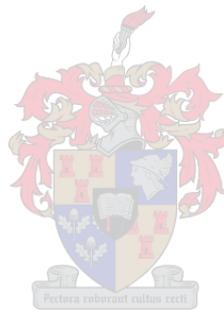


**THE CONRADIE CODEC:
THE RECODING OF MEANING IN FOUR OF MY STAGE ADAPTATIONS**

by

Wilhelm Conradie



Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Drama (Directing) at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof. Edwin Hees

March 2015

DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that the reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signed: Wilhelm Conradie

Date: March 2015

Copyright © 2015 Stellenbosch University
All rights reserved

Table of contents

DECLARATION	1
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
ABSTRACT	4
OPSOMMING	6
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	8
CHAPTER TWO: CASE STUDY ONE – <i>TWINTIG AKTEURS OP SOEK NA 'N [BETER] REGISSEUR</i>	35
CHAPTER THREE: CASE STUDY TWO – <i>ONSINDROOM</i>	58
CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY THREE – <i>iFOREST</i>	79
CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY FOUR – <i>WHEN IN LOVE...</i>	99
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	118
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to the following people for their commitment, guidance, encouragement and support:

- My wife and favourite person in this world, Uné, for supporting me when I decided to give up – and supporting me when I decided to push through;
- Prof. Edwin Hees for constantly reminding me that it is best to keep writing and for making this process an enjoyable one;
- Prof. Marie Kruger for encouraging me to persevere;
- Anlé D’Emiljo, who is crossing the finish line with me;
- Marleen van Wyk of the JS Gericke Library for her assistance;
- All the performers, writers, directors, choreographers, designers, technicians and staff members of the Stellenbosch University Drama Department and HB Thom Theatre who were involved with the creation of the various adaptations; especially Estelle Olivier for her work on *When in Love...* as well as her assistance with this thesis.

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I attempted to analyse the four adaptations I created between 2004 and 2010. The first two products (texts and productions) were created in 2004 and 2005, while I was a student at the Stellenbosch University Drama Department. The third adaptation (text only) was created in 2007, while I was a freelance stage manager. In 2010, I collaborated with a choreographer for the first time to adapt a Shakespeare text into a dance theatre production.

The process of adapting a text always starts with an interpretive reading. Extracting information and meaning from a text can also be referred to as 'decoding'. In the process of creating the adaptation new meaning is written, or 'encoded', into the product that must in turn be decoded by the reader or audience member. A term for this decoding and encoding process that is often encountered in the field of video editing (an aspect of my current profession) is a 'codec'. In video editing a codec is responsible for the decoding of a computer file into a video program that a viewer/audience can engage with, as well as the encoding of a video program into a file.

Since I function as the 'codec' in these adaptation scenarios, I thought it appropriate to label my approach to the adaptation process, the 'Conradie codec'. The aim of this reflexive study is to analyse my four adaptations, the processes as well as the products, in order to determine if such a codec truly exists.

Research done in adaptation studies was presented in an attempt to define adaptation as both process and product – Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* was particularly useful. This created a framework for the study of each of the four adaptations in chronological order, according to the year in which they were created. The study also draws very generally on the principles of semiotics, especially with respect to the notion of coding.

Firstly, the 2004 adaptation of Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* into *Twintig akteurs op soek na 'n [beter] Regisseur* was analysed. This

was followed by *onsindroom* (sic), an adaptation of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*. The third adaptation was *iForest*, which was created in 2007. This was an adaptation of (primarily) Eugene Ionesco's *The Killer*. Lastly, the adaptation of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* into *When in Love...* was studied.

It was concluded that, while the 'Conradie codec' does exist and was applied in the creation of the four adaptations, its efficiency was limited – predominantly by time constraints. In all four the cases analysed the rehearsal process started when a complete draft of the adapted text was not yet finished. This put enormous pressure on the rehearsal process. While this is accepted when creating a workshop style production, more time is needed to develop the adaptation in order for it to be cohesive.

By going through the process of analysing these four adaptations, the Conradie codec has been adapted (or updated) to version 2.0.

OPSOMMING

In hierdie tesis het ek gepoog om my vier verwerkings tot op hede te analiseer. Die eerste twee produkte (tekste en produksies) was in 2004 en 2005 geskep terwyl ek 'n student was. Die derde verwerking (slegs die teks) was in 2007 geskep terwyl ek 'n vryskut verhoogbestuurder was. In 2010, het ek vir die eerste keer saam met 'n choreograaf gewerk om 'n Shakespeare teks te verwerk na 'n dansteaterproduksie.

Die verwerkingsproses van 'n teks begin altyd met die lees van die teks op 'n interpreterende wyse. Hierdie proses, om betekenis uit 'n teks te ontgin, kan ook 'dekodering' genoem word. Tydens die verwerkingsproses word nuwe betekenis in die produk ingeskryf, of 'geënkodeer'. Die leser of gehoorlid moet weer op hul beurt die nuwe produk dekodeer. Hierdie dekodering en enkodering word in videoredigering ('n aspek van my huidige beroep) 'n 'codec' genoem. In videoredigering is 'n 'codec' verantwoordelik vir die dekodering vanaf 'n rekenaarleër na 'n videoprogram wat deur iemand gekyk kan word, sowel as die enkodering vanaf 'n videoprogram na 'n leër.

Aangesien ek tydens die verwerkingsproses as die 'codec' funksioneer, het ek dit goed gedink om met die term die 'Conradie codec' vorendag te kom. Die doel van hierdie refleksiewe studie was om my vier verwerkings, die prosesse sowel as die produkte, te analiseer en sodoende te bepaal of so 'n 'codec' wel bestaan.

Navorsing op die gebied van verwerkings was voorgelê in 'n poging om die konsep van verwerking as beide proses en produk te definieer – Linda Hutcheon se *A Theory of Adaptation* was 'n nuttige bron gewees. Dit het gehelp om 'n raamwerk vir die bestudering van elk van die vier verwerkings te skep – wat dan uitgevoer was in chronologiese volgorde. Die studie maak ook gebruik van die beginsels van semiotiek, in 'n baie algemene wyse, veral ten opsigte van die begrip van kodering.

Eerstens was die 2004 verwerking van Luigi Pirandello se *Six Characters in search of an Author* na *Twintig akteurs op soek na 'n [beter] Regisseur* ontleed. Dit was gevolg deur *onsindroom*, 'n verwerking van *A Dream Play* deur August

Strindberg. *iForest* wat in 2007 geskep is, was 'n verwerking van (hoofsaaklik) *The Killer* deur Eugene Ionesco. Laastens was die verwerking van Shakespeare se *Troilus and Cressida* na *When in love...* bestudeer.

Die gevolgtrekking was dat daar iets soos die 'Conradie codec' bestaan en dat dit wel toegepas was in die skepping van die vier verwerkings. Die effektiwiteit daarvan was wel beperk – hoofsaaklik as gevolg van tydsbeperkings. In al vier die gevalle het die repetisieproses reeds begin voordat 'n volledige weergawe van die teks voltooi was, wat enorme druk op die repetisieproses geplaas het. Terwyl dit aanvaarbaar is in die konteks van 'n werkswinkelproduksie word meer tyd benodig vir die verwerking van 'n teks om samehangend te wees.

Deur die vier verwerkings te bestudeer, was die Conradie 'codec' self in die proses verwerk (of bygewerk) tot weergawe 2.0.

Chapter 1: Introduction – Literature Study

Creating adaptations is not a new phenomenon. Shakespeare, Racine, Aeschylus and Goethe all borrowed familiar stories and changed them for their audiences. In the West there is a long history of *imitatio* or *mimesis* (imitation) – Aristotle saw this as “the instinctive behaviour of humans and the source of their pleasure in art” (Wittkower cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 20). Walter Benjamin wrote: “Storytelling is always the art of repeating stories” (cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 2). TS Eliot and Northrop Frye were of the opinion that art is derived from other art and that stories are born from other stories (Hutcheon, 2006: 2).

It is not strange that my first theatrical endeavour (in 1999) was also my first adaptation. A friend and I wrote a sketch revolving around an unlikely hero on a journey to save the world from an evil force. While we didn’t perform scenes from a J.R.R. Tolkien novel, it could have been interpreted as such with its medieval setting, plot and wizard dressed in grey.

Five years later, in 2004, I had to direct my first play as part of my BDram (Hons) in directing. I also wanted to write my own script, but was advised against it. Like a lot of students, I did not listen to my lecturers and decided to write my own script anyway. I ended up adapting Luigi Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. *Twintig akteurs op soek na ’n [beter] Regisseur* turned out to be a very successful production and I was awarded the prize for best student director at our drama department.

In 2005 I started with my MDram (the first time) and as part of the practical component for the degree, I had to direct another production. I decided that adaptation was the way to go once again and took August Strindberg’s *A Dreamploy* as a starting point to create an adaptation called *onsindroom* (sic). The play wasn’t as successful as my first adaptation, but I enjoyed the process of creating the script and the subsequent production tremendously.

Two years later I was working as a freelance stage manager throughout the country, but I also committed myself to writing the script for a production for the

Drama Department (bound for The National Arts Festival in Grahamstown) called *If forest* (later called *iForest*). It was primarily based on *The Killer* by Eugene Ionesco and influenced by various other sources, including the TV series *Lost* (by JJ Abrams) and the film *The Fountain* (by Darren Aronofsky). I did not direct this play as I was on tour as stage manager for Lara Foot-Newton's production of *Victory* by Athol Fugard. Writing *iForest* was a very stressful experience, since I wasn't around to "fix" all the issues with the script myself and even though I think the director, Suzaan Keyter, did a good job, I didn't really enjoy the process of handing over a script to someone else.

The last adaptation I created was in 2010 when I decided to attempt an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. The result was a dance-theatre production called *When in love...* I directed the production and Estelle Olivier did the choreography. In retrospect, the adaptation (text and production) wasn't what I initially set out to create.

Before I attempt another adaptation I would like to analyse the processes I used to create the first four adaptations. I will start by looking at what adaptation entails in a general sense and then attempt to see if there is a pattern in my work or any discernible method I follow when creating new works by adapting existing material.

In the last couple of years I've started working more frequently as a video editor. A very common technical term encountered in the field of video editing is 'codec'. The word 'codec' is a portmanteau of coder-decoder; when dealing with video it can also mean compression-decompression. A codec can be the program used to compress (or encode) a video file into a specific format or to decompress (or decode) a video file from a specific format. This process is also referred to as converting or transcoding.

The coder or compressor part of the program will *read the original* video file and then encode it; this entails restructuring the video file and then *writing* (compiling) it into a new video file. The decoder part of the program allows a media player (hardware or software) to *read from* the *encoded* video file by

decompressing it into a data stream that people will be able to enjoy as a programme – in this sense ‘programme’ can mean anything from an advertisement, a music video or an episode of a television show. In other words, a codec can decode meaning from a digital file (an original) that was compressed (or encoded) into a digital file (new product).

My contention is that this process of using a codec to decode and encode meaning is similar to the way in which meaning is decoded and encoded again when a work gets adapted. When we read a script or watch a film, we decode its meaning and then, during the writing (adaptation) process, we encode the newly created adaptation with meaning. But this is not to deny that relationship between the ‘original’ and the ‘adaptation’ is complex and perhaps not even very stable. If there is a specific method I follow when creating adaptations, whether it is on purpose or subconsciously, it may be the ‘adaptation codec’ I use to create new works. I will call this the Conradie Codec. That is, of course, *if* there are correspondences in the way I created the four different adaptations.

The method I used to investigate the implementation of the Conradie Codec was self-reflexive in nature. This was also the reason for the personal approach used throughout. While it may seem at first glance that a practice-based or practice-led research methodology (often referred to as Practice as Research, or PaR) was used, this was not in fact the case. Although I have four case studies, these adaptations (texts as well as stage productions) were not created with research findings intended as the outcome.

Creative & Cognition Studios distinguishes between practice-based research and practice-led research as follows:

If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based.

If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led.

(2015: online)

In the case of my thesis, it seems that the research methodology was closer to practice-led research, as opposed to practice-based research.

The research that I refer to in the analysis of each case study was research that informed my creative processes in order to produce the various adaptations, i.e. texts and stage productions. This same research was not research I did for the purpose of writing this thesis.

The research done for this thesis (post hoc) was about adaptations and the process of adaptation in broader terms. The research I did to inform my creative process was unrelated to any conscious consideration or assimilation of adaptation theory. I did not study previously created adaptations in order to create my own.

According to Christopher Frayling (cited in Rust, Mottram and Till, 2007: online) “research could be FOR practice, where research aims are subservient to practice aims, THROUGH practice, where the practice serves a research purpose, or INTO practice, such as observing the working processes of others” (original emphases).

While the research I did during the adaptation process can be viewed as practice-led research FOR practice, I am uncertain that the research I did for the purposes of writing this thesis can be seen as practice-led research THROUGH practice. The practice (the creation of the four adaptations) did not serve (direct) research purposes.

It can be argued that the research done here may be seen as practice-led research INTO practice, since I am observing working processes of others; in this case the “others” include me.

According to Creativity & Cognition Studios, research that is viewed as practice-led (or PaR) “includes practice as an integral part of its method and often falls within the general area of action research” (2015: online).

The references to my practice are at the core of my methodology, but the practice itself was not. I would thus be very wary of defining my methodology as practice-led research, or a practice as research methodology. I suggest that

the methodology used in the creation of this thesis should instead be defined as self-reflexive.

In the Western entertainment industry it has become quite common to purposefully adapt just about anything. We have so much at our disposal. The different mediums, from literary texts to video games, are all available to writers who want to adapt work in this sense and also for those who are interested in studying the field. Some critics are strongly against the idea of adaptations and there is a long history of, for example, resisting attempts to ‘modernise’ Shakespeare’s plays going back at least to the beginning of the twentieth century¹ to many articles and essays by Terence Hawkes towards the end of century.² But Philip Pullman is of the opinion that “[the] theatre itself is much less high-minded than those who keep a watchful eye on its purity [and that] the stage has always cheerfully swiped whatever good stories were going” (cited in Hutcheon, 2006: v). William S. Burroughs (cited in Hutcheon) wrote:

After all, the work of other writers is one of a writer’s main sources of input, so don’t hesitate to use it; just because somebody else has an idea doesn’t mean you can’t take the idea and develop a new twist for it. Adaptations may become quite legitimate adoptions (2006: v).

In *A Theory of Adaptation*³ Linda Hutcheon attempts to “think through not only this continuing popularity but also the constant critical denigration of the general phenomenon of adaptation” (2006: xi). Her book focuses on adaptation “in all its various media incarnations” (2006: xi) and although I am also interested in this broader approach to the field – especially when it comes to adaptations of comic books (or graphic novels) and video games – my focus in this thesis will be only on the four theatre plays I created by adapting and incorporating other works. I will, however, use examples from other media if this helps to clarify a

¹ See, for example, *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Styan, 1983).

² See, for example, *That Shakespearian Rag* (Hawkes, 1986).

³ This particular source has proved to be indispensable for the first section of this study.

specific point later in the text.

An issue that Hutcheon has with previous studies of adaptations is that they (the products) are mostly seen as “minor and subsidiary and certainly never as good as the [original]” (2006: xii). She agrees with Robert Stam, who says that “all the various manifestations of ‘theory’ over the last decades should logically have changed this negative view of adaptation” (cited in Hutcheon, 2006: xii – xiii).

For a long time adaptations have been criticised for simply for being secondary (perhaps even inferior) versions of the original. According to Hutcheon, one lesson learned from the Kristevan theory of intertextuality as well as from theorists like Derrida and Foucault is that “to be second is not to be secondary or inferior [and] likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative” (2006: xiii).

Contemporary popular adaptations are often put down as secondary, derivative, ‘middlebrow, or culturally inferior’ (Hutcheon, 2006: 2).

Such adaptations often get shot down for being popular entertainment for the masses and are even described as inferior and not ‘art’. This is especially true when the move is “from the literary to the filmic or televisual” and it has “even been called a move to a wilfully inferior form of cognition” (Newmand cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 3).

The critics seem less harsh in their judgement when the shift is to a ‘high art’ form, such as ballet or opera, for example, Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, or Verdi’s Shakespeare operas. They will not necessarily approve when the same play is adapted into a film, like Baz Luhrmann’s *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* (1996).

If an adaptation is perceived as ‘lowering’ a story (according to some *imagined hierarchy of medium or genre*), the response is likely to be negative. Residual suspicion remains even in the admiration expressed for something like Julie Taymor’s *Titus* (1999), her critically successful

film version of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. Even in our postmodern age of cultural recycling, something – perhaps the commercial success of adaptations – would appear to make us uneasy (Hutcheon, 2006: 3, my emphasis).

In her book Hutcheon attempts to challenge these negative views of adaptation. For the most part, I have a very positive view on the production of adaptations. I believe that as far as creative processes go, the practice of creating adaptations is not only 'a good thing', but in an important sense simply a more conscious implementation of an inevitable process of reading. I do not, however, believe that all adaptations end up as good, or enjoyable, products. Fortunately, something as subjective as determining the worth of various adaptations is not the issue here.

The focus of my study is to define the phenomenon of adaptation and investigate (retrospectively) how I have applied the principles in my own adaptations for the stage. One thing I have gained from reading Hutcheon's work is the understanding that when one studies an adaptation, it is important to study it *as an adaptation*. It should be studied as a newly created work that has a prior source or another (or original) work to thank for its existence.⁴ One should not attempt to remove the label of 'adaptation' from the product. In other words, it is important not to allow the predominantly negative view of adaptations to discourage you from studying the new product in relation to an 'original' work. In fact, part of the creative pleasure of analysing such works should be engagement with the interplay between the two (or more) works. Adaptations are in constant conversation with the adapted works in an intertextual way; I will discuss the key notion of intertextuality briefly below.

So, what exactly is an adaptation? Is there one, clear definition that includes all

⁴ I prefer to call the text/work that has been adapted the 'source', 'original' or 'adapted work'. This is not to say that all original works are in fact original, but the scope of this thesis does not allow (or require) a debate on originality at this point. For the sake of uniformity throughout this text I will simply refer to any source I've used, referenced, adapted or appropriated as either the 'source', the 'original' or 'adapted work'. Doing so will help to keep the focus on the subject at hand.

possible adaptations? And if there is, is it useful to use a definition that includes all forms of adaptations ranging from films adapted from novels to sampling in music, etc. to study the phenomenon?

Given this complexity of what can be adapted and of the means of adaptation, people keep trying to coin new words to replace the confusing simplicity of the word 'adaptation'. But most end up admitting defeat: the word has stuck for a reason (Hutcheon, 2006: 15).

Hutcheon notes that "According to its dictionary meaning 'to adapt' is to adjust, to alter, to make suitable" (2006: 7). From this we can deduce that the word 'adaptation' refers to an act or a process. It is a way for us to create meaning, or change meaning; to alter something and make it appropriate by changing its meaning even in a process of reinterpretation. It is a continuous process of meaning-making.

In *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006) Julie Sanders writes:

The processes of adaptation and appropriation ... is a sub-section of the over-arching practice of intertextuality ... most readily associated with Julia Kristeva who, invoking examples from literature, art, and music, made the case ... that all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic. The impulse towards intertextuality ... is regarded by many as a central tenet of postmodernism (Sanders, 2006: 17).

So, according to Sanders, we can define adaptation as a sub-category of the phenomenon of intertextuality. Intertextuality is a postmodern concept as well as a semiotic one.⁵ In studying adaptation and intertextuality, theorists have generated some useful terms that are relevant here: version, variation, interpretation, continuation, transformation, imitation, pastiche, parody, forgery, travesty, transposition, revaluation, rewriting, echo, translation, plagiarism, allusion, homage, quotation, recycling, spoof, sequel, prequel, remake,

⁵ I will not undertake a broad discussion of postmodernism here.

code/encode (cf. Hall, 2007: 110; Sanders, 2006: 18; Chandler, 2014: online). The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines intertextuality as ‘the complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text’ (Merriam-Webster, 2014: online).

A possible definition of adaptation is that “adaptation is a form of repetition without replication” (Hutcheon, 2006: xvi). This definition appeals to me, since I work in theatre and the word ‘repetition’ conjures up an image of the rehearsal room – especially in Afrikaans, where the word for rehearsal room can be directly translated to mean ‘repetition room’. In theatre the act of exploratory repetition is one of the most important aspects of creating plays. We spend at least a couple of weeks (for average productions) *in rehearsal*. This does not mean that we spend weeks doing exactly the same thing. This rehearsal process most decidedly involves creative ‘repetition without replication’.⁶

These ‘repetitions’ are there to constantly explore and change the nature of the production: hopefully for the better. Weaker moments in the production are adjusted. These ‘weaker moments’ can refer either to issues with blocking (the movements of the actors as directed), the performances and interpretations of the script by the actors or even the text itself. It is one of the functions of the director to act as an outside eye which observes these weaker moments and then tries to improve them. Mostly it will be blocking problems or issues with performances/delivery, but sometimes the problem with the production lies with the script itself and the director might make changes to the script or adapt it to suit the production’s needs better. This raises the following issue: does this mean that the director is actively adapting every script he/she directs?

Another, perhaps more positive, way to phrase Hutcheon’s first definition is to say that adaptation is ‘repetition with variation’. Hutcheon herself notes that “[part] of [the] pleasure ... comes simply from repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise. Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation;

⁶ At some point it will become necessary for the actors to start ‘replicating’ their performances, but small changes will happen until opening night – and sometimes beyond.

so too is change” (2006: 4). Repetition with variation is something that I deliberately implemented in three of my adaptations. It functions on two levels.

Firstly, I applied repetition with variation in an intertextual way. I adapted the original by repeating certain phrases within a scene or scenes in their entirety. If, for example, the original scene ended in a climax, I would build up to the climax, but let something interrupt the build-up, thus changing the outcome of the scene to suit the needs of my adaptation. This was mostly used for comic effect. It relied upon knowledge of the previous/original work in the viewers/audience. It relied on the fact that people engaging with the work recognise or remember something of the original work. An example of this, not from my own work but rather hypothetical, would be to allow Hamlet to live at the end of a comical adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* – not something I would necessarily attempt.⁷

Secondly, I used repetition with variation as a concept in my adaptations in a non-intertextual way; that is to say that I use repetitions of actions or spoken words to create a rhythm and then add a variation to it. There are examples of this in *onsindroom* that I will refer to when I analyse that adaptation in more detail in Chapter Three.

Adaptations can also be seen as a ‘transpositional practice’ (Sanders, 2006: 18). This implies a generic shift from one to the other, for example play-text to film. This shift sometimes allows adaptations to “parallel editorial practice in some respects, indulging in the exercise of trimming and pruning” (Sanders, 2006: 18).

Another aspect of adaptation that can help us define it is adaptations’ tendency to comment on source texts by changing points of view from the original works. Adaptations sometimes add ‘hypothetical motivations’ (Sanders, 2006: 19) by asking the very useful question: “What if?” Adaptations can also comment on

⁷ In 1681 Nahum Tate changed the ending of his (in)famous version of *King Lear* “making Cordelia survive and marry Edgar” (Hutcheon, 2006: 12). It would be simplistic to think of this simply as a ‘mistake’ or sentimentality – it is rooted in a discernable cultural value system.

the source texts by “voicing the silenced and marginalized” (Sanders, 2006: 19). This can be done by giving a character who was oppressed in the original work more power, or a stronger voice, in the adaptation. This was done in Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest*, where the play explores the perspective of the natives, Caliban and Ariel, in a postcolonial adaptation of Shakespeare’s play that adjust the balance of power.

Adaptation can thus be an exercise in making a text explicitly ‘relevant’ (to the time or the place where it is being performed) or sometimes simply easier to understand for new audiences. This can be done “via the process of proximation and updating” (Sanders, 2006: 19). We have seen a number of Shakespeare’s plays (apart from *The Tempest*) receive this treatment. In Stellenbosch University’s Drama Department we produced three such adaptations between 2010 and 2011, one of which was my own version of *Troilus and Cressida*. The other two were Christiaan Olwage’s (2010) *Nog ’n Hamlet*⁸ and Marthinus Basson’s (2011) production of *Juliet + Romeo + Romeo + Juliet*. Recent professional adaptations include TeaterTeater’s productions of *Kind Hamlet* (2012) and *macbeth.slapeloos* (2013), also adapted by Marthinus Basson.

Another possible definition of the concept of adaptation comes from Michael Alexander. He calls adaptations “palimpsestuous works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts” (cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 6). ‘Palimpsestuous’ has its roots in the Greek word ‘palimpsest’ which means, ‘scraped again’. According to the OED (cited in O’Conner & Kellerman, 2012: online), a palimpsest is:

- (1) Paper, parchment, or other writing material designed to be reusable after any writing on it has been erased. This meaning is now obsolete.
- (2) A parchment or other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier

⁸ The Afrikaans title translates as *Another Hamlet*.

(effaced) writing.

(3) In extended use: a thing likened to such a writing surface, esp. in having been reused or altered while still retaining traces of its earlier form; a multi-layered record.

In ancient times, when people used materials such as clay tablets or parchment, they would physically scrape the old writing off and rewrite on the material. “Such a recycled document is called a ‘palimpsest’, and sometimes the ghost of the old writing can be seen beneath the new” (O’Conner & Kellerman, 2012: online). In the 19th century the term ‘palimpsest’ was used (figuratively) to describe the practice of cross-writing. The practice of cross-writing (or crossed writing or cross-hatching) is an old one from a time when people who were too poor to afford a lot of paper (since postage was charged by the number of pages or page sizes) would start to write a letter and, when the page was filled, turn the paper 90 degrees and continue to write perpendicularly to the original. “Many examples of this phenomenon can be found online, including ones by famous writers from the era like Henry James, Jane Austen and Charles Darwin” (Paperblanks, 2013: online).⁹

Palimpsests were meant to obscure (sometimes even subvert) the original, while in the case of cross-writing (the 19th-century version of palimpsests) the point was to be able to read both the ‘original’ as well as the ‘new’ writing. This aspect of cross-writing ‘fits’ the process of adaptation well. When we come into contact with an adaptation, as stated earlier, part of the pleasure comes from repetition with variation with reference to the original. Perhaps it is because, as Thomas de Quincey wrote: “what else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain?” (De Quincey, cited in O’Conner, & Kellerman, 2012: online).

Cardwell (cited in Hutcheon) writes:

If we know the prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one

⁹ For a visual example of cross-writing, visit: <http://blog.paperblanks.com/2013/03/cross-writing/>

we are experiencing directly. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works. It is what Gérard Genette would call a text in the 'second degree' (1982:5), created and then received in relation to a prior text. This is why adaptation studies are so often comparative studies (2006: 6).

Genette's definition of adaptations as works 'to the second degree' is an important one. It reinforces our positive attitude towards adaptations. At first I misread the statement to mean that adaptations might be secondary to the original, which casts a negative view on adaptations, but the expression 'second degree' implies that it is a text taken to another level, or amplified. If we view an adaptation as a work interacting with a previous text (and also openly announcing its relationship to the prior text), it creates the possibility to generate more meaning from it than if we were to study it purely as an autonomous work.

It is, of course, possible to study adaptations that way (as autonomous works). In fact, many theorists have insisted that they should be interpreted and valued as such. *Hamlet*, one of Shakespeare's most celebrated masterpieces, "is based on a Norse legend composed by Saxo Grammaticus in Latin around 1200 AD" (Mabillard, 2000: online). Shakespeare appropriated the characters and plot for his adaptation but not a lot of people, myself included, even knew about it until we were referred to the history of Hamlet. When we study *Hamlet*/Hamlet, we don't also (consciously at least) study the tale of Amleth. Shakespeare so successfully appropriated the original tale that *his* play has become an autonomous creation.

Walter Benjamin writes that "an adaptation has its own aura, its own presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 6).¹⁰ To uncover all the layers of meaning

¹⁰ A good example of this is the film *Clueless* (1995). It is very loosely based on the Jane Austen novel, *Emma*, but the film does not allude to Austen's characters or even evoke a sense of Jane Austen's period.

in an adaptation, I feel it is best to study it in relation to the source, or sources. When I adapted a work, I purposefully left traces of the original in the new work for exactly that reason. I wanted people engaging with the adaptation to *know* that they are engaging with an adaptation and not feel left out of some secret (and in the case of my first adaptation, perhaps ‘in-jokes’, as some audience members called this). If the adaptation were to be studied as an autonomous work, the references and allusions would seem inappropriate, or simply out of place, without the references to the original work or works to guide people engaging with the work.

When critics study adaptations in a comparative way, they often tend to do so as an exercise in ‘fidelity criticism’. That is to say, they study the adaptation and attempt to determine its proximity or fidelity to the original. Proximity in this sense doesn’t necessarily indicate *interaction with* the original as much as *being true to* the original. This expression ‘being true’ can be a very confusing term, since being ‘true’ immediately conjures up a sense of being ‘good’; thus implying that if an adaptation is more ‘true’, or ‘closer’ to the original it might be better on some imagined scale, while this is not necessarily the case. While I am not attempting to making value judgements and also not doing fidelity studies of my adaptations, the issue of proximity is something that can be useful to the study of my adaptation process and products.

Sanders writes that examinations of the transition from literary text to film are not aimed (or not supposed to be aimed) at judging adaptations as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, and that judgements based on fidelity are groundless (Sanders, 2006: 19 – 20). She is of the opinions that “adaptation studies are ... not about making polarised value judgements, but about analysing process, ideology and methodology”. The analyses of the process and the products will be the focus of chapters two through four. In some cases the process and products themselves will be the focus, while in some cases the ideology and methodology (or approach) will come to the foreground.

Although I have attitudes and judgements (both good and bad) towards the adaptations I have created, they are not the focus of this study. I simply want

to analyse the processes and the end results in order to ascertain if there is a specific way I approached these adaptive endeavours. There are enough honest people, both critics, colleagues and friends, who have given me feedback on the productions in relation to previous versions of the originals. That feedback, even though it was helpful for debriefing purposes, is not the focus of this particular study. I do not want to determine whether my adaptations appealed to the sensibilities of the people who engaged with them. I want to attempt to see if there are common denominators in the way I approach meaning-making through drama.

In this study I will not attempt to determine whether, or to what extent, I was 'faithful' to the original versions of the plays I adapted. I will primarily look at the process and the methodology I adopted to produce my text. I will work on the assumption that I was in some sense 'faithful' to the original works to some degree in all of my adaptations, but to be honest, if I wanted to be 'faithful' to Shakespeare's work, I would rather just direct one of his plays using his own words – but even then the issue of *just how faithful* I was being would by no means remain uncontested.

So even though I will be studying my adaptations *as adaptations* and even though I will be comparing aspects of the different texts (source and adaptation), I will in no way be attempting to determine the 'degree of fidelity' to the original, since this would probably (and pointlessly) yield an 'unfavourable' outcome. I will discuss, as well as attempt to explain and rationalise, any similarities or equivalences between my adaptations and sources, but rather as part of the process and not for the purpose of determining fidelity to the original for the purpose of making a value-judgement. Sanders is of the opinion that "it is usually at the very point of infidelity that the most creative acts of adaptation and appropriation take place" (Sanders, 2006: 20), Césaire's *A Tempest* being a striking example.

Even though there may be no criteria for determining 'fidelity', the question of *what* exactly got transposed in the adaptation process is a contested one. Some reviewers and audience members are of the opinion that it is the 'spirit' of a

work or the 'tone'. Others suggest that the 'style' is of importance. These three concepts are all "arguably equally subjective and, it would appear, difficult to discuss, much less theorize" (Sanders, 2006: 10).

Others will say that the 'story' is the most important when assessing the fidelity of an adaptation (or translation) to an original work; or rather, they will look for equivalences in the "different sign systems for the various elements of the story: its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on" (Sanders, 2006: 10). These concepts might be useful later when I discuss my own adaptations. I will try to evaluate how meaning can be generated by the adaptation when studying it as an adaptation, or as Genette called it, a text to the second degree. The adaptation is most often a text in constant contact and interaction with a prior work; a text constantly drawing attention to the fact that it is familiar with the original, but that it wants to highlight (or even subvert) an aspect of the original.

Perhaps it is useful to organise different types of adaptations into categories. One proposal comes from Deborah Cartmell (Cartmell and Whelehan cited in Sanders, 2006: 20). She argues that adaptations can be organised into three broad categories, namely:

1. Transposition;
2. Commentary;
3. Analogue.

In its most simple form a transposition takes a text from one genre and "[delivers] it to new audiences by means of the aesthetic conventions of an entirely different generic process" (Sanders, 2006: 20). One of the most popular types of adaptations, namely novel to film¹¹, is an example of this. But there are more layers of transposition than just generic ones. Some adaptations also transpose their source texts in "cultural, geographical and temporal terms"

¹¹ Film noir would provide a number of excellent examples, e.g. James M Cain's suave crime novel *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) is adapted by Luchino Visconti as the gritty Italian neorealist psychosexual drama *Ossessione* (1943).

(Sanders, 2006: 20).

An example of an adaptation that shifted its source text in this manner is *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* by Baz Luhrmann. It updated Shakespeare's text by moving it to "a contemporary North American setting" (Sanders, 2006: 20). Another example of a Shakespeare adaptation is Kenneth Branagh's 1999 *Love's Labour's Lost*. He set it in 1930 in a "faux-Oxbridge context" (Sanders, 2006: 21). Yet another adaptation from one of Shakespeare's works came from director Michael Almereyda in 2000, when he "re-envisioned Elsinore as a Manhattan financial corporation with Claudius as a corrupt CEO" (Sanders, 2006: 21). When I adapted *Troilus and Cressida* in 2010 I didn't transpose it to a different location, or more contemporary setting. The intention for this adaptation was to shift away from being a text-based production to a production that utilizes movement and dance as the predominant form of presentation. In Chapter Five I will discuss this in more detail.

It is clear that Shakespeare is a very popular source for adaptations. Other authors and playwrights whose texts are very frequently transposed for film and television include Charles Dickens, Hendrik Ibsen, Jane Austen and Anton Chekov¹² (Sanders, 2006: 21).

I made use of transposition during my adaptation process during my first three attempts. *Twintig Akteurs...* takes place not just in any theatre, but in a very specific theatre, the HB Thom Theatre in Stellenbosch, and to some degree the play only works, or could only work, when set in 2004 engaged with by people who were at the Drama Department during that time. For my second adaptation, *onsindroom*, I transposed the locations from references from Strindberg's own life to locations that I was familiar with. In the third adaptation I attempted, *iForest*, I transposed Ionesco's *The Killer* in a temporal sense, by placing it possibly thousands of years later, but in the same location. It seems that transposition comes naturally/instinctively to me.

¹² Even the most cursory glance at the film website www.imdb.com will bear this out.

We move into the territory of commentary, Cartmell's second category, when adaptations "[start] to move away from simple proximation and towards something more culturally loaded" (Sanders, 2006: 21). Commentary can be described as adaptations that "comment on the politics of the source text, or those of the new *mise-en-scène*, or both, usually by means of *alteration* or *addition*" (Sanders, 2006: 21). Once again we find an example in an adaptation of a Shakespeare play, this time *The Tempest*. In a 2010 film version of the play, the director, Julie Taymor (who previously adapted Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* for screen), changed/altere d the gender of Prospero.

In Taymor's versions 'the main character is now a woman named Prospera. Going back to the 16th or 17th century, women practicing the magical arts of alchemy were often convicted of witchcraft' (Harp, 2011: online).

Changing the gender of Prospero offers audiences the possibility to generate different meanings from the film, for instance, highlighting the injustice of the witch hunts that took place predominantly between 1400 and 1800. While they didn't exclusively persecute women, more than 95% of all the alleged witches were female, since, according to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, "women were far more susceptible to temptation by the Devil, and thus more frequently became witches" (Pavlac, 2001: online).

It might be necessary for an audience engaging with an adaptation like this to be aware of the explicit relationship between the adaptation and the source text in order for commentary to have the intended impact. Most formal adaptations anticipate this and thus have the same title; or they state explicitly that they are 'based on' or 'an interpretation of'. Examples of this include Ingmar Bergman's (1973) 'interpretation of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*'. One of my own adaptations was "based on William Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*".

This aspect of adaptation often relies on an existing knowledge or a least familiarity with the original text. Someone who hasn't read *Hamlet*, or an audience member who hasn't studied the play quite extensively, might not get

the same level of enjoyment from reading or watching a production of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead* as someone who is very familiar with the original.

When an audience engages with Marthinus Basson's 2013 version of *macbeth.slapeloos* (sic) they might require some knowledge of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. There is, however, one particular instance in the play where knowledge of the original text is not needed in order to understand the commentary on the current situation regarding violence in South Africa and in particular on the farms of South Africa. As the murderers confront Lady Macduff and promptly cut her down, she yells "MOORD! MOORD! MOORD!!!" In Act IV, Scene 2 of Shakespeare's text, she cries out when her son is killed and she runs off stage to die. This production of *macbeth.slapeloos* made use of video projections and, as she dies, the massive screen behind her lit up with pictures of brutal farm murders taken across South Africa. This made the intended commentary quite clear, albeit it incredibly shocking to watch. This strong visual statement also made the ensemble's moan "O, Skotland! Skotland!" sound a lot like "O, South Africa! South Africa!" Also, the comparison between Macbeth and our own president was made striking at that moment. All of this can be decoded by the audience members without any knowledge of the original script whatsoever, which brings us to Cartmell's third category, analogue.

Analogue implies that a work might be enjoyed independently without any knowledge of its "shaping intertext" (Sanders, 2006: 22). Knowing that it is an adaptation of a prior work and being familiar with the source text is not necessary for the enjoyment of the new work. I have already mentioned *macbeth.slapeloos*. Another example of such a stand-alone work is *Apocalypse Now* (1979); Francis Ford Coppola's film recontextualised Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

The musical *My Fair Lady*, a version of George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, has achieved its own canonical status (Sanders, 2006: 23). Going further back in history we realise that Shaw's play was influenced by "Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where Pygmalion creates a statue with which he falls in love"

(Sanders, 2006: 23). This can be considered an adaptation, or at least an appropriation of the original.

Victor Hugo's epic novel, *Les Misérables*, was also adapted into a musical. The musical became very popular and is the longest running musical on the West End. In 1998 when a film adaptation of the novel (*not the musical*) was released, everyone wanted to know if Liam Neeson was singing in it. Neeson commented: "One of the greatest novels in Western literature, and all everybody's asking is, 'Do you sing in it?'" (TV Tropes, 2014: online). In 2012 another film adaptation of *Les Misérables* was released (to critical acclaim) and this time it was a musical film based on the musical (and possibly influenced by the novel too). The enormous popularity of this musical indicates that the audience members are enjoying the production. It is highly unlikely that all, or even any, of the audience members are familiar with the novel or even aware of the fact that it is based on a novel. This would suggest that it is not necessary to have a knowledge of the original to enjoy the adaptation.

As the examples of *My Fair Lady* and *Les Misérables* indicate, some "texts rework texts that are often themselves reworked texts. The process of adaptation is constant and ongoing" (Sanders, 2006: 24). It might be better to think of adaptations not just as formal entities (products) and "simplistic one-way lines of influence from source to adaptation" but rather "in terms of complex processes of filtration, and in terms of intertextual webs or signifying fields" (Sanders, 2006: 24).

It is very important to note that Sanders agrees with Hutcheon that adaptation is not just a product but also a process. "The word *adaptation* [refers] to both a product and a process of creation and reception" (Hutcheon, 2006: xiv). People who engage with adaptations, be they readers or audience members, are frequently aware of the fact that they are experiencing these adaptations as adaptations of other works. While it is useful to categorise adaptations into the three broad categories discussed by Sanders, it might be necessary to also specify three more precise definitions. Hutcheon made an attempt to do exactly this.

She starts off by stating that if we look at an adaptation as a product or a formal entity, it can be seen as “an announced and extensive *transposition* of a particular work or works” (2006: 7). Adaptations are “openly acknowledged and extended reworkings of particular texts” (2006: 16). This is directly linked to the first category (transposition) as described by Cartmell. As I’ve already discussed, a work may involve a shift in medium or genre and also cultural, geographical and temporal shifts.

An attempt to define the term *transposition* comes from the ‘inventor’ of the term *intertextuality*, Julia Kristeva:

We shall call *transposition* the signifying process’s ability to pass from one sign system to another. ... Transposition plays an essential role here inasmuch as it implies the abandonment of a former sign system, the passage to a second via an instinctual intermediary common to the two sign systems, and the articulation of the new system with its new representability (cited in Allen, 2000: 54).

When adaptations are defined as transpositions or reworkings, they are often compared to translations and, according to Hutcheon “[just] as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation” (2006: 16). In the past the study of translation, just like the study of adaptations, always granted primacy to the source text and, not unlike the study of the translation, it always had “faithfulness and equivalence” (Hutcheon, 2006: 16) to the original in mind. According to Stam (cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 16), “there will always be both gains and losses” when transposing a work into a new medium, and sometimes even within the same medium; some ‘reformatting’, to use a new media term, will always take place.

Walter Benjamin didn’t agree with the view that the original had an obvious authority and he argued in *The task of the Translator*:

[Translation] is not a rendering of some fixed nontextual meaning to be copied or paraphrased or reproduced; rather, it is an engagement with

the original text that makes us see that text in different ways (Benjamin cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 16).

Translation and adaptation share this transpositional nature and thus studying translations may help us to define adaptations. While translations usually imply a transpositioning of the language but still within the same medium (for example, a novel from English to Spanish), adaptations can also be re-mediations, that is, a shift from one medium to another. This is especially true of those which are also “intersemiotic transpositions” (Hutcheon, 2006: 16). This implies that they are transpositions from one sign system to another, for example, from words to images (Hutcheon, 2006: 16). It involves a very specific form of translation: “transmutation or transcoding ... into a new set of conventions as well as signs” (Hutcheon, 2006: 16).

While translation studies are useful for defining adaptation, we can also study the concept of paraphrase to gain insights.

John Dryden is quoted as defining paraphrase as ‘translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view..., but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified’ (Hutcheon, 2006: 17).

Sometimes when film directors work with scripts based on novels, they are tasked with creating visuals for the novel’s omniscient narrator’s exploration of a character’s psychic world. An example of this might be found in the various on-screen adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes character. In the first episode (entitled *A Study in Pink*) of the BBC television series *Sherlock* (2010), we can see how Sherlock Holmes analyses a victim in order to gain information for the police department. He sees the letters R, a, c, h and e scratched into the floorboards. In post-production the editors and visual effect staff added white text above each letter. A dictionary-style definition for ‘Rache’ appears to indicate it as the German word for ‘Revenge’. Holmes immediately abandons that theory and only the animated letters remain. A sixth letter appears and starts to scroll from the letter “a” to “l”, where it stops. We now realise that

Holmes thinks the victim tried to scratch out the name “Rachel”. This can be her name or she might be referring to someone else. This leads him to his next clue and so forth.

There are more examples of this throughout this entire sequence; amongst other things, he examines her finger nails, her coat and her wedding ring and he also looks up the weather on his phone. All of the deductions that he makes are shown as text on the screen and this enables us to enter into his thought patterns, or his psychic world. By adding these graphics to the image, the director allowed us to follow Holmes’s thought pattern as he tries to solve the mystery of the victim’s demise. If this information was originally given to us in a novel by a narrator, we can say that the adaptation paraphrased (or adapted) the words in the novel into text on a screen.

As stated earlier, adaptation is not only a product, but also a process. Hutcheon actually views the process of adaptation as two separate processes. She views it from the adapter’s perspective as a “creative *and* an interpretive act of appropriating/salvaging” as well as from the audience’s perspective as “an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work” (2006: 8).

When someone decides to adapt an original work, the adapter might be worried about his responsibility to the author/creator of the original. This might be because the process of adaptation “can be a process of appropriating, of taking possession of another’s story, and filtering it ... through one’s own sensibility, interests, and talents” (Hutcheon, 2006: 18). In other words, your frame of reference will invariably have an impact. If you decide to create an adaptation, you will be an interpreter first and then a creator. I would also phrase it that you are a ‘decoder’ first and then an ‘encoder’. You will also be attracted to different aspects of the original than someone else might.

For example, I have a background as a stage manager and if I decide to adapt Michael Frayn’s *Noises Off* (1982) I might want to focus more on the story of the poor backstage staff and how they get verbally abused by the director. If someone else, perhaps an actor, decides to adapt the same script, they might

focus on the stress caused during a technical rehearsal and create a new play based only on the first act.

Who we are and what it is we want to adapt will be determined by why we want to adapt a specific work in the first place:

There is a wide range of reasons why adapters might choose a particular story and then transcode it into a particular medium or genre. Their aim might well be to economically and artistically supplant the prior works. They are just as likely to want to contest the aesthetic or political values of the adapted text as to pay homage. ... Whatever the motive, from an adapter's perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriating or salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new (Hutcheon, 2006: 20).

As we've seen with translation, there is no such thing as a literal translation and similarly there is no such thing as a literal adaptation. Thus, the process of adaptation, while it does resemble imitation, it is not "slavish copying" (Hutcheon, 2006: 20). It is, as we've heard on almost every episode of *American Idol*, a process of making the work *your own*. The pleasure of adapting a text (as well as the pleasure for an audience member experiencing an adaptation) comes from what you *do with* the original work.

As with Cartmell's second category (commentary), for people engaging with adaptations *as adaptations*, it "is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality *if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text*" (Hutcheon, 2006: 21). According to French semiotic and poststructuralist theorists (such as Barthes and Kristeva), "texts are ... mosaics of citations that are visible and invisible, heard and silent; they are always already written and read" (Hutcheon, 2006: 21). Adaptations can be classified in a similar fashion, but it can be added that they are, as previously stated, also acknowledged as adaptations *of specific texts* (Hutcheon, 2006: 21).

When looking at adaptation from the audience's perspective, we can define

adaptations as *intertextual palimpsests*. According to Hutcheon, part of “both the pleasure and frustration of experiencing an adaptation is the familiarity bred through repetition and memory” (2006: 21). Our relationship with one work will determine our enjoyment of an adaptation of that work. We might revere an original work and because of our familiarity with that work, we might not enjoy an adaptation of the work. This does not necessarily have anything to do with fidelity. Some adaptations are unsuccessful because the interpretation and creative process (the adaptation process) were undertaken with a lack of creativity and/or skill. The adapter didn’t make the original work his own during the process and thus the new work is not successful as a new, autonomous work.

Part of what makes an adaptation enjoyable to an informed audience is their awareness of the original. Hutcheon writes: “As audience members, we need memory in order to experience difference as well as similarity” (Hutcheon, 2006: 22).

Perhaps we need to think of adaptations “in terms of complex processes of filtration, and in terms of intertextual webs or signifying fields, rather than one-way lines of influence from source to adaptation” (Sanders, 2006: 24).

Although I will not be discussing audience’s reactions to my adaptations, we need to remember that an important aspect of a play is the audience’s engagement with the play. It is also these audience members that engaged with my adaptations that generated meaning through their engagement with it. Other terms for meaning making are reading, watching and decoding; especially the decoding of sign systems. This decoding of, and encoding to, different sign systems encapsulate the process of adaptation and the way to do this is by making use of a codec – in my case the Conradie Codec.

According to Chandler (2014: online), “signs can be words, images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning”. Charles Sanders Peirce (cited in Chandler, 2014: online) stated that “nothing is a sign unless it

is interpreted as a sign". We can call anything a sign as long as it stands for or refer to something else. We regularly interpret things unconsciously as signs and we do this by "relating them to familiar systems of conventions" (Chandler, 2014: online). These "systems of conventions", or more specifically, the conventions of communication, are also called codes.

The process of decoding a system like this, be it a play text or film or television series, into meaning and then encoding it again into a new sign-system for a reader or an audience to decode is the primary function of theatre-makers like me who makes use of the adaptation process to create new work.

At this point it is important to look at the adaptations, the processes and the products, themselves. In the following chapters I will attempt to explain the process I followed to create each adaptation. I will look at the process I used to decode the original works. It is important to make sense of the original before one can even attempt to create a new work from it. I will also investigate which elements of each of the sources I appropriated for my own creations. This will include themes, characters, plot, etc. I will not investigate the same elements for each adaptation, since I didn't follow exactly the same method for each adaptation – in some of the cases I focused more on character than others, for example. At the same time I will decode the product that I ended up with. I will decode each of the four adaptations in the same manner I did the adapted works. Thus, I will once again look at the new works' themes, characters, plot etc. to see how it has been altered, transposed, etc.

As I stated earlier, I am not interested in only measuring the fidelity of the adaptations and I also do not intend to rate any of the works on a scale of one to ten on how "true to the original" they were. I do, however, find it interesting to see how much of the original was retained and how recognisable the sources were in the adaptations.

I will look at the four adaptations in the chronological order in which they were created. It makes sense to do it in this way, since it might help recognise a

pattern or perhaps growth as an adapter. It might be easier identify a logical progression or through line, if any exist, this way.

The first adaptation I will look at is *Twintig akteurs op soek na 'n (beter) regisseur*. Translated it means *Twenty actors in search of a [better] director*. From there I will move on to *onsindroom* (not with a capital "O"). The English title does not translate very well. The Afrikaans title is a portmanteaux of four words/phrases: *onsin* (nonsense), *sindroom* (syndrome), *ons in droom* (we/us in [a] dream) and lastly *onsin droom* (nonsense/nonsensical dream). The next adaptation I will investigate is *iForest* (only the "F" is a capital letter). Lastly, we will study *When in love*, my first adaptation of a Shakespeare text – in this case one of his so-called 'problem plays', *Troilus and Cressida*.

Chapter two: Case study one – *Twintig Akteurs op soek na 'n [beter] Regisseur*

During my undergraduate studies we had to read Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in search of an Author* as part of the anti-realism module. I enjoyed the meta-theatrical aspects of the play, since it was only my second year working in theatre and everything about the theatre and the theatre-making process excited me. Also, recognising some of Pirandello's humour regarding "the problems of the theatre, in both the practices of the theatre and its members" (Cusson, 2002 online) made me feel like I was part of a theatrical in-joke. At that point in time I had dealt with some people who took their work in the theatre (mostly themselves) so seriously that it felt good to know that someone else thought that we should have some fun in the place we work.

In 2004 when I did my honours in directing I picked *Six Characters in search of an Author* as my final practical project. During the casting process I picked twenty possible candidates but soon realised that I made some errors in the process. Also, instead of doing the play as-is, I decided to rewrite sections and localise it more. I was adapting my first play: *Twintig Akteurs op soek na 'n [beter] Regisseur*. I will refer to it as *Twintig Akteurs* from here on. I will also refer to *Six Characters in search of an Author* simply as *Six Characters*.

The process I went through in order to create the adaptation (the text) of *Twintig Akteurs* was not really what I would call a structured, thought-through process. I didn't plan ahead too much. I was writing from an emotional place of frustration. The physical process of writing the play consisted of sitting behind my computer with Fred le Roux's Afrikaans translation next to me, typing away furiously in order to have a text ready for the rehearsal process.

My initial idea was to focus more on the theatre company that is trying to produce a production at the drama department; a very 'on-the-nose' reference to my own situation at the time. I thought to myself: "What if I highlighted some of the issues I have with the theatre industry and the Drama Department at the moment?"

Twintig Akteurs was just as much an interpretation of (or response to) the Drama Department as it was a reaction to *Six Characters*. At the time I felt a bit jaded with the department. I am not completely sure why I had these feelings; perhaps the events leading up to the casting process were very frustrating, since the venue for our exam changed twice and I had to change all my planning along with it. Or perhaps I felt that the way it was communicated wasn't great. Or lastly, and I suspect it is more this last one than anything else, I was feeling the pressure of directing my first play at the department. In the last seven years as theatre technician at the HB Thom Theatre I had witnessed the pressure that some students experience when they go through this process.

I should mention that haven't looked at this text since I directed it in 2004. Only recently, as part of this study, did I analyse the text again. Much like Pirandello I needed a couple of years to fully understand what I had created. He explains it quite beautifully in the preface of the 1925 version of the script for *Six Characters*:

If I now think about these things, about having intuited that necessity, having unconsciously found the way to resolve it by means of a new perspective, and about the way in which I actually obtained it, they seem like miracles. The fact is that the play was really conceived in one of those spontaneous illuminations of the fantasy when by a miracle all the elements of the mind answer to each other's call and work in divine accord. No human brain, working 'in the cold', however stirred up it might be, could ever have succeeded in penetrating far enough, could ever have been in a position to satisfy all the exigencies of the play's form. Therefore the reasons which I will give to clarify the values of the play must not be thought of as intentions that I conceived beforehand when I prepared myself for the job and which I now undertake to defend, but only as discoveries which I have been able to make afterwards in tranquillity (Pirandello, 2014: online).

I have to agree with Pirandello that while one is in the process of writing (or directing) a play it is sometimes not easy to explain the process and one's exact

plan of action. My own experience was similar to Pirandello's in the sense that I also cannot recall exactly how I planned this project and I cannot exactly recall how it came to be. I was merely attempting to, like he put it, "satisfy all the exigencies of the play's form". And once the entire process was over it felt that if it wasn't for a miracle I would not have been able to finish it. Pirandello says that it was only because of the "spontaneous illuminations of the fantasy" and the "elements of the mind...[working] in divine accord" that he could write this play. I think the common word we use for this is 'inspiration'.

I am not going to analyse every instance where I tried to incorporate the original text into the new one or where I made use of transposition or intertextuality in the process of creating the new text. I want to rather focus on a couple of specific points that I found interesting when I re-read the adaptation recently and recounted the three performances of the resulting production. I will start the decoding of *Twintig Akteurs* by discussing the title of the play. Then I will focus on examples of transposition that I found interesting or important. After that I will explore how I intended to portray the relationship between real-time and stage-time – and also how this changed in the end. The metatheatrical and intertextual nature of the adaptation will also be discussed along with the characters and their function in the new play. Lastly I will look at the (seemingly out of place) allusions to Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*.

The title of the adaptation was a wordplay on the original title; a repetition with variation of *Six Characters in search of an Author*. By adapting the title of the play, I prepare the audience for engagement with an adaptation before the play begins. By altering the title, I indicate that there will be a shift in the focus of the new play. Where the main focus in *Six Characters* are on the six characters, especially those of the father and step-daughter, in *Twenty Actors* there will be, among others, a transposition in focus towards the performers of the play. What the audience doesn't know from the start, however, is that all twenty members of the production, not just the actors, will be performers in the play. Also, where the author in Pirandello's play might not be physically present, there were different directors physically present in my play. Some of them were characters,

while the last, namely myself, was also the actual director; although one might argue that I was playing the character of 'Wilhelm the director' instead of just being the director of the production. Initially this would have been clear cut, since I only had a set number of lines in the text. When I made the decision to continue the directing process during the performance, the lines between playing a character and being myself got blurry. This was to the benefit of the production in my opinion.

Analysing the aspect of transposition in *Twintig Akteurs* I find that the one of the most important elements of the original play that was transposed in the process, was that of the location and the time. The characters were also transposed, but I find that the way in which they were adapted is suited better to the aspect of commentary, which I will discuss shortly.

In *Six Characters* we could place the play in any theatre anywhere in the world if we wanted to. It only states that it takes place on the stage of a theatre. Most of the videos of productions of the original that I've seen place it in the theatre where they are producing the play. It sounds like a very straightforward thing to do. But if we think about it, we can make the location of the play in any theatre we want to.

One could, like Jaco Boucher did in his 2008 production called *Untitled*, build a set that emulates the rehearsal space he used when he was creating the play. In this case the set was a replica of the Cape Town High School hall that was constructed on top of the Rhodes Theatre in Grahamstown. I could, for instance, design the set for a production of *Six Characters* that looks like the stage of the Baxter or Artscape or any other theatre. This might serve as commentary on the play's text to have a specific point of view regarding one of these theatres. For instance, if the character of the Director calls the crew members lazy, and the set looks like the Artscape's stage, audience members might likely decode it as commentary, by the play, on the attitude of the Artscape theatre crew.

In the text of *Twintig Akteurs* we had to visualise a very specific theatre; or rather, the text mentions that the setting is the HB Thom Theatre and Stellenbosch Drama Department. When someone reads the play with the intention of directing it, it is likely that he/she will place it in the HB Thom Theatre and Drama Department. Similarly, the director will most likely adhere to the text and place it in the year 2004.

While we can decode Pirandello's stage directions in the text to mean any theatre in any time period, with my adaptation we have to understand that this play will take place at the HB Thom Theatre – a theatre linked to the Drama Department of Stellenbosch University. It immediately creates the idea that the actors we will come across will most likely be students. We also need to do some research about the specific theatre as it has a specific history and specific heritage. There were also specific politics at this specific theatre in 2004 and also specific lore surrounding the building.¹³

All of this might be taken for granted if we are familiar with all of the above-mentioned aspects. I was a drama student at the department, I worked in the HB Thom Theatre regularly and also wrote an essay on the history of the theatre, so I would have a very specific attitude towards the theatre in the text while decoding it. So will most of the actors (students at the same department) who read the text when we rehearse the play. But the audience, or at least the non-drama students, who will eventually watch the play will most likely not be aware of all the nuances. As director it will be important to view it from their perspective as well, lest all those encoded messages stay that way. The drama students in the audience will be aware that the play they are watching is taking place in the same theatre in the play. It is clearly stated in the text and there were references (or visual reminders like decor pieces) to previous plays that were performed in the HB Thom Theatre earlier in 2004. This will most likely

¹³ An example of lore such as this is the rumoured ghost of Fred Engelen. People refer to this ghost as Fred. I used this in the adaptation to set up a joke. The new Director says that Fred (le Roux) translated *Six Characters* into Afrikaans and one actor asks, "Fred?" meaning "Was it Fred, the ghost?" Almost everyone who studies at the drama department knows about Fred the ghost.

not be the case for the non-drama student members of the audience. This could likely influence their opinion/enjoyment of the produced play in a negative manner.

Someone who was familiar with the US Drama Department would be aware of the plays that were produced in the immediately preceding years (2001 – 2004). I made references to some of these plays in stage directions and one play in particular featured quite a lot:

Wanneer die gehoor instap is die stel soos dié van [die 2003/2004 Produksie] *Prinsloo Versus* (wit papier driehoek en projektor ens), [die 2004 produksie deur Marthinus Basson] *Brolloks en Bittergal* (huisie wat USL staan en miskien van die bome of duine ens) en [die 2004 woordkuns program deur Mareli Hattingh] *Digvrou* (die *fly* met skoene en 'n swart boks of twee). Die verhoog is donker. Daar hang 'n skerm (soos een van dié wat gebruik is in *Prinsloo Versus*) reg in die middel van die verhoog. Daar is 'n stokmannetjie met 'n bril op geteken. Elke keer as hierdie mannetjie praat, speel die tema liedjie van *Pokkel die Eekhorning* ('n kinderprogram wat in 1994 in die oggende op SABC2 gewys het) saggies in die agtergrond. Die ouditoriumligte doof uit. Een kollig reg in die middel van die verhoog kom stadig op. Wilhelm Conradie kom opgestap en gaan staan in die lig. Hy het 'n swart broek en skoene aan en dra 'n wit hemp met blou, swart en rooi horisontale strepies (soos dié in *Prinsloo Versus*). Hy het 'n klein, eenaardige bokbaardjie en daar is te veel gel in sy hare.

(Conradie, 2004: 1)

Prinsloo Versus was a play by Adriaan Meyer. At the beginning of the play the director (also the author of the play) introduced himself and delivered an expository prologue. He then left the stage and an actor (Eben Genis), dressed exactly like him, walked on stage and started to deliver the opening speech of the first act of the play, which was very similar to the director's prologue. Most people who were familiar with the department would be familiar with *Prinsloo*

Versus. It was a very popular play and it won some awards. They would recognise the set: the white triangle of paper, the overhead projector and the screens with the paintings.

In *Twintig Akteurs* the character of Wilhelm tries to emulate the events of the beginning of *Prinsloo Versus*: he switches on the projector, writes on the transparencies, draws images on them, etc., the projector fails and we see the panic, frustration and anger in the character – it turns out that the power cable has been cut and he shows it to his stage manager. Wilhelm threatens the stage manager (not the character, but rather the actual stage manager of the production) by gesturing furiously, but then regains his composure and continues with his blocking.

People who saw the production of *Prinsloo Versus* would recognise the set, remember the original function, but notice that this is a case of repetition with variation and the end result is an intertextual joke. For people not familiar with *Prinsloo Versus*, the moment would still be funny, but for a different reason, since the situation itself was also intended to be funny. So the opening moment of this production would hopefully be an example of analogue as well as parody. While I was primarily adapting *Six Characters*, I was also creating a send-up of the Drama Department and I felt free to parody or comment on certain plays, situations and people.

Not only did I transpose the location and period of the original, but also the way in which the play deals with stage-time. The relationship between stage-time and real-time in *Six Characters* is closely matched. The break in action when The Manager leaves with the characters to write down their story is about as long as the break (intermission) for an audience could be. All the events follow on each other in a logical, realistic way. The impression is created that the audience is witnessing the events as they unfold in real-time. When the characters play out a scene, it is not a flashback, a distortion in time, to an event that Madame Pace's parlour that happens, but rather the representation of that event. Time seems to be continuous and the action as well. There are no blackouts or other lighting changes that specifically indicate a break in real-

time. The false starts and stoppages, even though they disrupt the flow of the action, are not breaks in the flow of represented time. Stage time continues, since the action continues and the audience experiences time at a similar pace as the characters in the play.

At first, the way I made use of the aspect of time in *Twintig Akteurs* seems to be different than that of *Six Characters*. There are two definite breaks in the action that affects stage-time. The company leaves the stage after they have fired the original director – they were rehearsing for a production of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*. They will come back in a week's time and are supposed to start rehearsals on the new play: the Afrikaans translation of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* by Luigi Pirandello as translated by Fred le Roux. There is a blackout and the first scene ends.

Moments later the second act begins. In the audience/reader's mind a couple of days have passed when the second act begins. This seems like an obvious difference in stage-time and real-time, especially in the text of the adaptation. As I will explain later in this chapter, the concept of the production changed shortly before the first performance, so it is different to the script.

The same break in the stage-time's relationship to real-time occurs when the scheduled intermission in the performance takes place. In the play, the company decides to break for the day and they will pick up the rehearsals at a later stage. As the play resumes, however, the audience will see that more time must have passed in the stage-time as the performers are already in a performance of their version of *Six Characters* in a theatre of the absurd style that the director suggested just before intermission. Stage-time seems to match real-time quite closely for a while, but then the action is broken when someone corpses. They all break character and laughs with the actor and decide to skip to a later stage in the play (*Six Characters*).

This tells the audience that the company is still in rehearsal; probably a dress rehearsal, since they are already working in their costumes. Also, for the first time in the play (*Twintig Akteurs*) the actual stage lighting equipment is in use.

All of these breaks in time suggest that what we are seeing on stage isn't real time. Time is not continuous. But what the audience did not know, when they saw this text in performance for the first time, was that the entire performance was actually just another layer. The end of this play, just like the end of *Six Characters*, was indeed, as Cusson calls it:

[The] most manipulative part of the entire drama, with the parts of reality and fiction clashing in such a way on stage that the audience is left in the hopeless position of trying to figure out what has exactly happened (Cusson, 2002: online).

At the (perceived) end of *Twintig Akteurs* we see the green light and the four characters, Father, Son, Step-Daughter and Mother, in silhouette, as we would at the end of *Six Characters*. Then there is a blackout and the curtain falls as it would in *Six Characters*. Some audience members thought this was the end of the play. They started to applaud. All of the actors in *Twintig Akteurs* came forward, still in character, and they didn't take a curtain call. The director, the character called Oorspronklike Regisseur, informs them that she will be giving notes the next day and that they can all get dressed, go home and that she will see them the next morning for another rehearsal. One actress stays behind:

Lisa: Ek wil jou net gou iets vra. Dit pla my nou al 'n tydjie.

OorReg: Ja, Lisa.

Lisa: Dink jy die gehoor gaan dit verstaan? Ek meen die hele "Dis-'n-play-within-a-play-within-a-play" situasie. Meeste van ons het gesukkel om dit te verstaan en ons het *Six Characters* gedoen in Teaterwetenskap.

OorReg: Moet jou nie bekommer nie. Die gehoor is nie so dom soos julle dink nie. Hulle tel goed op wat ék nie eens bedoel het nie, wat net so per ongeluk deurkom.

Lisa: Is jy seker?

OorReg: (soos hulle afstap.) Ontspan. Dit sal fine wees...

(Conradie, 2004: 40)

As the performers walked off the stage, the lights faded to black. The audience again thought that it was really the end of the performance (of *Twintig Akteurs*) and started to applaud. When the lights came back on again all the performers came downstage and they did a curtain call. They called me up and I, or at least the character of Wilhelm, did a curtain call with them. As the audience got up to leave, one of the actresses approaches Wilhelm:

Tilana: Ek wil jou net gou iets vra. Dit pla my nou al 'n tydjie.

Wilhelm: Ja, Tilana.

Tilana: Dink jy die gehoor gaan dit verstaan? Ek meen die hele “Dis-’n-play-within-a-play-within-a-play-within-a-play” situasie. Meeste van ons het gesukkel om dit te verstaan en ons het *Six Characters* gedoen in Teaterwetenskap.

Wilhelm: Moet jou nie bekommer nie. Die gehoor is nie so dom soos julle dink nie. Hulle tel goed op wat ék nie eens bedoel het nie, wat net so per ongeluk deurkom.

Tilana: Is jy seker?

Wilhelm: (soos hulle afstap.) Ontspan. Dit sal fine wees...

(Conradie, 2004: 40-41)

I came back on stage and my stage manager and I discussed notes regarding the performance and what we should still fix (including the broken projector). We started setting up again for the next rehearsal, moving on all the decor the Foreman character moved off earlier. Some of the audience members stayed behind to watch this – almost like people staying behind in movie theatres to

see if there are sneak peeks after the credits. So, in effect, our performance continued until everyone left the auditorium.

I don't know if all the audience members realised that they watched real-time representation of a rehearsal of the play (*Twintig Akteurs*) they were intended to watch.

As I mentioned earlier, there was a difference between the script (the adaptation), as well as my initial concept, and the end-result. Initially I intended to put the play on as a finished product. On the morning of the first performance I realised that the show wasn't ready for various reasons. I decided to change the concept and stage the entire performance as a rehearsal of the advertised production. As an experiment I made the decision to keep the performers in the dark about this choice.

My reasoning behind my decision was quite simple. When actors play their characters, they do so to the best of their ability as performers. When I placed them on the stage as performers attempting to play the characters of actors playing characters, there still existed a chance that their performances might not be authentic. When I changed the parameters of the play without telling them, their performances became very real, since they cannot be better or worse at playing their characters than they were for the rehearsal – which is what the audience saw: a rehearsal.

People, mostly my cast who were furious because I didn't inform them of my intentions, asked me afterwards if I planned to do this all along. I can honestly say that I didn't think about it for longer than the three stressful hours I had free between our technical rehearsals that morning, where only eleven of my *twenty* actors could be present, and the evening we performed. Until fifteen minutes before we started the performance I wasn't completely sure that I should go through with it, but in the end I decided to go forward with it.

I was also asked where I got the idea to have the double false ending. I do not recall if I read this prior to the production, but in this essay by Cusson there is an example of how Pirandello experimented with the ending of his play:

In one performance, the 1925 revision sanctioned by Pirandello himself, the ending of the play was changed to make the audience even more confused. As [The Manager] called for lights at the end of the final act, it is the instinctive thing for an audience to begin to come back to 'reality', much like when the final credits begin to roll at the end of a movie or television show. In this instance, however, as the audience is beginning to applaud and reach for their coats, the lights were turned back off and the stage-lights came back on. The audience became very confused, and some even sat back down in anticipation of more play. Another great example of this kind of phenomenon is when inexperienced concertgoers begin to applaud when the conductor has seemingly finished a piece, and feel foolish as another movement begins (2002: online).

It was interesting to see how disorientated people became when I 'tricked' them with this ending. By creating the illusion that I am working within the regular confines of the conventions regarding scenes and intervals etc., they never realised that the entire time what they *perceived* to be a representation was in fact *the illusion*. Only as it happened did it occur to (some of) them that they were never intended to see a performance of the play they thought they came to see. I think I would describe it as experiencing a magic trick as it is explained to you. The audience's reaction to the end of the first performance of *Twintig Akteurs op soek na 'n [beter] Regisseur* was without a doubt my favourite moment as director.

Twintig Akteurs, just like the original, is set within a theatre and it deals with the problems of theatre-making. It is a play within a play within a play, so metatheatrical aspects and theatricality feature quite heavily throughout. I didn't wish to change this theatre-about-theatre theme at all since this was one of the key elements of the play I was drawn to in the first place. Something that I've

realised, or an opinion that I've formed, in the process of creating this adaptation is that you do not have to attempt to change everything when you adapt it. While adaptation implies change, a greater magnitude of change does not equal a better adaptation. There are not a certain number of things you need to change before it qualifies as an adaptation; when you start adjusting or altering the text, you have started the process of adaptation and the product you end up creating, will be an adaptation. Whether it is good or bad is not the issue.

When we study the problems of the theatre-making process by putting it in a play, we realise that a lot of the humour will come from miscommunications; this is evident in *Six Characters* as well as *Noises Off*. There are examples of such miscommunications throughout the *Twintig Akteurs*. A possible reason for this is that when people slip in and out of character it is potentially confusing for everyone involved. I will briefly look at two examples of this from *Twintig Akteurs*.

One example occurs shortly after the theatre company start the rehearsal on *Six Characters*. The Director is now being played by the actress who were initially meant to play Madame Pace. The Prompter is playing The Prompter. In *Six Characters* the Prompter is regularly reprimanded by the Manager because he/she does not want to read all the stage directions for the actors.

Souffleur: Kom ons gaan aan... (*sy lees in haar teks en dan*) So hulle (*die akteurs*) sing en dans en gaan te kere en dan raak die Verhoogbestuurder moeg vir die geraas...

VerhoogB: (*as haarself*) O... (*as karakter*) Toe nou, toe nou! Dis genoeg daarvan! Hier's die regisseur!

Souffler: Musiek en dans hou skielik op. Die akteurs draai om en sien die Regisseur wat... (*sien die aktrise [Madame P] wat nie deur die ouditorium aankom nie, maar wel op die verhoog staan*) ...op die verhoog staan.

(akteurs lag almal)

Madame P: O kwit! *(hardloop vinnig by die trappe af en maak dan asof sy in die gangetjie af kom.)*

Souffleur: 'Musiek en dans' hou skielik op. Die akteurs draai om, kyk in die OUDITORIUM in en sien die 'Regisseur' wat by die deur inkom. Hy... *(wil verander na sy, maar nadat hulle voorheen op haar gegil het hieroor, verander sy dit nie weer na 'sy' toe nie.)* HY stap deur die ouditorium onder 'n koor van 'Goeie môres' van die Akteurs, klim die trappies op na die verhoog. Sy verhoogbestuurder bied hom sy pos aan – 'n koerant en 'n tydskrif of so, en 'n teks.

Madame P: Geen briewe?

Verhoogb: Nee, meneer, dis al pos wat daar is.

Madame P: Sit dit in my kantoor. *(Sy kyk rond en draai dan na die Verhoobestuurder.)* O, maar 'n mens kan niks hier sien nie. Vra hulle om ons 'n bietjie lig te gee, asseblief.

VerhoogB: Reg!

Madame P: *(Klap haar hande)* Kom nou laat ons begin! *(Aan Verhoogbestuurder)* Makeer iemand?

VerhoogB: *(Wat nou al 'n geruime tyd wag om hierdie grappie te maak)* Ja...die Regisseur!

(Almal bars weer uit van die lag.)

(Conradie, 2004: 15)

In this scene the actors are still getting used to the idea of referring to another actress as the Director. They are also still getting used to the idea of rehearsing

Six Characters, which is in itself quite a difficult thing to do because of its metatheatrical nature. Some members of the theatre company, like The Prompter, 'Madame Pace' and The Stage Manager, are quicker to catch on and actually have fun with the situation, but it leads to more confusion later. There are three potential jokes in this moment. The first is when The Prompter realises that the actress playing The Director is still on stage when she is supposed to be in the auditorium. In performance the actress playing the actress playing The Director was very good and got a laugh from our audience every night.

The second joke comes from The Prompter. Just before this extract The Prompter continuously changes references of 'he/him/his' to 'she/her' and it slows down the rehearsal process. Madame Pace/The Director asks her to stop it, but she struggles with it, since it is a compulsion she has. She finally manages to control herself when she has to refer to The Director as 'Him'. The joke also depended a lot on the actress playing the part of The Prompter. She had to play it with just enough sarcasm in her voice for the line to work.

The last joke is an adaptation joke, in the form of commentary, made by The Stage Manager. In *Six Characters* the Leading Lady is late, and not for the first time, and The Director is not amused. In *Twintig Akteurs* (quite early in the play) The Director was late for their rehearsal of *Endgame* and we realise that it was a habit of hers. The stressed out Stage Manager cannot help but crack a joke about it when the opportunity presents itself. It pays off, since the actors all have a laugh. The character of The Stage Manager was shy, but assertive, and in performance we could see that she enjoyed the fact that everyone enjoyed her joke at The Director's expense.

The second example of miscommunication occurs because of the palimpsestuous nature of this particular script:

Madame P: En luister wanneer ek dinge verduidelik! (*Hy draai weer na die Hoofspeler.*) Ja, ou kêrel, die dop... of, kan jy maar sê, die leë vorm van rede, sonder daardie inhoud van die instinkte, wat blind is! Jy is die rede, en jou vrou is die

instinkte, in 'n spel waarin julle rolle speel wat aan julle toegewys is. En die hele tyd wat jy jou rol speel, is jy die eiesinnige marionet van jouself. Begryp?

Hoofspeler: *(sprei sy hande oop)* Ek? Nee.

Madame P: Dis eintlik heel eenvoudig, sien Pirandello probeer...

Souffleur: Nee, dis sy woorde.

Madame P: O, jammer. *(Maak keelskoon. Terug na haar stoel.)* Ek ook nie! Ewenwel, laat ons aan die gang kom daarmee! Dit gaan 'n daverende misoes wees in elk geval! *(Vertroulik)* Ek stel voor dat jy effens meer na die gehoor draai – omtrent driekwart profiel. Ander sal die hele ding, met die duistere dialoog en die gehoor wat nie in staat is om jou te hoor nie – anders sal die hele ding na die hel gaan. *(Klap haar hande)* Nou, komaan, kóm-áán! Laat ons begin!

Souffleur: Ekskuus, maar kan ek 'n bietjie dié kant toe sit? Dit trek nogal hier.

Madame P: Natuurlik! Nes jy wil, nes jy wil!

(Intussen het een van die akteurs wat 'n Karakter speel die ouditorium binnegekóm. Nadat hy die hele lengte van die ouditorium-paadjie afgestap het, kom hy vlak voor die verhoog staan om die aankoms van die Ses Karakters by die Regisseur aan te kondig. Hy kyk om hom rond, verward en effens onthuts.)

Souffleur: Wat op dees aarde maak jy?

Madame P: Ek kyk 'verward en effens onthuts' rond.

Souffleur: Verwys dit nie dalk na die Karakter nie?

Madame P: Dalk... eh... Goed! So die Karakters kom natuurlik nou in.

Souffleur: Gaan hulle maskers dra?

Madame P: Ons sal maar moet hoor as die regisseur kom.

Souffleur: O, ja dis reg. Ek het amper vergeet jy's 'n akteur. Waar draai sy?

Madame P: Ek weet nie, maar sy moet blerrie gou maak. Ek suig alles hier uit my duim uit en ek ken self nog nie my eie woorde nie.

VerhoogB: So is daar nou maskers of nie?

(Conradie, 2004: 18)

This example shows that because the actors are working without the guidance of a director and because of the intertextual nature of the script, they are bound to misunderstand the intention of the text, and also one another, at times.

The first comic moment in this section lies in the fact that in *Six Characters* Pirandello wanted to make the point that sometimes actors don't actually understand *what* they are saying. So he is highlighting a possible problem of theatre-making, namely some actors who just say their lines without understanding the meaning of the words. The opening speech of the character of Die Hoofspeler was appropriated directly from the translated script. It is very close to the English version of the play. So it seems that Pirandello had a problem with certain actors who were merely saying their lines without understanding the meaning behind them.

In *Twintig Akteurs* we realise that the actress playing Madame Pace and then later The Director might have that same problem. She doesn't trust her fellow actor's intellect and feel obligated to help him understand. In the process she causes the misunderstanding that becomes the joke and not, as in *Six Characters*, only the Leading Man. So it is a simple, yet effective joke. By

appropriating a section of the original text and splicing it into my own adaptation I created, in my opinion, an effective comedic moment.

These are only a few examples of how the characters and the dialogue in *Twintig Akteurs* reinforce the theme of the problem of theatre making. There are numerous others. The misunderstandings caused by the ambiguities in the text reinforces the stop-start nature of the action and along with the somewhat chaotic nature of the action on-stage you really get the idea that these twenty actors are quite desperately in search of a better director. During the rehearsal process of *Twintig Akteurs*... the cast and I had several miscommunications because of the nature of the text. I would give a note and refer to a line in the script, but some of the actors, unaware that I was referring to the script, would take offence or be confused, until I explicitly pointed out that I was referring to a line in the text. Some of these misunderstandings were added to our final text.

Since the characters in *Twintig Akteurs* are actually all *actors* playing parts, they tend to, as actors do from time to time, break character. The argument might be made that especially young/inexperienced/student actors left to their own devices will do this on a more regular basis. Sometimes a character would say something as the actor (i.e. not in character) and the other actor would still be in character and he/she would react *in* character. This leads to confusion and miscommunications. It was also amplified by the fact that in some cases, they are referring to miscommunications and ambiguities that occur in the *Six Characters* text. At the beginning of the second rehearsal the original director is late for the rehearsal. She has allocated the part of The Director to herself – against the advice of her lecturer, Marthinus Basson. When asked about this decision against the instructions of her lecturer, she replies that he doesn't know everything! These defiant words cause one of the younger actors to drop his notebook and pen out of shock – this would be a running joke throughout the production.

As a result of the director's lack of punctuality, the rehearsal cannot continue and the cast decides to mutiny. They appoint the actress scheduled to play the part of Madame Pace to play the part of The Director while they wait for the

actual director. As soon as she starts to play the part of The Director, she actually starts to direct the cast. No one complains though and she gradually becomes the character of The Director and also the actual director of the play within the play.

The Stage Manager of the production was also appointed, by the original director, to play the character of The Stage Manager in her production of *Six Characters*. Shortly after the second rehearsal starts they realise that no one was cast in the role of The Prompter. The Prompter says that she will play that part, since she is an actual prompter and no one will be able to play the part better than her. This was an intertextual reference to The Step-Daughter, in *Six Characters*, when she says that the Leading Lady cannot play her better than herself, since she is the real person.

So, when someone reads *Twintig Akteurs*, they will realise that there are characters called Actor 1, Actor 2, Actor 3, etc. There is a character called The Prompter who, in *Twintig Akteurs*, is an actual prompter for the theatre company, but appoints herself to play The Prompter in the company's production of *Six Characters*. There is a character called The Stage Manager who is the actual stage manager of theatre-company, but who also plays The Stage Manager in the rehearsal of *Six Characters*. Add to this the fact that there is a character who, throughout the text of *Twintig Akteurs*, is referred to as Madame Pace, but she never really is Madame Pace. Here we have a recipe for confusion, miscommunication and ambiguity. In short, chaos will ensue. This was in fact the case for many of the actors in my cast for *Twintig Akteurs*. But, to quote Pirandello, I too had to “[present] this natural and organic chaos” (Pirandello, 2014: online).

The character of Madame Pace, in *Twintig Akteurs*, starts off as an actress intended to play Madame Pace, but then gets handed the role of The Director in *Six Characters*. Then as the rehearsal progresses, she assumes the role of The Director and later the theatre company actually appoints her to direct the production of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. She accepts this responsibility and also takes it upon herself to change the style of the production

to a Theatre of the Absurd play. What we see at the beginning of the second half, after intermission, is a rehearsal of this Absurdist take on *Six Characters*. In my research I read that Pirandello had a direct impact on Absurdist writers like Ionesco and Beckett. I thought it appropriate to incorporate Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* into my adaptation.

Cusson (2002: online) writes:

Eugene Ionesco, a Romanian born French dramatist, ... and Samuel Beckett, an Irish dramatist ... were also greatly influenced by Pirandello and his dramatic ideas in their positing a theatrical and philosophical view that life was absurd, which became known theatrically as Absurdist theatre. Beckett and Ionesco were both leaders in the Absurd theatre, and took many of Pirandello's ideas and applied them to their theatre in an effort to extend what Pirandello first meant to infer, that the human condition is essentially absurd, and that this condition can be represented in the theatre as solely absurd. This method of drama, if we believe the Absurdist, would lead a view to conclude that the theatre itself is absurd, which is one of the basic tenets Pirandello pushes for in his time.

My directing lecturer at the time was of the opinion that I had an affinity for the absurd. I decided that, since I gravitated towards the absurd and since Pirandello was so influential on the Absurdist Theatre movement, to infuse *Twintig Akteurs* with a measure of absurdity would not be completely unthinkable or unmotivated. There are several examples of this in the text and also in the production of the play.

Instead of rehearsing *Die spel soos hy dit gespeel het* (*Mixing it up* or *The Rules of the Game* depending on the English version), they are working on a production of *Endgame*, by Samuel Beckett. In my text, the actors and director have different views about the length of the pauses noted in the stage directions of *Endgame*. It seems, at first glance, that they are mocking *Endgame*, or perhaps even Samuel Beckett's use of pauses. My intention was a tongue-in-

cheek look at the way actors and directors have to battle with certain stage directions in texts.

So my intention was not to mock *Endgame* or Beckett's pauses, but rather highlight a possible awkward situation when directors and actors miscommunicate. This specific instance also served the purpose of character development. We needed to realise that the character of The Director is not necessarily very good at what she does. I used this scene to make it believable for the company of actors to develop doubts regarding their director and then replace her with a new director.

Another function for referencing *Endgame* this early in my adaptation was to communicate to the audience (or at least those who knew of *Endgame*) that this play does not fall within the realm of realism. Up to this point in the play, similarly to the beginning of *Six Characters*, the style of acting required by the script was very natural or realistic. *Endgame* is classified as an absurdist play and I wanted to communicate to my audience (once again, to those who knew *Endgame*) that there are absurd events to come. In case this message was not clear, I also tried to make some of the events in the opening scene really absurd, but the characters treat it as natural, or normal occurrences, thus shifting the style of the play into the realm of the absurd. An example of this would be the initial director's (seemingly) indestructible cellular phone.

The first director, the one directing *Endgame*, arrives late for the rehearsal. When she enters, from the back of the auditorium, we don't immediately realise that she is part of the production at all – unless you know the actress and she told some her friends who are in the audience. She takes her seat, quite close to the front and in the middle block, shuffling passed a couple of people. Meanwhile on stage, the actors are already rehearsing *Endgame*.

Moments after she has taken her seat her phone starts to ring. She doesn't switch it off, but rather gets up and goes to the emergency exit where she answers the phone and, in a hushed tone, has a conversation. She says the stereotypical things like: "I can't talk now, I'm at the theatre", "I'll call you later",

etc. Frustration registers on the actor playing Clov's face. When she hangs up, she immediately stops the actor and the audience (those who haven't guessed by now that it is part of the show and a joke) realises that she is part of the performance.

She goes on stage where she has an argument with the actors about the rehearsal and the quality of their work. Her phone rings again, but she ignores it at first. One actor asks her to switch it off. She doesn't listen to him, but rather answers the phone. She gets frustrated with the person on the other side and smashes the phone to bits by stomping on it. She throws the parts into the wing, tells the actors that she is leaving and storms off through the auditorium. Mere seconds later the phone rings again. An actor goes into the wings, picks up the parts of phone, walks on stage with it and answers it. He informs the caller that the director has left without her phone, hangs up and flicks it casually back into the wing. I intended for the audience to decode this absurd occurrence into the following meaning; an obviously destroyed phone can still ring in this play, thus anything goes!

A third function of the *Endgame* reference is one that Samuel Beckett himself used when he gave his play its title: *Endgame* refers (amongst other things) to the endgame of a game of chess. One of the important tactics in chess is that the centre of the board needs to be controlled. Later when I started blocking the play, I realised that I could adapt this chess concept and use it for the actors' movements. We played a game where whomever had power always had to attempt to be in the centre of the stage. So we tried as far as possible, or as long as it made sense, to have characters who were in a commanding position, to be physically in a commanding position. This also worked to our advantage, because visually it created the image of someone in centre stage with two groups of people, one group stage left and one group stage right, physically opposite each other. According to Cambon (cited in Cusson) this is also a popular way of blocking *Six Characters* (2002: online).

Later in the rehearsal process we got stuck when we tried to create a more stylized segment of the production, the section that happens after the

intermission. Once again, I decided that extending the chess reference might solve the problem. We incorporated the physical movements of chess pieces into the actors' movements. In other words, some actors were only moving in lines parallel to the setting or centre lines emulating the movements of rooks, some were able to move in diagonal lines like bishops, while others could do both like the queen. Some of the actors who had less important parts were merely pawns in the play and were forced to move one step at a time. These were the characters of the younger actors in the theatre-company. The Director, for instance, had freedom of movement, like the queen.

Thus, instead of just briefly alluding to *Endgame* in the opening moments of the play, I tried to incorporate it, and its absurdist concepts, into the rest of the play as well. The fact that the rehearsal of the play (*Twintig Akteurs*) is the actual play (*Twintig Akteurs*) and that the play will never actually be performed also has a hint of *Endgame* to it. The twenty actors of this play might very well be caught up in this eternal moment of rehearsing the same play every day after day for all eternity – much like the characters from *Six Characters*.

In this, my first formal attempt at adaptation, I used the Conradie Codec conservatively. The original text was transposed, in terms of time and place, in order for new meaning to be generated in the year 2004 at the HB Thom Theatre. Various sections of the adapted text was appropriated and incorporated into the newly created text.

Chapter three: Case study two – *onsindroom*

The original focus for my postgraduate studies was intended to be a study of the subconscious of the theatre-maker with specific reference to the work of August Strindberg. Prof. Temple Hauptfleisch pointed me towards *A Dream Play* by August Strindberg. The title for my thesis would be: “The Performance Space as a Showcase for the Subconscious of an Individual – with specific reference to the work of August Strindberg”. I wished to show how someone would be able to channel their personal issues into a script and/or theatre production.

August Strindberg’s ‘inferno’ period refers to a time of great emotional (and perhaps spiritual) suffering. It came about after his second marriage (to the Austrian journalist Frida von Uhl) came to an end in 1893 after barely a year.

He had then hovered on the brink of complete insanity, writing nothing and devoting himself to alchemy, in particular to the attempted making of gold. Religion, of all things for so confirmed an atheist, had saved him. Under the influence of the eighteenth-century Swedish theologian Emmanuel Swedenborg he had come to believe that, as John Keats phrased it, suffering makes souls, and that everything was planned in detail by a just and merciful Providence (Bergman, 1973: vii).

From the pre-inferno period two plays stood out namely *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1888). After he recovered from his mental breakdown (which he wrote about in *Inferno*) he wrote approximately thirty-five plays in eleven years! Among these thirty-five plays was his dream trilogy called *To Damascus* that he wrote in 1898 (Parts I and II) and 1901 (Part III). Although these plays touched on the concept of dreams as part of a play, it is in *A Dream Play* (1901) that he really made it the focus of a play.

Earlier dramatists had certainly used their powers of imagination and their memories and had touched on the unconscious, but none of them

had written a play designed to tell the truth about God, man, and the universe in a form deliberately imitative of a dream (Strindberg, 1973: 6).

There are numerous autobiographical references in *A Dream Play* and although they form an important part of the text, one should be careful not to focus only on this particular aspect of this text. He referenced his own life (events, places, people, emotions, fears, dreams, etc.), but he also attempted to sympathize with ordinary people. There is no doubt, however, that the background history of the text and its author should be carefully studied for clues that could help decode the meaning of the text – especially if you intend to produce or adapt the text. The problem with (or rather the enjoyment of) analysing the text stems from the fact that all the usual aspects – the characters, the treatment of time, location and action, the themes and symbols and, in this case, the all-important background history of the text and its author – are so entangled that we cannot truly study them as separate aspects.

Emil Schering, who translated Strindberg's plays into German, "was more than a little puzzled by *A Dream Play* when he read it for the first time" (Strindberg, 1973: 3). In response to a letter Schering wrote him, Strindberg replied and formulated his intentions with the play:

How to understand *A Dream Play*?

Indra's daughter had descended to Earth to find out how human beings have it. And there she learns how difficult life is. And the worst is: having to injure or do harm to others if one wants to live. The form is motivated in a preface: the conglomeration out of a dream in which, however, there is a definite logic. Everything *irrational* becomes believable. Human beings appear at several points and are sketched, the sketches flow together; the same person splits into several persons only to form into one again.

Time and place do not exist, a minute is equal to many years (Strindberg, 1973: 3).

Strindberg, in an explanatory note on his play, also wrote:

Everything can happen; everything is possible and likely. Time and space do not exist; on an insignificant basis of reality the imagination spins and weaves new patterns: a blending of memories, experiences, free inventions, absurdities, and improvisations (Strindberg, 1973: 19).

Even though Strindberg contends that anything can happen, this doesn't imply that the play will jump around senselessly – this is still a Strindberg play, so “there is a definite logic”. Even though its foundation is the “insignificant basis of reality”, it doesn't mean that Strindberg didn't plan exactly what the structure of this play would be. In the Strindberg collection in the Royal Library in Stockholm there are notes that indicate how carefully he planned it. He used, as a point of departure: the age-old notion that a dying person's life flashes in front of his/her eyes (Strindberg, 1973: 3). In Strindberg's planning notes there are references to 'The Seasons', the character of 'Indra's Daughter', 'The Growing Castle' and 'The Dream Play'.

Before writing *A Dream Play* Strindberg initially started work on, what he called, a “straightforward realistic play called *The Corridor Drama*”. He intended for it to be about “a composer [who] has been waiting for seven years for his opera to be performed, and seven years for a wife” (Bergman, 1973: ix). Strindberg stopped work on this play when his third wife, the 22-year-old actress Harriet Bosse, left him (on 26 June 1901) less than two months after they got married.

He continued work on the play only after she returned to him, pregnant, in August. She left him again in the same month and he stopped work on the text. Finally, on 5 October 1901, “three and a half months pregnant, she returned to live with him ... [and] after their reunion ... [he] re-worked it as *A Dream Play*” (Bergman, 1973: ix). Some sections of this initial play were retained in the final version of *A Dream Play*.

If you read the text with the idea of producing it, it quickly becomes clear that the challenges are numerous and careful design (and possibly a hefty budget)

will be required to create Strindberg's vision on stage. That is probably why the play was not produced until 1907, even though it was finished at the end of 1901. "Like [Hendrik Ibsen's] *Peer Gynt*, the last act of which is also a dream play, Strindberg's *A Dream Play* was regarded, on publication as unstageable" (Bergman, 1973: xiii). Most producers/directors didn't know how to undertake such a task. With all the technological and engineering capabilities available to us now, a play of this magnitude would be possible to produce, but there are few producers who would be willing to face the financial risks involved for a relatively obscure play such as this.

It is not only the financial implications of creating a production on this scale, but the desired effect the author intended also needs to be taken into consideration. In the initial production the director (Castengren) intended to use magic lantern slides to represent the different locations. This was in line with Strindberg's vision for the play and also his views on life and how it seemed more and more like a dream. "For years he had been fascinated by magic lanterns, with their similar capacity to provide seemingly disconnected yet suggestively relevant images" (Bergman, 1973: xi). The only problem was that the equipment gave them trouble during the rehearsals and they had to use regular stage decor. Strindberg wrote about this in his *Open letters to the Intimate Theatre*:

[It] disturbed the actors' mood and caused interminable intervals; moreover, the whole thing became materialized, instead of the intended opposite, i.e., dematerialization (Bergman, 1973: xiii).

Strindberg intended the locations to be represented as dematerialised spaces even though they had their roots in real-life locations. One might also argue that all of the locations in the play are actually just one location, i.e. the dreamer's unconscious mind. This might open up the possibilities regarding the staging of the play and also its interpretation. It is therefore not unheard of for some directors who attempt a production of this text to ignore a lot, or even all, of the details in the stage directions altogether and rather interpret the text and create their own viable locations. When I directed and designed my adaptation I decided to make use of digital projections as backdrops. This was primarily

used to make the transitions from one scene to the next as fast as possible instead of using different, larger pieces of decor.

Ingmar Bergman, famous for his interpretations of Strindberg's works was one of the directors who, in trying to stay true to the letter of Strindberg's text, did not achieve success with his production. In 1963 he directed it for Swedish television. Bergman himself "regarded it as a failure" (Bergman, xiv). It was only years later, after some vigorous cutting and adapting that he could successfully stage the play in 1970. Bergman made cuts and transpositions to the text and kept all of Strindberg's own words. Most noticeably, he removed almost all of the stage directions. The first two thirds of the play were more or less left intact, but the last third of the play was shortened quite considerably. There is also no interval. A performance of this text should last just under two hours. In his production, Bergman made use of simple, yet effective staging and he approached the production more like a chamber play instead of a spectacle.

It might have allowed him to fit the production in a smaller budget or perhaps he wanted to focus on the relationship between the characters on a more intimate level. The latter can be achieved by making the scale of the production slightly smaller and removing some of the more fantastic elements indicated in Strindberg's text. This approach to the staging of *A Dream Play* was influential on the style I wanted to employ when I eventually created the production of the newly created script.

Other adaptations of Strindberg's text include Caryl Churchill's adaptation of the text in February 2005 – a couple of months before I created mine. Katie Mitchell was tasked with directing the play for the Royal National Theatre in England and it was staged in the Cottesloe. Even though the production was well-received the reviewer mentioned that what she saw was not a production of Churchill's script:

Clearly, Katie Mitchell, the young director who staged *A Dream Play*, had few qualms about altering the work. Her ensemble-devised piece

detaches itself from both Churchill's adaptation and Strindberg's original (Kritzer, 2005: 502).

Katie Mitchell explained how she approached this task of staging *A Dream Play*:

My aim with this new production, like Strindberg's, has been to put a dream on stage. Choosing a dreamer was the first challenge. The actors and I then started to construct the dreamer's waking world and to imagine what may have sparked their dreams. ... In order to find a theatrical language with which to communicate a dream, we studied our own and others' dreams. ... We decided only to select material that we could stage without having to use clunky theatrical conventions. ... Although it is a slightly different shape to that first imagined by Strindberg, it has at its heart the same impossible aim: to put a dream on stage (Mitchell, 2005: online).

I had the same intention when I started with my adaptation of *A Dream Play*. My initial plan was to have the cast assist me in creating the adaptation of the text. I asked them to give me some of their own written work and accounts of their dreams – hence the *ons* (“we”) in *onsindroom*. For some reason they weren't open to the idea of creating a workshop-style text. Only one of the cast members gave me some of his writing and I adapted that into the final script. His written work became the main body of a play-within-a-play section in my final adaptation.

After my attempt to get my cast involved proved unsuccessful, I decided to just write most of the play myself. When I started I didn't have a very specific plan – definitely not as thorough as Strindberg's layout on a scene-by-scene basis. I took Strindberg's Author's Note as a starting point. The idea that in a dream anything is possible appealed to me.

The problem was that while you can write anything in a text, the staging of it must also be taken into account. The theatre, especially student theatre with very limited budget, isn't necessarily the easiest medium to represent dreams

or the unconscious mind in. Film and television are perhaps better suited for the task. Computer-generated effects do tend to make the task slightly easier. Unfortunately this limitation had an impact on the adaptation process. I couldn't have caves that change into cathedrals etc.

I made the choice that, since the form of the *representation* is limited, the *content* needs to be surreal enough to still create the illusion of a dream. So I decided to take Strindberg's concept that "time and place do not exist", that the play can consist of "a mixture of memories, experiences, free fancies, incongruities and improvisations" and that the "characters, split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, disperse [and] assemble" to heart. Examples of this in my adaptation include a cameo appearance by a character from an Ionesco play, a play-within-a-play with a short educational scene on Strindberg as well as one character played by three actors at the same time.

I decided to shift the focus of the play to the characters of a Man and a Woman. Just as with Strindberg, the character of the Man would be a representation of myself. And as in *A Dream Play*, the character of the Woman would be my Victoria. At that point I had never been in a relationship before, so the search for Victoria was very much a topical subject. I thought that I could, like Strindberg, explore these feelings of failure, as well as a good dose of post-teen angst, and produce a play similar to what Strindberg called the child of his greatest sorrow.

As a starting point I used a short, 10-minute play I wrote in 2003 called *Jou matras en my kombes*. The central character in this play was a Man (a writer) and his publisher (*The Man*). The action in the play is a discussion between the writer and his publisher of the Man's latest short story called *My matras en jou kombes*. The short story is about the Woman who left him (*the Man*) for *The Other Man*. As they discuss it, the Woman appears and they relive short conversations from their relationship. *The Other Man* is only heard and we only see his arm as he leads the Woman off-stage, away from the Man.

I decided that for my adaptation I would make the Man my central character and use the very simple story, of a search for love and the recovery of a lost love, as the overarching storyline. I decided to show possible scenes from their relationship and present it in the form a dream.

I also incorporated a scene, called *Him and Her*, written by Liezl (Li) Kuhn as part of her third-year writing course. I saw the text in performance earlier that year and asked her if I could incorporate it into my text. Her text features two main characters, the Man and the Woman, improvising scenes in order to work through their relationship problems.

From *A Dream Play* I retained only a couple of scenes. The scenes of the theatre corridor were relevant, since the girl I had a crush on at the time was an actress and also a director. We were close friends and we would always discuss our rehearsals and the progress etc. at the Drama Department's stage door. I could incorporate Strindberg's corridor scene into my new text. Also, a short section between the Lawyer and Agnes – the scene where they decide to get married – ended up in *onsindroom*. This was reworked and took place between two of my new characters called the Pregnant Woman and the Man with the Tear in his Pants, who were different versions of the Writer and Victoria.

With the basic storyline and source texts ready, I had to start the actual writing of the script. Strindberg was once asked: "How do you write creatively?" To which he replied:

Well, how? Let him explain who can! It begins with a sort of ferment or a kind of pleasant fever, which becomes ecstasy or intoxication. Sometimes it's like a seed that sprouts, attracts all interest to itself, consumes everything ever experienced, but still selects and rejects. Sometimes I believe I am some kind of medium, because the writing goes so easily, half unconsciously, only slightly calculated! (Strindberg, 1973: 13).

I wouldn't say that it went by easily, but after two weeks of feverish, half-unconscious writing, I had a text compiled of a number of small scenes which included appropriated sections from *A Dream Play*, *My matras en jou Kombers*, a piece of writing one of the cast members submitted as well as the scene by Li Kuhn. I had used my basic storyline to link them all together by "the insignificant basis of reality" and attempted to create something that imitated "the inconsequent yet transparently logical shape of a dream" (Bergman, 1973" ixx).

My intention was to pay homage to Strindberg's text and the intention he had with *A Dream Play* by creating my adaptation. Strindberg had specific motivations for including each of the locations. The reasons for most of them are biographical, while others are more thematic in nature. The same goes for the characters inhabiting the various spaces and the themes linked to them. As previously stated, while it is important to look into the aspect of personal experience (autobiographical detail) in the script, Strindberg also intended to showcase every phase not only of his own life, but also of every human being's life experience. Thus, the different aspects of the text function on two levels: Strindberg's personal experience as well as what he perceived to be the fate of mankind in general.

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse every single aspect of Strindberg's text and how I adapted it. I will rather concentrate on the ones I focused on and appropriated when I created my adaptation of the text. Some of the themes that were important to Strindberg were not important, or relevant, to my own life and the impetus for *onsindroom* was to write from my personal point of view. It was supposed to be *my* dream play. I will discuss the importance of the location of the Growing Castle in *A Dream Play*, the 'corridor scene' from *A Dream Play* and also the decisions I made regarding the characters of the adaptation. I will also look at the aspect of chronology in my adaptation and how it differed to *A Dream Play*. Lastly I will look at three existing scenes by authors other than Strindberg that were incorporated into the adaptation.

Looking at it from a biographical point of view, The Growing/Rising Castle in which the character of The Officer was imprisoned was possibly the physical “new cavalry barracks with its gilded onion-shaped dome” that was, according to Strindberg, “the most beautiful building in Stockholm” (Bergman, 1973: xii). Strindberg could see this building from his house in Karlavägen. The character of The Officer is linked to this location. Strindberg mentioned that the character of The Officer was based on a “carefree lieutenant named Jean Lundin, whom he had known twenty years earlier”, but Michael Meyer (cited in Bergman) claims this is false and that Strindberg himself was the source for this character, since most of the male leads in all of his plays and thus, by implication, so are the characters of The Officer, The Poet and The Lawyer in *A Dream Play* (1973: xiii). This claim is further substantiated by the fact that there “had been some talk when Strindberg was young about him becoming an officer [at] the military academy in Karlberg” (Strindberg, 1973: 6).

In a broader sense though, the symbol of the growing castle can also imply the idea of military life, but according to Johnson it is even more than that. It might be that “age-old question: What are you going to be when you grow up?” (Strindberg, 1973: 6). It might also refer to unfulfilled childhood dreams. Of course, since this play is set in a dream and hence links to the various meanings of the word ‘dream’ can be expected, it poses the question to the reader: “What is it that you dream for yourself? What does life hold for you or rather, what would like to gain from life?” One can also perhaps view this (optimistically I might add) as a message from Strindberg urging the reader/audience to chase their dreams.

Although I did not have a growing castle in *onsindroom*, I implemented this idea of going after a dream, or following your passion, in a different way in *onsindroom*. A number of the scenes are based on the notion of romantic love and finding a soul mate etc. So on one level, looking for the person of your dreams features quite strongly in both Strindberg’s text as well as my play. However, there is one character in *onsindroom* who doesn’t have a lot of lines

and doesn't appear a lot in the play, but the meaning of this character is something very personal.

Quite early in the play, the Skrywer is running away from three people. They run passed a man in a suit with a tear in his pants. This man wants to buy an item from a vendor, but has no money and is forced to pay the vendor in candy that happened to pour from the tear in his pants. In Afrikaans there is an expression that implies that a man with a tear in his pants struggles financially: "Dit gaan maar broekskeur met hom." This is something that is usually not associated with people in suits, like chartered accountants.

Before I did my degree in drama, I was studying to be a chartered accountant. It was a sensible thing to do, as it is a very good option financially speaking. But after just a couple of months I dropped out and decided that I would rather earn less money and work in the entertainment industry than be rich but hate every day of my life. When I was writing *onsindroom* I was, as I am still today, in the very fortunate position of living a dream.

Strindberg's own work and life-experience involving the theatre as well as his personal links to the theatre were the inspiration for his earlier version of, or initial idea for, *A Dream Play*. Not only did he work in the theatre, but two of his wives were actresses, so it follows that at some point he physically waited for them at the theatre – a moment that we see played out in *A Dream Play*. More than just the physical act of waiting, but also the figurative 'waiting for Victoria' that features in his play is important. Victoria becomes a symbol for the perfect mate. This theme of a woman "as the complement is one theme that runs through almost all of his major creative works" (Strindberg, 1973: 10). The character of Victoria and the concept of Victoria as the perfect mate became a very important theme in *onsindroom* as well. At that stage I had never been in a romantic relationship with someone, so it was a topic that was very relevant to me. In *onsindroom*, there are several instances of Victoria. She takes on different forms. She is the girlfriend, the wife, the daughter, the friend, etc. Almost every scene in *onsindroom* includes a variation of Victoria.

Stockholm Stream was visible from the specific theatre where Strindberg waited for his 'Victoria' – his first wife, the Finnish actress, Siri von Essen, as well as his third wife, the actress, Harriet Bosse. This was possibly the reason for making the Billposter a fisherman, and so instead of the composer (from an earlier draft of his play) waiting seven years for a wife, the Billposter had to wait seven years for a green fishing net in the play. After finally receiving his net, the Billposter is not satisfied with it. He says that it is "[not] quite what [he] had hoped for" or "[not] quite what [he] had in mind"; it depends on the translation.

In this scene in *A Dream Play*, outside the theatre, there is a door that appears to have no function; no one know where it leads and no one has seen it opened before. It has an air hole shaped like a four-leafed clover in it. The Officer said that it looks like a pantry door he saw when he was young; from biographical writing we also know that Strindberg saw a similar pantry/larder door when he was young. The Officer undertakes to open the door to see what is behind it. In Strindberg's text he intended this door to take on different functions in various scenes. It was created from a cupboard from a previous scene and changes into another décor element for the next scene etc. As a piece of décor it had a practical purpose.

For her adaptation of the text, Caryl Churchill updated the larder/pantry door to a modern reference – a refrigerator door. In a review of the 2005 production at the Cottesloe, Amelia Howe Kritzer wrote:

[Caryl Churchill] identifies the refrigerator door as a primary image, replacing Strindberg's larder door with a contemporary reference to the satisfaction of appetite. The notion of appetite, universally experienced but selectively satisfied, opens a route to understanding Strindberg's play about human suffering (Kritzer, 2005: 502).

Kritzer refers here to Churchill's text (adaptation). The director, Katie Mitchell, however adapted Churchill's adaptation for the Cottesloe production.

Clearly, Katie Mitchell, the young director who staged *A Dream Play*, had few qualms about altering the work. Her ensemble-devised piece detaches itself from both Churchill's adaptation and Strindberg's original. ... The image of the larder door has not been reshaped as a refrigerator, but rather restated as an armoire one might see in a high-end furniture showroom. As an emblem of consumerism, the armoire provides a symbolic referent to desire in the contemporary world, but shifts the focus from humans in general to those whose appetite centres on consumerist obsessions such as clothing and entertainment (Kritzer, 2005: 502 – 503).

For my adaptation, I kept the 'waiting for Victoria' scene, or at least a version of it, in *onsindroom*. I also placed it after intermission. Some of the characters were combined or omitted because of cast limitations. Others were changed altogether to fit in better with my version of the play. For instance, the character of Agnes has been changed to be a mirror image of Victoria/herself.

In the scene just before intermission, we see Victoria rehearse a ballet/dance piece. As the scene progresses, her mirror image starts to control her and she has to follow her own reflection, instead of the other way around. At the end of the scene, she realises that she is inside the mirror that she has now become the reflection, and the mirror image escapes and assumes her identity in the outside world.

A few other changes I made were the Officer from *A Dream Play*, who was changed to the Skrywer, as well as the Billposter, who was updated to be the Bemarkingspersoon. Instead of waiting for a fishing net, the Bemarkingspersoon is waiting for an Xbox (gaming console). When he finally gets one, he is disappointed because it is "[not] quite what [he] had in mind". This 'buyer's remorse' of the Billposter forms a link between Strindberg's original text, the 2005 adaptation by Katie Mitchell and my own version of it.

While the Bemarkingspersoon and his Xbox links to the concept of consumerism that Katie Mitchell focused on in her adaptation, the idea of

something not living up to the expectation can be applied to a relationship as well. Sometimes, and certainly in Strindberg's case, the idea of a person and a relationship with that person is built-up to such a degree that it is doomed to fail before it even exists; there is no way that the real person/relationship can live up to the preconceived idea/expectation. It can never be "quite what he had in mind". In *A Dream Play* this is what happens as well. The scene after the 'waiting' scene is a scene from domestic, married life between The Officer and Victoria/Agnes. From one scene to the next they got married although we didn't see it. In this scene, which depicts another day from their marriage, we see how the routine of everyday life gets them down.

Two differences between *onsindroom's* 'waiting' scene and that of *A Dream Play* are where the respective scenes occur in terms of plot line. In *A Dream Play* the scene is relatively close to the beginning of the play and it sets up the relationship between the Officer and Victoria. In *onsindroom* on the other hand, the 'waiting for Victoria' scene is quite far into the play; it is the first scene after intermission. In *A Dream Play* the scene builds up towards the opening of the door. The Glazier arrives with a diamond to open the door, since the locksmith is unavailable. As he is about to open the door and the mystery is revealed, he is stopped by the Policeman and everyone is escorted off stage and seamlessly into the next scene.

In contrast to *A Dream Play*, I decided to give this scene a climactic ending in *onsindroom*. At the end of this scene, the Hoof van die Brandweer (Fire Chief) arrives on the scene but is not allowed to open the door unless it is an emergency. The Skrywer rushes into the theatre building to rescue Victoria and chaos ensues. We hear a crash of glass as the mirror is smashed, freeing Victoria. The Fire Chief opens the door and when the Skrywer comes out with Victoria in his arms, they escape through the door with the four-leafed clover – which now has the purpose of an emergency exit.

It is clear that while the two waiting scenes, the original and the one in my adaption, are similar, they have distinctly different functions in their own play. I didn't just take the scene from *A Dream Play* and paste it into *onsindroom*. I

reworked it into a new scene that can be understood as a scene without knowing the original.

Aside from Indra's Daughter, the major characters in *A Dream Play* are the Officer, the Lawyer and the Poet. The three characters are three different sides, or aspects, of the same consciousness – that of the dreamer. With all the autobiographical elements in his play, it is as if he becomes the main character in his own play. When I adapted the text, I decided not to split them up into three definite types, or roles, according to their occupation. Instead I made them converge into one character called either the Man, the Writer, or by his name Johan, at different stages in the text. I attempted to emulate Strindberg by making the psychology of the author-dreamer, i.e. my own, the focus of the new text.

The character of Man/Writer/Johan was still played by three different actors at various stages in the play. In the prologue and epilogue they were on stage at the same time as the same character; this character was *physically* “split, double[d], multipl[ied]” (Bergman, 1973: ix).

One major difference between my Victoria and that of *A Dream Play* is the removal of the Eastern/Vedic religious references from her character. She is only referred to as the Woman or Victoria or Vicky in *onsindroom*. She is no longer referred to as Agnes, or Indra's Daughter. While I wanted to create a dream play, I still needed it to be *my* dream play. Leta Jane Lewis wrote a very insightful article where she “[analysed the] *Dream Play* for concepts and symbols having their source in his enthusiasm for alchemy and the orient” (Lewis, 1963: 208).

In Strindberg's text there are several references that have their origin in either alchemy and/or the orient. Lewis writes:

For many years Strindberg maintained an active interest in alchemy and oriental culture, because he consistently found in them practical and

philosophical theories, which were significant *to him personally* (Lewis, 1963: 208, my emphasis).

The Officer is not the only character linked to The Growing Castle. Indra's Daughter visits this location first once she has descended. Indra is an Indian/Vedic god, but more precisely, he is "the god with the golden armour who rides in a golden car drawn by golden horses" (Lewis, 1963: 217). On top of the castle is a flower bud – the chrysanthemum that blooms at the end. Chrysanthemum translates literally to "gold flower" ("chrysos" is the Greek word for "gold" while "anthemom" means "flower"). According to Lewis, this flower symbolises "humanity's divine potential" (1963: 217). In essence then, the castle, since it has the bud of a golden flower on its roof, has the potential to have a golden roof once it blooms (as it does in the end of the play). All these gold symbols can be viewed as an attempt by Strindberg to embed his interest in alchemy (the transmutation of various metals into gold) into the fibre of the text so to speak.

The castle also shares similarities to Eastern temples:

Thus, the castle's giant flower top strongly suggests an Indian temple crowned with a huge sacred lotus, an emblem of "the dedication of the builder's heart" and its gilded roof likens it to Tibetan temples, which have roofs of pure Himalayan gold. Furthermore, from the standpoint of alchemy, the golden roof and its golden flower indicate the divine presence in the castle (Lewis, 1963: 218).

The obvious connection, of course, is that a temple is also called a 'house of god'. Since the Daughter of a god inhabits the castle, the divine presence that inhabits the castle firstly refers to the Daughter of Indra, who enters the castle in order to rescue the Officer within. Secondly, it refers to the Officer himself. Of course he doesn't see himself as divine, or holy or perhaps special in any way, but "Indra's Daughter who, as a goddess, is herself one of the drama's chief symbols of divinity ... explains to [him] ... that he, too is a child of heaven" (Lewis, 1963: 218).

These alchemy and eastern religious references are really important pieces of information when we decode *A Dream Play* with the intention of creating a production of the original text. It is something we could focus on and explore from a design and/or directing point of view. In my case, however, it was interesting, but not crucial to my process of recoding the original text into a new script that was meant to be based on my own preferences and interests. My focus was not at all on alchemy or the divine. I wanted to focus on my own dreams and my own sense of what a dream means to me. My dreams seemed rooted in a surprisingly real, or logical, place.

To understand my adaptation (the text), one needs to understand the overarching storyline, since the action in the play is not continuous or in chronological order. Some of the scenes are not even on the same timeline. There are a couple of scenes that take place in alternative timelines. For instance, if a character made a decision at point A in a timeline, the timeline would split up into timeline one and timeline two. In the play we are presented a moment from one of the timelines in which two characters, the same character but from different timelines, meet up for a cup of coffee and discuss the events that happened in their two respective timelines. So although there is an overarching storyline, there might be alternative storylines that can happen, have happened and/or will happen. For this reason, it was important that I have a clear idea where exactly each scene takes place – the location as well as the location in time.

It might seem strange that I endeavour to adapt a Strindberg text and seemingly ignore his text altogether. If I do comparative study between Strindberg's text and my own, it would be difficult to see the original text in the new one. I can ask what was adapted in the process. Did I adapt the plot or the characters? I can ask how I went about adapting the text. Did I attempt to transpose his text to a more modern period in time like Caryl Churchill did? Or did I attempt to update it as a whole? I think the answer is not simple or straightforward. I think what I adapted in this process was Strindberg's *intention* – the intention to

create a play that represents his view of a dream. I took that idea as a starting point.

I found Strindberg's author's note for *A Dream Play* to be invaluable when I started the writing process. I deemed his author's note to be so important that I incorporated it into my prologue in which the three actors playing the character of the Man/Skrywer address the audience directly. One of them says:

Ek weet ek's nie wakker nie. Ek weet hierdie onsindroom het al begin. Het jy al ooit gedroom al die karakters in jou droom is eintlik variasies van dieselfde mense? Jy sien hoe jy *verdeel, verdubbel en vermeningvuldig word; jy versprei, dun uit en verdamp; maar neem weer vaste vorm aan, word verstrooi, kom weer saam en vergader uiteindelik weer op een punt.* jy. Al die karakters in jou drome is eintlik maar net uitdrukkings van hoe jy jousef en ander mense ervaar.

(Conradie, 2005: 2, my emphasis)

A section of the prologues has been appropriated directly from the author's note of *A Dream Play*. I used this prologue to create a framework for the audience. They know what to expect from the play. It would help them decode the play in an appropriate/correct/ideal way.

The story arch presented in *A Dream Play* is actually quite simple. "Indra's daughter had descended to Earth to find out how human beings have it" (Strindberg, 1973: 3). Similarly, the storyline for *onsindroom* is also quite simple: a Writer recounts a failed relationship that is presented in the form of a dream. Although these are quite simple stories, we need to take into account the unconventional presentations of both texts. With *A Dream Play*, Strindberg adhered to the logic of the dreamer. Even though he created some surreal scenes and spectacular images, the story seems to progress in a linear, or a reasonably chronological, fashion. There is a measure of cause and effect at play.

When I started adapting the text, I decided to, as far as possible, not adhere to cause and effect in the presentation of the play. My dreams do not work like that and, although it is a play and we need an audience to make sense of it in some way, I did not want the story to progress in a linear way. For example, in *onsindroom* it was possible for a mother and her unborn daughter to have a conversation.

The fact that the progression in the story is not represented chronologically may create the sense of disorientation on the part of the reader or audience member. I remember at the first read-through of *onsindroom* the cast of my production found the treatment of time very disorientating. Once they got used to the idea that time doesn't flow from point A to point B in a manner we're used to, they started to enjoy it more. I had to map out the plot in a chronological way in order for them to know where they were in the story at any given point in the play.

Because of this out-of-sync effect there are several scenes that seem to be flashbacks and sometimes the dialogue tend to be loaded with foreshadowing elements. Some of the characters also seem to be more aware of the nature of time than others. For example, after the Writer saves Vicky from the mirror world, they escape through the door opened by the Head of the Fire Department. In the next scene Vicky and the Writer meet each other on the street and discuss events that happened and events that will happen and are happening all at once. The scene ends with Vicky telling the Writer that she will see him again when he comes to rescue her a bit later – but we just saw it in the scene before. The intention with presenting the story out of chronological order was to reinforce the idea of a dream-like state for the audience; or rather, to represent how I often experience time in my dreams.

The one major advantage of 'shuffling' the order of the different scenes was that I could incorporate and adapt scenes into different slots as it made sense for the dream-logic of the play. I was finishing different sections of the overarching story at different times and I also had three finished pieces of writing by different authors that I wanted to incorporate into my final text.

The reason I wanted to incorporate these scenes was because all three of them referenced a theme of *A Dream Play*: married life is tough, and relationships are usually unhappy and tend to end badly.

As mentioned earlier, my initial intention was that the cast should also attempt to embrace this form of 'therapeutic writing' by writing some of their own problems into the play. Only one of the actors gave me some of his written work. It dealt with serious issues he was dealing with: feelings of loneliness, contemplating suicide, etc., but he did it in comical way, which I enjoyed. With his permission I altered it to create a spoken word 'production' that the Writer and Vicky watch when they go to the theatre in one of the scenes in *onsindroom*. I will not focus on this scene, but it is important to note that it was included in the end.

The second existing scene that was appropriated into the new text was written by Liezl (Li) Kuhn. Initially I intended to slot it into my text as it was, but later I added the character of the therapist (called Counsellor Kuhn) to create a framework for the scene to work in. She is a Drama Therapist who specialises in couples counselling. Ms Kuhn's script touches on the themes of fidelity, working through one's issues (suffering) and overcoming one's fears and paranoia in a relationship. The themes connected specifically to the Pasting scene in the Lawyer's house and I was really excited when she agreed that I could use it in *onsindroom*.

The theme of being someone, or making something of yourself, of working hard, etc. are all themes that feature both in this scene and in *A Dream Play*. In the process of becoming someone, this scene does warn, however, not to become your parents, i.e. make the same mistakes they did. After a breakthrough, the characters (Him and Her) decide to continue improvising until they figure out everything they can that might hinder their relationship. The end of her scene suggests that life is, as Strindberg feared, repetition, but that through this repetition and suffering one's soul can grow stronger. In *onsindroom* the therapist cut them short before they could resolve all of their issues; this was intended as a joke, since a therapist needs to make money by having regular

clients and they can't have regular clients if their clients are too effective in sorting out their own issues.

The final existing scene that I incorporated into *onsindroom* was also the last scene before the epilogue. This was actually a 10-minute scene I wrote in 2003. It is about a Writer who wrote a short story about an unhappy relationship. He admits that he was to blame and he is responsible for driving the Woman into The Other Man's arms. I found it appropriate for my adaptation since Strindberg had three very unhappy marriages and some claimed he hated women. Although he had misogynistic tendencies and developed persecution mania leading up to (and lasting through) his inferno period, he later admitted that he might have been to blame for a lot of the unhappiness in his marriages. In *A Dream Play* he attempted to confess some of this by not blaming women for all the negative aspects of the relationships and by taking responsibility for some of it. In this penultimate scene in *onsindroom* I wanted to echo this sentiment when the Writer confesses to The Man that he pushed her away by his actions and also his own insecurities, in other words, my own insecurities.

In retrospect, *onsindroom* seems a bit juvenile and quite 'angst-ridden', but at the time it was a play that I needed to create in order to work through personal problems I had. The production, though well-received in general by audiences, was not quite what I had in mind when I set out to adapt *A Dream Play*. I applied the Conradie Codec by appropriating the intention Strindberg had for *A Dream Play* and in the process I managed to create an adaptation that was, at least, non-linear in terms of structure. I would have liked for it to be less text-based and even more oneiric in its visual representation.

Chapter four: Case study three – *iForest*

Eugene Ionesco's *The Killer* and my adaptation, *iForest*, are both plays about death, or rather, about trying to beat death. Richard N. Coe writes that "Death is the one constant theme which gives unity to Ionesco's theatre ... there are few among his major plays with neither corpse nor killer" (cited in Purdy, 1967: 423).

In 2007 I committed myself to writing and directing a new play for Stellenbosch University's Drama Department that would show at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. I wanted to write the broad outlines of the script and improvise with the cast once we went into rehearsals. Soon after I started the conceptual process, I received a job offer from the Baxter Theatre which I couldn't refuse. I accepted it, but was still expected to conceptualise and write the script for the Drama Department. The script would be handed over to another director.

Even though I had explored the subconscious with *onsindroom*, I wanted to create a play that would be oneiric in terms of atmosphere. In addition to this dream-like setting, I also wanted to explore the five senses and how they are perceived in dreams. The original text had the working title *Making sense of things* and would feature a protagonist who arrives in a strange yet familiar place. He would have to make sense of the strange, surreal surroundings and as he ventured deeper into the unknown, he would encounter different realms of the senses – almost like a very light version of *Dante's Inferno*; instead of the circles of hell it would be the circles of senses. In each realm he would have to solve problems by using a different sense in order to progress deeper into the dream-like world.

The only problem was that I planned on using improvisations with the cast to create these problems and solutions by incorporating some of their dreams and nightmares; something similar to what I had originally had in mind for *onsindroom*. Since I would no longer be directing or facilitating this process, I abandoned the idea of creating a workshop text with the cast and just started the writing process.

I looked through some of my old notebooks for ideas I had scribbled down earlier to see if any of them were useful and could be explored or incorporated into this new play. I came across a very short plot outline for a script I had started writing a year or two before.

The concept was quite simple. A colonial man and his four servants are in a forest. He isn't a very nice person and abuses them verbally. All the servants speak different languages and because they cannot speak English, he views them as inferior. If I ever planned on developing this idea further I would have asked a friend of mine, Mdu Kweyama, to help me with the dialogue, since he is fluent in English, isiXhosa and Zulu. He is also a very talented choreographer and I wanted the servant characters to use movement and gestures, more than dialogue, to express themselves.

I thought about only using black actors to play the servants (all of them called Jack) and the dialogue would also be made up of as many of the eleven official languages of South Africa as possible. Throughout the play there would be miscommunications because everyone in the play would be speaking a different language. This mutual miscommunication is something Ionesco often adopted in his texts, although the miscommunications would occur because of the degeneration of language and thought processes, not because of different languages.

Another reason for misunderstandings in the play would be that the 'master' character would see all four of the servant characters as exactly the same person. He would view the group as one unit and he would call them all Jack. This would highlight his ignorance and racist tendencies. Later in the play they would realize that there is no reason for him to be in control and the locus of power would shift. I never developed the play beyond these rudimentary ideas. However, when I read through the notes, they triggered some new ideas that could be developed further for the play I was supposed to write for the Grahamstown production.

I also knew that I wanted the new play to be in the genre of Theatre of the Absurd, if possible, and as part of my research I read some of Ionesco's plays. In my previous two adaptations I had only *referenced* the style of the Theatre of the Absurd and sometimes I merely alluded to some of Ionesco's characters, like the Fireman who popped up, out of the blue, in *onsindroom*. I decided that for this play I would also attempt to create an adaptation of one of Ionesco's plays. When I read the Ionesco plays as part of my research for writing the script, one stood out in particular: *The Killer*.

Ionesco wrote *The Killer* (sometimes translated as *The Killer without Reason* or *The Killer without Cause*) in 1958. It is the first of his plays that featured Bérenger, one of his Everyman characters. Bérenger would appear in three other plays including the *Rhinocéros* (1959), *Exit the King* (1962), and *A Stroll in the Air* (1963). It is not the same Bérenger every time, though – or at least, it is highly, unlikely since we can assume that he dies at the end of *The Killer*. Since this is a character created by Ionesco, however, it is quite possible for him to die, only to reappear in *The Rhinoceros*.

In *The Killer* Bérenger discovers an ideal 'radiant city'. The idea of a 'radiant city' refers to a transcendent experience Ionesco had in his childhood, similar to the story told by Bérenger in the beginning of the play. Unfortunately, this feeling doesn't last long, since we learn that there is a killer in the city. He kills people by showing them a picture of the colonel, which has an almost hypnotic effect on them rendering them helpless. He then pushes them into the pond where they drown.

Bérenger leaves the radiant city after Dany, a woman he falls in love with instantly and believes he's engaged to, also falls victim to this killer with no apparent cause. He asks his friend, Eduard, to help him track down the killer. It is suggested that Eduard himself might in actual fact be the killer. Bérenger returns to the radiant city and at the end of the play, he confronts the killer:

When the Killer appears, laughing derisively, he should be standing on the bench or perhaps, somewhere on the wall: he calmly jumps down

and approaches Bérenger, chuckling unpleasantly, and it is at this moment that one notices how small he is. Or possibly there is no Killer at all. Bérenger could be talking to himself, alone in the half-light.

(Ionesco, 1970: 98)

In a long climactic speech that lasts approximately ten pages, Bérenger tries to convince the killer that murdering is wrong. Eventually he comes to the conclusion that there is no hope and that it is useless to try and prevent this serial killer from killing everyone he pleases. While we can assume that Bérenger is his next victim, it is not explicitly stated as such at the end of the play:

Bérenger: There's nothing we can do. What can we do... What can we do...

(While the Killer draws nearer, still chuckling, but very, very softly.)

CURTAIN

(Ionesco, 1970: 109)

In the original pitch to the drama department I put the genre down as Physical Theatre. From a practical point of view this has the advantage of not relying on as many stage production elements that need to be designed, constructed and then put together on the day of the performance at the festival.

The opening scene of Ionesco's *The Killer* was set in an empty space:

No decor. An empty stage when the curtain rises. Later there will be, on the left of the stage, two garden chairs and a table, which the Architect will bring on himself... The atmosphere for Act I will be created by the lighting only. At first, while the stage is still empty, the light is grey, like a dull November day or afternoon in February. The faint sound of wind; perhaps you can see a dead leaf fluttering across the stage. In the distance the noise of a tram.

(Ionesco, 1970: 9)

Ionesco relied on the lighting, but also on the actors, to create the mood. Their performances, their physical presence and not that of a set, should be the focus of the audience. The physical theatre productions I have worked on often present the audience with only the bodies of the performers and the lighting to generate meaning from the production.

I knew that I would like to incorporate physical theatre elements or at least make use of physical improvisations to create non-verbal dialogue (or a physical vocabulary) for some of the characters. Their physicality would replace the need for a physical set. If we could make use of expressive movements and gestures and combine it with lighting and sound effects, we would be able to create a world for the characters and also engage the audience's imagination actively.

This idea was no longer in play after the decision was made that I would write a script and the director would direct it – a more traditional approach to theatre making, and not exactly what I had intended at the beginning of this process. We could no longer call the product a Physical Theatre production, since the process of creating a Physical Theatre production is very different. For administrative reasons we had to let the festival know what genre the production was.

The problem was that by the time I had to hand over the project to the new director, we had no idea what the actual genre would be yet, since I only had a couple of loose ideas. I mentioned this to everyone involved:

Ek weet nie of ons dit 'n 'physical theatre' produksie moet noem nie. Dit voel op die oomblik of dit nie tot een 'genre' beperk moet word nie. Miskien moet ons net nie die genre spesifiseer nie. Dit gaan snaaks, absurd, ernstig, donker, ens wees. Ek dink ons moet onself net nie beperk deur 'n genre daaraan te wil koppel nie. Indien Grahamstad dit vereis, merk 'Comedy, Drama en Physical Theatre' of net 'Other'

(2007, personal communication with the director and production manager).

I had to start creating the adaptation in order for us to find out what this 'Other' genre would eventually be.

In planning the writing process for this script I initially had several, seemingly disjointed, ideas. I wanted to explore the five senses in a dream-like play. I would make use of the characters of the colonialist man and his four slaves and see where they could fit in. I would make use of *The Killer* where appropriate. This was all part of the initial plan for creating the adaptation. During the process I also decided to incorporate elements from two films, *The Skeleton Key* and *The Fountain* as well as a television series called *Lost*.

In terms of adaptation, I will refer mainly to *The Killer* and Ionesco. I will also briefly discuss how elements from *The Skeleton Key*, *The Fountain* and *Lost* were decoded and then encoded into *iForest*.

Before I can talk about how all these different elements were appropriated into my final adaptation, a summary of the product is needed for the sake of context. In order for me to successfully discuss the adaptation process as well as the product of *iForest*, a rudimentary breakdown of the plot would not suffice. What follows is a more detailed plot summary of *iForest*.

A man called Eugene (most likely named after Eugene Ionesco) arrives in a forest with his four slaves – all of them are called Jack. He is seeking the solitude of the forest to complete a theory and/or formula he is working on – and also to do some photography. The formula he is working on has the potential to save the life of his wife, Dany. In the forest Eugene has dreams and nightmares and experiences various moments of déjà vu. In these dreams and flashbacks the Jack character momentarily transforms into the character of his wife.

At the end of his first nightmare a woman, Chaos, tries to drown him. He is saved by The Guide and Guardian and wakes up. Chaos has become part of the Jack group without Eugene noticing – Chaos is literally in their midst. The

Guide and Guardian (a strange character played by two people) arrives at his camp and offers to take Eugene and Jack on a tour of the forest. He shows Eugene strange things in the forest, for example an area that echoes for no apparent reason.

As they travel deeper into the forest, Eugene mentions some ruins that he photographed earlier. This upsets The Guide and Guardian because no one is supposed to know about it. He reveals that the actual reason for the forest's existence is to be a prison for a killer. The ruins Eugene saw earlier is all that remains of a previous civilization – the Radiant City. At this stage they also realised that Jack (all of them) are no longer around and has probably fell victim to Chaos. Eugene and The Guide and Guardian rush back to the camp. Back at the camp the Jacks have been transformed by the presence of Chaos. They have gained knowledge, no longer view themselves as slaves and are able to speak.

In the final scene Eugene and The Guide and Guardian confronts Jack in order to learn Chaos's plan and prevent her from escaping. Chaos arrives and with the help of the Jacks, drowns The Guide and Guardian in a pond. The play ends as Chaos steals Eugene's life force and tells him, or implies it least, that he is part of a cyclical nightmare where it always ends badly for him.

I will now discuss how, in turn, how I incorporated, transposed and appropriated the different sources into the final adaptation. As the initial spark for creating this adaptation came from Ionesco's text, I will start with the aspects of *The Killer* that I used.

Although the original's scene is set in a city, when I read it, transposed the location for my adaptation to a forest. In dream analysis, something I still wanted to incorporate into the text, there is a theory that forests, or jungles, etc. as well as the type of forests – for instance, jungles, swamps, etc. – represents our state of mind or how we subconsciously view ourselves. In dreams, forests often signify a way to escape from the day-to-day rush. It might indicate the need to get away to a simpler, more peaceful place; a place of solitude or a

place for contemplation; much like The Radiant City is presented in *The Killer*. A forests can also signify a transition as well as a sense of self in dreams.

Secondly, I also came up with the idea that this new play would take place in the same location as the first and last scene from *The Killer*, in other words The Radiant City. The only difference is that a long time has passed since the original play took place. The killer from Ionesco's play has killed everyone, the city has fallen into ruin and nature has claimed the location. That was the reason for the ruins in the new text.

I want to propose that by making the setting of *iForest* the same as that of the *The Killer*, and using the location of The Radiant City's foundation (the ruins) as the foundation for the location of my adaptation, *iForest* can be seen as an allegory for adaptation in general – or at least the way I approach it. Like the overgrowth of nature hides the ruins/foundations of temples of ancient civilizations, the new text, created on top of the old text, has the potential to hide the original and become a text in the second degree. That was particularly true in the case of *iForest*.

The location of the forest was the main inspiration for the name *iForest*. Originally it was called *The If Forest*, which changed to *If Forest* and then became *iForest*. The reason for initially adding the 'If' was because I wanted anything to be possible in the forest and thus the play itself. I was still interested in dreams, dream analysis and still had *A Dream Play*, and consequently Strindberg, in mind. I wanted the name of this play to imply that anything can happen; as Strindberg wrote in the preface of *A Dream Play*:

[The] author has ... attempted to imitate the inconsequent yet transparently logical shape of a dream. Everything can happen; everything is possible and probable (Bergman, 1973: ix).

This was a concept that I already explored when I created *onsindroom*. It seems that I was still interested in playing the 'What if?' game. I was reading a lot about the meaning of dreams and the psychological analysis of dreams. While doing

research for this study I came across a term used by psychologists for this ‘What if?’ question. It is referred to as counterfactual thinking or counterfactuals and it is defined as “thoughts about alternatives to past events, that is, thoughts of what might have been” (Epstude & Roese, 2008: online).

According to Epstude and Roese (2008), counterfactual thoughts can be either negative or positive. Negative outcomes are called downward counterfactuals while positive outcomes are called upward counterfactuals.

In the opening scene of *The Killer* we are introduced to Bérenger while he is experiencing an overwhelmingly positive reaction to the beauty of the Radiant City. He is experiencing it for the first time. He is almost giddy, while the Architect, who is taking him on a guided tour of the city, seems neutral, almost indifferent:

The blue, the white, the silence and the empty stage should give a strange impression of peace. The audience must be given time to become aware of this. Not until a full minute has passed should the characters appear on the scene.

Bérenger comes on first, from the left, moving quickly. ...

Bérenger: Amazing! Amazing! It’s extraordinary! As far as I can see, it’s a miracle... [*Vague gesture of protest* from the Architect.] ... A miracle, or, as I don’t suppose you’re a religious man, you’d rather I called it a marvel! I congratulate you most warmly, it’s a marvel, really quite marvellous, you’re a marvellous architect! ...

Architect: Oh... you’re very kind...

Bérenger: No, no. I want to congratulate you. It’s absolutely incredible, you’ve achieved the incredible! The real thing is *quite beyond imagination*.

(Ionesco, 1970: 9 – 10)

When I adapted the text I wanted the character of Eugene to have a similar initial reaction to the forest, but at the same time be aware of the danger that lurks. This sense of trepidation will influence him to such an extent that his mood is also affected; even if it is just for short little bursts of contradictory feelings. It adds an element of foreshadowing to the opening scene of *iForest*. Eugene is, to some degree, aware of what happens later in his story and it affects his mood.

Eugene is bouncing between these upward and downward counterfactuals. This might also be, psychologically speaking, an explanation for his sharp mood swings at the beginning of the play.

Eugene: (Excited.) Oh, this must be paradise! Don't you agree Jack?

(No reply, since no-one is there...or a faint, unintelligible reply from Stage Right off-stage, followed by a groan and maybe the sound of something heavy being dropped.)

(Eugene continues.)

Eugene: I would never have thought a place like this existed. And to find a map in the jacket of that dead professor...that's just....well... (Like before.) incredible! It's just incredible! This peaceful quietness. (Sharp contrast – very tired all of sudden.) This dreadful weariness.

(Short pause and then very excited once more.)

Eugene: It's so refreshing that I just have to contradict myself.

(Conradie, 2007: 2)

Looking at the plot of *iForest*, Eugene is stuck inside this looping story, trying to unravel it or find a better outcome. He has to ask ‘What if?’ every time he goes through the cycle. According to Chaos, it is always the same in the end with Chaos being victorious, but Eugene refuses to give in and continues to play the ‘What if?’ game. He needs to see if there is another, more positive, outcome. One where he triumphs over Chaos and manages to save Dany.

The end of *iForest* is very similar to the end of *The Killer*. In *The Killer* Bérenger confronts the killer and for a scene that lasts approximately ten minutes (depending on the direction and acting) Bérenger attempts to persuade the killer to stop. The killer doesn’t say a word, rendering Bérenger’s attempt at discourse moot:

Bérenger: You’re laughing at me! I’ll call the police and have you arrested.

(Chuckle from the Killer.)

Bérenger: It’s no good, you mean, they wouldn’t hear me?

...

Bérenger: I’m-not-afraid-of-you!

(Chuckle from the Killer.)

Bérenger: I could squash you like a worm. But I won’t. I want to understand. You’re going to answer my questions. After all, you are a human being. You’ve got reasons, perhaps. You must explain, or else I don’t know what... You’re going to tell me why... Answer me!

(The Killer chuckles and gives a slight shrug of the shoulders. Bérenger should be pathetic and naïve, rather ridiculous; his behaviour should seem sincere and grotesque at the same time, both pathetic and absurd.

He speaks with an eloquence that should underline the tragically worthless and outdated commonplaces he is advancing.)

...

Bérenger: Oh... how weak my strength is against your cold determination, your ruthlessness! And what good are bullets even, against the resistance of an infinitely stubborn will! (With a start:) But I'll get you, I'll get you...

(Then, still in front of the Killer, whose knife is raised and who is chuckling and quite motionless, Bérenger slowly lowers his two old-fashioned pistols, lays them in the ground, bends his head and then, on his knees with his head down and his arms hanging at his side, he stammers:)

Bérenger: Oh God! There's nothing we can do. What can we do... What can we do...

(While the Killer draws nearer, still chuckling, but very very softly.)

CURTAIN

(Ionesco, 1970: 98, 99 & 108 – 109)

At the end of *The Killer*, Bérenger tries to ward off The Killer by arguments. Richard Schechner pointed out that "The Killer is death himself ... Bérenger's arguments do not fail because they are clichés or because they are false, but because there is no defensive weapon against death" (cited in Purdy, 1967: 419). At the end of *iForest*, Eugene also has no defence against Chaos, just like Bérenger in *The Killer*.

Eugene: You?

(Chaos just nods her head.)

Eugene: Have you come to drown me again?

(Chaos shrugs “maybe”.)

Eugene: Why are you doing this?

(Chaos just smiles.)

Eugene: What are your motives?

(Chaos shrugs.)

Eugene: What did I do to you?

Guide & Guardian: What did all those people do to you?

(Chaos smiles.)

Eugene: What did you do to Jack?

(Conradie, 2007: 54-55)

Shortly after this confrontation, the Guide and Guardian is killed; all four the Jacks drown her in a pond – similar to the way in which the killer, from Ionesco’s play, disposes of his victims. Eugene is now defenceless and Chaos, in some mysterious way, paralyses him by draining him of his life force. Chaos is more than just a killer – she is a representation of death itself and as such, there is no defence against her. Not only has she drained him of his life-force, but by implication, she has also taken away all hope for saving his Wife, Dany. The idea that Chaos is a representation/symbol of death is also echoed in the final words of the play:

Chaos: Good versus evil – light versus *darkness* – order
 versus Chaos.

(mumble from Eugene)

Chaos: The outcome is always the same.

(Conradie, 2007: 66, my emphasis)

It is ironic that Eugene goes into the forest in search of answers to the meaning of life and to 'cure' death, but instead he finds death waiting for him in the form of Chaos. In *The Killer* the killer's gender is not specified. When the director and I spoke about the gender of Chaos, we both agreed that she is female. Ionesco often made antagonistic characters in his play female. For instance, in *The Killer*, the character of the Concierge, another of his recurring characters, is very antagonistic towards Eugene. Also Mother Peep (a strong political figure in *The Killer*) is female.

In other works, like *Jacques* and *Amédée*, Ionesco created what Richard Coe calls "grotesquely caricatured portraits of the bourgeois system at work in love and marriage" (1971: 75). According to Coe, in the worlds Ionesco created in these plays, as well as others such as *L'Avenir* and *Victimes*, the women are guiltier than the men for the "deliberate destruction and betrayal of the inner life, for the fear 'of what the neighbours say'" (1971:75). He lists examples from works by Ionesco to help make his point including Daisy's betrayal of Bérenger in *Rhinoceros* as well as Dany's betrayal of (another) Bérenger in *The Killer*. He also labels the marital conflict between Amédée and Madeleine in *Amédée* to be "fully worthy of Strindberg's *Dance of Death*" (1971: 76). Even though I don't believe Ionesco can be accused of hating women, he certainly created female characters who can be considered antagonistic towards his male protagonists.

Traditionally chaos as a characteristic was thought of as a feminine quality. Logic and order, on the other hand, were deemed to be male qualities.

Even though I do not necessarily view chaos as an inherently feminine quality, it was my intention for Chaos to be portrayed by a female actress. The reason for this was based on the concept of the anima; a concept I encountered when I did research on dream theory and encountered Carl Jung. He wrote:

Every man carries within him the eternal image of woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definite feminine image. This image is fundamentally unconscious, ... an imprint or 'archetype' of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by woman-in short, an inherited system of psychic adaptation. ... I have called this image the 'anima' ... The anima has an erotic, emotional character, the animus a rationalizing one. Hence most of what men say about feminine eroticism, and particularly about the emotional life of women, is derived from their own anima projections and distorted accordingly (Jung, 1925: online).

Since I made Eugene a scientist, a logical occupation, I thought that it would make sense to make the antagonist a female chaotic figure. In the tradition of giving characters names based on their occupation, I decided to call the character Chaos, based on her nature. I also think that Chaos as a concept, as supposed to a mere mortal being, makes her considerably more fearsome as a counterpoint to Eugene.

In a more general sense, I also attempted to appropriate, or rather imitate, an aspect of the writing style of Eugene Ionesco. There is an aspect of Ionesco's play texts which you cannot appreciate when you watch a *production* of his texts. It seems as if he toys with the reader, or decoder, of the script in terms of stage directions. In order to produce a play of one of his scripts, the director needs to solve problems to which Ionesco doesn't always give straight answers. An example of this (already referred to earlier in this chapter) is at the end of *The Killer*:

When the Killer appears, laughing derisively, he should be standing on the bench or perhaps, somewhere on the wall: he calmly jumps down and approaches Bérenger, chuckling unpleasantly, and it is at this moment that one notices how small he is. *Or possibly there is no Killer at all*. Bérenger could be talking to himself, alone in the half-light.

(Ionesco, 1970: 98, my emphasis)

One cannot show both of the options in a production. The audience will only be able to see one option – the decision made by the director. As a reader one can imagine this scene with the killer and then read it again and imagine how it would be without the killer.

Ionesco did something similar in opening scene of *The Bald Prima Donna* as well:

When the Curtain rises, it is a typically English evening at home. Typical English Mr Smith, in his favourite armchair L of the fireplace, wearing English slippers, is smoking an English pipe and reading an English newspaper. He is wearing English spectacles and has a small grey English moustache. Typically English Mrs Smith is seated in the armchair L of the table, darning English socks. There is a long English silence. An English clock chimes three English chimes.

(Ionesco, 1958: 1)

As readers we need to decode the various ‘English’ objects and actions in these stage directions. A director and/or designer of a production of this script might have some difficulty portraying all of the ‘English’ items or actions. For instance, an audience would hardly be able to label the type of silence as ‘English’ depending on type or duration of silence. This was Ionesco having fun once again.

I also wanted to have fun and not prescribe the director in every little detail when I wrote some of the stage directions for iForest:

Eugene: Incredible! It is just incredible! The variety. The vibrancy. Not sure if “vibrancy” is the correct word - or if it even IS a word. The vocabulary?

(Short pause.)

Eugene: (Excited.) Oh, this must be paradise! Don’t you agree Jack?

(No reply, since no-one is there.)

Or.

A faint, unintelligible reply from Stage Right off-stage, followed by a groan and maybe the sound of something heavy being dropped)

(Eugene continues.)

Eugene: I would never have thought a place like this existed. And to find a map in the jacket of that dead professor...that's just....well... (Like before.) incredible! It's just incredible! This peaceful quietness. (Sharp contrast – very tired all of sudden.) This dreadful weariness.

(Short pause and then very excited once more.)

Eugene: It's so refreshing that I just have to contradict myself.

(Again off-stage.)

Eugene: Don't you agree Jack?

(No reply again, since we know there is no-one there, or, maybe, just to confuse us or to make us question ourselves, there is a faint, unintelligible, mumbled reply from the Stage Right wing, followed by a groan and the sound of something heavy being dropped...or rather a groan as something heavy is put down with care in order not to make a sound).

(Conradie, 2007: 2 – 3)

In this case, similar to the stage directions in *The Killer* and *The Bald Prima Donna*, the audience would only see the result of the choices made by the director's decoding of the text.

The setting of the adaptation, the similarities between the two opposing characters in the play as well as the opening and ending of the play as well as

the attempt at emulating the playfulness (with regards to stage directions) were the major aspects of *The Killer* that I adapted for the creation of *iForest*.

Aside from Ionesco's influence on *iForest* I also incorporated a wider range of inspirations that could be linked to the text I created. Films, like *The Fountain* and *The Skeleton Key*, and the television series *Lost* were important influences.

After struggling with this binding theme or overarching storyline for a long time, I watched a film called *The Fountain* (2006, directed by Darren Aronofsky). The film's plot is summarized as follows:

Three stories - one each from the past, present, and future - about men in pursuit of eternity with their love. A conquistador in Mayan country searches for the tree of life to free his captive queen; a medical researcher, working with various trees, looks for a cure that will save his dying wife; a space traveler, traveling with an aged tree encapsulated within a bubble, moves toward a dying star that's wrapped in a nebula; he seeks eternity with his love. The stories intersect and parallel; the quests fail and succeed (Hailey, 2014: online).

Before I watched the film, the character of Eugene in *iForest* already had lines about a formula that needed to be finished. So one could assume that he is some form of mathematician or scientist. In *The Fountain* one of the main characters (portrayed by Hugh Jackman) is a scientist is looking for a cure for his terminally ill wife. He is so obsessed with finding a cure for her illness that he neglects her in the process.

In *iForest* Eugene's wife had already died and he is trying to find a way to bring her back or meet up with her again in some way. By showing flashbacks of Eugene's relationship with his wife we realise that he was also obsessed with work before she died. There is a strong similarity between the man in the film and Eugene in my text. Both in the film and the text, they are so preoccupied with their work that, although it is a noble cause, i.e. 'curing' death, they neglect their loved ones in the process. Both these characters also fail at their task in

the end. This is more than just a coincidental parallel, since I consciously based my adaptation on the ending of *The Fountain* as well as the *The Killer* as well as another film, *The Skeleton Key*.

The idea for *iForest*'s ending comes from *The Killer*, but the specific idea that Chaos drains Eugene's life force, is something that came from *The Skeleton Key* (2005, directed by Iain Softley). In this supernatural thriller, the villains use a voodoo ritual to drain a young person's life force and transfer it to another, older person, thus giving them eternal life of sorts. By showing us images of previous generations of people dating back for centuries, the viewer is left with a very strong sense that 'this has happened before'. This was also a reason for Chaos' final words in *iForest* (referred to earlier in this chapter).

I combined the end of *The Killer* with the end of *The Skeleton Key* to create Eugene's physical transformation from the brash optimistic explorer to the frail, helpless terrified man in the wheelchair at the end. I altered the ending of *The Skeleton Key* and made it suitable for my adaptation's purposes.

The references to *Lost* are perhaps the slightest of all, but still important. In the last two seasons of this series (seasons 5 and 6) it is revealed that the island, on which most of the show takes place, was designed to keep some dark and powerful being imprisoned on it. In previous seasons this creature has only been shown and referred to as the 'smoke monster'. It is a powerful, destructive force capable of death and destruction. In *iForest* the Guide and Guardian informs Eugene that although the forest is wonderful, it also functions as a prison for a killer, which refers to the killer from *The Killer* as well as Chaos, which might just be a more 'pure' incarnation of the killer.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Eugene Ionesco's *The Killer* and my adaptation, *iForest*, are both plays about death. But they are also about life and finding meaning within the apparent chaos that is life. In *Reassessing the Theatre of the Absurd*, Michael Bennett wrote:

I am not the first scholar to suggest that maybe the Theatre of the Absurd does not necessarily comment on the purposelessness of life. ... I suggest that meaning-making, not meaninglessness, is integral to the plays characterized as absurd. Because of the plays' parabolic nature – metaphor, paradox, and a move to disorder – the reader or audience member is forced to confront his or her own worldview in order to create order out of the chaos presented in the plays (2011: 8).

In the adaptation process of *iForest*, the Conradie Codec was used to incorporate various sources from different media (theatre, film and television). The resulting adaptation was intended to rely more on the physicality of the performers than the dialogue of the text.

Chapter five: Case Study four – When in love...

In 2003, as part of our final design class project, we had to conceptualize any Shakespeare text. I picked *Troilus and Cressida*, since I had Ancient Cultures as a subject and we had studied Homer's *The Iliad* the year before. My design, a futuristic/sci-fi inspired concept, was flawed and poorly executed and I almost failed the subject.

In 2009 I was fortunate enough to work in London as a stage manager and I got to see *Troilus and Cressida* performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre as part of their Young Hearts Season. I experienced it, on the whole, as a bit pedestrian, even though I really enjoyed some of the actors' performances; especially those of the actors playing Cressida, Pandarus, Thersites and Menelaus. They interpreted their characters in a way that I thought was interesting and fresh while still remaining appropriate to the text. Most of the other actors weren't 'bad' *per se*, but they were exactly what I would expect to see in a play-reading of the text, as supposed to production. I could still enjoy the language, but the actors weren't embodying the characters as much as I would have like to see.

I suspect the problem was also that the directing choices weren't bold, or experimental, enough for my taste. I thought, conceptually speaking, it could have been presented in a much more exciting way. It was all very much 'expected' and routine. According to Dunton and Riding (2004), a production of *Troilus and Cressida* is a director's work/production:

[Directors] find that audiences come to *Troilus and Cressida* with unformed expectations and refreshingly open minds. Directors are able to explore *Troilus and Cressida* on their own terms as there are few established norms weighing on interpretation of the play (Dunton & Riding, 2004: 266).

I would like to think that I was an open-minded audience member when I watched the production. I do, however, think that the director chose a very 'safe'

approach to present the play with regards to design and the way in which he directed most of the actors. As stage manager I was fortunate enough to have worked with some of South Africa's strongest conceptual directors, namely Marthinus Basson, Jaco Boucher and Mark Fleishman. It might be that I expected more of an international theatre production of a text that gives the director so much freedom. Instead, it was as if he attempted to present the audience with something they expected, or wanted, from the play instead of applying his own concept to it.

In 2010 I approached Estelle Olivier, a choreographer and lecturer in Movement and Physical Theatre at the Drama Department, about producing an adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida*. Firstly, because I wanted to create an adaptation of a text I really liked. Secondly, because I still wanted to create a Physical Theatre production in collaboration with a choreographer, since I couldn't do it with *iForest*. Lastly, I still had the need to redeem myself for the failure of my engagement with the text in 2003.

From an adaptation point of view, Shakespeare's text interested me because it was also an adaptation of *The Iliad*:

During the Middle Ages, poets changed the story, recasting Homeric heroes as chivalric knights. Among the popular medieval additions was the story of *Troilus and Cressida*, which Geoffrey Chaucer rendered ... as *Troilus and Criseyde* in the 14th Century. Shakespeare, who studied Chaucer, was probably familiar with this work (Dunton & Riding, 2004: 259).

Aside from the 2009 version in London, I haven't seen a production of *Troilus and Cressida* or heard of any versions of it in South Africa. Not even the Maynardville Open-Air Theatre, which presents a Shakespeare play every year, has done a version of *Troilus and Cressida* since they started in 1956.

Initially, my concept was to create a Physical Theatre production by appropriating as much as we could from the text, but, since it was a Physical

Theatre production, convey the story predominantly through physical performance and improvised physical vocabulary. The idea of using fight choreography to depict the war/battle scenes had potential that excited me. Since the play is also about romantic love, we could also use choreography to show the different romantic relationships between the couples involved.

From a teaching point of view, I thought Estelle might find this process interesting/challenging/exciting, since the students we would use for this production did fight choreography as part of their movement module. During the casting of the production, we also focused on casting all of the final-year Physical Theatre students (a different subject/module than movement), since they were already familiar with the fundamentals of Physical Theatre and understood the 'language' the choreographer spoke.

The students were required to prepare a line or phrase from any Shakespeare text and perform it physically in either duets or trios. It was quite a tough audition task and overall not a lot of the students who auditioned understood or interpreted the task they were given. Most of them were confused by the fact that they were not asked to speak in an audition for a Shakespeare play. After much deliberation we were satisfied that we had a strong group who would be able to build a production using Physical Theatre principals.

When we started rehearsals Estelle and I realised that we were not on the same page regarding the concept. She thought that there would still be a fixed script in the production and that she would be required to choreograph specific sections with the cast – similar to the task we required in the audition process. I was under the impression that we would create a Physical Theatre play, which means that we would appropriate some of the themes, plot and characters and create a brand new play through improvisations and a workshop-style creation process. I was under the impression that we were going to cut most of the original text in order to create a production that consists predominantly of physical expression. I wanted to attempt something different than the 'scriptocentric approach' to theatre-making I was used to (cf. Burke cited in Lambert & Snyman, 2010: 312).

The difference between our concepts for the production was a technical, but very important, one. Estelle was prepared to create a Dance Theatre production, while I wanted to create a Physical Theatre production. Both focus on storytelling by using the actors' physical body language, like movements and gestures, etc. instead of vocal language based on a script. Dance Theatre (*Tanztheater* in German) is a unique genre of dance and/or theatre.¹⁴ A very basic definition of Dance Theatre, according to Estelle Olivier, is:

[A] form of theatre (with all the bells and whistles if you want it) that uses dance as the primary language. While it can still contain text, it is still choreographed and will vary in form from one choreographer to the next (2014: personal communication).

It seems that Physical Theatre, on the other hand, is a little more difficult to define in such exact terms:

Callery (2001:4) suggests that Physical Theatre is a theatre in which “the primary means of creation occurs through the body rather than through the mind”. ... Botha (2006:5) notes that Physical Theatre has “appropriated the ideals and methods of different forms of theatre to such an extent that its eclecticism has become part of what defines it”. One can thus deduce that Physical Theatre is not only a theatre grounded in the body, but also a theatre grounded in the crossing of boundaries by interweaving different approaches and disciplines. ... Murray and Keefe (2007: 18) purport that the emphasis that the Dadaists, Surrealists, Futurists and Artaud “placed on spontaneity, creative freedom, the power of image as opposed to spoken word, and the necessity of theatre to engage with the senses and not simply the intellect” could be seen as precursors to Physical Theatre (Lambert & Snyman, 2010: 314-315).

When Estelle and I discussed the process we were about to go through, she told me that a Physical Theatre production requires a much longer process. We

¹⁴ See Servos, N. (2014: online) for more information on Tanztheater Wuppertal.

only had four weeks and it would not be sufficient. She was never under the impression that creating a Physical Theatre production was our goal. So instead of staying with *my* initial idea of creating a Physical Theatre production, we decided that we would approach the process like a Dance Theatre production. I would write a script based on *Troilus and Cressida* and there would be certain sections where Estelle would create choreography.

At the beginning of the writing process I summarised every scene to one or two lines. I reverse-engineered Shakespeare's script into one page. Estelle and I would use this to see where we could employ choreography instead of text.

Thersites addresses the audience and informs them of the setting: there is a war raging because a Trojan prince, Paris, has stolen the wife (Helen) of the Greek/Spartan king, Menelaus.

Another Trojan prince, Troilus, tells Pandarus (Cressida's uncle) that he is in love with Cressida, the daughter of "a Trojan priest [who] defected to the Greek side when he foresaw that the Greeks would win the war" (Dunton & Riding, 2004: 260). Pandarus promises that he will help Troilus win her heart.

In the Greek camp the commanders are gathered in war-council. A Trojan messenger, Aeneas, arrives with a challenge from Hector (brother to Troilus) to any Greek brave enough to face him alone in combat. Ajax is selected to represent the Greek army as their champion over Achilles.

Aeneas arrives back in Troy with a message from the Greeks: they will lift the siege if Helen is returned. Hector and Cassandra (his sister) are both in favour of this. Paris and Troilus are both against it.

Pandarus arranges for Troilus and Cressida to meet in private and they declare their love for each other. In the Greek camp Calchas, Cressida's father, arranges the exchange of a Trojan prisoner for his daughter. Troilus and Cressida are separated. When she arrives at the Greek camp, Cressida is violated by the Greek commanders. There is a deviation from the original here. Before she is raped by the commanders, Cressida is rescued by Diomedes.

On the battlefield, Hector and Ajax refuse to fight since they are family. A temporary truce is called and a feast is arranged. During the festivities Ulysses shows Troilus that Cressida has betrayed him with Diomedes. Troilus vows vengeance.

In Troy, signs foretell Hector's death. But, rejecting family pleas. Hector insists on keeping his vow. In turn, Hector tries to dissuade Troilus from arming, but Troilus, also vengeful, determines to fight (Dunton & Riding, 2004: 264).

On the battlefield Hector slays Patroclus. Achilles is enraged and joins the battle. He discovers Hector, unarmed after the day's battle and, with the help of his Myrmidons, slays Hector and drags his corpse through the battlefield.

Troilus delivers the news to the Trojans. When Pandarus arrives with news for Troilus, he will hear none of it: "Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe (V.xi.31)". This was one of the possible endings to the play. But "[both] the quarto and *First Folio* versions of [the play] conclude with comical (albeit sour) final address of Pandarus" (Dunton & Riding, 2004: 267).

This was a very brief 'skeleton' that we used to start the adaptation process. In our planning phase for this project, we wrote down, in point-form, all the key plot points that we thought were crucial to advancing the plot. We simplified Shakespeare's text considerably. One could say that we decoded the original text into what we perceived to be the lowest common denominator in terms of the plot.

We approached the adaptation process for the new script as follows: Firstly, we would identify scenes that could be physical or movement based only. Secondly, the rest of the scenes would need to be rewritten. For a number of scenes we did improvisations with the cast and rework those into fixed text. Lastly, to create the rest of the scenes I had to rewrite them by condensing the text.

Estelle and I agreed that the fight scenes had to be choreographed sequences. The bigger scenes that would be choreographed included a new opening scene (before the prologue) as well as the big battle scene close to the end of the play. Almost all twenty-five cast members were involved in these scenes. The smaller fight scenes were between Hector and Ajax as well as the scene between Hector and Achilles. To create all of these physical scenes, Estelle worked with the cast-members involved as they employed the principals of contact improvisation. They created vocabulary which she then altered or structured to make sense within the context of the production.

This method of creating choreography is something that is used in the Drama Department's Movement and Physical Theatre course in the different year groups. We decided to use this method primarily because all of the students were familiar with this way of developing physical vocabulary. From an educational/teaching point of view, this was a good opportunity for Estelle to see the application of the skills by the students in the context of a production.

In the big opening fight scene, for example, we wanted the conflicts between different characters to be evident. We also set up some of the plot points that would occur in the play. For example, Menelaus and Paris fight each other while Troilus battles Diomedes. In the case of Menelaus and Paris, they use Helen as a weapon, creating a trio of dancers while showing the central conflict of the Trojan War. Cressida was also added to the battle between Troilus and Diomedes, which foreshadows Diomedes' seduction of Cressida that will happen later in the play. So while we tried to show physical battle, we also incorporated the romantic theme of the play into these fight scenes.

For the fight duets between Ajax and Hector as well as the duet between Hector and Achilles, they also made use of contact improvisation to create the structure in the fight. Estelle then refined it and we incorporated some of the lines that I adapted from the original text.

While it was possible for Estelle to create/choreograph all of these sequences by herself, we thought it was important for the actors to develop their own

physical vocabulary. Firstly, not all of the students had the same physical ability/facility and they had to create movements that were suited to their bodies. Secondly, it is my opinion that by creating their own work they feel more invested in the production, which makes the entire process more enjoyable and rewarding for everyone involved.

The music accompanying all of these fight scenes was percussive to emulate the idea of war drums. I played the percussion instruments in rehearsal and also during the production. I wanted the opening scene to have a very specific rhythm based on Japanese Taiko drumming and it was very fast-paced and energetic. It helped to create the frantic atmosphere of a battlefield. I used a similar style of drumming for the final battle scene as well. This battle scene, the movement as well as the music, was a repetition with variation of the opening scene. This time only the soldiers were involved, not the non-soldier characters like Helen and Cressida. So while the opening physical sequence can be seen as an expository scene, this reprisal of the opening sequence includes a very specific set of events that happen in Act five in Shakespeare's text. Instead of dialogue between the people doing battle, I chose to show the battle itself.

We also decided to create duets for the scenes between Helen and Paris, Troilus and Cressida as well as the scene between Cressida and Diomedes. The *pas de deux* between Troilus and Cressida as well as Cressida and Diomedes were set pieces choreographed and set by Estelle. The duet between Paris and Helen were created by the two actors who used improvisation to create the vocabulary, which Estelle then refined.

The music we chose for these duets were contemporary pop music. The music for the duet between Paris and Helen had to show that their physical/sexual relationship is not a healthy one; we used a song called *Machinegun* by a group called Portishead. For this scene we assembled a choir from some of the actors. They reworked the original song and gave it an even more haunting undertone. It removed any notion of romance from the duet and instead

portrayed their physical/sexual relationship as a power struggle – which we thought was appropriate for the relationship between Helen and Paris.

The duets between Troilus and Cressida as well as Diomedes and Cressida had a much lighter, even optimistic quality. We used Imogen Heap's *Between Sheets* for Troilus and Cressida. It was a bit 'on the nose' in retrospect but the song encapsulated the feelings of excitement of the two characters in our opinion. For Diomedes and Cressida we used a song called *Undertow* by the group Stars. Once again the song's title might seem like a very obvious, or safe. The lyrics in the song served as an expression of Cressida's state of mind at that moment in the play.

Some of the criticism we received after the production was over was that the use of the two more romantic pop-songs felt out of place and forced. At the time I defended our decisions, but looking at it now, I realised that these contemporary songs were the only 'modern' elements of the entire production, since everything else was a stylized version of the period of the Trojan War.

For most of the scenes involving Thersites we decided that we should deconstruct the original text and then let the actors improvise around the original, much like musicians would improvise on standard chord progressions. There are numerous examples of this, but I will focus on one scene in particular. In Act 2, scene 1 of *Troilus and Cressida*, Thersites mocks Ajax and gets a beating for it:

Enter AJAX and THERSITES

AJAX: Thersites!

THERSITES: Agamemnon, how if he had boils – full, all over, generally?

AJAX: Thersites!

THERSITES: And those boils did run – say so – did not the general run then, were not that a botchy core?

AJAX: Dog!

THERSITES: Then would come some matter from him, I see none now.

AJAX: Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear? Feel, then.

Strikes him.

THERSITES: The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel, beef-witted lord.

AJAX: Speak then, thou whinid'st leaven, speak: I will beat thee into handsomeness.

(II.i.1 – 12)

The actors playing Thersites improvised the scene with the actor playing Ajax and came up with different insults for him as well as the other Greek generals. We decided to use three actors to play Thersites. In the original text he has such a chaotic presence and we wanted the characters that encounter him to endure an onslaught of insults.

We repeated the improvisation process several times, recording them as well as making notes of the things we wanted to retain. So after I compiled the improvised notes etc. into the new script it looked like this:

THERSITES enter in a foul mood.

THERSITES: Whores
Mongrels
Bastards
The ones we call friends
No, the ones we call master
The ones who beat us with a stick

AJAX: (off-stage) Thersites!

THERSITES: Calls the bitch from her cave.

AJAX: (off-stage) Thersites!

THERSITES: Shouts the savage from her hovel.

AJAX: (off-stage) Thersites!

THERSITES: Moans the whore in ecstasy!

THERSITES all laugh.

AJAX: (Off-stage) Thersites, where are you?

THERSITES: Over here, master mongrel!

AJAX on stage

AJAX: (punching Thersites) Ah, good morning, good morning, good morning!

THERSITES: (recovering) Brocolli-breathed brute!
Frakkin' fart-face!

AJAX: What!

THERSITES: I said I'll have another taste.

AJAX: Then I'll feed you 'til you had your fill.

AJAX beats THERSITES again.

AJAX: Now help me learn the song.

THERSITES: I'd rather play pig and roll around in dung.

AJAX: Help me learn the melody.

THERSITES: A stab in the eye appeals much more to me.

AJAX: The lyrics then, the lyrics at least.

THERSITES: Our time on earth is limited you beast!

AJAX: Your hearing's out of tune and that insulting tongue tires not. I'll beat you until it bleeds beauty.

(Conradie, 2010: 19 – 21)

While it seems that we simply paraphrased Shakespeare's text in order to

update the meaning for a modern audience, we actually spent a lot of time adapting or translating the text. By ‘translating’ I don’t mean from one language to another, since it was still English, but rather from a Shakespearean idiom to contemporary English idiom. Translation, according to Walter Benjamin, is very close to Hutcheon’s definition of adaptation.

[Translation] is not a rendering of some fixed nontextual meaning to be copied or paraphrased or reproduced; rather, it is an *engagement with the original text* that makes us *see that text in different ways* (Benjamin cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 16).

So by translating and updating the language, we were also actively *adapting* it through improvisations with the cast. When I compiled these improvised sections into the script, I attempted to keep the language, even though it was more contemporary, in a heightened form. I decided to write in verse instead of prose. I wanted the dialogue to remain stylised – it seemed more suitable to the genre of Dance Theatre based on Shakespeare.

The only character whose lines we didn’t update, but rather appropriated, or absorbed, directly into the new script were those of Cassandra. Since she is the character who prophesies the fall of Troy and the death of Hector, I wanted to keep her language different from the rest of the characters. She is speaking in verse, but still in the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare. The idea behind this came from the way Shakespeare also differentiated between prose and verse. Everyone in the play spoke ‘Wilhelm’ and we reserved the ‘Shakespeare’ for Cassandra.

An example of this occurs quite early in the play when Cassandra prophesies that Helen must be given back to the Greeks lest Troy falls. First, in *Troilus and Cressida*:

CASSANDRA:	[<i>Within</i>] Cry, Trojans, cry!
PRIAM:	What noise, what shriek is this?
TROILUS:	'Tis our mad sister, I do know her voice.

CASSANDRA: [Within] Cry, Trojans!

HECTOR: It is Cassandra.

Enter CASSANDRA raving, with her hair about her ears.

CASSANDRA: Cry, Trojans, cry, lend me ten thousand eyes

And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

HECTOR: Peace, sister, peace.

CASSANDRA: Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled old,

Soft infancy that nothing canst but cry,

Add to my clamours: let us pay betimes

A moiety of that mass of moan to come.

Cry, Trojans, cry, practise your eyes with tears!

Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilium stand –

Our firebrand brother Paris burns us all.

Cry, Trojans, cry, a Helen and a woe!

Cry, cry! Troy burns – or else let Helen go!

Exit

(II.ii.97 – 112)

In *When in love...*, the adapted scene looked like this:

CASSANDRA: (off-stage) Cry Trojans, cry!

TROILUS: Our deranged sister approaches.

CASSANDRA enters.

CASSANDRA: Cry, Trojans, cry! Lend me ten thousand eyes,

And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

Hector tries to hold her in order to calm her down.

HECTOR: (gentle) Calm down sister.

She wriggles out.

CASSANDRA: Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled
elders,
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,
Add to my clamours! Let us pay betimes
A moeity of that mass of moan to come.
Cry, Trojans, cry! Practise your eyes with
tears
Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.
Cry, Trojans, cry! A Helen and a woe:
Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go.

CASSANDRA exits.

(Conradie, 2010: 26)

Estelle and I also used the idea we used during the audition phase in order to give her a physical language as well as a spoken language. She had choreographed movements and gestures during these lines. It would set her apart from the other characters and reinforces the words from her brother, Troilus: "Our deranged sister approaches." There was an image I had in mind when we were working on the character of Cassandra. In the 2007 fantasy war-film, *300*, the Ephors (leaders) of Sparta consults the Oracle on behalf of King Leonidas. The movements of the Oracle were very sharp and jagged and I wanted Cassandra to have these movements and gestures when she prophesies. She needed to be presented in a different way than the other characters for the simple reason that she was, in fact, different to all the other characters in the play.

For the rest of the adaptation process of the script, I had to condense the original text. In the process I sacrificed the poetic quality of Shakespeare's text in order to move the plot along a lot quicker, which it did quite successfully – the running time of the production was approximately seventy five minutes, as supposed to the play I saw in London, which ran for over two and a half hours.

As far as possible I attempted to keep only the essential plot elements. For example, the scene where Achilles confesses to Patroclus that he is actually in love with a Trojan princess was cut. In the version of the play I saw, it was clear that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers. I also pointed this out clearly in my text. In the version of the play I saw at Shakespeare's Globe, it was clearly stated that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers. When I read the original text again it also seemed like that is also the way Shakespeare presented them in his text. It seemed out of place then that Achilles would later confess to Patroclus that he is in love with someone else. I wanted to remove this confusion from my adaptation.

According to Dunton and Riding, "the two grand subjects of the play are war and love, but by using inflated rhetoric and finely-tuned registers of speech, Shakespeare satirises both warriors and lovers in *Troilus and Cressida*" (2004: 259). I intended to satirise the warriors and lovers through their physical behaviour rather through what they say, so I was able to cut a lot of the "inflated rhetoric". For example, by showing how awkward Troilus and Cressida are at their first meeting, by way of their uncomfortable body-language, instead of them talking about it, I managed to condense the text considerably.

Another example of satire was using the smallest female cast member to play the great general Agamemnon. The other members of the Greek war party had to carry a small table with them at all times; she could stand on it in order to compensate for her length and size. She was often enraged when they didn't pay her the proper attention or respect. In the original text the Greek generals fall prey to Thersites' wit. Since I didn't have the same lengthy scenes between Thersites and the generals, I wanted to show the audience, by way of some

physical comedy, that this adaptation, like the original text, intended to satirise the Greek generals as well.

With regards to the characters of the adaptation, I want to discuss only two points: the character of Cressida and a new addition to the play, the Masked Observers.

The character of Cressida has been discussed and analysed in depth, especially since the 1985 Howard Davies production for the Royal Shakespeare Company and Juliet Stevenson's portrayal of Cressida. For their production they decided to alter the approach to the character of Cressida.

Stevenson described playing Shakespeare's female characters in the 1980s in terms of 'investigating' them 'from scratch'. She stated that in rehearsal she would "react against the way tradition and prejudice have stigmatised" Shakespeare's women into derogatory stereotypes of 'Cressida the whore [or] Kate the shrew'. It was Cressida's reputation as a 'whore' that Stevenson vociferously denied, remarking in an interview that she "didn't want to play her as a whore – she's not a whore, there's no evidence for that at all" (Rogers, 2014: 56).

Up until the 1960s, Cressida had the reputation as a 'whore' – something I was initially unaware of. Even though she is unfaithful to Troilus, when I first read the play in 2003 the judgment of 'whore' seemed harsh. When I saw the production of this play at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in 2009, the character of Cressida was also not portrayed as such. One reviewer called her "sweetly determined". She was not coquettish or flirtatious, but merely quick-witted.

Rogers writes:

Troilus and Cressida's Greek camp scene has become central to the narrative that has been built around the 1985 production, positioned as a 'feminist' production by critics when it opened in Stratford. Read by critics as a gang rape that situated Cressida as a victim of war, Davies' staging bears the imprint of second-wave feminism and its

preoccupations with “issues which specifically affected women” including “sexual violence” (2014: 56).

Although there have been exceptions...the influence of Davies’ staging of the Greek camp scene can be observed in most subsequent productions of the play, producing their own representations of a vulnerable Cressida fending off male sexual aggression (2014: 57).

One of the problems I had when I read the play was that I couldn’t understand exactly why Cressida is unfaithful to Troilus. To come up with a possible solution to this problem, I decided not to make it about her own weakness, but rather her circumstances and especially the event of her arrival at the Greek camp.

In the research I have done and, once again, when I saw the production, Cressida’s arrival at the Greek camp had an ominous atmosphere. Rutter (cited in Rogers) says that the Greek commanders “were expecting Hector” and that “[they] were in the mood for violence” (2014: 57). In Davies’s 1985 production:

Agamemnon, sensing Cressida’s ‘emotionally raw’ and weakened state, first saluted Juliet Stevenson’s Cressida with a chivalrous kiss on the hand before lunging at her and placing a second kiss on her lips. She retaliated with a slap, which Agamemnon parried; Nestor’s subsequent ‘Our General doth salute you with a kiss’ (4.6.20) was uttered as a rebuke to her. Cressida was then dragged back on the orders of Agamemnon, who condoned the Greeks’ ‘kissing in general’ in revenge for Cressida’s public humiliation of him (Rogers, 2014: 57).

In our production she didn’t slap Agamemnon, but her quick wit got her into trouble. Agamemnon did not respond well to being insulted. We choreographed this scene with all the soldiers from the Greek camp slowly surrounding Cressida and, in an increasingly menacing way, pushed her around, lifted her off balance and threw her to each other. We suggested that she was been violently abused, but not raped.

In order for the audience to believe that Cressida would even consider the advances of another man, we had Diomedes rescue her from his fellow Greek soldiers when things got out of hand. He becomes her protector and this might, believably, lead to his seduction of Cressida later on. We had to make her vulnerable and him a hero. This was an addition and not based on a reading of the original text. I think it solved one of the logical gaps in the original text – something I viewed as a problem area.

For the character of Cassandra, as mentioned earlier, we added a lot of gestural and physical movement to her words. Since she is a prophetess, she is able to see the events of the play before they occur. With this in mind, I also added a chorus to the production, called the Masked Observers. These characters represent oracles throughout the ages who observe humanity and deliver prophecies.

This was an obvious new addition to the play. The idea came from another JJ Abrams television series called *Fringe*. In this sci-fi series there are bald men in suits who appear from time to time; they are able to travel to different moments in time and observe mankind. In short, they can be seen as modern-day oracles.

In the television series, however, one of them intervenes to save a young boy, which sets off a chain of events in motion that creates the overarching plot of the entire series (which ran for five seasons between 2008 and 2013).

We wanted them to be linked to Cassandra. So I created a back-story for them. The reason for their presence in this specific time is to observe Cassandra, a Masked Observer-in-training. Towards the end of the play, at the moment of Hector's death, we see her ascension into their order. This moment in the play is foreshadowed right at the beginning of the play, during the opening fight sequence, where she is grouped with the Masked Observers.

I had the concept in mind that when she ascended, she interfered, like the observer in *Fringe*, and changed events that were supposed to follow. In this

case, I used Cassandra's Observer status to change the ending of the play from an uncertain, ambiguous ending, to a more positive end. This ending was perhaps contrived, but not even Shakespeare was above creating a happy ending where he saw fit.

I appropriated the version with the final speech by Pandarus. Shortly after Troilus brings the news of Hector's death to Andromache and the Priam, Pandarus enters with news for Troilus to which Troilus responds: "Be gone, broker-lackey!" In the original this is where Troilus exits and Pandarus delivers the epilogue. I cut the "comical (albeit sour) final address of Pandarus" and instead Pandarus reveals that Cressida has returned to him, broken.

Troilus is left with a choice: does he storm off, like he does in the original play, or does he decide to stay and forgive her betrayal? During the new epilogue, now delivered by the Masked Observers, both Troilus and Cressida, slowly and tentatively, reached out to each other.

I think, although the last speech could come across as a bit too sweet for some people's taste, it ended the play off on a more positive note. A lot of people argued that this was not appropriate, since this is a play about war and the horrors that human beings inflict upon each other. Since it was my adaptation, I wanted to end the play on a positive note.

The Conradie Codec was implemented during the adaptation process of *When in Love...* by moving away from a text-based play and into the realm of physical theatre. Although it was the intention of this adaptation, it was not feasible. During the adaptation process, the codec was primarily used to simplify and/or update the language used in the original text and also to replace specific moments/scenes with dance sequences.

Chapter six – Conclusion

In this study I found ways to define what adaptations, the processes, products and the field of study, are. I applied this knowledge by analysing the four adaptations I have created to date. I also intended to search for equivalences in the processes I used to decode original texts and other sources and then encode the meaning, or new meaning, into a new plays.

As far as definitions go, I now know that in studying adaptations, we are investigating a sub-category of intertextuality. Studying adaptations implies the study of complex, interrelationships between a text and other texts; it also involves the interpretation of both old and new texts.

With regards to the process of adaptation, it implies the adjustment or the alteration or changing a source to be more suitable to your needs as theatre-maker. It can also mean repeating something, themes, dialogue, plot, etc. without simply replicating or copying; the new product needs to be a variation of the original. The process of adaptation also has the tendency to be transpositional practice on the part of the adapter although it is not to say that all transposition is considered adaptation. Aspects of the source can be transposed in terms of cultural, geographical and temporal terms, to name but a few.

When analysing the eventual products, adaptations can be described as a text in the second degree, since they are always new creations based on an earlier, but not always original, work. The adaptation is a second, or new, engagement or opportunity to generate meaning. Some adaptations have the tendency to comment on the source text, the adaptation itself or both. This is usually accredited to alterations or additions made during the adaptation process. Sometimes adaptations do not rely on prior knowledge of the shaping intertext – this category of adaptation is referred to as analogue.

In the analyses of the four adaptations I started by creating some context for, or reasoning behind, the selection of the different sources. I have described the

decoding process of each source as well as the encoding of the subsequent adaptations. While the different adaptations have undergone different encoding processes, there was a similarity in the approach I used in order to create the product.

The decoding process, analysing and doing research on the play led to a clear understanding of the source material which allowed me to confidently encode each adaptation with, as Walter Benjamin calls it, “its own aura, its own presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be” (Benjamin cited in Hutcheon, 2006: 6).

I am not arrogant enough to believe that the processes I used to create adaptations are entirely new ways of creating adaptations. By dissecting the four case studies I have come to realise that I have used techniques that were used by many other adapters before me. I would like to suggest, however, that the ‘codec’ aspect of the process depends on who the adapter is and often on the specific context within which the adaptation is created. As previously stated, the process of adaptation “can be a process of appropriating, of taking possession of another’s story, and filtering it ... through one’s own sensibility, interests, and talents” (Hutcheon, 2006: 18). The result will be adaptations that each have their own, and also their unique, aura; if I may be so bold as to adapt Walter Benjamin’s words. This is the strongest, if not perhaps the only, case that can be made for calling the codec used to create my adaptations, the Conradie Codec.

There was a definite shift in focus from one adaptation to the next. In the first adaptation, *Twintig Akteurs...*, I focused on the theatre and the process of theatre-making; there were allusions to the Theatre of the Absurd but not an in-depth engagement with it just yet. For the second adaptation, *onsindroom*, I shifted the focus to surreal, or subconscious, landscape and imagery. With *iForest* I started to shift away from dialogue as the primary mode of communication. I initially intended for the performers’ physicality, movements and gestures, as supposed to the words they speak, to be the encoded messages for the audience to generate meaning from. The end result was still

a text-based production that included some physical aspects – less than I initially intended. For the last adaptation (*When in love...*) the focus shifted even further away from a purely text-based adaptation. Once again the intention was for the text to form a much smaller part of the play. The initial concept for the production was a predominantly physical or movement-based production; but once again it didn't quite move away completely.

There is definite tendency to move from purely text-based towards a completely non-verbal form of theatre-making. But I do not think that I would eventually create an adaptation without any dialogue in it all.

All of these adaptations were created in a very short time, under very high pressure; 'adapt or die' is an appropriate representation of the level of stress I experienced at times. I used to think that, like so many other people, I do my best work under pressure. By analysing all of these four adaptations, I realised that this was not necessarily the case. I needed more time in order to apply the Conradie codec more effectively.

I propose that by going through the process of analysing these four adaptations, I have gained insight into my own adaptation practices and in doing so the Conradie codec has been adapted (or updated). All that remains is to apply the Conradie codec 2.0 to future projects.

Bibliography

Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. Oxon: Routledge.

Bennet, M.Y (2011). *Reassessing the Theatre of the Absurd*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bergman, I. (1973). *A Dream Play – an interpretation by Ingmar Bergman*. Trans. Meyer, M. London: Martin Secker & Warburg Limited.

Chandler, D. (2014). *Semiotics for Beginners*. Available: <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem09.html>. Last accessed 25 August 2014.

Coe, R.N. (1971). *Ionesco, a study of his plays*. London: Methuen and Co Ltd.

Conradie, W.J. (2004). *Twintig Akteurs op soek na 'n [Beter] Regisseur*. Stellenbosch University: Unpublished play.

Conradie, W.J. (2005). *onsindroom*. Stellenbosch University: Unpublished play.

Conradie, W.J. (2007). Pers. Comm., May 2007.

Conradie, W.J. (2007). *iForest*. Stellenbosch University: Unpublished play.

Conradie, W.J. (2010). *When in love ...* Stellenbosch University: Unpublished play.

Creativity and Cognition Studios. (2015). *Differences between practic-based and practice-led research*. Available: <http://www.creativityandcognition.com/research/practice-based-research/differences-between-practice-based-and-practice-led-research/>. Last accessed 19 February 2015.

Cusson, R. (2002). *Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author: A Tension Between Art vs. Life and the Pirandellian Influence*. Available: <http://www.angelfire.com/ny5/vortex/papers/pop.html>. Last accessed 24 June 2013.

Dunton-Downer, L. & Riding, A. (2004). *DK Essential Shakespeare*. London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd.

Epstude, K & Roese, N.J. (2008). *The Functional Theory of Counterfactual Thinking*. Available: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2408534/>. Last accessed 7 August 2014.

- Hailey, J. (2014). *The Fountain (2006) - IMDb*. Available: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0414993/>. Last accessed 12 August 2014.
- Hall, S. (2007). *This means This, This means That: A user's guide to semiotics*. London: Laurence King.
- Harp, G. (2011). *The Essence of The Tempest*. Available: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1274300/reviews?ref_=tt_ql_8. Last accessed 5 October 2014.
- Hawkes, T. (1986). *That Shakespearian Rag*. London: Methuen.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.
- Ionesco, E. (1958). *The Bald Prima Donna*. London: Calder Publications.
- Ionesco, E. (1970). *Eugene Ionesco: Plays Volume III*. London: Calder & Boyars Ltd.
- Jung, C.J. (1925). *Marriage as a Psychological Relationship: Anima and Animus*. Available: http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/p109g/internal/j_anima.html. Last accessed 10 August 2014.
- Kritzer, A.H. (2005). A Dream Play (review). *Theatre Journal*. 57 (3), 502-504.
- Lambert, R. & Snyman, B. (2010). Crossing boundaries: forging innovative theatrical and research content. *South African Theatre Journal*. 24 (1), 311-326.
- Lewis, L.J. (1963). Alchemy and the Orient in Strindberg's 'Dream Play'. *Scandinavian Studies*. 35 (3), 208-222.
- Mabillard, A. (2000). *Shakespeare's Sources for Hamlet*. Available: <http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sources/hamletsources.html>. Last accessed 5 October 2014.
- Merriam-Webster. (2014). *Intertextuality - Definition and More from the free Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Available: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intertextuality>. Last accessed 25 August 2014.
- Mitchell, K. (2005). *No Limits*. Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/feb/12/theatre2>. Last accessed 4 July 2013.

O'Conner, P.T. & Kellerman, S. (2012). *The Grammarphobia Blog: Palimpsestuous*. Available: <http://www.grammarphobia.com/blog/2012/02/palimpsest.html>. Last accessed 19 March 2013.

Olivier, E. (2014). Pers. Comm., 22 September 2014.

Paperblanks. (2013). *Cross-Writing: When People Wrote Across the Page to Save Paper*. Available: <http://blog.paperblanks.com/2013/03/cross-writing/>. Last accessed 2 April 2013.

Pavlac, B.A. (2001). *Ten Common Errors and Myths about the Witch Hunts, Corrected and Commented*. Available: http://departments.kings.edu/womens_history/witch/werror.html. Last accessed 27 September 2014.

Pirandello, L. (2014). *Preface to Six Characters in search of an Author*. Trans. Bentley, E. Available: <http://www.eldritchpress.org/lp/sixp.htm>. Last accessed 5 October 2014.

Purdy, S.B. (1967). A Reading of Ionesco's *The Killer*. *Modern Drama*. 10 (4), 416-423.

Rogers, J. (2014). *Cressida in twenty-first century performance*. *Shakespeare*. 10 (1), 56-71.

Rust, C., Mottram, J. and Till, J. (2007). *AHRC research review: practice-led research in art, design and architecture*. Available: http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/43065/Practice-Led_Review_Nov07.pdf. Last accessed 19 February 2015.

Sanders, J. (2006). *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Oxon: Routledge.

Servos, N. (2014). *Tanztheater Wuppertal*. Trans. Morris, S. Available: <http://www.pina-bausch.de/en/dancetheatre/>. Last accessed 5 October 2014.

Shakespeare, W. (2003). *Troilus and Cressida*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strindberg, J.A. (1973). *A Dream Play and Four Chamber Plays*. Trans. Johnson, W.G. Seattle: The University of Washington Press.

Styan, J.L. (1983). *The Shakespeare Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

TV Tropes. (2014). *Adaptation Displacement*. Available: <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/AdaptationDisplacement>. Last accessed 21 September 2014.