrović's English translation, it is written:

“For me, Lucky *sublimated* what I was experiencing and what I was seeing and hearing.”
(Jestrović 2013: 130)

There is a difference in meaning between the original utterance and the translation. With the word *concentration* there seems to be no transformation process, and the meanings of the city are simply collected into Lucky; on the other hand, with the word *sublimate*, Lucky becomes a more delicate, higher form.

Jestrović's choice of the word *sublimate* is interesting. The scattered layers of meaning, or the city's constituents – conditionally said, the permanent constituents: the people, the culture, the architecture, and the constituents that marked the historical moment: destruction, death, danger; hunger, siege, were gathered and transformed during the production process. After they had gone through the production as the focal point, these layers dispersed themselves again and sublimated into Lucky – as a purer, idealized form of the city.

We will now look at the concrete examples and analogies between this Beckett's character and Sarajevo. Even though Lucky or the performance *Waiting for Godot* were not the primary objects of Jestrović's analysis in her chapter “City-as-Body” – Lucky is just one of the examples of the corporeality of the city – she makes several interesting points. In fact, Jestrović's points and my labeling of them (Analogy, Representation, Performance, Resistance) have roots in Glamočak's explanation to Sontag on how he saw himself performing the city. Briefly, on one page in her book chapter, Jestrović lists four useful and concise points in which she compares Lucky with the city. I take these points as a springboard for my analysis.

Glamočak says that Lucky has tragic dimensions in common with Sarajevo, that he sublimated the war experience, that Lucky *was* the city, as well as that Lucky was the metaphor of Sarajevo and its citizens. (Diklić 93) From his description, we see that Glamočak is definitely the originator of the coinage “Lucky the City”, which Jestrović takes as a subtitle to the section where she listed her four points of comparison.

However, Jestrović does not go into deeper analysis of Sarajevo through Lucky as a character. I will here expand and contextualize her points, and explain in detail how real life situation in the city could be read through Lucky. It is important to furnish the analysis with the exact excerpts from the play, as well as with the examples from the city. The excerpts and the examples are then brought into connection, which is relevant for full understanding of the analogy between Beckett's characters and other war participants. By taking the keywords from Jestrović's points, extracting and showing what they could mean in this context, I will offer an interpretation of how certain scenes from the performance must have resonated with the audience.

5.3.2.1 Analogy

The first and the most prominent resemblance between Lucky and Sarajevo is that they are both seriously hurt.

1. "Sarajevo, like Lucky's festering body sores, is a city that has been wounded."
(Jestrović 2013: 132).

The keyword from point 1 is *wounded*. The wounds on both Lucky and the city are literal, that is, physical. At the beginning of the play, shortly after Pozzo and Lucky make their appearance on stage and after it is determined that Pozzo is not the Godot they are waiting for, Pozzo orders Lucky to bring him the coat, and to hold the whip while he puts the coat on; then to bring and open the stool, bring the basket with food to Pozzo, and finally, to step back, because Pozzo thinks that Lucky "stinks". (Beckett 26) While Pozzo is busy eating, indulging in his chicken and taking sips from the bottle, Vladimir and Estragon start examining Lucky, who is not able to stand still, so he "sags slowly" (Beckett 26), until the bag and the basket he is holding touch the ground; he then straightens up, and starts to sag again. Vladimir and Estragon do not really pay much attention to Pozzo eating at this moment. Instead, they start discussing Lucky:

Estragon: What ails him?

Vladimir: He looks tired.

Estragon: Why doesn't he put down his bags?

Vladimir: How do I know? [They close in on him.] Careful!

Estragon: Say something to him.

Vladimir: Look!

Estragon: What?

Vladimir: [Pointing.] His neck!

(Beckett 26)

From the first, violent appearance of Lucky and Pozzo some pages before Lucky is examined, we learn that Lucky is heavily burdened with the things he carries for him: "A heavy bag, a folding stool, a picnic basket and a greatcoat". (Beckett 23) Lucky is the first to appear on the stage, and he is driven by the rope passed around his neck; Pozzo is the one controlling the rope. The rope stretches across the whole stage as Lucky walks. With "a terrible cry" (Beckett 22), Pozzo orders Lucky to walk in front of him; we hear Pozzo's voice, but we do not see him yet. With a "crack of whip" (Beckett 23) Pozzo appears, this time tautening the rope, so that Lucky goes back; as Pozzo pulls the rope, Lucky falls with all his baggage. So, apart from the rope around Lucky's neck, the heavy burden he is carrying, and Pozzo treating him like a slave, we do not know what Lucky looks like. Vladimir points to Lucky's neck, and tries to show Estragon what he saw:

Estragon: [Looking at his neck.] I see nothing.

Vladimir: Here.

[*Estragon* goes over beside *Vladimir*.]

Estragon: Oh I say.

Vladimir: A running sore!

Estragon: It's the rope.

Vladimir: It's the rubbing.

Estragon: It's inevitable.

Vladimir: It's the knot.

Estragon: It's the chaffing.

[They resume their inspection, dwell on the face.]

Vladimir: [Grudgingly.] He's not bad looking.

(Beckett 26)

Even though Lucky is seriously sores, he is still “not bad looking”, as Vladimir concludes. How does this connect to Jestrović’s point that “Sarajevo, like Lucky’s festering body sores, is a city that has been wounded”? (2013: 132) First of all, Sarajevo was besieged – the artillery *siege ring* around the city was like *the rope* around Lucky’s neck. This is the first, and literal, interpretation of the ring analogy; the control over the city, and over Lucky, was physical. The city and the people’s lives depended on someone else’s will and mercy; in the same way, Lucky depended on Pozzo’s will and his orders. Sarajevo has been wounded in multiple ways by shelling, bombing, and sniper, all of which came from the 46 kilometers²⁹ (Andreas 2008: 181) ring that aggressors held around the city.

Like Lucky, the citizens of Sarajevo were exhausted, as pointed out in the previous chapters, visibly worn out by hunger and fear. They also had to obey the ‘master’s’ rules – the citizens could only eat what was given to them as part of the humanitarian aid; they had to go to the shelter and hide from the shelling, as well as dance to the music of snipers. The freedom to live and move freely across and outside of their city was taken away from the citizens, and their everyday activities were highly dependent on the master’s, or – the aggressor’s, will. As much as the city was wounded, burnt, and destroyed from the outside, it was the same city; its outlines could still be recognized – as Vladimir grudgingly says about Lucky: “He’s not bad looking.” (Beckett 26) Estragon does not really agree with Vladimir:

Estragon: [Shrugging his shoulders, wry face.] Would you say so? (Beckett 26)

How can anyone with the rope around his or her neck, visibly wounded and exhausted, still look good? The answer can be found in the following points; the city with its citizens, like Lucky, was still alive and was not giving up during the most hopeless situations. The courageous spirit compensated for the bad looks.

²⁹ The ring was expanded to 64 km later in the siege, and it remained this way until the end of the war. (Andreas 181)

5.3.2.2 Representation

Jestrović in her next point refers to Lucky's long monologue, when Vladimir puts the hat on Lucky's head and Pozzo orders him to "think" (Beckett 41); Lucky then "pulls on the rope, staggers, shouts his text." (Beckett 42) Lucky struggles to deliver his nonsensical speech, to utter the words as fast as he can, while Pozzo tightens the rope, and Vladimir and Estragon do everything they can to silence him. The speech initially seems incoherent and meaningless, but it upsets Lucky's master, as well as Gogo and Didi, which is why they try to stop him; the words are loaded with meaning.

2. "Like Lucky, who painfully attempts to recreate meaning from the garbage heap of language, the city tries to survive through the alchemical process of turning rubble into urban art. That is, even though Lucky's speech is nonsensical, it makes a statement about inadequacy of language and representation." (Jestrović 2013: 132)

The key words here are *recreating meaning* and *representation*. Similar to Lucky's struggle to recreate meaning, the citizens were constantly adjusting in their search for meaning and finding solutions for the impossible situations. How to make sense with the only means of expression we have available? We attribute new meaning to already existing items – they *represent* something that is not their original attribute. In Lucky's case, language was the raw material; for Sarajevans, it was the rubble.

Being inventive was a task that people were forced to engage in as a part of everyday survival. The absence of some simple objects that can be found in every household posed a big problem for families during the war. Handmade stoves for heating and cooking, improvised lamps, beds, to name a few, are today exhibited in the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an example of what the standard kitchen or living room looked like during the war in Sarajevo, see Figures 12-14. Some of these objects now look like an art installation or scenography. Today, these mundane items represent recent historical events, and they have also, through time, acquired artistic meaning.

The same plastic foil that was used as the front cover for the platform on which Pozzo and Lucky were performing, could be seen across the entire city, because it practically replaced all

the glass surfaces. All windows in the city were shattered from either detonation or direct impact, and the foil that the citizens received as part of humanitarian aid was used to cover the holes in the walls where windows used to be. (See figure 13) However, UNHCR's protective plastic sheeting was also used to design fashion creations and stage a cat-walk show³⁰ in Holiday Inn, the same hotel where Sontag stayed while staging *Godot*.

Fashion is just one of the examples where rubble and nothingness were turned into art; the citizens were finding channels for expression, creating new – and recreating the old meaning. As pointed out in the introductory chapter, *Waiting for Godot* was not the only event that happened in Sarajevo in this period – there was a remarkable number of cultural activities which took place during the siege. Despite the senseless destruction of the city, art was constantly created in many different forms. In the foreword to his collection of testimonies about theatre in war Sarajevo, Diklić provides the numbers and summarizes the cultural events:

In this period [...] 3102 artistic and cultural events took place or on average 2.5 events per day!!! The Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra performed 48 concerts in Sarajevo and in Europe. On 5 February 1994, when 66 people were killed and 199 wounded in the Markale massacre³¹, the Sarajevo String Quartet performed its hundredth concert and continued performing until the end of the year. [...] Fifteen writers were killed during the war, and at the same time 263 books were published. [...] Although 18 visual artists were killed, exhibits were taking place all the time during the war, a total of 177 in six city galleries and in a number of improvised venues. [...] Despite the fact that ten filmmakers were killed, 156 documentary and short films were produced during the war. [...] In Sarajevo theatres, 182 performances premiered and over two thousand shows were performed that half a million people saw. (Diklić 2004: 10)

Regarding the second part of Jestrović's point and Lucky's speech being nonsensical, yet making a statement, it should be emphasized that his speech in the Sarajevo production was different from most deliveries of this portion of Beckett's text. The speech is usually said as nonsense (Munk: 1993: 33), but Sontag wanted Glamočak (cast as Lucky) to "say it as if it makes perfect sense [...] with great sincerity, not too fast." (Munk 33) Sontag's direction to the actor and the desire to make sense out of a heap of words can be compared to the city's aspiration to create art from nothingness.

³⁰ Vilić, Amela, costume designer. "A Fashion Show using Plastic Covering for Windows." *FAMA Collection*. Oral History. Web. 5. Mar. 2015. [<http://www.famacollection.org/index.php/tb-eng/TB-298>]

³¹ The first massacre at the central marketplace Markale. Other sources give different numbers of victims, 68 and 144.

5.3.2.3 Performance

The keyword in this point is the *performance*. By performing, Lucky pretends; he does it on purpose to feel he is alive; he strives to maintain “normality”. On different levels, Sarajevo does the same throughout the war. The citizens constantly attempt to rebuild the city through improvisation and performing the return to normality.

3. “It is an impossible and dangerous, yet absurdly vibrant place. Despite everything, Lucky exercises his ludic urge to perform and the performance is painful for Pozzo his master and tormentor.” (Jestrovic 2013: 132)

Beckett’s stage directions just before Lucky’s speech commences say that “Pozzo’s sufferings increase” (Beckett 41) and that he becomes “more and more agitated and groaning (42); Pozzo’s pain manifests during Lucky’s performance. The wilder Lucky performs, the more desperate Pozzo becomes. Also when Vladimir comments upon Pozzo’s treatment of Lucky, wondering how Pozzo can “turn away [...] such an old and faithful servant” (Beckett 33), Pozzo starts complaining:

Pozzo: [Groaning, clutching his head.] I can’t bear it ... any longer ... the way he goes on ... you’ve no idea ... it’s terrible ... he must go ... [He waves his arms] ... I’m going mad ... [He collapses, his head in his hands] ... I can’t bear it ... any longer ... [Silence. All look at Pozzo.] (34)

The potent master-slave metaphor from Pozzo and Lucky’s relationship can be extended to the dependent bond between *the city under siege* and *the aggressor*. Pozzo as The Aggressor will be discussed later as part of this chapter. It is highly annoying for Pozzo when he loses control over Lucky, or when Lucky, despite Pozzo’s treatment, is still alive, obedient, serving him; and not only that – Lucky *dances* (Beckett 39) and *thinks* (Beckett 41). Pozzo acts as if Lucky wants to be treated cruelly. In the same way, it must have been very annoying for the aggressors to see that despite the worst of destructions they did not manage to silence the citizens and extinguish the hope.

Both Estragon and Vladimir ask Pozzo: “Why doesn’t he (Lucky) put down his bags?” (Beckett 30, 31), and he replies:

Pozzo: He wants to impress me, so that I’ll keep him.

Estragon: What?

Pozzo: Perhaps I haven’t got it quite right. He wants to mollify me, so that I’ll give up the idea of parting with him. (31)

Vladimir: You want to get rid of him?

Pozzo: I do. (...) The truth is you can’t drive such creatures away. The best thing would be to kill them. (32)

The people could not leave Sarajevo; their voices were raised, pleading for help, telling the truth, and fighting for life – so the only way to silence them was to *kill* them.

This is why Pozzo’s last sentence resonated with literal meaning for the citizens in the besieged city. Pozzo even refers to Lucky and those similar to him as “such creatures” (Beckett 32); the plural used here enhances the identification of the civilian victims with Lucky. Nobody managed to cast the citizens out of their own city; “you can’t drive such creatures away.” (Beckett 32)

This *driving away* could be read as *ethnic cleansing*. The production of *Waiting for Godot* took place in summer 1993 and Pozzo’s words made strong associations in the moment when Sarajevo was under siege for 17 months. The ethnic cleansing campaign, in which the Army of the Republika Srpska targeted Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats, never seized throughout the war; two years after Sontag’s staging of *Godot* in Sarajevo, in July 1995, more than 8000 boys and men were killed in the time span of three days. This happened in Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia.

This point (*Performance*) and the next one (*Resistance*) are somewhat intertwined; in my view, it is difficult to discuss the resistance of citizens without knowing what performing normality included. Resilience has been developed through exercising resistance, and resistance embeds performing normality. These concepts in relation to Lucky and the city are discussed in the upcoming pages.

5.3.2.4 Resistance

4. “It is a resilient city. Vladimir kicks Lucky to see if he is dead, but Lucky is alive and Vladimir hurts his foot. Lucky conveys the notion of city-as-body: wounded yet resilient.” (Jestrović 2013: 133)

As we have seen in Jestrović’s fourth point, the example she is using and the particular scene she is referring to come from Act II. It is problematic to expand the research to the second act since Sontag did not stage it in the Sarajevo production, and this was an intentional choice; as discussed in the Chapter 4, everything is worse in Act II – Pozzo is blind, Lucky is dumb, Vladimir and Estragon are still waiting and, for the second time, Godot does not come. Sontag wanted to suggest that by keeping the play open and choosing out Act II, there could still be some hope for the citizens; as she stated in her essay written for the New York Review of Books: “Maybe I wanted to propose, subliminally, that Act II might be different.” (Sontag 1993: 56)

Another issue with point 4 is confusion with misnaming or misprinting. For this point to be clear, first the confusion needs to be clarified: it is not “Vladimir who kicks Lucky to see if he is dead” (Jestrović 132), it is Estragon. A close reading, however, makes it clear that this confusion occurs in several editions; *Vladimir* instead of *Estragon* appears in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* by Faber and Faber, 2006 – the edition I used, as well as in *Waiting for Godot* Grove Press edition from 1954, which Jestrović used.

In Act I Lucky cries after Pozzo says that “the best thing would be to kill” him (Beckett 32); Vladimir offers to wipe Lucky’s eyes, but Estragon refuses and it is him who approaches Lucky with the handkerchief to help him – and then Lucky “kicks him violently in the shins” (32). Then, in Act II, it is Estragon, not Vladimir, who revenges himself for the kick he received, which becomes clear from the following excerpt:

Vladimir: Make sure he’s alive before you start. No point in exerting yourself if he’s dead.

Estragon: [Bending over Lucky.] He’s breathing.

Vladimir: Then let him have it. (82)

The misnaming occurs now: instead of writing [With sudden fury *Estragon* starts kicking Lucky (...)] in stage directions, it says: [With sudden fury *Vladimir* starts kicking Lucky, hurling abuse at him as he does so. But he hurts his foot and moves away limping and groaning. Lucky stirs.] (Beckett 82) That it is definitely *Estragon* who kicked Lucky we can conclude from the lines that follow:

Estragon: Oh the brute!

Pozzo: What's gone wrong now?

Vladimir: My friend has hurt himself. (82)

Jestrović is making an interesting point by saying that “Lucky conveys the notion of city-as-body: wounded yet resilient” (Jestrović 133); however, the example she has chosen has proven to be a difficult one. Perhaps a better example of Lucky’s resilience, spite and dignity can be seen in Act I, when Lucky kicks *Estragon* who tried to comfort him and wipe his tears away. After *Pozzo* said, “the best thing would be to kill them” (Beckett 32), since one cannot “drive such creatures away” (32), referring to Lucky and those similar to him, Lucky starts to weep. *Pozzo*’s comment to this is: “Old dogs have more dignity” (32), and he offers his handkerchief to *Estragon* to comfort Lucky, since *Estragon* is the one who feels sorry for Lucky. *Estragon* hesitates, but takes the handkerchief in the end.

Pozzo: Wipe away his tears, he’ll feel less forsaken.

[*Estragon* hesitates.]

Vladimir: Here, give it to me, I’ll do it.

[*Estragon* refuses to give the handkerchief. Childish gestures.]

Pozzo: Make haste, before he stops.

[*Estragon* approaches Lucky and makes to wipe his eyes. Lucky kicks him violently in the shins. *Estragon* drops the handkerchief, recoils, staggers about the stage howling with pain.]

(Beckett 32)

Estragon’s leg starts to bleed, and *Pozzo* only comments, “It’s a good sign.” (32). Lucky here clearly shows that he does not want to be felt sorry for – he does not want the kind of help

that Estragon offers him. Curiously, Lucky changes so fast from the crying and being wounded and hopeless, to violent, ready to strike and protective, which shows his incredible *resilience* – the keyword of this point. Following the metaphor of Lucky the City – can it be said that Sarajevo and its citizens displayed the same ability to withstand the brutal treatment during the war? Is Sarajevo a resilient city?

When the shelling of the city started in April 1992, the aggressor expected to run the city down quickly because of the great military advantage that the Serb forces had. This created an imbalance of power; the official Bosnian military did not exist and civilians were dumbstruck by the sudden terror. In the beginning of the siege, the city's defense was constituted of mostly criminals and local patriots who merged with the police forces (Andreas 2008: 28); there was no organized defense³² because nobody expected that the threats and nationalistic tensions would escalate into war. As Andreas writes: “ [...] siege warfare in Europe was assumed to be a relic of the past, yet a modern European city that has hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics was being shelled less than a decade later.” (Andreas 2008: 2) The destruction of the city proved to be of greater dimensions, harder and longer than both the besiegers and the victims could have predicted.

At one point during the destruction, people started realizing that they were being forced to adjust to the given situation. Bajrović (cast as Vladimir 1) claims that the beginning of the war was the most horrific – the spring, the summer and the autumn of 1992: “We expected slaughter, people were in fear. That lasted until the end of 1992, when we understood that *siege is our fate* and that neither slaughters nor street fights will happen, but that those inhumans had decided to stay in the hillsides to kill us from there.” (Diklić 2004: 17) People started focusing their energy to organize life in the abnormal living conditions. Bajrović also says that the actors were highly motivated to work, and through their work they were striving to find meaning in complete absurdity. This is just one example, coming from the actor who participated in Sontag's production of *Godot* in Sarajevo; needless to say, each and every person who went through the horrors of the Bosnian war has their own survival story.

To unpack Jestrović's two claims from her last point, that Sarajevo is “a resilient city” (2013: 133), and, like Lucky, that it is “wounded yet resilient” (133), it is necessary to have a closer

³² Andreas 2008, Chapter 1, 3-20.

look at the possible forms of resilience in the capital. Resilience can have many faces, on a scale from being tough and adaptable, withstanding emotional and physical turmoil for a long time, to being springy and easily restored to full recovery in a shorter period of time. It can be more acute and literal – like Lucky who was crying in one moment only to kick Estragon in the shin with force enough to make him bleed in the next moment. It also suggests performance and gradual development.

Seen in retrospect, in the case of Sarajevo, it seems that resilience was the result of several finely intertwined points, two of them being *performing normality* and *resistance*. The resistance was twofold; one part of it was the armed resistance, in the military sense, and the other part was the cultural resistance, which manifested itself through the efforts in the cultural field. The reason for continuing the cultural activities during the war was to preserve the dignity and hope, maintain the morale, and, as stated in several testimonials, it gave a strong sense of purpose. (Diklić 2004) People created art to survive, and it felt as important as going to fetch water. As Nada Đurevska (cast as Vladimir 2) stated: "In those moments, art was to all of us a kind of therapy and shelter." (Diklić 2004: 73)

Performing normality implied a wide range of activities which are connected to the ideal life image, or straightforwardly, *normal* life as it was known in Sarajevo before the war. This performance consisted of convincing oneself to go on with everyday life – or at least, to pretend to be doing so – despite of absurdly difficult conditions. Seemingly unimportant, or activities that are usually taken for granted, had to be re-learned or done in a new way under siege: cooking with what was available, showering, having a cup of coffee and a cigarette, going to work and school, reading books in the candlelight, handicrafts like making jewelry or learning how to play an instrument – everything was challenging. Humor, spite and self-irony were, on a no small scale, great contributors to resistance for the citizens during the siege.

To return to Lucky, who, despite being helpless, kicked Estragon because he did not want to receive the help that was offered to him: there is another point of comparison with Sarajevo. As previously explained, the military advantage of the Serb army was overwhelming, and the besieged citizens had few options and means to defend themselves. Regarding being helped in the way that is not essentially helpful, it is important to note that Sarajevo had received enormous amounts of humanitarian aid in various forms from UN agencies and non-

governmental organizations, a big part of which never reached the intended recipients. On the other hand, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo in September 1991³³, which meant that the deliveries of weapons and military equipment to all entities belonging to former Yugoslavia were forbidden. The Serb army had been equipped in beforehand, and continued receiving ammunition from Serbia throughout the war, but they had fewer people. (Andreas 2008: 32) For the Bosnian army, the problem was the opposite – there were enough men, but unarmed. Andreas points out that: “No other war is as closely associated with humanitarian assistance as is the Bosnian conflict.” (2008: 2) Of course people in the besieged city needed food and essentials for living, but as quoted in Andreas, a State Department official simply put it: “They needed guns, we sent them flour.” (2008: 37) Lucky needed the rope around his neck to be taken off, but he was offered a handkerchief to wipe his tears away. In the same way, the siege ring around Sarajevo needed to be broken. Instead, people were offered humanitarian aid so they could withstand the siege longer.

5.3.3 Waiting for... Clinton?

What everybody in Sarajevo at that time was waiting for was an American intervention. In her New York Review of Books essay, “Godot Comes to Sarajevo”, Sontag writes that she and the cast tried to avoid jokes about “waiting for Clinton but that was very much what we were doing” (Sontag 1993: 57) in late July 1993, when the Serbs took positions on Mount Igman, which allowed them to fire shells horizontally into the center of the city. The citizens hoped for American airstrikes to be conducted over the Serb gun positions, or for the arms embargo to be lifted. In this context, the following exchange between Didi and Gogo must have struck a deep resonance with the audiences, if we think of Godot as president Clinton:

Vladimir: Let’s wait and see what he says.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: Godot. [...] I’m curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we’ll take it or leave it.

³³ “Resolution 713”. *UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency. Refworld*. Web. 31. Mar. 2015. [<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/rwmain?docid=3b00f16f1c>]

Estragon: What exactly did we ask him for?

Vladimir: Oh... nothing very definite.

Estragon: A kind of prayer.

Vladimir: Precisely.

Estragon: And what did he reply?

Vladimir: That he'd see.

Estragon: That he couldn't promise anything.

Vladimir: That he'd have to think it over.

Estragon: In the quiet of his home.

Vladimir: Consult his family.

Estragon: His friends.

Vladimir: His agents.

Estragon: His correspondents.

Vladimir: His books.

Estragon: His bank account.

Vladimir: Before taking a decision. (20)

5.3.4 Lucky the City and Pozzo the Aggressor

After having discussed the metaphor of Lucky as the City, the master-slave relationship between Lucky and Pozzo can be further explored. The rope as the symbol of authority defines their bond; Pozzo controls Lucky with the means of the rope which makes wounds around his neck. In the analogy where Lucky is the besieged city, Pozzo becomes the aggressor. Following this parallel, the figure Pozzo is compared to the Serb aggressors besieging the city and forming the ring around it. The ring around Lucky's neck in Beckett's play was made of rope, but the ring around Sarajevo was made of heavy artillery. Just like Pozzo the character in the play is not dehumanized, the aggressor is not dehumanized either; he is given a human face.

Radovan Karadžić (1945-) was the main plotter of the Bosnian war³⁴. He studied medicine at University of Sarajevo and became a psychiatrist; he is also a published poet. Karadžić never showed malice towards other national groups prior to his political beginnings around 1990. His rapidly growing nationalistic tendencies turned extreme rather fast. He established a political party, SDS (*Srpska demokratska stranka*, Serb Democratic Party), which exclusively served the interests of ethnical Serbs in Bosnia, and he bonded with Serbia's leader, Slobodan Milošević, during the secret military build up before the war. As the nationalist party leader he was elected to the Bosnian parliament, and there, on October 15, 1991, he threatened the extinguishment of Bosnian Muslims if Bosnia continued insisting on its independence from Yugoslavia, with these words:

“Don't think that you won't take Bosnia and Herzegovina to hell, and the Bosnian Muslim people perhaps to annihilation. Because the Bosnian Muslim people would not be able to defend themselves if there was a war here.”³⁵

All the time until the end of the war Karadžić had the Serb forces under his control. He is indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for genocide, persecutions, extermination, murder, deportation, crimes against humanity, violence with the main purpose to spread terror among the civilian population, unlawful attack on civilians³⁶, for all of which he is currently prosecuted in the Hague, Netherlands. The former president of Republika Srpska chose to defend himself against the criminal charges. Karadžić is now waiting for his verdict, which is not expected before mid to late 2015.

For these reasons, Karadžić stands as the embodiment of the aggressor figure. He is also a figure of many contradictions: a poet, a psychiatrist, a family man, to the most of the world known as the “Butcher of Bosnia”, but for Serb ultranationalists and large parts of the population in Republika Srpska, he is a hero. As Robert Donia claims in a newly published biography of Karadžić, he was “a chameleon”, “a narcissist in the courtroom no less than in

³⁴ Robert J. Donia, *Radovan Karadžić. Architect of the Bosnian Genocide*; Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*; Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia (BBC)*; Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*; Kjell Arild Nilsen, *Milošević i krig og i Haag – en dokumentasjon*.

³⁵ “Karadžić o izjavi da ce muslimani nestati.” *Youtube*. 16. Mar. 2010. Web. 30. Mar. 2015. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIrzImkJiOw>]

³⁶ “Case information sheet Radovan Karadžić.” *ICTY*. Web. 30. Mar. 2015. [http://www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/cis/en/cis_karadzic_en.pdf]

public life” (Donia 2015: 6), “architect and perpetrator of genocide” (Donia 2015: xi), and a highly intelligent man.

Comparing the character of Pozzo and his treatment of Lucky to a prosecuted war criminal such as Karadžić and his treatment of the besieged city has its limits, but there are some instances in the performance where the allegory resonates with uncanniness, exactly because of the hypocrisy and sensitivity the ones in power display after brutally treating the one they hold captive.

In the play, there are three episodes of crying shortly following one another: first it is Lucky who cries because Pozzo wants to kill him; then it is Estragon, crying because he is kicked by Lucky for trying to comfort him; and last, Pozzo cries because his “good angel” is killing him. Before the tears started going from one character to another, Pozzo, “in the goodness of (my) heart” (Beckett 32) was bringing Lucky to the fair, where he hoped to sell the slave, but he was actually very determined that “the best thing would be to kill” him. (32) Lucky starts crying after having heard this; Estragon attempts to comfort him by wiping away his tears, but Lucky kicks him in the shin; then Estragon bleeds and “staggers about the stage howling with pain.” (32) Pozzo’s reaction to this is:

“He’s stopped crying. [To Estragon.] You have replaced him as it were. [Lyrically.] The tears of the world are a constant quantity. For each one who begins to weep, somewhere else another stops. The same is true of the laugh.” [He laughs.]

(Beckett 33)

Following this formula of tears and extending it to mean the same for the laughter of the world, Pozzo laughs – which means that he has, at that moment, taken away the laughter from someone else. His comment to the suffering of others is heartless and cruel. He goes on:

[...] “Guess who taught me all these beautiful things. [Pause. Pointing to Lucky.] My Lucky! [...] But for him all my thoughts, all my feelings, would have been of common things.”

(Beckett 33)

During the “nearly sixty years” (Beckett 33) of their relationship, Lucky has always been the more intelligent member of this pair; he dances, he helps Pozzo, carries everything for him, he

is loyal, and Pozzo still wants to get rid of him. Vladimir says to Pozzo: “After having sucked all the good out of him you chuck him away like a... like a banana skin.” (Beckett 33) Pozzo replies that he cannot bear “the way he [Lucky] goes on [...] he must go” (34) and, he breaks, while sobbing, “He used to be so kind... so helpful... and entertaining... my good angel... and now... he’s killing me.” (34) On top of it all, Lucky later *thinks*; he has so much to say that Vladimir, Estragon and Pozzo have to throw themselves on him to prevent him from further shouting his text (42) and in the end, Vladimir must take his thinking hat off to silence him. (44) In a paradoxical way, Lucky is free and Pozzo suffers because of that.

It is curious how Pozzo changes, almost in an instant, from his strong determination to kill Lucky, and cruel carelessness when Estragon was crying, into a highly sensitive man who calls Lucky his good angel. This contradiction can be compared to Karadžić’s role in the military strategy of firing snipers and shells at civilians in Sarajevo and his response to ICTY twenty years later, that every shell that had fallen on Sarajevo “hurt me personally”³⁷, and that he should be rewarded for “reducing suffering”³⁸, not accused of war crimes.

Tracing the crying parallel of Lucky-Estragon-Pozzo as City-people-Aggressor, we see that the City cries, then the citizens cry, then the aggressor cries because of two possible reasons: 1. the city is resilient; the aggressor cannot destroy it – instead he goes on torturing it; 2. the city gave him education, professional recognition and exactly in this place the aggressor started his political career – it was his “good angel”, as Pozzo said about Lucky, and Karadžić rewarded the city by shelling it and killing civilians. The city resisted and refused to bow down. It is not the fault of the City that the aggressor was arrested for his war crimes – but in the aggressor’s reversed logics – it indeed is because of the city that he is prosecuted in Hague. If the city did not provoke him to shell it, he would not have had to do it. Karadžić drove himself into the moral abyss of committing the worst crimes against humanity. Michael Gurnow writes, “the true slave had always been Pozzo”³⁹; in the same way, Karadžić is the slave of his own ideology.

³⁷ “Radovan Karadzic denies Bosnia war crimes.” *BBC News*. 16. Oct. 2012. Web. 6. Apr. 2015.
[<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19952899>]

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Gurnow, Michael. “No Symbol Where None Intended: A Study of Symbolism and Allusion in Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*.” *The Modern World*. Web. 5. Apr. 2015.

5.3.5 Hungry Estragon, Hungry Citizens

Something that has spoken just as directly to the audience as Lucky performing the city, Pozzo as the aggressor, or Clinton being the embodiment of Godot they were all waiting for, must have been the food scenes in the performance. The last parallel and comparison to be discussed as part of this chapter is the one of hungry citizens with hungry Estragon. Food shortage for the people in Sarajevo during the siege was not a philosophical question or an abstract idea; it was literal. The choice of food was limited – if it could be called a choice at all. The citizens had to take what was given to them as part of humanitarian aid, and, as written earlier in the chapter on production, the hunger and yearning for certain items were often overwhelming. Complaining about it – voicing it out loud, asking for a piece of chocolate from the parents, fried egg with sunny side up, not to mention fresh fruit or vegetables – could not help, because that kind of food could not be acquired. This is for instance one of the central themes in children’s memories from the war.⁴⁰

Estragon is hungry; after deciding that the best thing is not to do anything and go on waiting for Godot, who has to consult all his friends, correspondents and bank account before making a decision to help (Beckett 19/20), and in the scene preceding the entrance of Lucky and Pozzo on stage (22/23), Estragon is hungry – and Vladimir offers him a carrot to soothe his hunger. They have the following exchange:

Estragon: [Violently.] I’m hungry.

Vladimir: Do you want a carrot?

Estragon: Is that all there is?

Vladimir: I might have some turnips.

Estragon: Give me a carrot. [Vladimir rummages in his pockets, takes out a turnip and gives it to Estragon who takes a bite out of it. Angrily.] It’s a turnip!

Vladimir: Oh pardon! I could have sworn it was a carrot. [He rummages again in his pockets, finds nothing but turnips.] All that’s turnips. [He rummages.] You must have eaten the last. [He rummages.] Wait, I have it. [He brings out the carrot and gives it to

⁴⁰ Memories of children survivors from Sarajevo, collected by Jasminko Halilović in book *Djetinjstvo u ratu*. (*War Childhood*.) Sarajevo: Udruženje Urban, 2013.

Estragon.] There, dear fellow. [Estragon wipes the carrot on his sleeve and begins to eat it.] Give me the turnip. [Estragon gives back the turnip which Vladimir puts in his pocket.] Make it last, that's the end of them. (21)

To give advice such as “make it last”, because it is the last piece of something so basic and easily available, and such a common vegetable as a carrot, could only make sense and have meaning to someone who felt the lack of it. Like a little child, Estragon says to Vladimir that he is hungry, and expects Vladimir to do something about it. Already showing disappointment that there is nothing else but the carrot to eat, Estragon agrees to take it. Like an understanding parent, companion, or a caretaker, Vladimir caringly looks for the carrot in his pocket and by mistake gives a turnip to the frustrated Estragon. Vladimir apologizes, and finally, after some effort, finds this single carrot and gives it to Estragon. After that, he asks Estragon to give him the turnip back so he can carefully store it in his pocket and save for the next, sure to come, hungry episode.

For the citizens deprived of food – also of cigarettes, sugar and coffee – it was not difficult to imagine oneself in Estragon's shoes and identify with the moment when he received the better out of the two simple choices he had, and started eating it. Estragon's frustration and disappointment with the lack of food choice can be compared to hopelessness of choice for the citizens in Sarajevo. Instead of Estragon's carrot and turnip, they could choose between macaroni and rice, the two most common ingredients of the humanitarian aid during the war. Gogo and Didi go on:

[...]

Vladimir: How's the carrot?

Estragon: It's a carrot.

Vladimir: So much the better, so much the better. [Pause.] What was it you wanted to know?

Estragon: I've forgotten. [Chews.] That's what annoys me. [He looks at the carrot appreciatively, dangles it between finger and thumb.] I'll never forget this carrot. [He sucks the end of it meditatively.]

Estragon was not especially grateful – he replies to Vladimir's question about the carrot briefly and unenthusiastically – it is what it is, a simple carrot, and of course he should be

able to get many more of them and much more than just a simple vegetable. But upon further inspection, his appreciation rises, and Estragon here refers to the carrot as to the most delicious treat, saying that he will never forget it.

This scene must have echoed with the audience in the Youth Theatre. To explain how and why, I must tell the story about the ICAR meat can. ICAR is canned beef that Sarajevans received during the war as a part of humanitarian aid. (See figures 20 and 21) There are still discussions about the quality, content, dates of production and expiry, and the country of origin of these meat cans. The popular joke often told by the locals is that not even cats and dogs wanted to eat this so-called beef, but people had to, since they had no other choice. The myth goes on – if the dogs did eat this meat, their hair turned grey. The citizens were craving for meat, and this bad quality canned beef was what they were provided with. In 2007, an ironic monument to canned beef was raised in Sarajevo⁴¹. The inscription on its marble foundation reads: “The Monument to the International Community” from the “Grateful Citizens of Sarajevo”. On top of the base stands a one-meter high can of beef replica with ICAR written across it. In relation to this, the end of the ‘carrot conversation’ between Gogo and Didi stirs the memory of this unfortunate meat can and the citizens who ate its outdated contents⁴²:

[...]

Estragon: [He raises what remains of the carrot by the stub of leaf, twirls it before his eyes.] Funny, the more you eat the worse it gets.

Vladimir: With me it’s just the opposite.

Estragon: In other words?

Vladimir: I get used to the muck as I go along.

The primary satisfaction of the basic human need for food, a relief, and almost a reward after tasting the food, as well as Estragon’s gratefulness that he got to taste the carrot, suddenly turned into a realization that this carrot is nothing special. His brain reacted first, then his taste buds followed – after the initial thrill of eating, Estragon’s deep hunger was satiated for a

⁴¹ “Bosnians raise monument to canned beef.” *Reuters*. 6. Apr. 2007 Web. 5. Apr. 2015. [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2007/04/06/oukoe-uk-bosnia-monument-can-idUKL0657786020070406]

⁴² Sadiković, Amira, UNHCR. “No information on the quality of humanitarian aid.” *FAMA Collection*. Oral History Interview, October 1992. Web. 25. Mar. 2015. [http://www.famacollection.org/index.php/tb-eng/TB-281]

brief moment, only for the disappointment to come back. On the other hand, Vladimir's comment is graver, with lower expectations and acceptance that this difficult situation will last. It was similar with the citizens who have not tasted meat for a long time – when they got ICAR, they were initially thrilled by it, but soon realized that it did not taste as good as expected, or was that good for them – but they eventually got used to “the muck”. After all, the siege lasted for 1425 days.

6 Conclusion

Remembering [...] means recognition of the victims' memories. [...] [R]emembering is the beginning of a process, not its end.

Aleida Assmann (2011: 50)

What is the function of art? In special circumstances, what does art really do? In the widest meaning, art gives *freedom*. It allows exploration; it provides a space for communication; it soothes and relieves the pain, allows us to play, raises important questions that otherwise could not be addressed; it challenges what we know about reality; it implies responsibility. Thus, art demands presence.

Theatre has a special place among the various art forms because it is about *here* and *now* more than any other means of expression. People gather in the haven of theatre for a kind of ritual in which they can re-experience themselves and others. However, the function of theatre and art in general becomes even more prominent if we take a closer look at their role in times of crisis. To be free and safe in the theatre acquires *literal* meaning when discussed in the context of war.

Peter Brook, the English theatre and film director, writes that “the theater is a holy place in which a greater reality could be found” (2008: 60), and this was exactly the significance of theatre for people during the Bosnian war: it provided a shelter from the constant bombardment and it became a “symbolic space” (Jestrović 2013: 129). Theatre became a haven in both a literal and a symbolic sense in Sarajevo: literal because the theatre physically protected the audience and the actors from danger; and symbolic because theatre activity became the core of cultural and spiritual resistance. The theatre became a place for preserving first dignity, and then sanity.

As we have seen, during the siege the citizens were deprived of all the means necessary for leading everyday life, and completely shattered by the war reality. The fact that there was nothing to be done to change this was worse for the citizens than food and water deprivation. Media presented the Bosnians to the world as powerless victims and this label, in addition to

truly dehumanizing circumstances, contributed to their feeling of lost dignity. In this sense resistance through cultural activities was of utmost importance – *putting on a play* was a “serious expression of normality”, as Sontag writes in her essay “Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo” (1993: 54), and therefore a way for the citizens to recover their dignity.

Since the citizens could not physically protect themselves from the everyday shelling and snipers, they tried to at least shield themselves from the ongoing emotional turmoil, to increase and optimize the functionality of everyday life. People worked themselves into conscious *forgetting*, which implies strenuous effort and repression. This made all life under siege appear as *performance*; Sarajevans performed normality and life. The social anthropologist Ivana Maček writes that “Sarajevans described their wartime existence as an *imitation of life*.” (Maček 2009: 62) In this situation, it was not a miracle that theatre was up and going – it was natural and necessary, and the only thing left to do. It was as if they were making theatre on multiple levels.

The first level of theatre implies the actual stage within the theatre proper. The professional actors were performing on the podium; their audience was the citizens.

The second level of theatre consists of the city as a colosseum – the city was besieged in a ring of artillery – in which the citizens were the actors, performing normality and life; their audience was the aggressors who held them at gunpoint.

The interaction between “the actors” and “the audience” on the second level corresponds to a theatre of war in the strategic, military sense. On the third level, the audience is the international community, watching the performance in the theatre of war.

On this third level, the main ‘on-stage’ activity is that of the citizens waiting, which is the main thematic connection with the play Susan Sontag staged in Sarajevo. When she came to the besieged city to make a production of Beckett’s play, the citizens were grateful that not the entire international community was silently observing the destruction. Sontag’s engagement reinforced their efforts; her presence meant that they were not forgotten. This brings us back to the first level and the specific object of study in this thesis, the production of *Waiting for Godot* in Sarajevo, in 1993.

Exploring the play through the war context “challenges us to a new kind of listening” (Caruth 1995: 10), therefore opening the possibility for new understanding and interpretations of the play. This production has highly affected the reading of *Waiting for Godot* because of the circumstances under which it was staged. For instance, what otherwise would be considered a prop – like the carrot that Vladimir gives to Estragon – can no longer be looked upon as a mere prop.

We saw that theatre under siege, where Sontag’s production holds a special place, was of major importance for the citizens during the war. But what does the memory of those events mean for us today? What does it mean for the understanding of literature, for performance studies, for memory studies, for the survivors as a collective? Here the problem with memory starts unfolding – how do we remember the positive event that happened within the negative context? In what way is the remembering done? These are some of the questions that remain to be explored through further research.⁴³

⁴³ A couple of weeks before the deadline for this thesis, I got hold of a collection of photos from the Susan Sontag Archive, the Department of Special Collections at the Charles E. Young Research Library, at U.C.L.A. The photos show the English text of *Waiting for Godot* as well as the Bosnian translation, with Sontag’s notes and inscriptions in pencil. Kaja Schjerven Mollerin, who is currently writing her PhD about ethics and aesthetics in Sontag’s authorship, visited the Sontag archive in April 2015 and made the photographs for me.

A detailed analysis of the texts, Sontag’s notes and translation/adaptation, exceeds the scope of my dissertation since this rich material could not be examined in such a short period of time.

On the level of production, it would be interesting to take a closer look at Sontag’s dramaturgical changes: how she divided the text between the different pairs of Vladimirs and Estragons, where they joined and shared the lines and where they parted, etc. We could certainly learn more about the tripling of the roles from closely examining these texts with Sontag’s notes.

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Appendix



Figure 1 The Cast of *Waiting for Godot* with Susan Sontag. Photo by Paul Lowe, 1993.

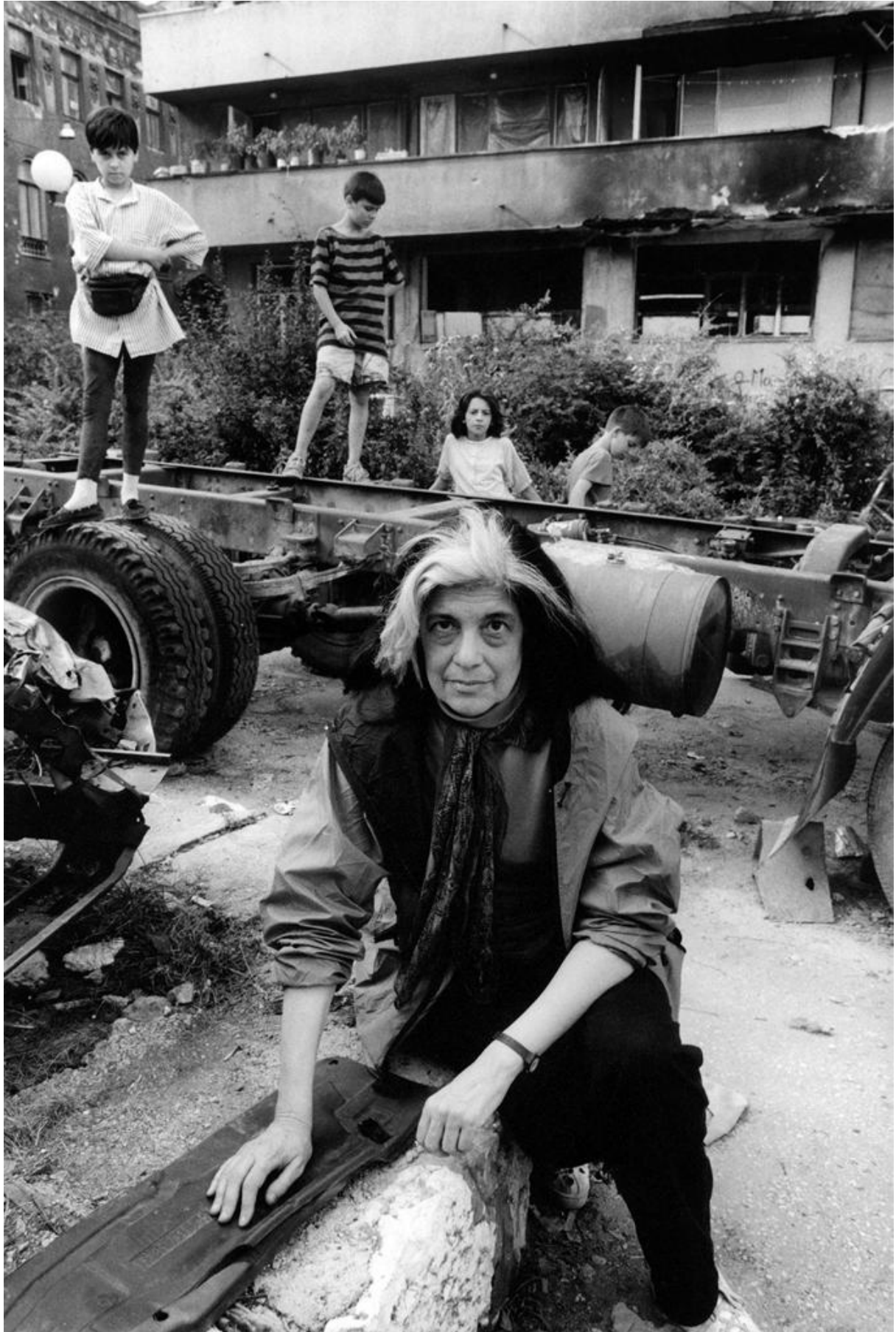


Figure 2 Susan Sontag in Sarajevo, 1993. Photo by Paul Lowe.



Figure 3 Discussing costumes. Photo by Paul Lowe, 1993.



Figure 4 During the rehearsals in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre. Photo by Paul Lowe, 1993.



Figure 5 Rehearsals under the candlelight. Photo by Paul Lowe, 1993.



The cast of the Sarajevo production of Godot. Seated: Ines Fancovic, Sead ("Sejo") Bejtovic, Mirza Halilovic, Nada Djurevska, Izudin ("Izo") Bajrovic, Susan Sontag. Standing: Milijana Zirojevic, Velibor Topic, Admir ("Atko") Glamocak, Irena Mulamuhic. In the lobby of the Youth Theater, Sarajevo, late July 1993. Photograph by Annie Leibovitz

Figure 6 From the *New York Review of Books*, October 1993. In the lobby of the Youth Theatre. Photo by Annie Leibovitz.



Figure 7 Pozorište mladih Sarajevo – The Sarajevo Youth Theatre. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 8 Narodno pozorište – The National Theatre. View through the alley connecting the Youth and the National Theatre. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 9 The National Theatre and the Susan Sontag Theatre Square. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 10 The Susan Sontag Theatre Square in front of the National Theatre. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 11 The alley where the Youth Theatre is situated, seen from the entrance of the National Theatre. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 12 Oven made from a barrel. Historical Museum BiH. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 13 Permanent exhibition *Sarajevo under Siege* in the Historical Museum BiH. A typical wartime kitchen/living room interior. On the window to the left is the UNHCR plastic foil mentioned in the thesis. Note the similarity to scenography/art installation. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 14 From the permanent exhibition *Sarajevo under Siege*. 5-liter plastic canisters that meant life. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 15 The Holiday Inn Hotel in Sarajevo. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.

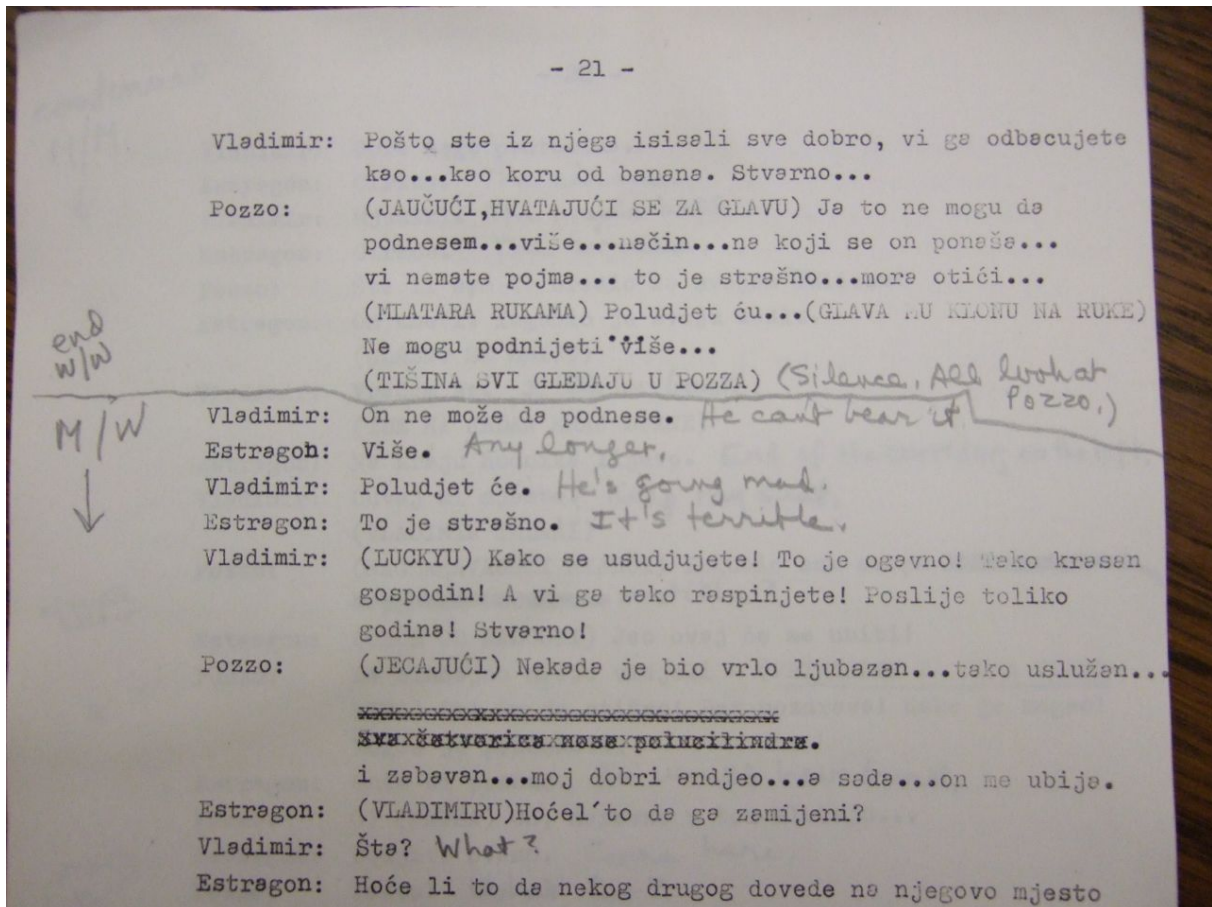


Figure 16 Bosnian translation of Waiting for Godot with Sontag's notes. From The Sontag Archive, UCLA. Photo by Kaja Schjerven Mollerin, April 2015.

- 1993 -

1.	8. VIII 1993	PREMIJERA	EURIPID: "ALKESTIS" - H. PAŠOVIĆ	14 ⁰⁰
2.	- II -	DRUGA PREMIJERA	"ALKESTIS"	16 ⁰⁰
3.	9. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	14 ⁰⁰
4.	9. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	16 ⁰⁰
5.	13. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	16 ⁰⁰
6.	17. VIII 1993	PREMIJERA	S. BEKET: "ČEKAJUĆI GODOA" - S. ZOKIĆ	14 ⁰⁰
7.	- II -	DRUGA PREMIJERA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	16 ⁰⁰
8.	18. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	14 ³⁰
9.	19. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	12 ⁰⁰
10.	20. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	14 ⁰⁰
11.	21. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	16 ⁰⁰
12.	21. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	16 ⁰⁰
13.	25. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	13 ⁰⁰
14.	25. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	15 ⁰⁰
15.	28. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	13 ⁰⁰
16.	28. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	15 ⁰⁰
17.	30. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	14 ⁰⁰
18.	1. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	13 ⁰⁰
19.	1. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	15 ⁰⁰
20.	26. VIII	PREMIJERA	D. LIKIĆ: "BAJESKIJA" - G. GOJER	14 ⁰⁰
21.	27. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"BAJESKIJA"	14 ⁰⁰
22.	31. VIII	PREDSTAVA	"BAJESKIJA"	14 ⁰⁰
23.	2. IX	PREDSTAVA	"BAJESKIJA"	14 ⁰⁰
24.	5. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	14 ⁰⁰
25.	5. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	16 ⁰⁰
26.	7. IX	PREDSTAVA	"BAJESKIJA"	14 ⁰⁰
27.	8. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	16 ⁰⁰
28.	9. IX	PREDSTAVA	"BAJESKIJA"	14 ⁰⁰
29.	10. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	13 ⁰⁰
30.	10. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ČEKAJUĆI GODOA"	15 ⁰⁰
31.	11. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	13 ⁰⁰
32.	11. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	15 ⁰⁰
33.	12. IX	PREDSTAVA	"ALKESTIS"	15 ⁰⁰

Figure 17 A copy of a hand-written repertoire list from 1993 displayed in A Window Exhibition: Theatre under Siege 1992-1995, in the Sarajevo Youth Theatre. "Čekajući Godoa" is Bosnian for "Waiting for Godot." Photo by author, July 2014.

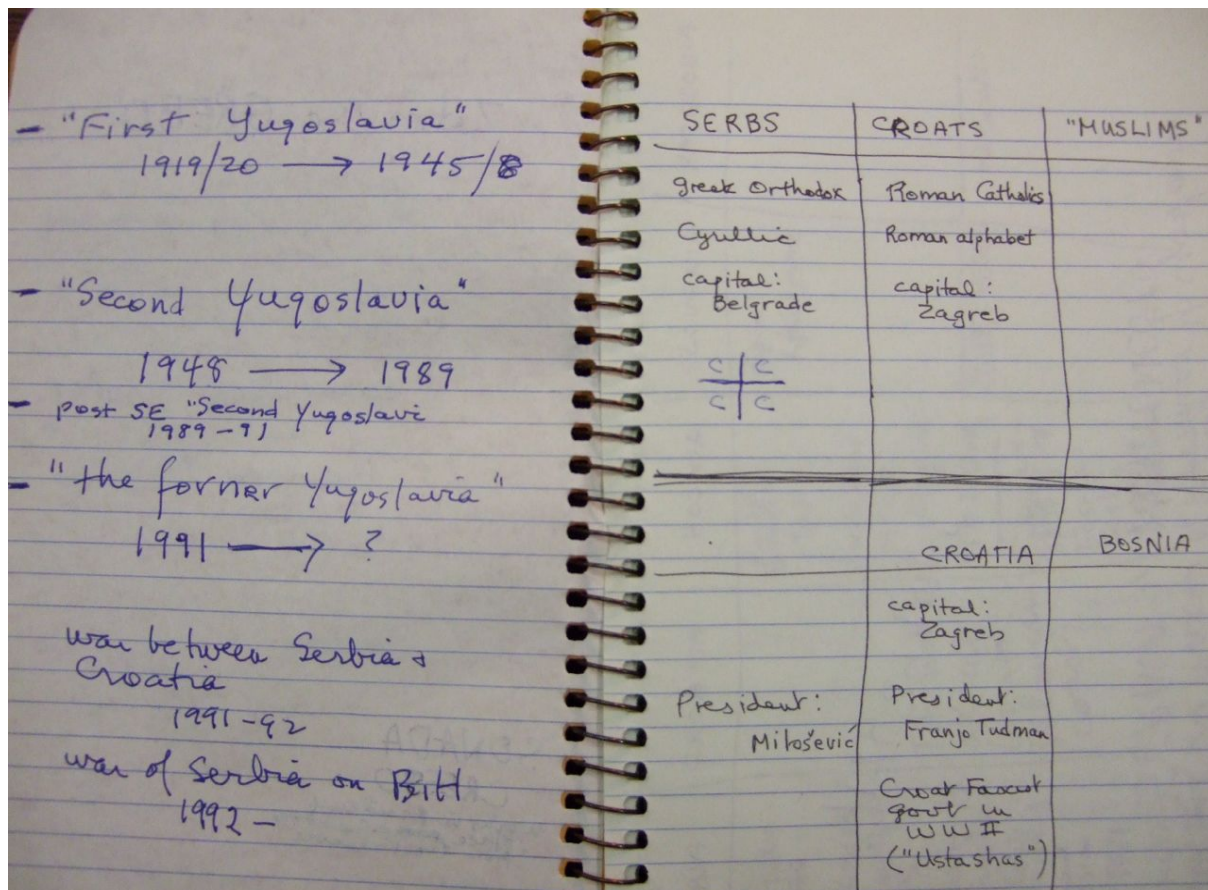


Figure 18 From Susan Sontag's notebook. Photo by Kaja Schjerven Mollerin, April 2015.

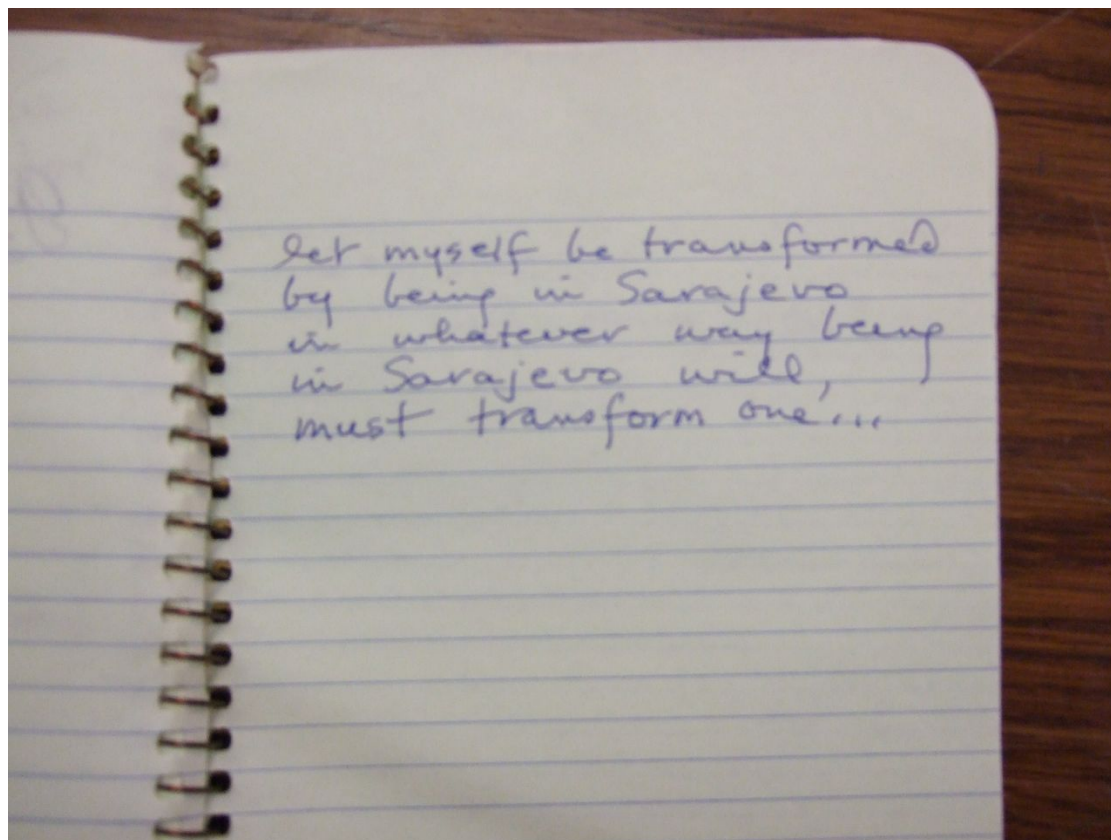


Figure 19 "Let myself be transformed by being in Sarajevo in whatever way being in Sarajevo will, must transform one..." From Susan Sontag's notebook. Photo by Kaja Schjerven Mollerin, April 2015. Susan Sontag Archive, UCLA Library.



Figure 20 Food items from humanitarian aid displayed in the Historical Museum. ICAR canned beef to the right. Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.



Figure 21 ICAR canned beef "Monument to the International Community from the Grateful Citizens of Sarajevo." Photo by Amar Bidžević, April 2015.