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**The poetics of a contemporary, transcultural adaptation in
the process of directing the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967)
by Plinio Marcos**

Drama Department

Masters in Drama

Anderson Barroso de Oliveira

15406212

Supervisor:

Prof. Hazel Barnes

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TITLE: Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss STUDENT NUMBER: 15406212
SURNAME: BARROSO DE OLIVEIRA
FIRSTNAMES: ANDERSON
HOME/POSTAL ADDRESS: 228 OLIVIER ST, BROOKLYN - PRETORIA
POSTAL CODE: 0181
TEL: CEL NO 072 1060759
WORK ADDRESS: POSTAL CODE:
TEL: E-MAIL ADDRESS: ANDERSON88BARROSO@GMAIL.COM

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ABSTRACT

This study takes place in the investigation of two aspects. The first was the process of translation and adaptation of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) by the Brazilian playwright Plinio Marcos to South African English and its respective context, followed by a free adaptation for the context of 2017 in Pretoria. The second aspect was a reflection of the staging process of the same play from the director's perspective in a transcultural environment. Regarding the translation process, I sought in Walter Benjamin's theory of translation, a translational methodology that could extract the essence of the text, that is, translate, transfer the poetic power of the original work to the new language and to the new context. In parallel with Benjamin's translational theory, I sought in Pavis the understanding of the translational process of the theatrical text and the cultural shift of signs from the original work to the arrival context and the embodied performance. It was a process coordinated from the foreign director's perspective who seeks to give the conceptual references of his practical work through reflections and quotes from various theorists and theatre directors that served as a basis for research. It is a theoretical and reflexive accompaniment of the phases that made up the staging process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017).

Keywords: Translation, adaptation, transculturalism, Plinio Marcos, theatre directing and staging process.

Table of Contents

Chapter Page	i
PLAGIARISM DECLARATION.....	ii
SUBMISSION FORM FOR DISSERTATION	iii
TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background and Contextualisation	6
1.1.1 Thinking about Brazil and South Africa - marginality and transculturalism.....	9
1.2 Problem Statement	15
1.3 Research Objectives / Research Questions	17
1.4 Theoretical Framework	18
1.4.1 Definitions of Key Terms.....	22
• Interculturalism and Transculturalism	22
• Hybridism	24
• Translation	25
• Adaptation	27
1.5 Methodology	28
1.5.1 Rehearsal plan and practical investigation	32
1.5.2 Theatre Directing.....	34
1.6 Proposed Outline of Chapters	35
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.	
2.1. Translation according to Walter Benjamin	37
2.2. Relativism of textual fidelity	39
2.3. Recognition of theatre purpose	41
2.4. The translation of the text for the theatre	43
2.5. Audience reception	50
2.6. Adaptation	52
CHAPTER THREE: THE MARGINAL THEATRE OF PLINIO MARCOS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE THEATRE DIRECTOR.	
3.1. The underworld of Plinio Marcos' characters	60
3.2. <i>Razor in the Flesh</i> . A cutting-edge play	68
3.2.1. The characters in <i>Razor in the flesh</i>	70
3.3. The work of the theatre director and the influences on the directing of the South African production of <i>Razor in the Flesh</i>	77
3.4. The director's work from a transcultural perspective	84

**CHAPTER FOUR: STEPS OF THE STAGING PROCESS OF THE
PRODUCTION *RAZOR IN THE FLESH***

4.1 <i>Razor In The Flesh</i> Staging Process	88
4.2 The text: <i>Razor in the Flesh</i>	89
4.3 Process of preparation and conception of the production by the director	91
4.4 Rehearsals and round table work	98
4.5 Blocking rehearsal of production	101
4.6 The investigation of characters rehearsal with actors	106
4.7 Narrative text structure rehearsal	108
4.8 Adjusting the rhythm rehearsal	110
4.9 Technical rehearsal with the entire support team	113
4.10 Final touches and polishing rehearsal	114
4.11 General rehearsal	115
4.12 Reflection after the process	116

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the study	119
5.2 Limitations of the study	125
5.3 Contribution of the study	125
5.4 Conclusion and central question of the research	125

SOURCES CONSULTED	128
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APPENDIX	137
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Razor in the Flesh (1967) is a classic in the work of Plinio Marcos, in which three characters live a life of dispute and decadence in a rented room in a brothel. The prostitute, Chrystal Scarlet; the pimp, Vado; and the homosexual, Velvet, speak of their lives and expose their marginality. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a naturalistic portrait of the Brazilian underworld in which the slang, the violence of human relations, the oppressive situation and the struggle of each character construct a representation whose drama is timeless. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is the most staged work of the Brazilian playwright, Plinio Marcos.

The play can be seen as a metaphor for the mechanisms of power among the social classes that live in misery, since the characters, although they belong to the same social stratum, are dedicated to a continuous dispute of domination over one another. In this dispute, the characters' power play ranges from physical strength to blackmail for self-pity, from seduction to humiliation, and includes the provisional alliance between two in an attempt to isolate the third; but the possibility of joining forces to fight against the situation that oppresses them is never considered.

This study will consist of two aspects. The first is the translation and adaptation process of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) to South African English and a South African context, followed by a free adaptation for a Pretoria audience in 2017. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (Silva – OED : 2017) :

Modern South African English is a complex linguistic and cultural mixture. The Constitution of 1994 recognizes 11 official languages, namely English, Afrikaans, and the nine major African languages (including isiZulu, isiXhosa, seTswana and seSotho), as well as additional 'community and religious languages' such as Khoi-San, Telegu, Hindi, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Arabic.

From these diverse linguistic influences, South African English shows an individual particularity which differs from the English spoken in other parts of the world. It is into this interbred English, full of words and accents from these 11 official languages, that the play of Plinio Marcos has been translated and adapted.

The second aspect is a reflection on the theatrical production process of the same play from the perspective of the theatre director. This dialogue involves the journey

between the theatrical directing, translation, adaptation, work of the actors in the play and transculturalism.

In the context of this study the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) itself is not the main point of this research. The play serves as a catalyst for a series of processes. These processes include the translation of the text from Portuguese to South African English, the free adaptation of a Brazilian context to a South African context and the theatre directing carried out in this intercultural and transcultural movement. It is both transcultural and intercultural because the director and the author of the play are Brazilian and because there is so much cultural and contextual displacement of the play between Brazil and South Africa.

The first section will clarify issues such as interculturalism and transculturalism, the process of translation and adaptation of a Brazilian play to a South African context, changes, hybridisation from one reality into another, moving from one socio-cultural context to another, but always realising the universal questions that this play contains. With regards to the notion of translation, I look at Walter Benjamin for his concept of origin and translation in *The Task of the Translator* (2008), which is deeply historical, and how he establishes the restoration of the original to another language by forging a new link between the past and the present. This movement of restoration and dispersion, which constitutes the original, features several key moments of Benjaminian philosophy, included in his theory of translation.

In the article "Two readings about *The Task of the Translator*" by Josalba Ramalho Vieira (1996:109), she affirms that:

for Benjamin the multiplicity of languages is the sign of its incompleteness and transience, since each language carries in itself only a promise of completeness. Thus, the translator's task is to "save in the mother tongue, the pure language that is under the spell of a foreign language".

In Benjamin's (2008) view, the translator must release the language imprisoned in a foreign work through its new creation.

A mother tongue is considered the language which corresponds to the native language, the first language a child learns and which generally corresponds to the ethnic-linguistic group within which the individual lives and develops.

Freeing the “pure” language is to break the crumbling barriers of language itself. Translation, Flávio Kothe (1976:[sp]) says, according to Benjamin " ... is something like a trans-construction of the original, an interpretive recreation of it, touching it as a tangent touches a circle at one point". In this sense, all languages are, at the same time, insufficient and true. In translation, the dynamics of the original and the need for deconstruction meet because translation breaks up the usual order of the mother tongue to manifest in it the order of the original, i.e. the "pure language".

The concept of the Benjaminian original, which also influences his idea of translation, contains features that define the original as an unfinished restoration still in process. It shows that the original refers to a past but this only takes place through mediation, memory or reading the signs. Thus, there could be no immediate reunions with the past. That is, the concept of the original brings with it a movement of restructuring and reproduction but also of incompleteness.

The restoration indicates, from the outset, the recognition of the loss. As Vieira (1996:108) says, the movement of origin in Benjamin can only be recognised "on the one hand, as restoration and reproduction, and on the other because of this as incomplete and unfinished".

About translation and adaptation, in a reading of *Walter Benjamin: translation and melancholy*, Susana Kampff Lages (2002:215) states:

Like time, a translation is characterised by a certain instability, once defined as a mediator not only between two spatially distant cultures, but also between two different historical moments. Translation occupies a passage of space, which is not fixed, crystallised moments or absolute identities but is continually pointing to the differential condition that it is. Simultaneously excessive and meagre, powerful and impotent, always the same text and always another, the text of a translation at the same time destroys what defines it as original - language - and revives it through another language, strange or foreign.

Translation is a living process, driven by language that is constantly reinventing itself within a particular culture and within its historical moment. Therefore, I think of a translation and adaptation process as fully interconnected to the here and now of the foreign language that receives it. If we think of language as a living thing, it is possible to believe that the original is subject to change as, in the continuation of life,

the original would change. In the translation process and the movement of the text to another cultural reality, modification also occurs resulting from the impact of contextual transference of the translated text or the adaptation. Walter Benjamin (2008:70) speaks of posthumous maturation of words that are already settled:

[...] elements that at the time of the author may have followed a trend of his poetic language may later be exhausted; explicit trends can stand out but become passé. What was once new, later may sound spent; what was in current use may sound archaic (...) For while the word of the poet lingers in its mother tongue, even the greatest translation is destined to disappear in the evolution of the language.

The plot of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) deals with universal themes. It is a universal story that could happen anywhere in the world. What could change would be the language, slang, the language of the streets, poetic tendencies, the aesthetics of the place where the story takes place, the biotype of the characters and other socio-cultural and historical issues that should be taken into consideration. But the play itself addresses human issues. In the original version, the play takes place in the underworld of Brazil, in the rotten heart and forgotten, poverty stricken outskirts of São Paulo.

The greatest merit of this play is precisely in the dialogues, the speech and the acidic, aggressive and violent words that are part of the language of the streets. In this play the words gain the same weight as unreasonable physical aggression. A direct translation of the play ignoring the slang, the idiomatic and colloquial vocabulary of these marginal characters would not produce the same visceral and cruel effect that the original text provokes. In the process of translating the original work which is in Brazilian Portuguese into South African English, it is necessary to take into account this marginal universe and the biting, aggressive words of the reality of South Africa, so that the language of the playwright Plinio Marcos can be reached.

This development of translation seeks to find, in the words of the language of the new version of the text, something close to the feeling caused by the original text. In this process the work occurs both through the search for these words, slang and puns of language, within a formal process of vocabulary research (of this marginal universe in South Africa) and translation, as well as within the rehearsals of scenes

and linguistic laboratories and verbal experiments with the actors, from their own knowledge of slang and accents.

In some moments the process of translation and adaptation took place within the very process of staging the production. Part of the adaptation was made during the round table rehearsals, in the readings with the actors, from questions that arose during the readings. I asked the actors to be willing to change and adapt any word or situation that did not make sense to them in the context of South Africa. Obviously we always have as reference the text already translated into South African English and a kind of repertoire of possibilities of slang vocabulary and vocabulary of the marginal universe of South Africa, equivalent to the expressions of the original text.

Because it is a play, dramatic literature, it requires a less conventional translation process but one needs always to respect the writing of the playwright. It is necessary that the text be reworked according to the socio-cultural and historical issues of this country for this story to come alive, pulsating, and be able to communicate something of the reality of its original country to the South African audience. Here the notion of translation is also inserted as a process of adaptation through theatrical practice, that is, rehearsing, experimenting, doing and redoing. In this process I try to reflect on my own work as a director from that transcultural theatre experience and this process of translation and adaptation. For reference I use some researchers on theatre directing and directors of modern theatre such as Grotowski, Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine, who were known for the quality of their theatre productions and for working with actors from around the world, enhancing transcultural and anthropological theatre practice.

The director has a first vision of the production when they read the text. [...] Then the director shall design this still-confused vision that is not the conception but rather the dream of a production, certain initial plans. Surely one must translate this in precise terms: which actors? Which areas? There must be a project. It's inevitable. [...] The project is needed to start the work; but then come the unknowns: from the actors come things that have been ignored, from the director himself comes new associations, objects show new possible functions (Grotowski cited in Ceballos 1992:277).

For Grotowski, it is from that moment that things in the process actually begin happening. It is the "professional audience", the director, who is to encourage the

work, think about how to modify this or that, how to stimulate the work of the actors, how to direct the action (Grotowski 2007:212).

Therefore, my reflection on the work of the director in this staging process was based on this principle, but always took into consideration the changes, the hybridisations from one reality to another and the move from one socio-cultural context to another.

1.1 Background and Contextualisation

Given that I am a Brazilian citizen and I am living in South Africa and also married to a South African, I find myself placed in a transcultural and multicultural context. I bring with me socio-cultural experiences that are different and sometimes similar to some aspects of the South African culture. I think it is important to make a few small observations of differences and similarities between these two cultures, since this comparative notion of historical, social and economic aspects will influence the process of translation and free adaptation of the play.

Although South Africa has a different historical-cultural background from Brazil, we can still point out some similarities that are important for this research:

Both countries were colonised by Europeans.

Both countries used slave labour.

Slavery in Brazil (1530 - 1888) was consolidated as a long-term experience that marked many aspects of Brazilian culture and society (Gonçalves 2016:[sp]).

The South African economy was sustained by slavery and servitude for 250 years and by discrimination and exploitation for another 100 years (Danilevicz 2010:1).

According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in 2016, 54% of the Brazilian population was black, with only 17% of blacks being part of the richest population in Brazil, which proves the question of the privilege of the white population.

Instead of making a full differentiation of the socio-political issues of Brazil and South Africa between 1967, when the play was staged for the first time, and 2017, when the adaptation was carried out, this study focused rather on elaborating and

pointing out the socio-political issues that caused the emergence and perpetuation of excluded minorities, such as those resembling the characters of *Razor in the Flesh*. In this perspective I bring to section (1.1.1) the question of colonialism and slavery as strong factors in the current social problems of Brazil and South Africa. By adapting and contextualizing the textual production of Plinio Marcos, I bring in sections (3.1 and 3.2) a historical and biographical portrait of the author's marginal poetics, as a real portrait of the poor classes from the miserable peripheries of Brazil, which resemble those marginalized in South Africa. In this sense the research focuses on the lives of the characters, on the visceral poetics of the text, seeking to find in 2017 an equivalence to the decadent aesthetics proposed by Plinio in 1967. I tried at all times to keep the focus on the author's work, articulating the construction of the play according to contemporary marginal reality, fruit of the unfinished abolition of slavery, as well as apartheid, which contributed to the presence of social inequalities which are so apparent in both countries today.

The history of Brazil-South Africa relations presents more moments of mismatches than of encounters. They are countries with similar economic profiles, complex social structures and different historical and cultural formations. These two states which are considered the most important of their respective continents have made different policy options throughout their developmental process. Thus, with the increasing complexity of international relations, the international insertion of both has taken place in different ways. While Brazil sought to insert itself positively in the international and regional context, following the rules - not always codified - established by the international order, South Africa assumed a posture of challenge, thus inserting itself negatively into a process which peaked in the mid-1980s, when international sanctions closed over Pretoria, leading to the revision of the anachronism of the racial segregation politics adopted by the Afrikaner government. This policy clashed directly with that followed by Brazilian diplomacy which valued the multiracial elements of its ethnic formation (Pena Filho 2001:5).

These aspects provoke in me the motivation to translate, adapt and direct in South Africa, a play by a Brazilian author, but one that brings with it universal questions and social problems of the reality of these two countries. The play is transposed to the reality of South Africa through a process of translation, adaptation and theatre staging, in the sense of seeking to match the marginal and social truth of the country.

This process seeks to identify issues in the text that are similar and also differ in the two cultures, to explore and reframe the profile of the characters and stories that

take place in Brazil to the world of South Africa. For the Brazilian play itself is also, in many ways, a mirror of the reality of South Africa.

Transculturalism enhances the mixing of different cultures in contemporary times, emphasising the fluidity of these borders, thus seeking to go beyond a strictly culturalist view, to overcome the concept of culture as a 'particular way of life' of a particular community (Jesus 2015:05).

This Masters research in Drama, with the focus on theatre directing, is developed through appropriating theories such as interculturalism, transculturalism and hybridity, translation and adaptation in a process that redefines the cultural fusion as a social issue with human implications, representing a hybrid crossover point between economic, social, cultural and political capital.

For some years now I have been overcome by a restlessness that only began to dissipate when I realised that the way to find the answers that I crave is not related in principle to the actor's work, but to the work of the director. Or rather, the work of a director who leads the development of research in search of a characteristic of his own; a characteristic that reflects his artistic, aesthetic and ideological convictions before the world. It would be a director who works with a group of fixed actors in a constant exchange of collaborative work, such as exists in the traditions of groups and collectives. I confess that, in addition to intellectual and professional reasons or for the pleasure of making theatre, my choice of directing is a form of self-analysis, as a way to rediscover myself in the represented situations which allow me to imagine alternatives. As Nietzsche (1901:[sp]) said in *The Will to Power*, "We have art so as not to die of truth",

For this research which is occurring in a context of cultural differences (Brazil and South Africa), my research also turns to theatre in an intercultural environment with the director as a driver of this process. Pavis (2008) believes that to design the theatre at the crossroads of cultures, it is essential to consider the manoeuvres that are linked to this phenomenon. It is necessary, first, to understand what this 'culture shift' is: interculturalism; and to recognise the cultural production from these shifts. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that:

The theatrical interculturalism does not escape the historical contradictions of our time, even if, to make its own theory and produce more delicate fruits, it would be better to put it for a

moment in brackets. Interculturalism allows two cultures to meet and see what both have to say and how they can love each other (Pavis 2008:208).

In my view, I recognise the role of an intercultural director as one who develops his office in different cultural contexts, always linking customs, giving new meaning to cultures and traditions. The work of the intercultural director also concerns anthropological questions of different cultures and languages. This interculturalism and hybridisation between cultures can be seen both in the director's dramatic visual aesthetic work (scenery, lighting, costume, music and actors' interpretation), as well as in the actors' speech and gestures in scenes. Elements of two different cultures are being exposed in the scene.

During this process, my work as theatre director is to instigate the actor, propose or provide the actor with the means to his success in that space of free meetings and events that is the stage, where poetry springs forth as a collective work, in conjunction with the audience and with the degree of imperfection proper to living phenomena.

The figure of the actor, despite being different in each period, each society and having specific requirements in each language, will always respond in the function of an actor and in the implementation of the scene. By the very nature of the profession, the actor is a being who manifests curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. Therefore, it is the director who feeds, guides and stimulates the actor in their search of objective, subjective or metaphorical ways to find this support for their questions. Otherwise, the risk of falling into generalisations that reproduce the 'common sense' is great. It is worth justifying that part of the staging process of the production is where my gaze turns to the work of the director together with the actors in the rehearsals. Through this process, I intend to establish a model of theatrical construction divided into steps. My intention is to verify the possibilities of conducting a theatre staging process and to choose principles that may be adapted to the needs of other works. They can be resized in terms of a contemporary, lively and pulsating artistic 'making', becoming a driving force for future research.

This research proposes to reflect on a theatre staging process from the view of the director, in order to develop my work as a theatre director, seeking to enumerate and list, in order of priority, the constituent elements of the director's work in a staging

process. Some principles are spread throughout the research contained in reflections and others are situated in Chapter 4 between pages 88 and 116, where I talk about the process of setting up the play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017).

1.1.1 Thinking about Brazil and South Africa - marginality and transculturalism.

Throughout history cultural interconnections have manifested themselves in diverse cultural forms and practices, from cultural exchanges and imports to the imposition of cultural values through war, conquest, and even colonisation. Nevertheless, even in the extreme case of slavery, exchanges are produced which, through certain concrete processes of reverse acculturation, are eventually assimilated by the dominant culture.

Starting with a clarification of the relations between Brazil and South Africa, I would like to reflect on some historical similarities regarding the formation of marginalised people in Brazil and South Africa; aspects that cause the emergence and perpetuation of excluded minorities such as those resembling the characters of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967). From this perspective I bring, in particular, the question of colonialism and slavery as a strong factor in the social problems of these two countries. According to Braga (2010:[sp]), Brazil and South Africa have in common the fact that their colonisers have benefited from a slave system of human exploitation to maintain power, from the withholding of production resources and expansion of exploitation of land.

During South Africa's mercantilist era (1652-1795), the Dutch colonists suffered from lack of skilled labour, especially on the wheat and wine farms. The natural solution would have been to bring in European workers which would have been expensive. According to Thompson (2001:33), as the Dutch were already involved in the Atlantic slave trade, they trafficked slaves from a number of places, including the East African coast such as Mozambique and Madagascar, and also from Indonesia, to create the basic infrastructure for its colonial system in South Africa. The success of the socioeconomic structure of the colony was dependent on the work of the slave and native populations. According to Braga (2010:44), the white settlers perceived themselves as a distinct community, and this distinction was based on an essentially

racial basis. The slaves in South Africa experienced a form of subjugation as severe as slavery practiced in the Americas. About this Thompson (2001:52) says “slaves were extracted from various native cultures and dispersed in small lots between owners. The natives already had their means of subsistence removed and were incorporated into a society in which their patrons adopted methods of control similar to those applied to slaves.”

The period of slavery in South Africa lasted between 1658 and 1834; its abolition did not mean the end of the suffering of the enslaved population and the natives, since emancipation did not mean economic freedom. Thompson (2001:60) states that natives and former slaves had little choice but to continue working for whites. Moreover, despite legal equality, natives and former slaves were treated by whites as an inferior community. Later on, their descendants would continue to face difficulties during the apartheid regime, which consequently further strengthened this social inequality that is still seen today.

In Brazil, the first peoples to be enslaved by the Portuguese were the Indians, at the beginning of the colonisation. However, the experience was not considered successful. According to Sousa (2010:01), the Indians lived in a subsistence economy and were not accustomed to a heavy work routine. They were also extremely vulnerable to the diseases brought by the Europeans and, because of this, had a very low life expectancy when subjected to slave labour. Although the government of Portugal created laws prohibiting indigenous slavery, the practice continued even after the arrival of the enslaved African population.

Interested in profiting from the production and commercialisation of sugar, the Portuguese decided to traffic slaves captured in Africa. According to data from the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation (WISE) of the University of Hull, United Kingdom, between 1501 and 1866 more than 5.5 million Africans were forced to embark onto Brazilian soil to work in precarious and degrading conditions. Of these, 3.86 million came from the centre-west of Africa, where today Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo are located. Another 877,000 came from the so-called Costa da Mina (Mining coast), which includes parts of present-day Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria.

Although a regime of apartheid did not happen in Brazil, which allowed for miscegenation among blacks, Indians and whites, there was no effort on the part of the government to integrate Indians, Africans and their enslaved descendants into society after the abolition of slavery. That is to say, these groups were marginalised and their emancipation did not guarantee them the possession of the means of production or the right to own land, or any other benefit. According to Morangoni (2017:[sp]), the "unfinished" abolition of slavery, as well as apartheid, is evident to the present day, so that social inequality rates are high in both countries. In 2017, the United Nations released the Human Development Report which pointed to South Africa as the most unequal country in the world; Brazil ranked tenth.

In this post-colonial, post-slavery and post-apartheid context, the poor classes in both these countries have undergone a process of marginalisation, intensifying social inequalities. However, it is worth noting that the individuals who make up the marginalised group in these contexts do not choose such a position and, in most situations, suffer from hostility, discrimination, prejudice and violence that cause various problems in their lives. Individuals who are poor, black, unemployed, homosexual, transvestite, prostitute, immigrant, disabled, and otherwise marginalised are easily noticed in the large cities of these two underdeveloped countries. To date, the governments of South Africa and Brazil have attempted to end social inequality and racism through various programmes of social inclusion and racial affirmation policies.

Through the application of transculturalism I tried to interact with the marginal reality of South Africa and Brazil by creating a third reality (the reality of *Razor in the Flesh* 2017) from the condensation of some similar social problems of these two countries that are present in the context of the play, *Razor in the Flesh*. According to Brook (1992:[sp]), transculturalism in the theatre pushes to seek for a universal language of theatre to articulate a universal art that transcends narrow nationalism in an attempt to express human experience.

In order to express the marginalisation present in both these countries, to compare it and to create a relevant theatrical expression of it, one needs to be open to possible changes and transformations arising from cultural interaction, as Brazilian and South African cultures are not static entities. One of the main barriers hindering dialogue

between any two cultures is our habit of conceiving them as being fixed, as if there are lines of fracture that separate them. Describing the differences between cultures as fracture lines means ignoring the permeability of cultural boundaries and the creative potential that individuals exert in crossing them.

When we understand, however, that the way we view the other culture(s) pervades the way we look at our own reality, we are faced with the notion of transculturalism. Through this conceptualisation we are not only aware that we are different, multiple, plural and that we establish interrelations, but we recognise the right of the 'other' and, of course our right, to difference. This is the definition of transculturalism that we adopted for this work based on Cox and Assis-Peterson (2007).

To speak of transculturalism in the context of a process of translation, adaptation and theatre staging is to defend, above all, respect and openness to the culture of the 'other', without, however, overestimating it, rejecting or belittling what is our own. Let us then consider other implications of the term, given its fundamental importance in this process. The probable origin of this terminology is, according to Reis (2010), the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who in 1940 created the term 'transculturation' in his most important work entitled *Cuban Counterpoint: sugar and tobacco*. The foundation of Ortiz's reflections, according to Kings (2010:465-467), "[...] always revolved around a main theme: Cuba and the dynamics of its social, economic and cultural formation". The author reflects on the formation of the Cuban people, visiting "... the various groups that have merged and resulted in what we now call Cubans". To this end, Ortiz defends the need to create a new term that would embrace and signify the "... process always in motion that is the meeting of peoples and their cultures". Thus, the idea of transculturalism emerged, surpassing, according to Reis (2010:468), "the limited vision of racial miscegenation to signify the movement that underlies the encounter of cultures".

This concept created by Ortiz in the 1940s was adapted by the Uruguayan writer and critic Ángel Rama between 1970 and 1980 to analyse the Latin American narratives of the twentieth century, introducing the idea of transculturation in narrative. Not only Rama used the terminology idealised by the Cuban author in re-adapting it to his study proposal. According to Reis (2010:[sp]), Ortiz's word had its value confirmed by the numerous networks of discussions, re-appropriations and new readings that

followed until the present time. The term transculturalism, therefore, perfectly translates the current world situation, whose cultures, societies, etc. are mixed, especially now with the advent of the Internet. As Hall (2006:88) says, there are "[...] cultural crossings and mixtures [...] increasingly common in a globalised world".

Thus, transculturalism goes beyond the simple observation of diverse cultural groups, revealing here what is 'trans', that is, what transcends pre-established barriers, both geographic and cultural, among others. According to Cox and Assis-Peterson (2007:35), the prefix 'trans', among its many meanings, conveys those of 'movement through', 'coming and going', 'perpetual movement', 'transit' and 'exchange'. These meanings refer to the idea of 'frontier', or rather, of its rupture, with a view to a "slippery place", as Bhabha argues (1998:76) in *The Place of Culture*, a work that exalts "fluidity", this movement of "to-ing-and-fro-ing" (the symbolism present in the prefix "trans" described above), also holding discussions about otherness. We need, therefore, to open up to transculturalism, bearing in mind the very context of globalisation, which also includes this cultural sphere now on the agenda.

In a transcultural environment of 'transit', 'circulation', 'exchange', it is extremely important to be open and devoid of any prejudice or ethnocentrism that might subjugate the culture of another or interfere in the fluidity of a relationship between cultures. According to Motta-Roth (2003:[sp]), there is, therefore, a need to escape from stereotypes, that is from clichéd visions that determine what is right or wrong, good or bad, superior or inferior, which privilege certain cultures to the detriment of others whether for political, economic, social or historical reasons. In this theatre staging involving Brazil and South Africa, we sought to take into account the socio-cultural interaction of both marginal realities at stake, respecting the target culture (South Africa) and seeking the desired scenic adaptation and format the theatre director conducting this process was after. After the translation and adaptation of the text by a transcultural method of comparative involvement, of the junction, adaptation, confrontation and reconciliation between the two 'objects' in question, a fusion between the two texts was made (translation and adaptation to the South African context) where the culture of arrival prevailed more, in this case to South Africa, because the performance was intended for the public of Pretoria to understand.

The translation and adaptation of the text of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) uses popular English that is heard on the streets of the marginalised peripheries of South Africa, where there are influences of diverse other languages, for example: Afrikaans, isiZulu, Sepedi and others. Therefore, this English must be seen and used as a mediating resource for a transcultural approach that will communicate from the marginal aesthetic of Plinio Marcos to South Africa. In this sense the language has this force in communication and in the capacity to reproduce within its reality through a process of translation of foreign work. According to the UNESCO (2009:12) World Report on Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue:

Languages are the vectors of our experiences, of our intellectual and cultural contexts, of our modes of relationship with human groups, with our value systems, with our social codes and feelings of belonging, both collectively and individually.

In the perspective of cultural plurality, especially between the relations between Brazil and South Africa, the linguistic diversity found in the South African reality provoked a creative adaptation of the original work's characters in this process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) for the changes in the physical and social environment found in the arrival culture. An example in the experience of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) would be where we try to maintain the codes, the slang of diversified South African English, with some subtle traces of the Brazilian marginal cultural language present in the work of Plinio Marcos. In this sense, the English language was not only a bridge or a means of communication, but it represented the very structure of the cultural expressions that bear the identity, values and world conceptions of the particular universe of each of the South African actors in the play.

In this setting of staging, rehearsal, exchange and interaction between the South African actors and the Brazilian director, more diversified and hybrid perspectives of English were also encouraged, revealing extremely complex forms of interaction, in which language, identity and relations between those involved influenced each other, adopting new forms for the purpose of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). According to UNESCO (2009:12), as the variety of links between language and place increases, there is a growing variety of communication schemes characterised by code changes, plurilingualism and the acquisition of different language comprehension and expression skills. Many linguistic communities are currently dispersed through

different countries as a consequence of migration, colonial expansion, refugee displacement, job mobility, and exchanges of studies and work, which has become more important for transculturalism. According to Hall (2006:13), we need to live with different patterns of otherness, (quality of what is 'other'), since it is fanciful to think that there is a “unified, complete, secure and coherent identity”.

1.2 Problem Statement

Because my artistic training was in the country of my birth, Brazil, and is now continuing here in South Africa, I seek to understand the cultural relationship between Brazil and South Africa through the means of theatrical art. It will involve a process of translation, adaptation and staging of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) of the Brazilian playwright Plinio Marcos in a South African reality.

I need to consider the cultural and historical differences shared between these two countries, so that I can find the best way of translation, adaptation and recreation of the original text in Brazilian Portuguese to South African English without losing the essence of the first version. It is necessary to recreate all the poetry and drama of the original text in a way that is appropriate to the South African environment.

Faced with the historical complexity and cultural plurality of South Africa, such as the 11 official languages and the different ethnic social customs, I have the challenge of translating and adapting the original into an entity that can communicate in South African English and be understandable to South Africans as a whole.

Even though Brazil is a continental country and has a cultural diversity and considerable folklore, we recognize ourselves as part of the same culture because we have a single official language in Brazil which is Portuguese. Through this language, through our literature and music, we can unite the country from the north to south as one people. Within this context of plurality between Brazil and South Africa I also find myself with issues of dissimilar artistic training between the actors and myself. It is the first contact for the South African actors with the visceral drama of Plinio Marcos. It is my first experience in directing and researching in a language that is not my mother tongue.

I believe that all of this will help to enhance my theoretical and practical basis, as an act of thinking in the theatre of these two countries. As Joseph Beuys (2010:[sp]), said, "The first artistic, creative act is thinking: the generation of new ideas and new solutions is the basis of the method". This quote of Joseph Beuys can be extended beyond the walls of performance art and could be understood through other artistic languages within the theatre-making world.

During these two years of Masters my view, my intellectual energy and practice have been focused on this research. The process of staging the production is also a long one, where the method is made from the act of thinking and doing. Directing this process I seek the maximum possible experimentation, deconstruction, to redo and remake so that the scene is not built from easy and repetitive formulae. At this point of staging the play, after *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) had been completely translated and freely adapted to a South African context, I took into account the studies that had been done during the research, everything that related to the work of the theatre director, stage production and working with the actors. I studied these concepts and terms and related them to each other, realised their consequences in practice but also confronted these theories. In this research, I sought to study and be influenced by the theories and practices of thinker-directors like Gerald Thomas, Peter Brook, Yoshi Oida, Mnouchkine, Barba, Artaud, Stanislavski, Grotowski and others. I, however, always sought to focus the most on what was closest to my reality and artistic practice.

In this study and this practical experience developed in this Masters, the main aim is to clarify the work of the director for myself, so as to empower my grasp of the practical and theoretical art of a theatre director and other issues related to a process of staging outside of my country.

1.3 Research Objectives / Research Questions

This research aims to investigate the process of translation, free adaptation and production of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) of the Brazilian playwright, Plinio Marcos to South African English and its respective context. It is a reflection on the work of a theatre director coming from this theatre making process.

I start from a process of study of and reflection on theories and terms like interculturalism, transculturalism, translation, adaptation, stage production process and theatre directing.

Specific objectives of the research:

- Produce a reflective theoretical hypothesis on translation, adaptation and theatre direction within a transcultural context.

Sub-question Can we establish a referential model for the work of the theatre director-translator and adapter that can be used as a basis for conducting other theatrical productions?

- Produce a specific translation for the English and South African context of the text *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) by Brazilian playwright Plinio Marcos.

Sub-question What would be the relevance of the text of *Razor in the Flesh* for South Africa in 2017?

- Produce a critical reflection of my own work, based on this practical and theoretical experience within a transcultural context.

Sub-question What will be the consequences of this theatrical practice between Brazil and South Africa developed here in this research for my work as a theatre director in South Africa?

Research questions:

Central research question - How is a process of translation, free adaptation and theatrical creation conducted by the theatre director?

Sub-question - What is the role of the theatre director in a process of theatrical creation within the hybrid context?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

A part of the theoretical framework that is used as the basis for this study concerns interculturalism (theatrical), transculturalism, hybridism and theories about translation and adaptation. Interculturalism and transculturalism have been studied in various fields of art and some researchers such as Pavis (2008), Carlson (1997), Oliveira

(2013), Banu (2011), Holledge and Tompkins (2000) and many others stand out for their research of theatre and performance art along with culture source, tradition, foreign culture, historical context, adaptation and anthropological and social codes.

In theatre and other artistic practices, interculturalism has served as the basis for the creation of various artistic works, using aesthetic and conceptual elements derived from interculturalism, or simply by the interaction of different cultures. The most outstanding artists in this focus are Yoshi Oida, Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Sotigui Kouyaté and Ariane Mnouchkine, who have produced work and studies about the crossing of cultures and the hybridisation of diverse elements of cultures around the world. Among these artists and researchers cited, I focused especially on the work of French researcher Patrice Pavis, in his book *The Theatre at the Crossing of Cultures* (2008).

Analysing issues such as objectives, translations, adaptations, choices and sociological, anthropological, cultural and aesthetic approaches, the author articulates a competent theoretical path from the text to the stage. From an historical perspective Pavis reflects on interculturalism in Western theatre, towards the end of the twentieth century.

Finally, from a semiotic angle, Pavis looks shrewdly at the specificity of theatrical translation (inter-gestural and intercultural transposition) in particular cases of stage productions of Peter Brook (*Mahabharata*, 1985), Ariane Mnouchkine (*Twelfth Night*, 1982 and *Twelfth Night*, 1989) and Eugenio Barba (*Dancing with Faust*, 1987).

For better comprehension I will define some terms of the theoretical framework that compose this research. Interculturalism takes place when two or more cultures come into engagement in a horizontal, synergistic manner. To this end, none of the groups must be more powerful than any other, favouring integration, coexistence and diversity instead.

According to the website “concept of” (concept of 2011:[sp]) the intercultural approach can happen in three stages:

The Negotiation, the Penetration and the Decentralisation stage. In this research these stages can be read as follows:

The Negotiation - a symbiosis produced to achieve understanding and avoid confrontations but finding the balance point between 'source culture' (Brazil) and 'target culture' (South Africa).

The Penetration – to exit one's place to take another point of view.

Decentralisation - a reflection of perspective between these two cultures.

Through these three basic points I have a dynamic view of cultures, so that they can merge into a single event, which in this case is the theatrical phenomenon or, rather, the theatrical staging of the free adaptation of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017).

The dynamic process of interaction between different cultures, in this case Brazilian and South African, provoked deep thought about the method of moving from the source culture to the target culture. As a Brazilian translator, adaptor and director, I am imbued with cultural experiences and history related to my Brazilian culture. I imagined that the end result would have a more Brazilian aesthetic and concept than a South African. About this ethnocentric deviation produced by whoever is leading the process, Patrice Pavis (2008:181) says:

Incidentally, we do not see how we can move away completely from altering texts for comprehension on systems and the relationship between anthropological vision / sociological vision we have inherited in our own culture. This ethnocentric deviation is further reinforced by the need to make the source culture relatively understandable and legible for the target public and thereby prepare the ground for "various possibilities" from a point of view that does it justice, be it the specificity of the source culture or be it the facility of reading by the future public; to therefore see intercultural transfer as an appropriation process of the source culture by the target culture.

This same logic of appropriation from the source culture to the target culture extends not only to the translator, adaptor or the director but also to the set designer, the actors, the lighting designer, all of whom have a function of mediation, adaptation, transformation, modification, preparation, appropriation of the elements from the source culture and text (Brazilian) with a view to the target public and culture (South African) who will enjoy the theatrical event.

The adaptor is defined in function of his anticipation of the public's reactions, which is necessarily ethnocentric as he judges another culture in function of his own perceptions. To adapt is always also finding a meaning that is not evident, facilitating the audience's

reception and understanding, interfering in mediation and placement in contact of cultures. The adaptor is able to notice the difference, and primarily the difference between his (our) culture and the foreign culture without trying to rank it or reduce them to one another (Pavis 2008:186).

Here my work consisted of translating, adapting and directing, using a tactic that mediates above all the source culture to the target culture. As already stated in topic 2.1, I did an open transfer of the original text to the world of South Africa.

Regarding the term *poetic* appearing in the title of this research, I have researched Aristotle, studying the process of poetic construction and the nature of its parts, which is key to reaching the aesthetic. *Poetics* (1993) is a treatise on poetry and the basis of Aristotle's treatise is the art of imitation. His argument shows elements referring to a theatrical poetic and is based on the analysis of certain plays of Greek playwrights. With this realisation I feel comfortable in the appropriation of the term poetic.

The artist is therefore an imitator *par excellence* and if the recreation is an original production, unlike the reproduction, just as mimesis promotes a kind of resurrection of something that is at the origin of time or in the depths of each man, it can be said that *Poetics* will still serve as the basis for future generations, who will create new aesthetics but can never underestimate the kernel of Aristotelian imitation (Araujo 2011:81).

In *Poetics* (1993), Aristotle has as a base the reasoning of mimesis, active and creative imitation and catharsis, which refers to the purification of souls through the emotional discharge caused by the drama. The play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) tells of the complex and agonising relationships of Chrystal Scarlet, a prostitute; the pimp, Vado and a homosexual janitor, Velvet. In a tense atmosphere, it unfolds a web of physical and psychological violence in the pursuit of money, drugs, sex and affection, generating an intense, confused and dramatic connection between the characters.

In this sense the writing of Plinio Marcos raises several philosophical and social issues concerning human relations and their emotional discharges, and introduces metaphors on the structure of relations.

Razor in the Flesh is a metaphor of social disease. The disease is there, but it will never be cured. The text has a strength that is not

marked by temporality. It does not lose its essence. I believe that when he wrote it, the author did not imagine the narrative would be so lasting and universal. It is a matter of social disease and it does not stop from one day to the other. With their eyes closed or their backs turned, the audience can understand the message (Cruccioli 2014:03).

Social issues of the marginal underworld are almost universal, especially in developing countries such as Brazil and South Africa. Since this research interacted with these two distinct yet similar cultures in its examination of some social aspects, it was appropriate for me to discuss and stage *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) with a transcultural and intercultural focus without the fear that it may seem like a dated dramaturgical work, specific to the Brazilian reality.

This research arises from the needs of the contemporary multicultural man. It is a work that discusses an Aristotelian poetic connected to the theatre and the adaptation of a foreign play to another reality. It includes the poetics of theatrical adaptation in a transcultural process, which presents a systematised organisation of a stage production process.

1.4.1 Definitions of Key Terms

From the theoretical framework central concepts arose that form the basis of this study: Interculturalism, transculturalism, hybridism, translation, adaptation and theatre directing. For the purposes of the study, a clarification of these terms is required.

- **Interculturalism and Transculturalism.**

The concept of interculturalism has been used to indicate a set of proposals for the democratic coexistence of different cultures, seeking integration between them without nullifying their diversity, fostering the creative and vital potential resulting from the relations between different agents and their respective contexts.

Interculturalism emerges from the issue of cultural diversity, which was driven by the migratory movement around the world that reached its peak in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century provoking a demographic transformation in some European cities, One of the consequences was the emergence of situational limits of tolerance (Vasconcelos 2015:01).

This term differs from another widely used term in the study of cultural diversity which is that of multiculturalism which indicates only the coexistence of various cultural groups in the same society without pointing to a policy of coexistence. This coexistence and interaction between cultures in a reciprocal way, favouring their conviviality and integration points to a relationship based on respect for diversity and mutual enrichment of cultures.

In its formulation of "intercultural dialogue", the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue proposes a new model of management of ethnic-cultural diversity where "interculturality" is defined as "an open exchange of views, respectful and based on mutual understanding between individuals and groups with different ethnic origins, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage (Oliveira 2013:10).

Transculturalism has a very close similarity to interculturalism, where transculturalism can be understood as the interaction between individuals of different cultures, being open to possible changes and transformation coming from cultural interaction. Consequently, in a transcultural approach cultures are studied in comparison with one another. This is a perspective in which all cultures seem off-centre to all other cultures, including their own.

In order to reach this transcultural dimension or "special mode of existence" (Epstein, 2004), one must go through a process of physical, spatial and imaginary deterritorialisation, transnational movement, linguistic disaggregation, cultural displacement - what I synthetically call "A creative transpatriation" - that is, physical, emotional detachment (where distancing means critical distance, not the opposite of commitment) of one's primary culture, territory, and roots (Dagnino 2012:07).

My immersion in South African culture occurred through direct contact with the culture in general of the country. It is a process that is strongly linked to my own experience. It is also linked to the natural process of quotidian transmutation, of re-establishing myself in relation to what affects me in this globalised, increasingly heterogeneous world. As Epstein (2009:330) puts it, "we acquire transculturation (...) at the crossroads with other cultures through the risky experience of our own cultural wandering and transgressions".

Transculturalism thus seeks to go beyond a strictly culturalist view by overcoming the concept of culture as a particular 'way of life' for a particular community. No

longer a particular feature, the 'way of life' of transculturalism has been globalised given the influence of globally hegemonic patterns in current consumerist practices.

In contrast to the emphasis on multiculturalism in the *coexistence* of a plurality of cultures, transculturalism is distinguished by highlighting the *mixture* of diverse cultures in contemporary times. While multiculturalism establishes borders of recognition and institutionalisation of multiple cultures that coexist with each other, transculturalism emphasises the fluidity of these borders. Transculturalism is characterised by its compatibility with globalisation, insofar as it advocates free cross-fertilisation (Alvares 2012:02).

Making a direct point of this distinction between these two concepts I would say that the main point that differentiates interculturalism from transculturalism is that interculturalism does not allow one culture to be annulled by the other culture. The two cultures co-exist in harmony, showing off their diversities. On the other hand transculturalism's main goal is the possibility of being affected and changed by the other culture into a loose interweaving.

- **Hybridism**

In the words of the anthropologist Canclini (2008:19), hybridisation is characterised by "sociocultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, which exist separately, combine to generate new structures, objects and practices".

The question of hybridism is a constant in countries like Brazil and South Africa, which are formed from the clash of cultures. It has received greater interest in so-called globalised times, when the circulation of ideas and cultural products have reached an unprecedented degree. According to Sousa (2014:144), the term hybridism encompasses several 'intercultural mixtures', not being restricted to racial mixes, religious mixtures, and 'traditional symbolic movements' (syncretism).

In this sense, hybridism shapes the contemporary cultural debate, placing in debate the issue of inter-relationship between the national culture and the external influence. For some, the world today offers an opportunity to create a global culture, a new element for the coexistence of diversity and cultural pluralism.

From this idea of movement between cultures, more specifically with the focus between Brazil and South Africa, I will address the concept of cultural hybridism in

the process of translation, adaptation and the stage production of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967). The transition between cultures is something so celebrated in our postmodern times that it is an almost inescapable aspect of cultural production. Just think, for example, that hybridism, far from being unique to our time of globalisation, always occurs when different civilisations enter into conflict, in combination or synthesis.

There is no doubt that the process of cultural contacts has reached an epidemic stage in this world, more and more like the dream (or maybe a nightmare?) of a global village, with possibilities of transcultural connections that up until yesterday seemed mere science fiction.

We need to look at the issue of cultural hybridism in the time of globalisation without falling into the trap of unproductive moral judgments that seem to reduce the discussion to two equally sterile positions. On the one hand, there are those who condemn globalisation, as if it were possible to avoid it and recommend resisting hybridism in the name of an allegedly national culture, as if such an entity existed. Every national culture that I know is an unstable and contradictory equilibrium where different interests struggle to impose themselves as exclusive. On the other side are those who welcome this time as a window of opportunity for peripheral cultures. Globalisation would be the space of coexistence of diversity, pluralism and difference (Cevasco 2006:04).

● Translation

As a pivot on the theory of translation I use the essay *The task of the translator* (1923/2008) of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin. Here I make some specific notes on the work to be translated, according to Benjamin's thought. For Walter Benjamin (2008), a literary work, document, text or any other linguistic and poetic material, should only be translated if there is a vital relevance in it.

It is only when one recognises this relevance to all that has history and that it is not only a scenario for life that the concept of life finds its legitimacy. For it is from history that it can be determined, ultimately, the domination of life (Benjamin 2008:68).

The original work must have life to be able to be translated. That is, the original text needs to have something more, to have its own life force, to have a story, have resonance that allows it to be transposed to another reality. According to Benjamin (2008:28), a translation arises when a work reaches the epoch of its relevance. Still

on the potentiality of a work, Benjamin (2008: 69) affirms "the life of the original reaches, in a constantly renewed way, its latest and vastest unfolding". The original work is rebuilt for the reality of the receiving language: the foreign language that will receive the new version of the original work.

From this perspective I see the play of the Brazilian playwright, Plinio Marcos, as a rich work of possibilities, history, connections and life. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a classic of the Brazilian dramaturgy and is a work which has relevance and translatability. It is a work that survives several readings, a play that has surpassed its time, persisting in some way in the collective memory and being updated by successive readings in the course of its history around the world. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a work that speaks essentially of human feelings, which are the same in any part of the world, thus facilitating identification with the message inserted therein. In this sense it is not only a question of translating words, but of translating history, the life of the work. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a work that has life and translatability.

In this research I regard the translation process as something practical. It is in practice that the synthesis operates with the theory. It is in this sense that I intended to address the phenomenon of translation and its appraisal coming from the theatre play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967).

For Rabello (2008:07), translation can be understood as an interactive process of epistemological and anthropological order involving language and literature, culture and philosophical aspects, among others, because translation cannot be defined as a mere technical procedure and closed problem, but rather as a dynamic complex of problems linked to the literary work, to history and culture as a whole.

Increasingly it becomes evident that translation represents a very powerful means of communication. It is through it and the mediating role of translators that the image of an author and a culture are transferred to other cultures. According to Rabello (2008:01), the power of translation is not limited only to disseminating knowledge and culture in the world, it also influences the evolution of the receiving cultures. The translated works can interact with the productions in the formation of future trends and developments in the framework of that culture. In the worst of hypotheses translations may only be successful in themselves, not counting the influence of

translation on the receiving culture. As Yves Chevrel (1997:355-360) said, to translate, to edit a translation, does not mean just working on an operation of linguistic nature, it is also taking a decision that brings into play a cultural and social balance.

Considering the importance and omnipresence of translation today, it is not surprising that it has received so much attention from scholars engaged in different fields and that they have contributed, in turn, by offering new insights and new perspectives. The result is great depth and breadth, which seeks subsidiaries in the various disciplines: Linguistics, Literature, Cultural Studies, History, Anthropology, Ethnography, Philosophy, among others, covering various aspects.

To preserve the multidisciplinary approach, however, it is necessary that the translation be able to merge and harmonise the plurality of approaches and interests and objectives all organic, in which diversification and expertise are seen in the light of reciprocal respect, and not in a negative light (Ulrich1997:142).

● **Adaptation**

It is customary to understand adaptation as the transposition of a text to a new medium, i.e. *inter-semiotic translation*, for example, the staging of a dramatic text, the translation of a novel to film, the transformation of a story into comic strip, and so on. One can also speak of adaptation when a certain text is modified to meet the needs of a new target audience, as is the case of this research.

In the context of *Translation Studies*, Bastin (1998:3) defines adaptation as a translational procedure "which results in a text that is not generally accepted as a translation, but it is nonetheless recognised as representative of the source text". This opens space for additions, omissions, creations, cultural adjustments, and so on, in order to generate a new text that is culturally accepted, or even that is specifically targeted to the presupposed target audience. Bastin (1998) draws a distinction between local adaptation - limited to isolated parts of the original text - and global adaptation - that there must be a whole recreation of the original text by changing its function and its impact. Thus, the localised adaptation would be a by-product of translation, while the global adaptation would have a more independent existence. In the case of treating two texts in different languages, the recourse to translation is inevitable.

For Merino (2001:233), however, what distinguishes translation from adaptation is the inter-linguistic character of the former, a character that adaptation does not share, because it is a "process which, by definition, takes place within the same language". Still on adaptation, Merino (2001), speaks about the importance of current and relevant adaptation that is done within the translated text to clarify the receiving language. Hurtado-albir (1999:[sp]) defines adaptation as "a translation technique that consists of replacing one cultural element with another of the receiving culture". In short, it is clear that, for Merino, adaptation is a much broader phenomenon, it is independent and not a technique linked to translation.

1.5 Methodology

For Guimarães (2011:[sp]), methodology is understood as being the set of methods, ideas and especially methods of science in a certain area for the production of knowledge. Methodology is a general way of conducting and developing a research project, that is, all the methods for accomplishing a body of work. Guimarães (2011:[sp]), suggests that the method is "the way or route to the accomplishment of something". Method is the process to reach a certain end or to arrive at knowledge.

Taking as a model the methodological processes developed by researchers Patrice Pavis in his book *Theatre at the crossroads of culture* (2008) and Myer Taub in his PhD thesis *Lessons from an aftermath: Recovery of the self through trans-disciplinary applied drama practice* (2008), I have redesigned these two models of methodology and brought their ideas of constructing graphs to my research about the translation, adaptation and theatrical staging of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967). The two methodological concepts that have been used as references, as well as the entire contents of the book from which these ideas of methodology were extracted, are part of the writings and theories that support this research, since they deal with the processes of translation, crossing of cultures and the processes of artistic creation which are closely related to my research, so it is justifiable to use them here in this study.

Both of the aforementioned researchers developed a study methodology in which they use graphics and maps to describe their routes taken through their research,

identifying and developing layers of concepts and key terms that would help in the understanding and development of the research as a whole.

Each of these stages has been outlined progressively, in a chronological order, but can also be read parallel to each other because as each stage has influenced the research they have also informed each other and furthermore there is a cyclical nature to the chart that suggests something of the ongoing process nature of the work at hand. The chart itself points to how maps become a significant tool in the research; not only as documents made from within the research but also as a way to assist in navigating the journey of the research (Taub 2008:45).

The following is the methodological procedural chart that served as the basis for conducting all my theoretical and practical research:

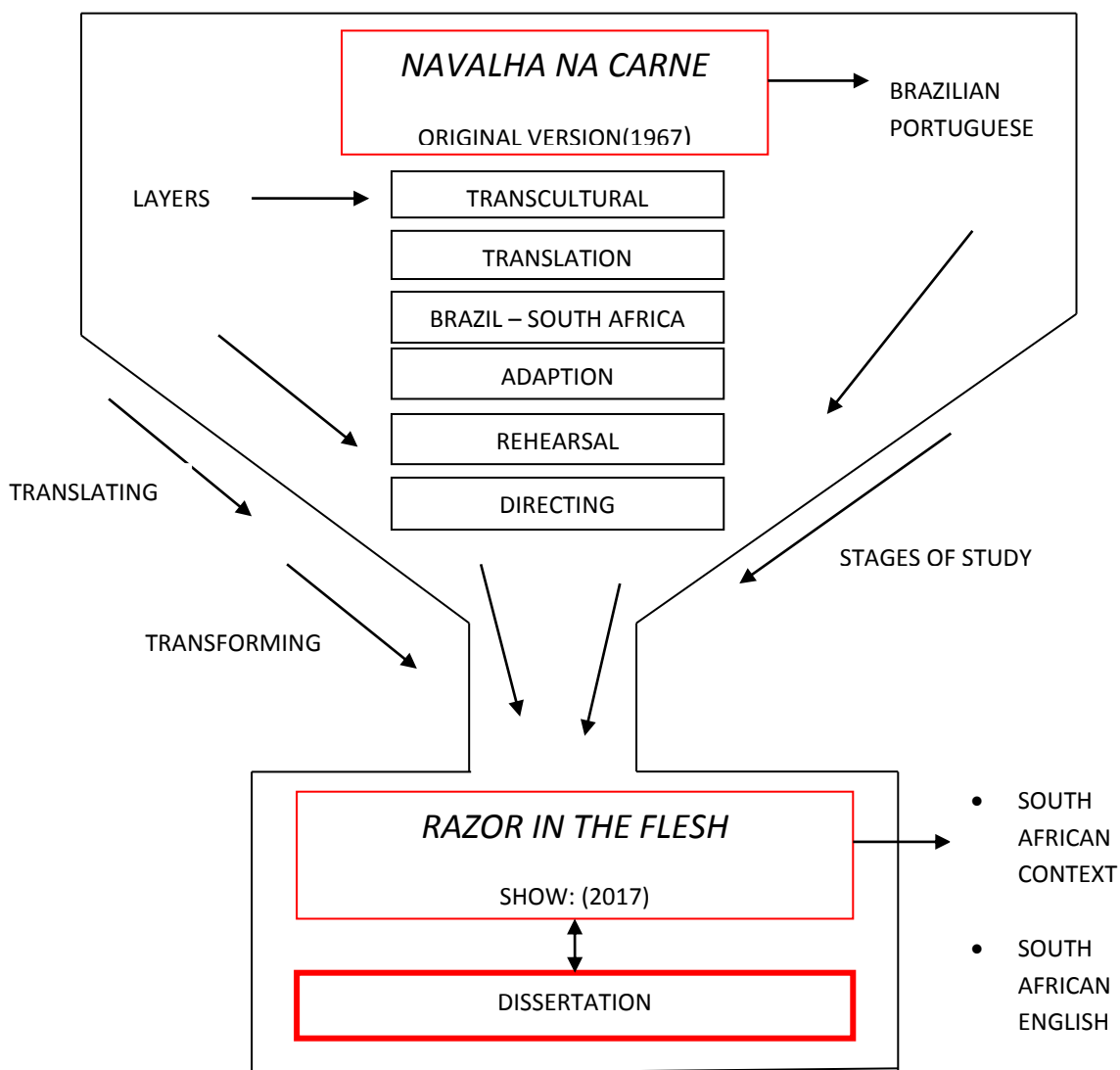


Figure 1: Layer process graph outlining the research methodology.

This description map of the research process is the methodological chart that outlines the paths taken throughout the research process. Layers were studied individually and also as related to one another in a process of progressive development as shown in the graphic. These layers evolve in a movement of fusion and transformation to reach the two main goals that are the *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) production and the final dissertation.

In his book *Theatre at the Crossroads of Cultures* (2008) the French theatre researcher, Patrice Pavis, in Chapter 1: *For a theory of culture and scenery*, uses the hourglass symbol as a way to identify the intrinsic elements of production and theatrical performance in the theatre through a progressive and chronological process. To give them organic scope, he carries them through from the beginning of the theatrical process - the choice of a project (text or pre-text, translation, means of adaptation and ways of organising the various scenic systems such as directing, performance, cosmetic layout or sound etc.) - and continues up until the final conception of the *mise en scène* that has as a perspective the way the public will receive the work in the form of a theatre spectacle.

Similar to Pavis's hourglass and Taub's chart, each step (terms, stages and concepts) is studied separately and accompanies its own process of development and transformation along with other steps until the final result. Each of these layers was studied: *Razor in the Flesh* (original version), translation, transculturalism, Brazil versus South Africa, adaptation, rehearsals and directing theatre, comparing and realigning them in a progressive process until the final result: the stage play and the dissertation.

The methodological practice here was applied in three directions. First the methodology of the theoretical study from the model system to develop the research that was the graphic map, where each layer is activated, distilled, developed and related to one another following a gradual rhythm, passing through the experience of the theatrical staging and the presentations and the reflections of this experience to the dissertation thesis as the graphic shows.

For the layer of translation a specific methodology and translation processes were used like those used in the field of linguistics, as described below. This methodology provides a translation that can adapt to the new context and still transmit the poetics

and the message of the original work and convey the same understanding of the overall meaning of the work. It is an adaptation translation developed by reformulating and creating contextual equivalents according to the South African context. I defend a free translation respecting the intentions of the original text and its visceral poetics.

The text is viewed as a whole, a discourse determined by a situation in a precise context but also maintaining through translation the key words that give rigor to the dramaturgical work. It is translation as an act of communication and (re-)creation.

The meaning depends on linguistic, extra-linguistic and situational factors, since the interpretative process is carried out at the level of the language in situ.

This method involves two phases:

1. A global interpretation of the message

The interpretation here concerns my understanding of the text. It is global in the sense of the whole dramaturgical work. The message is the story of the play, the narrative, the plot. The overall interpretation is intended to give a message or story expressed in a given language to be translated into another language so that it is understood by a language community that does not speak the language in which that message was originally conceived. The translation here is defined as the replacement of textual material from one language (Brazilian Portuguese) by equivalent textual material in another language, (South African English). The translation itself exists in the interpretation of the verbal signs by means of some other language.

2. (Re-)creation of the text in the target language (South African English) giving clarity to ideas; a free adaptation of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967).

To stage the play, I also used a methodology, or rather, conducted a staging process according to the forms of my experience in Brazil as an artist and theatre director as shown in the following topic of the rehearsal plan but also always appropriating new concepts, practices and methods that were discovered and developed throughout this research, along with all the readings that compose the bibliographical and theoretical framework of this research.

Thinking about the practice of the staging and theatrical construction of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) for a South African context broadened my conception about translation, beyond the linguistic borders of translating a work from one language to another.

In the practicalities of staging I use the term translation as a metaphor for the shift of something to another reality or context: to translate poetic meanings, physical actions from one historical cultural context to others. It was a poetic and metaphorical translation that occurred within the process of staging the play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017).

After the appropriation of key terms and the series of interventions of the translator, the adapter, the director, the actor, and finally the spectator, this cascade of interventions could be represented by an hourglass (Pavis 2008) in which the top bulb, that of the source culture, would spill indefinitely into the lower bulb, passing through filters until it reaches the recipient of the target culture (the spectators and the translated and adapted play) or the final result which is the dissertation.

We put ourselves therefore in the situation of a public who receives a foreign culture, which was the subject of a series of operations and transformations that facilitate the transfer and adaptation. This model relates to the intercultural transfer of a certain number of cultural factors pertaining to source culture to the public and a different culture (Pavis 2008:178).

As this research emerged from a process of translation, adaptation and theatrical production in which the theatre director acted as the main conductor of research and staging, I propose that here theatrical direction is also one of the methods of construction of this work as a whole. Theatrical direction was also the method, the path, to the creation and discoveries of this process of research and theatrical staging.

1.5.1 Rehearsal plan and practical investigation

To clarify this part of the research based on practice, specifically the staging of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) to a South African context, I describe here a rehearsal plan used for the first meeting between myself (director) and the actors of the play. At this stage of the proceedings, the text was already fully translated and adapted, but open to changes, i.e. available for the second process of adaptation that was

made at the round table discussion together with the South African actors who composed the cast of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). Possible changes arising from rehearsals, research, corporeal practices were already expected.

At the first rehearsal we had a 'blank reading' (a clean reading without characterisation of characters) of the text with the actors reading the lines of their respective characters. After they were familiar with the text, we returned to the beginning of the text and re-read it, this time analysing it and making contextual comparisons of each frame of the play in order to enable the process of displacement of the cultural and historic context of the original into a South African reality.

According to Stanislavski (2015:26), this round table work with the actors, called textual deconstruction or analysis, is also a means of becoming familiar with the whole play by studying its parts. This whole process of textual analysis is based on the Stanislavski method. I decided to use this method as part of my training as a director and to feel more supported by the process of studying and setting up the production.

A thorough study of the text was done very calmly and accurately. In many cases this study can lead to weeks of work. We divided the text into scenes, units, sub-units and also named each scene, unit and sub-unit. As part of the textual deconstruction process we sought and chose the dramatic axis of the play and also the dramatic axis of each character. This disentangling or teasing out of factors and mapping facilitated the South African actors' understanding of Plinio Marcos's drama and also strengthened the adaptation of the play with the help of the South African actors' perspective of each scene and character.

The process of dramatic textual deconstruction provides a more conscious and intelligent understanding of the text, allowing the actors and the director a close examination of almost every moment of the play's plot. Stanislavski (2015:29) says that the analysis is a process of probing with depth, layer by layer, descending to its essence, breaking it up, examining each portion separately. The division of this play into small frames facilitated this second scan for the process of a contextual transfer from Brazil to South Africa. Starting from the study of these small frames allowed better verification of whether each adapted frame of the play is actually part of the

South African context. Such analysis also enhanced the process of staging the play in the general sense. It improved the study and characterisation of each actor in deepening the understanding of his character. According to Stanislavski (2015:29), this process seeks to find stimuli to creative fervour, to plant, so to speak, the seed in the heart of the actor.

The theatrical text deconstruction worked as a kind of 'autopsy', a scrutiny of the text, performed by the actors and the director to better understand the plot, the dialogues between the characters, the metaphorical messages, the literary references, and to understand the relationship possibilities between the text of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967/2017) and the reality of South Africa and Brazil, to determine to which class these characters belong, what their origins are, to seek to know the psychology of these characters, their desires and frustrations. As a support base for the process of textual deconstruction and contextualisation of the play for South Africa, we had the South African English culture, the slang and many other elements that may legitimise the Brazilian text to the reality of South Africa.

1.5.2 Theatre directing

The theatre director is responsible for thinking about the visual and dramatic aesthetics of a theatre production, supervising and directing the staging of a play, working directly with actors and actresses and their interpretations, deciding how best to combine the efforts of various parts of the team such as the illuminator, set designer, costume designer and other professionals and aspects of theatrical production. According to Amaral (1998:05), the function of the director is to ensure the quality and integrity of the play in constant dialogue with the representation of his thoughts on aesthetic and ideological levels. Amaral (1998:08) states that the theatre director is the figure who generates unity in the group and is responsible for coordinating all the work. For this research my work was doubled as I was both theatre director and researcher. First I had to investigate the theory and practice of theatre directing, incorporate the practical elements of methodology and also think of the practice as an object that generates theory and discussion.

There are circumstances where the best or only way to shed light on a proposition, a principle, a material, a process or a function is to

attempt to construct something, or to enact something, calculated to explore, embody or test it (Archer 1995:38).

The practical work can use a variety of creative methodologies which are able to contribute to research in different areas of knowledge, as methodological innovations, encouraging other angles and concepts, as well as materialising a different kind of practical knowledge. My investigation practice was to raise and think of the elements of the practice of theatre directing in transcultural and intercultural situations. It also included adaption and translation of theoretical, metaphorical or physical elements in the creative practice of theatre.

For Fayga Ostrower (1977:[sp]), "to create is basically to give form to phenomena that are related in a new way and understood in new terms." So the artistic creation relates proportionately to the creator's ability to understand and format the world according to his particular vision, according to his understanding of the facts of his time. Therefore, the creative artist (the theatre director), must learn to share his craft that can be taught, should deeply know the art with which he will deal but must, above all, have a vision of his world and his epoch based on solid and profound general knowledge.

1.6 Chapter outline

Chapter One: Introduction

The introductory chapter of this dissertation consists of a rational basis, motivation and stimuli for the study, including a short explanation of the various points that make up the whole research. It covers translation, adaptation, transculturalism, theatre directing and staging of the production, that is, a theoretical conceptual framework, positioning all these study topics in the perspective of the construction phases of the staging process of a theatre production. This chapter contains a brief synopsis of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967), by Plinio Marcos. It also provides a problem statement and the objectives that the study wants to accomplish, including the research approach to completing those goals. Finally, this chapter includes a chapter preview that serves as a guideline for the following chapters of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.

This chapter is presented as an explanation of the theory of the translation of Walter Benjamin, as well as questions related to the process of adaptation and relativism to textual fidelity. This chapter also presents an argument about the process of translating the theatrical text and its specificity. Another issue raised in this chapter is the cultural and historical relationship between marginalised groups in South Africa and Brazil, including a small contextualisation of the historical problems that perpetuated an inequality and marginalisation of the minority peoples of these two countries, mirrored by the characters of Plinio Marcos.

Chapter Three: The marginal theatre of Plinio Marcos from the perspective of the theatre director.

This chapter uncovers with more depth and specificity the dramaturgy of the playwright Plinio Marcos, reflecting on his marginal characters and on the visceral narrative of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). Also, it contains a reflection on the work of the theatre director, and the references that guided this staging process. I also show the director's work in an environment of cultural interaction and interaction between different languages.

Chapter Four: Steps of the staging process of the production *Razor in The Flesh*.

This chapter consists of an analysis of each stage of the process of setting up the theatre production. The process is numbered in 11 stages of specific studies, where I use different methods and theories, such as Stanislavski, Artaud, Nunes, Neto, Spolin, among many others, as a reference to guide my work as director and person responsible for the aesthetic and dramatic development of the production.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The final chapter provides a brief and reflective overview of the process of translation, adaptation and staging of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) into a transcultural environment guided by the director's eye. This chapter also addresses the limitations of this research and points out the strengths and answers the central question of research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1. Translation according to Walter Benjamin

In this chapter I will discuss the translation process according to Walter Benjamin's text, *The Task of the Translator*, which can be seen as a text by a philosopher who has gone through the translation experience he wishes to reflect on. It is a text that raises so many essential considerations that it is recognised as a classic text on this subject. Examining Benjamin's essay is an initiation ritual for anyone who wants to write about translation. In this chapter I will also discuss the specificity of the translation and adaptation of theatre text, the relationship between Brazil and South Africa in terms of the cultural and historic influences on the formation of marginal groups in both countries, and the term transculturalism. Concerning Benjamin's work, I agree with Susana Kampff Lages (1998:63) when she states that:

In the essay "The Task of the Translator", Walter Benjamin synthesizes some of the main uncertainties and doubts found in the traditional reflections on translation, at the same time as it marks a reversion or, more precisely, a displacement or problematisation of the terms with those which they are traditionally seen, dichotomous concepts such as fidelity / freedom, literality / figurativeness, original text / translated text.

In fact, Walter Benjamin's essay *The Task of the Translator*, published in 1923 as a preface to his translations of Charles Baudelaire's poems, is already widely read and analysed, and is part of a broader reflection by the German philosopher on language and translation. According to Benjamin (2013:50-53), language is a two-fold phenomenon: on the one hand it is an arbitrary system of signs destined for communication, on the other it is the product of the interrelationships between immediate language and its reproduction by man in the act of pronouncing things.

Translation, says Benjamin (2008:20), has form, and translatability is inherent and essential to some texts. The author establishes a new connection between original and translation or between source text and target text. He says that a translation represents nothing more to the original than the possibility, because of its translatability (or possibility of being translated), of expressing the meaning that is hidden in it. The dialectic of Walter Benjamin is, in some parts of the text, very complex and complicates understanding the proposed concepts.

[...] arguments are presented in a long way, in a language whose evolutions, in themselves, evoke unusual, old-fashioned tones ... Such a text [...] itself constitutes an allegory: an allegory of reading as translation and allegory of translation as reading that intends to establish an ideal correspondence between the original text and the translated text (Lages 1998:64).

In this dialectic lies, at the same time, the advantage and the disadvantage of the text, since Benjamin's work still has influence on several contrasting interpretations. Could the various translators of his essay have transposed the significance of the source text? It is precisely this relationship between source text and resultant text that Benjamin reformulates in an original way, affirming that there is a 'bond of life' between the two. According to Benjamin (2008:11), just as the manifestations of life are in the most intimate link with the vital, with nothing to do with him, the translator, so also the translation emerges from the original. He continues to maintain that as manifestations of life have the purpose of expressing the essence of life, of its meaning, so the purpose of translation is to express the most intimate relationship between languages. Thus the basic concept of Benjamin's theory of translation is: Pure language.

He postulates the existence of a convergence between all languages, an intimate relationship between what they mean. Benjamin (2008) defines pure language as the whole of these intentions of all languages. In fact, each language means the same thing but with different intentions. The translation should free the pure language of the original by revealing its intention, or rather, its meaning. The meaning would emerge, then, from all the ways of meaning that a word has in all languages through translation.

This lack of concern with the reproduction of the meaning of the original also frees the translator from the threat of non-fidelity to the starting text. For there are at least two clear moments in the creative process of a work of art: the moment of perception and the realisation of that perception. At the moment of perception, interpreting Benjamin's reasoning, the artist deals only with his idea of the work and with the form that that specific perception will gain, and not with the possible recipient of that work, because, at this stage of its creation, there is not a recipient, except the possible form of an idea in action. Only in a second moment, perhaps, once the form and tools necessary to shape his perception are established, can the artist imagine a

possible reception and a receiver or multiple receivers. In its essence, that is, in its innermost core, the work is not born to communicate anything, but to give form to the invisible. Since the text should not communicate anything, the concepts of fidelity and freedom reveal themselves as abstractions from theorists, since the relation of content to language differs completely in the original and in translation. For Benjamin (2008:20), in the original, content and language formed a particular unit, such as egg and shell while the language of translation envelopes its content, like a royal robe, with successive folds. The translation cannot be faithful, since the language of the translation is inadequate for its own content, since the meaning is connected to the way of signifying in the determined word. It is not for the translation to be faithful to the source text, but, as it were, to elevate it to a more definitive stage of the language, in order to bring it closer to that mode of intention of all languages which is pure language.

In the final pages of his text, Benjamin explains more clearly this concept of pure language and the relation between original text and translated text. Both would be fragments of a larger language. The task of translation would not be to be as similar as possible to the original, but would be to bring the original's way of signifying (or rather forming) into the form of the target language as much as possible. The element of the translator in this search would not be the phrase, but the word. It is only in the transposition of the literality of the word that the pure language is revealed. The pure language would be the private word of expression, which expresses nothing and symbolises nothing if not a meaning in all languages. According to Benjamin (2008:29), the role of the translator would be "to rescue in his own language the pure language, linked to the foreign language, to liberate by transcription the pure language, captive in the work".

2.2. Relativism of textual fidelity

The acceptance of the relativism of textual fidelity is a consequence of significant developments that the concept of translation has experienced in recent decades, stimulated by Benjamin's seminal ideas. For Jakobson (2007:64), there are also other understandings of the concept of translation that recognise the inadequacy of directly mimicking or exactly reproducing the source text in the target text. He argues for the transformation of texts.

Moreover, the interrelations between texts, media, arts and cultures can also be studied as a form of translation, that is, as intersemiotic translations. According to Jakobson (2007:65), it consists of the interpretation of the verbal signs by means of systems of nonverbal signs. From the perspective of theatre, there is a history of condemnation of considering the text sacred, about which Roubine (1998:53) speaks:

The relation between text and performance is experienced as a situation of conflict and that this tension reflects the latent rivalry that the evolution of the theatre raises between the author and the director, because in the eyes of the author, any intervention of the director is a vague threat.

When the intermediary of this relationship is the translator, I believe that the translator is bound to seek impartiality, which is a difficult task, since there will always be a translation project, even if unconsciously, and it follows that the three involved (author, director and translator) in the process are all creative agents of the text. Concluding his ideas on the subject of the text, Roubine (1998:77) states that "contrary to the fears of some and the desires of others, contemporary experiences, even the most audacious ones, have not invented a theatre without text"¹, and thus without the possibility of translations.

In fact, as De Marinis (2005:83) observes, what is rejected by contemporary theatre makers is not the dramatic text itself, but rather the way the theatre used it, especially in the last two or three centuries, that is, as a thing to be 'translated' faithfully into the scene, as something that would already virtually be theatre, a performance. This attitude renders the staging a non-creative practice, deprived of real autonomy which is limited to illustrating, or at most, but prudently, to interpreting the author's text. According to Pavis (2008:26), the staging is not obliged to be faithful to the dramatic text, when he states "the staging is not the performance-like realisation of the text. Actors are not charged with following the instructions in the text and the stage directions to produce the interpretation, with the eloquent force of a cake recipe". Plinio Marcos's theatre, as it will be presented later, allows great freedom of staging, and constitutes a challenge to South African actors to find the similarities between the two cultures. As corroborated by Pavis (2008: 197), within

¹ Roubine does not consider gestural, physical or dance theatre here.

this focus, the issues related to historical placing are highlighted, in that translation "put[s] into play two moments in history", that is, the work in its own context and that of the spectator in the circumstances in which he watches the production. First of all, it is necessary to be aware that the work of the translator is, first and foremost, one of co-authorship. He, with his life experience, with his knowledge of the world, with his mastery of the subject, will reveal, in a language other than that of the original text, the content to be translated. In the process of translating *Razor in the Flesh* (1967), the idea of fidelity was important only in the sense of preserving the original idea of the text, plot and subject matter, which is the very essence of Plinio Marcos` s dramaturgy. The translator`s challenge is to express this idea in the target language (South African English) in such a way that it is dynamic and provocative so that it can be communicated and arouse discussion as the original did. As Chevrel (1989:09) says, "to translate or edit is also to make a decision that puts a cultural and social balance at stake".

We know that often in the translator's work direct and meaningful interventions are not only advised but are often necessary, because, depending on the genre of the original text, some translation attempts can be practically ineffective for the complete understanding of the audience for which it is being translated. Poetic texts and idiomatic expressions need to be added as well as the popular sayings, slang or other regional and folkloric peculiarities, unique to the receiving culture. After all, fidelity is not related to the meaning of the equivalent words, nor to the choice of the most finished words, not even, I would say, to the imitation of style but to the original sense which is the essence of the text and, above all, must be safeguarded by the translator.

2.3. Recognition of theatre purpose

Theatre is made for many different purposes: entertainment, education, philosophical examination of concepts and values, as well as to express understanding of the human condition. The translator of an author`s script also needs to be true to the intention of that work. I recognise the purpose of this translation and theatre adaptation of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) to be the generation of knowledge and new textual systems based on various codes, specific and diversified, developed within the theatre. The new systems and codes come from the environment of arrival and

the language that receives the work, the original text is restructured and covered with new meanings. This purpose also includes the stimulation of new interrelations between the artists involved and the audience. In addition, the viewers were encouraged to aim at multiple readings in their engagement with the meaning of the performance. According to Carlson (1997:479), understanding "is not a closed circle, since the connotative process of interpretation will always push the viewer beyond mere encoding".

The function of the theatre event allows for the presentation of a reality not always available to an audience to experience directly in actuality, thus challenging our understanding of human behaviour. Theatre is the most public of all arts. It is an art that needs to function at the centre of the community. Theatre, in this sense, is challenged in artistic and social terms to teach, orientate change and itself be an example of this change. One of the functions of theatre is precisely to show an action from several perspectives, freeing itself from the sensation of space-time closure, and thus encouraging the public also to see the world as open to change.

Theatre today should allow the individual to feel and create with freedom. The theatre maker investigates ways of communicating feelings and ideas beyond or around the use of words. Not to destroy the language, but to deepen it, to amplify it, thus making the communication real, alive and significant. Theatre, more than ever, must allow people to know about themselves and their potential. But mere appreciation of the performance is not enough, a constant examination of the problems presented is necessary, an examination that may lead to the solution of these problems, perhaps not during the performance but some day, in contact with reality.

Theatre thus far has as its main function to influence life by transforming it. Artists, in turn, should enhance their understanding of their own lives by using them to enlighten audiences. As Boa (1977:[sp]) suggests in his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, "we need to reflect on the past, rehearse its transformation in the present, to invent the desired future, because to be a citizen is to transform reality and to live is to change the world". In this way, theatre would become a source of knowledge and understanding.

For Carlson (1997:402), theatre should always address the pain of living, the fear of dying, the seat of the absolute, these basic realities, since one of the contributions of theatre to society would be precisely to "raise the type of questions: the meaning of human work, the value of life, hopes, expectations and fears". In this sense I see theatre production as an attempt to widen present borders, to become more and more a living theatre, that is, a theatre where the gestures, the attitudes, the real life of the body have the right to divest themselves of the convention of language, to overcome the psychological conventions, in a word, to pursue to the end its deeper significance.

2.4. The translation of the text for the theatre.

In Pavis's (2008:125) view, translating goes far beyond the attempt to establish a semantic equivalence between two texts. The French thinker considers translating as an appropriation of the source text by the target text. Cultural aspects should be taken into account in the translation process. Another important aspect when translating a dramatic text for theatre is to take into account that the theatrical text has the power to be materialised, that is, staged, and therefore the translator has also to realise the characteristics of performance that he reads in the original. As Mendes (1995:24) asserts, the theatrical representation of drama is another work, another artistic reality, constructed by other signs, or, in Aristotelian terms, by other means of imitation.

It is necessary to understand the inscription of the translated work in a distinct situation different from the one in which the text was initially conceived, appreciating the cultural production that arises from an unforeseen transference. Thus, in the translation process, Pavis (2008:02) considers the term 'interculturalism' to be appropriate to describe both contact and exchanges between cultures. Prioritising the relationship between source texts and target texts as signs of each other, this translation concept also addresses issues related to the contact between different historical realities. According to Pagura (2015:02), the translator is the professional who allows a message to cross the so-called 'linguistic barrier' between two communities, and it is common to use the metaphor 'bridge' to designate this professional.

Pavis (2008) suggests that the theatrical translation functions as an hourglass since, in this way, grains from both cultures would pass from one to another, differently from what could occur if the model were a funnel, where the source culture would be directed to the target culture, without any type of appropriation. The exchange, as an hourglass, would work continually since it is made to be turned so that the two cultures are always in exchange; so that only too large a grain would not pass through the obstacle of acceptance.

The translation of a theatrical text, however, does not consist only in its transposition from one language to another because its nature is not the same as that of the literary text. Bigsby (2000:[sp]) says theatre can be planned privately, but it is conceived as such only publicly. The translation of the theatrical text is not limited to the act of finding verbal correspondences between source language and target language. Dramatic writing has peculiarities that indicate to its reader that it can be staged. What defines a text as dramatic is not so much the formal criterion, but its purpose, which is staging it. Kinnunen in Aaltonen (2000:35) argues that "there is not much difference between drama and story, and that drama can be distinguished from a poem or a novel solely by its function".

I see the task of the translator (theatre director) as a multiplier of the power of the meanings, the culture and knowledge found in the original. The complexities of the translation process require more than directly applying the strategies or rules learned. Translators plunge into the complexity of each new transcultural situation in which strategies are created dynamically to cope with the new problems that arise. Considering these facts, it can be said that the translator experiences each new task of translation as a creative problem solver, using learned strategies and rules only as initial stimuli of a progressive process of elaboration of strategies that allows him to solve odd problems as they arise. According to Pagura (2015:01), the conversion of a text written in one language, called the starting language, to another, called the target language, is called translation. But in the case of theatre, textual potential begins with the original work and ends in the staging of the performance.

One specificity of theatre translation is that staging occurs at the beginning in the original performance, but it is also at the end of the process. Any work unfolds in different ways, generates different insights, dialogues and diverse readings when

there is contact with the reader and this is even more complex in theatre. Theatre uses several significant systems such as gestures, intonations, visual presentations of place, costumes, action and lighting, all of which need to be appropriate to the culture and understanding of the new audience. The possibilities of meanings and interpretation are pluralised through the layers of materiality that are constructed. The staging of the script is one concern of the author of the original which then has to be realised in this translated staging. Therefore, the original text will have specific characteristics which the translator must identify, and ensure are carried through in the translation and adaptation. For example, the social problems encountered by the characters in the original Brazilian version are similar to the South African reality. In *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) the author makes scarce use of scenic indications, concentrating them subjectively in the dialogue. From this perspective, the translation of the piece can also be seen as a challenge in finding appropriate equivalencies.

Below, I present some theories about the theatre translation process that I used, both at the time of the textual translation and from the analysis and the staging process of the production. Two perspectives of thought are opposed, among translators and directors, over the statute of translation in relation to the staging - for the former, the translation is not linked to a particular staging and, on the other hand, directors tend to see the translation as an operation that strongly entails a staging. But, as Pavis (2008:132) states, the positions are not as opposite, perhaps, as they may seem at first for translators who are aware of their autonomy and who often consider that their work is for publication but not linked to a particular staging. In this sense, according to Pavis (2008:132), the translation does not determine and does not commit to the future staging; he leaves future directors free to make their own performed translation or adaptation. Bassnett (1985:102) states that the written text is the raw material with which the translator must work, resulting in a written text, rather than with a hypothetical representation. But, in this way, the translator refrains from translating for theatre because, as stated earlier, the specificity of a theatrical text is not textual, but pragmatic, that is, linked to the use of a stage - and this use is the last purpose of translation. For Sallenave (1982:20), to translate for the stage is not to advance, to predict or to propose a staging of the production; it is to make it

possible. It is already to hear the voices that speak. It is to see in advance bodies that move.

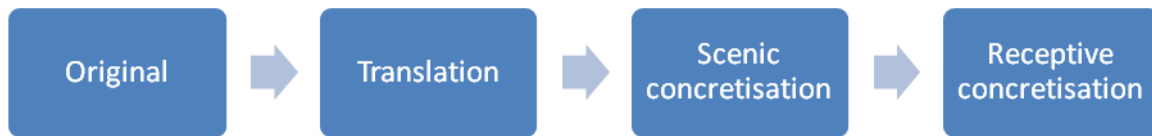
On the other hand, the theatre directors who translate tend to see the translation as an operation that strongly entails the production, this process of translation being part of the construction and staging of the performance. According to Vitez (1982:09), "translation and enactment is the same work. It is the art of choice in the hierarchy of signs." According to François Regnault (1981:184), playwright and translator, it is a subordination of the enactment to the text so that the text at the time of staging is subordinated, in turn, to theatre. For Lassalle (1982:13), the translation is, above all, the encyclopaedia that fills the holes of the original text, because in any text of the past there are obscure points that indicate a lost reality.

I take an example of the translation of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) to define more precisely the limits of a translation that does not take into account the staging: in the middle of the text, Vado tells Chrystal that he is smart and intelligent, a real *malandro*: Brazilian marginal slang that means a person who is accustomed to abusing the confidence of others, a person that does not work, a bum, a trickster, a thief. In the face of this slang or pun, the translator that aims at publication can keep it as in the original and use an explanatory note. However, the translator who aims for the stage must obligatorily re-create it, since there are no footnotes on stage and the message must be understood quickly by the viewer. In the South African version of *Razor in the Flesh*, the rogue rascal was replaced by *tsotsi*.

In her book *Translation Studies*, in the part devoted to theatrical translation, Bassnett (1985:[sp]) concludes that the translator must take into account the function of text as an element of performance and for performance. So does Pavis (2008:124), because in theatre the translation passes through the body of the actors and through the ears of the spectators. Pavis (2008:[sp]), points out that the theatre translator works on a text, but with a past, unknown situation and one that will be current, but which he does not know, or does not yet know.

In order to better describe and understand this process, Pavis (2008:126) reconstructs the series of concretions through which the dramatic text is translated, dramaturgically analysed, vocalised within a scene and received by the public.

The scheme below illustrates this process:



The original text (*Navalha na Carne*) is considered here as the product of the choices made by the author, based on the interpretation of reality perceived by him. This text is usually not intelligible outside its context of origin, that is, of its relation to the cultural environment in which it was created. The director, actors and designers of the performance, however, can evoke the parallels between the original and receptive cultures. Mounin (2006:154) notes that theatre, with its richness of situations expressing the more immediate and total life of a people, becomes in a literary form less suitable for export. But theatre has become an internationally valuable art form thanks to cultural integration and globalisation, made possible by the multiplication of fast communications. To translate a text from foreign dramatic literature means to go against the idea that one culture opposes the penetration of another culture. Before fidelity to vocabulary, grammar, syntax and even the style of each sentence in the text, the translator's focus should be on the qualities of the script which made the work a success in its country of origin. From this perspective the work is concerned with translating the theatrical value before worrying about the creation of poetic literary values. As Merimee in Pavis (2008:140) said, we should not translate the (written) text, but the work as a whole.

That is why the translator of a theatre piece will almost always resort to less literally faithful (adaption) processes of translation, to the processes that Vinay (1958:[sp]), calls "transposition and, in particular, equivalence"; because it should not only translate words, but also contexts and situations, so that they can be understood.

According to Pavis (2008:127), it is possible to observe here how the translator is in the position of reader and playwright, since his role is to interpret the original text, read and re-create it along possible paths suggested by the text to be translated. Like Pavis (2008:25), I consider that the translation "is not only a search for semantic equivalence of two texts, but the appropriation of a source text by a target text". To supplement this, Pavis evokes Mounin (1975:14), who says:

In the case of theatre, a representational theatrical translation is the product of a non-linguistic but dramaturgical activity; otherwise, we will have translated only the language, but we will not have translated the play.

Then, from this text 'created' by the translator there will be the dramatic realisation. At this stage, the text, which must be understood immediately and clearly by the audience, is reviewed and the dramaturgical choices are systematised, put to the test in the process of theatre staging. Pavis (2008:128) says that it matters little from a theoretical point of view whether or not this dramaturgical function is specified and distinct from the work of translating; what counts is the process of concretisation (fictionalisation and formation of ideology) that the translation has on the text.

In the process of concrete realisation, the text already comes into contact with the stage and happens for the materialisation of the theatrical phenomenon. According to Pavis (2008:129), staging, as a confrontation between the original text and the current, translated text, invites one to examine all possible relationships between textual signs and scenic signs. Finally, the text arrives at the receptive realisation. This is the moment when the source text reaches its goal: to touch a viewer of the target culture in the course of a concrete staging.

Pavis (2008:130) still highlights some factors that facilitate the reception of theatrical translation. He reminds us that translation for the theatre must avoid euphonies, unnecessary games of meaning, multiplication of details, as this requirement of a fallible text able to be represented runs the risk of leading to trivialisation under the guise of a "well-spoken" text. He says that some aesthetics no longer recognise this criterion and consider that any text is fallible, even translations that lead more to an exercise in style. And much more important than the simple criterion of good speech is the convincing adequacy of gesture and speech, a concept which he defines as "body language or word-body".

With this concept, Pavis (2008:139) understands that in theatre the word is "stuck" in the body of the actor, that the latter has the "word in the body" (as one says of someone who has "the devil in the body"). For Pavis (2008:139), the word-body is "the alliance of the pronounced text and gestures (vocal or physical) that accompany its articulation, that is, the specific connection that the text maintains with the gesture".

Thus, in order for the translation text to leave the page and to come to life on the stage, it is necessary for the translator to create for himself a visual and gestural image of this word-body of the language and of the source culture to try to appropriate it from the word-body of the language and the target culture (Pavis 2008:415).

In considering that in theatre, the word and the gesture form a dialectical unity, then it is not only translated linguistic signs but also gestural - and from this perspective the actor is partially a translator. For as Pavis (2008:145-153) states, thanks to his gestures, he is able to communicate cultures. An actor, as a modeller and final interpreter of his text and his body, can rescue the most miserable of translations, but he can also massacre the most sublime. Thus, the relativity of the theatre translator's work - one of the agents in the series of embodiments presented previously, is re-emphasised. However, even if it is a portion of the final result, it is important to reflect on the task of the translator of this genre.

Mounin (2006:155) thinks that theatrical translation, when it is not made for a didactic edition but for a staging, should treat the text so that it can be considered as both an adaptation and a translation. Before fidelity to vocabulary, grammar, syntax and even the style of each sentence of the text, faithfulness must come to what made the play a success in its country of origin. Thus, the translator of a theatrical work will often resort to less literally faithful translation procedures - for in addition to translating statements, it is also up to him to recreate contexts and situations that can be understood so immediately that one can laugh or cry.

Returning to Mounin's ideas about translating the theatrical text mentioned above, it is important to remember that in the theatre of Plinio Marcos, the characters' speech works well, especially as quick and direct dialogues, imbued with aggression and low calibre words, which awakens other readings about the social relationships between these types of marginal characters.

In this sense, Clifford (1996:263-264), playwright, translator and researcher, points out that:

[w]ords in a dramatic text are not an end in themselves; they are a type of scaffold on which the actor builds his performance. And what counts is not just the words themselves, but the gaps between words. The feeling behind the words. What is left out or missing

means as much as what is said: and, as translators, we have to be sensitive to both.

In *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), and in other plays of Plinio Marcos, the characters speak incessantly, with caustic and dramatic dialogues. Through her long monologues, the Chrystal character communicates her despair and loneliness. Pavis (2008:130) comments that the rhythmic and prosodic transposition of the original (source) text and the translated text into the scenic realisation is often regarded as indispensable to the "good" translation. He says that it is necessary to take into account the form of the translated message, especially its duration and its rhythm, since the duration of the scenic articulation is part of its message. In this way, I tried to keep this aspect of Plinio Marcos' text, the flow of words, sometimes repeated as a constant lament, which represents nothing more than the despair of the characters. From what has been said so far, translation for theatre is a complex process. Pavis (2008:144) argues that "keeping, transferring, and adapting the word-body from one language to another, is currently the task of translators concerned with scenic representation", a deepening of the author's style and themes related to the play to be translated. Thus, the next chapter is dedicated to the work of Plinio Marcos.

2.5. Audience reception

The first reception by the public of the theatre performance of a foreign text, translated and adapted to another context, takes place at the moment when the public enters the magical universe of the theatre. The public receives an 'invitation' to strip themselves of prejudices, to undertake journeys, to know passions and explore different, essentially human and universal conflicts, which is the specific case of *Razor in the Flesh's* text. In this sense the relationship of the public is more connected with the aesthetics of the performance, the aggressive and visceral language, than with the cultural aspects of the Brazilian reality, which no longer exist in this new version for South Africa. According to Hutcheon (2006:166), "for a translation and adaptation to be successful in itself, it must satisfy both the public knowledgeable of the work in question and those who do not know it".

Behind the text written by the author, the director, translator and adapter imprints his or her particular world view. If it is not the intention of the director and the actor to transform the author's text into 'something else', or relate it to a new context, evoking

new metaphors, it will simply be the original text, possibly decontextualised from the time and place in which it was written. My commitment as a director is to create metaphors for the audience to think and reflect on, through the diverse materials that make up the performance. The audience has, as concrete reality, the actors, the action, the pronounced speeches, the scenery, the costumes, the lighting and other visual resources. All this refers to a symbolic reality, metaphorical at a time / fictional space, supported through the theatre conventions of characters, narrative, plot etc, that which involve the spectator in a scenic illusion through which it enables them to participate in a theatre play.

This new public is moved and captured by the success inherited from the original work that was specially remade for this specific group. For Hutcheon (2006:166), when a public does not know the work, it is possible that a certain adaptation is received as a non-adaptation. It is not, of course, a fact that changes the status of the work; that is, it is an adaptation, but there is a discontinuity in the production / reception relation of an adaptation, because, according to Hutcheon (2006:166), "if the public does not know that the object is in fact a representation, or if he is not really familiar with the specific work that is adapted, the audience would simply experience the adaptation as he would experience any work". On the contrary, to presuppose an audience that knows the adapted original work entails a relation of collections and expectations that become a risk for the translator and adapter of the work in question. From this perspective a need is created for one work to face the other in a relationship of correspondence. It was exactly what was sought here in the relationship of the audience with the translated and adapted work.

Some writers in reference of the reception of the audience like Spolin and Pavis believe that it is necessary to think of the public, of the spectator of this final staging. They consider the group of spectators as part of the path. Spolin (2005:11) states that "the audience is the most revered member of the theatre". It is therefore necessary to generate the claim that the translated work is "comprehensible" to the public. Pavis (2008:128) believes that the staging should always be taken into consideration by any theatre translator or director. He, however, points out that the public should clearly and immediately understand the translated theatre text at the time of staging, which allows the translator, in dialogue with the director, to make

adaptations and comments, providing information that the audience needs to understand characters and situations.

If the commentary is too long or incomprehensible, the translator-playwright always has the possibility of making cuts in his version for the target audience, if possible according to the director, who may, in turn, find scenic means to produce his comments. This procedure, which may seem like an easy solution or a renunciation, is preferable to keeping incomprehensible allusions that would disconcert the target audience. Any translation - and especially that to the theatre, which must be understood immediately and clearly by the public - is an adaptation and appropriation to our present (Pavis 2008:128).

In the same way, even if the translator must consider that the translated theatrical text will be taken to a second, or further process of staging, this does not mean that he must be a playwright. The translator of the play for theatre must be aware of all these questions that have been pointed out here, as such reflections allow him to be imbued with the spirit of a director.

2.6. Adaptation

Based on the assumption that adaptation and translation are different phenomena, Merino (2001:230) states that translation is an essentially inter-lingual practice. On the other hand, according to Jakobson (1959:65), adaptation would occur at the intra-lingual and inter-semiotic levels through the adaptation of dramatic texts to the stage, from novels to cinema, from classic novels to a more facilitated language, aimed at a new reader, public or foreign language students, etc. There are also those who point to the translation/adaptation dichotomy as analogous to the translation/free² and translation/literal dichotomy or, in terms of Venuti (1995:[sp]), foreignisation and domestication.

Therefore, I understand that translation as a literal method would seek the formal equivalence between two foreign languages. Adaptation, on the other hand, would

² Free translation is one made for unofficial purposes. In it, the translator seeks to convey the author's thoughts and ideas without worrying much about the words of the original. An example of free translation is the name of movies, where the translator is more concerned with the context than the literal translation of the title. In literal translation the translator identifies words that can be translated in isolation from one language to another, without losing the body nor the sense of it. Example: "Mesa" (Portuguese) - corresponds to "Table" (English).

also apply, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (1958:90), to being used to describe, in the target language, a situation that does not exist in this new context but was portrayed in the source language, or facilitate the language to be understood in another context. This procedure, however, would not necessarily occur at the global level, that is, it would not apply to the whole text to be translated. It may be local, restricted to certain problematic points of the original text or search for changes that can dialogue with the public and the time of the new reception context.

In adapting *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) I followed this path precisely, changing certain points of the original text so that I could dialogue with the context of South Africa. In this perspective of communicating with the reception environment, the adaptation sought to find an equivalence in the metaphorical sense and in the use of slang, present in the writing of the original text in Portuguese within the marginal vocabulary of South Africa. An equivalence of meanings in the speeches between these marginal groups seen in underdeveloped countries like Brazil and South Africa, which are portrayed in the work of Plinio Marcos.

The following is an excerpt from the text adapted to the context of South Africa, a substitution of colloquial expressions and verbal puns typical of the marginal, cultural mode of English spoken by these groups.

VELVET (*takes the crack rock from his bra and hands it over*) - It's a good stone. You get lekker stoned.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT- You're not going to light that crap in here.

VADO- You shut your mouth.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT- Mama Sophie doesn't like a mess here at the boarding house.

VADO - I want her to fuck off!

VELVET - Oh, what a crazy motherfucker!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT- Then I'm the one who gets it. When you fuck off, she comes to complain.

VADO - Fuck her!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – She'll kick me out on the street.

VADO – Tough luck!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - My tough luck, right?

VADO – Fuck off, stop pissing me off. It was you who made all the mess and you're still whining. I don't want to hear a peep against crack. I want to enjoy getting blazed.

VELVET – This one knows how to live.

(Vado lights the smoking pipe and takes a drag.)

VADO - Lekker! (Marcos 1967/2017:12-13)

As part of the adaptive process, in his article *The Adaptation*, Bastin (1998) speaks of the breakdown of the communicative process, when a new era or need arises to address a new type of reading, usually requiring modifications of style, content and/or presentation. In this way the adaptation of *Razor in the flesh* (1967) needed to be updated and to be part of the present historical moment. According to Brisset (1986:10 in Bastin1998:06), adaptation is a "reterritorialisation" of the source work and an "appropriation" on behalf of the public of the new version. In order to complete this idea of adaptation for the public and at the current time, Santoyo (1987:104) says adaptation is a form of "naturalisation" of the play for a new environment and time but with an audience with different cultural baggage from the one in which the work was created.

The adaptation procedure opens space for additions, omissions, creations, cultural adaptations, and so on, in order to generate a new text that is culturally accepted or, moreover, that is especially directed to the target audience. The conditions pointed out by Bastin (1998:[sp]) to carry out adaptations are as follows:

- (i) absence of cross-code breakdown;
- (ii) cultural or situational inadequacy;
- (iii) change of textual gender;
- (iv) changes of season and / or readership.

Bastin (1998:[sp]) still draws a distinction between local adaptation - limited to isolated passages of the original text - and global adaptation - in which there must be a whole re-creation of the original text, changing its function and its impact. Thus, local adaptation would be a by-product of translation, whereas global adaptation

would have a more independent existence, even if, in the case of two texts in different languages, recourse to translation is inevitable. Merino (2001:231), on the other hand, restricts the adaptation to the intra-lingual scope, describing translation as the exchanges that take place between textual materials of different languages.

With the first, [translation] we refer to a dependent relation of a meta text in relation to another previous text originating in a different language, the one of departure; with the second [adaptation], to a relation of dependence of a text with respect to another previous text originated in the same language, but in different genre, medium, space or time (Merino 2001:231-232).

The author indicates four points in which adaptation can take place: genre, medium, space and time. It is important to note that adaptation can happen on only one or all of these levels. The terms genre and medium present similar meanings, but they should not be confused: the transposition of a play to the cinema, for example, would represent a change of genre, but would not represent a change of medium, since cinema and theatre are a visual medium; the transposition of a novel into the cinema would represent both a change of genre (literature> cinema) and medium (textual medium> visual medium). The notions of space and time refer respectively to the adaptation of a geographical and/or cultural space and to the adaptation of texts belonging to other epochs.

One of the reasons pointed out by Gambier (1992:421) for the existence of such a divergence and lack of systematising in the delimitation and definition of the terms translation and adaptation is the fact that translation studies is a discipline, essentially theoretical, still highly marked by ideology, value judgments and the view that the original text has supremacy over the translated text, and the translated text has supremacy over the adapted text. He points out, however, that all translation presupposes some degree of adaptation, even at the local level, and that thus many of the oblique translation methods pointed out by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) constitute, in the end, adaptations.

Gambier (1992:425) concludes by cautioning the existence of a paradox: if a good translation is one that is not noticed, then it must recourse to adaptation, and thus cannot always be literal. At the end of his essay, Gambier (1992:[sp]) stands in favour of linking the concepts of adaptation and translation, two practices that would be not only coexisting but also interdependent.

In *Theory of Adaptation*, Hutcheon (2006:15) defines adaptation as the assumed transposition of a work into a medium distinct from that in which it originated. The word assumed entails, at the same time, that adaptation, denouncing its relation to the text on which it is based, protects itself against possible criticism, but, paradoxically, opens space for these criticisms, which will advocate in favour of faithfulness to the work being adapted. Commenting on the relationship between adaptation and translation, Hutcheon (2006:16) is blunt when he states that "just as there are no literal translations, there cannot be literal adaptations". If, on the one hand, the translation must be faithful to the content of the source text according to the form of the target language, this requirement also exists when adaptations are made, whether they are adaptations between two similar or different mediums. It is worth emphasising, however, that the change of medium - be it a recurrent change, such as the film adaptation of a book, the staging of a play, etc. - makes the task of adaptation even more delicate and more likely to generate divergent opinions about their fidelity to the original work. In view of this problem, Hutcheon (2006:18) proposes aspects to consider when adapting, namely: in the first place, which elements of the original work should be adapted - thematic, its style and so forth, secondly the person(s) responsible for accomplishing the adaptation should be indicated. Reasons for adapting can be cultural, political, or personal, or they can be motivated to reach a new target audience that, once identified, will dictate the rules of this adaptation process. Finally, we must deal with the adaptation of aspects related to the time, place, society and culture in which the story takes place.

With these issues in mind, the work of adaptation gains systematising but does not guarantee, however, an approving reception. In summary, it was possible to identify two main positions on the practice of adaptation; on the one hand, it is seen as a broad phenomenon, occurring within the same language, which acquires this 'label' precisely because it is a global phenomenon; on the other hand, adaptation is conceived in close connection with the translation, representing a by-product of it, as well as a *sine qua non* condition for its existence.

The adaptation of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) to the local context of Pretoria sought a connection with the present time. Using the possibilities of several readings and interpretations that the original offers, I tried to change an important object and symbol which is a cause of conflict in the original text in the adaptation. This cause of

conflict is marijuana, which I replaced by using crack (cocaine) stones. The use of the drug (marijuana) in the play is responsible for triggering a series of other conflicts and raising the drama of the character Vado to a state of madness and despair when he is under the effect of the plant.

Razor in the Flesh was written in 1967, under the regime of military dictatorship in Brazil. The use of marijuana was seen as something completely outside the patterns of normality. It was considered a serious crime and users of this plant were seen as decadent beings, addicts doomed to die at any moment of an overdose. But in the current context of South Africa, I realise that scientific and academic discourse on the use of marijuana has gained other insights, which reduce the criminality of the drug and thus make the original script appear exaggerated. This new look at the clinical use of the plant is supported by science, which sees it as a solution to some health problems and as a major consumer power for commercial purposes, as such it already exists legally in many countries around the world. The adaptation to crack or heroine reflects more accurately the degree of madness and desperation reached by the character in the original play, whereas retaining the allusion to marijuana would not be convincing to a more liberal and educated society in the present.

To adapt these problems to the present day, it was necessary to replace the whole original scene written by Plinio Marcos, where Vado and Veludo (Velvet) fight for a marijuana cigarette. In the adaptation the marijuana was replaced by a pipe and some stones of crack: a more recurrent problem of Pretoria's reality. Because crack cocaine is a highly destructive drug and causes reactions different from that of marijuana, the original scene has been rewritten to reflect this, thereby gaining other conflicts and emotions.

The adaptation follows:

VADO - (*Vado is getting crazy*) I want this fucker to smoke this crack. Smoke it! Smoke it!

(*Velvet twists his body under Vado's legs and lies on his chest with his buttocks raised. He is completely crumpled by Vado's violence, but for Velvet it's only a game of pleasure.*)

VELVET - (*With sarcasm and pleasure*) But you won't get anything from me.

VADO - *(Crazy with paranoia, desperate and somewhat irrational)* Please, Velvet, smoke this rock. If you don't, I'll do something you'll regret. Please, smoke it!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT- For the love of God, Vado, stop it! Stop this! I can't take it anymore! I can't take it anymore!

VADO – *(beside himself)* Chrystal, my love, help me Chrystal, my dear, help me! Chrystal, I want to make him to smoke this crack.

Pause

VELVET – But you won't! *(Velvet laughs with a mad pleasure of someone possessed).*

VADO - Chrystal, my love, help me hold this disgusting fag..... Hold him, Chrystal, ... I want to make him smoke crack I want him to smoke. Please, Chrystal, hold him!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - That's all you want, you pig?

VADO - That's all I want. Help me! Please, Smoke!

(Velvet laughs with pleasure, he moves his body between Vado's legs and the bed, laughing like a madman.)

VELVET — Oh, alas! My God, that's crazy! What divine madness!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - I'll help you! I'll help you!

(Chrystal Scarlett tries to hold Velvet. When she touches him, he shrieks)

(Pause - Velvet rises only on the knees, his face is no longer of pleasure but anger, the powerful disgust of a fag that hates women.)

VELVET – Don't touch me, woman! Don't touch me! I don't like it when women touch me! Don't touch me! Don't touch me!

(There is a fighting game that takes place around the front of the bed.)

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Miserable moffie! Fucking poephol !

VELVET - Pig... *Disgusting cow (Velvet is reversing and leaving) Bitch! I'll get you back, you cow! I'll get you.*

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT- Get out of here, you shameless bitch! Get out! *(To Vado)* Now he'll go snitch on us to the cops, you disgusting fag!

VELVET – You bitch! You'll pay for this... I'm not going to the police. I don't like those people. But there'll be payback. Just you wait.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Get out of here, you shameless bitch! Get out!

(Velvet leaves, cursing. Chrystal Scarlett closes the door and then stops, looking at Vado for a long time.)(Marcos 1967/2017:16-17).

Adaptation studies help theorists to think beyond linguistic boundaries and place translators in the role of mediators, participants, and creatives. It is imperative that adaptation be seen as a creative process aimed at restoring the communicative balance (which is always disturbed by traditional forms of translation). For Bastin (1998), adaptation has to be considered a legitimate strategy, the motivation for its use understood and its relation with other types of translation appreciated.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MARGINAL THEATRE OF PLINIO MARCOS FROM THE THEATRE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE.

3.1. The underworld of Plinio Marcos's characters.

The Brazilian theatre in the 60's and 70's was renowned for its significant socio-political criticism. Plinio Marcos brought a particular emphasis to this through his use of language and the creation of his characters. However, his reputation in the context of studies of Brazilian dramatists of that time, although sometimes remembered or briefly quoted, was very precarious. The relevance of his theatrical work was often harshly judged because of the repeated use of profanity which generates discomfort and even depreciation of his artistic production.

If Oswald de Andrade, Nelson Rodrigues, Jorge Andrade, Ariano Suassuna, Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, Oduvaldo Vianna Filho, Augusto Boal and Dias Gomes³, among others gave specific contributions to Brazilian dramaturgy, that of Plínio Marcos was to incorporate the theme of marginality, in a language of unknown violence (Magaldi 2003:95).

Thus the language used in Marcos's plays is their most striking feature. His text is blatant in the recreation of the language used by the marginalised and he makes no effort to tone down its violence. However, when the style of the language in the plays is examined more carefully, it is found that it surpasses the purely stylistic.

Plinio Marcos in an interview confessed:

The curse word. I, by this light that illuminates me, did not do any language research. I wrote as one spoke among the carriers of the market. As is spoken in jails. As is spoken in the warehouses. If the staff of linguistic colleges started using my plays in their

³ The authors mentioned compose a group of modern writers that elevated Brazilian theatre to another plane: Oswald de Andrade (1890 – 1954) was a Brazilian writer, essayist and dramatist; author of the plays *The King of the Candle* and *The Man and Horse*. Nelson Rodrigues (1912 – 1980) was a playwright, journalist, story-teller and chronicler, known as the most influential dramatist in Brazil. Jorge Andrade (1922 – 1984) was a Brazilian dramatist and writer; author of the classic *A Moratoria* and various other plays. Ariano Suassuna (1927 – 2014) was a Brazilian dramatist, essayist, story-teller, poet and professor. Author of the play *Auto da Compadecida* and the novel *The Stone of the Kingdom*. Gianfrancesco Guarnieri (1934 – 2006) was an Italian naturalised Brazilian actor, director, playwright and poet. He was an outstanding actor in the Teatro Arena in São Paulo and his most important work was *They don't use Black-Tie*. Vianinha (1936 – 1974) was a Brazilian playwright, actor and director of theatre and television and militant communist. Augusto Boal (1931 – 2009) was a Brazilian theatre director, playwright and essayist, one of the important figures of international contemporary theatre. Founder of Theatre of the Oppressed.

research classes, good! This was a contribution to the better understanding between social classes (Marcos [sa]: [sp]).

That is, the author wrote according to how the people of marginalised Brazilian urban centres spoke. His purpose was not particularly to draw the attention of the powerful to a Brazil that was often forgotten, although his productions in general would be censored for unsettling what 'should be said'.

The problem was that Plinio Marcos's plays represented and were constituted precisely from the marginal culture as opposed to the current culture, and that he did not fuss about the rules institutionalised by the government system of the time that was governed by a dictatorial military government⁴. Thus, portraying common characters with their problems, Plinio Marcos uncovered processes of social masking and this was not pleasing to the Brazilian military government, because these masks supported certain attitudes taken by those who held power.

In order to represent these issues, Plinio Marcos constructed plays of great dramatic intensity, in which the wild and violent reality of a marginalised, forgotten society existing in the bosom of a dictatorial Brazil, was revealed. Therefore, it is said that:

Plinio Marcos was one of the most important playwrights of the 1960s. Formerly a circus performer (he played the clown, Frajola) and self-taught, he constructed plays of great dramatic intensity and impact, leading to the theatre the tragedies of the marginalised classes of the urban centres of Brazil with brutal reality. The stories presented by Plinio Marcos refer to a sordid world, with no prospect of hope, in which people wage a cruel battle exclusively for the sake of survival (Oliveira 2000: 139).

The characters in Plinio Marcos's work can be thought of as 'marginal man', which describes the type of individual produced by antagonism between the culture of origin and the culture of which he becomes part. According to Nascimento (2006:71),

⁴ Military dictatorship in Brazil was a regime inaugurated on April 1, 1964 and lasting until March 15, 1985, under the command of successive military governments. Of an authoritarian and nationalistic nature, it began with the military coup that overthrew the government of João Goulart, the then democratically elected president. The regime ended when Jose Sarney assumed the presidency, which began the period known as New Republic. Despite the initial promises of a brief intervention, the Brazilian military dictatorship lasted 21 years. In addition, the regime implemented several Institutional Acts, culminating with Institutional Act Number Five (AI-5) of 1968, which lasted for ten years. The 1946 Constitution was replaced by the 1967 Constitution and at the same time, the National Congress was dissolved, civil liberties were abolished, and a code of military criminal procedure was created that allowed the Brazilian Army and Military Police to arrest and imprison people considered to be suspicious, in addition to making any judicial review impossible.

this antagonism between cultures forges an unbalanced personality type, not completely integrated with any of the cultural standards. This approach, with an emphasis on personality, disregards ethnic and gender particularities, and can be employed in any group that experiences the outsider position; so that the concept of marginality operates to describe internally disarticulated groups, lacking political participation, lacking identification with the dominant culture, and marked by educational and cultural poverty.

Gino Germani (1970: [sp]). explains that marginality:

[...] is an asynchronous social process, that is, the disparity of levels of integration, development and participation of a certain part of society. This lack of synchrony points to the chronological coexistence of social categories with different degrees of development and observable differences in institutions, values and attitudes thus tend to marginalize social groups or categories, and even geographic areas, that are in situations of delay and / or exclusion.

Although this exclusion may be very much a matter of personal responsibility, in Marcos's dramaturgy the miserable ones present themselves as victims of this asynchrony of the social process. Thus, in the texts of Marcos the presence of characters in precarious conditions is evident, that is, to the margin of the society.

The author's dramaturgy then focuses on social denunciation, neglect and the struggle for survival, in order to interrogate the issue of violence.

In a column in the Brazilian daily newspaper *Última Hora* in 1969, Marcos writes about the marginality in the port of Santos in the state of São Paulo, where he lived a good part of his life and was able to know and understand this vulnerable class. This understanding contributes to the development of his dramaturgy and the justification of the aggressiveness of its characters:

The dock of the Santos Port was once one of the most dangerous places in the world. It was hardcore there. Nobody ran from a fight. The guy who fled from a rumble did not show up any more. If he came back to face them, they'd laugh in his face and humiliate him. The gangs would pick on them, cause a scene. The order there in the gulf was to face up. Every time. Any way you could. To be beaten is not ugly. What's worse is taking the team from the field just when a fight's starting ... So the business was about standing

up and fighting. No one let anything slide. And the brave guys were always on the front line. (Marcos 1969: [sp]).

Marcos Freire (1977:37) considers Plinio Marcos a "symbol of the Brazilian theatre", since he is the playwright with the greatest number of censored plays in Brazil when addressing themes related to social problems

Marcos (1976:56) stated in the "Debating Cycle" of the Teatro Casa Grande, held in Rio de Janeiro on April 14, 1975, that:

As for political theatre, I am particularly not in favour of this type of theatre. I like social theatre, and I explain why: political theatre, theatre that preaches political ideas, only affects those who agree, while the placement of the social problem is broader, it allows discussion, opens a dialogue with people who are indifferent. This is my point of view. .

I consider this statement by Plinio Marcos nonetheless, political. As Aristotle (1993: [sp]) points out, "man is considered a political animal because, unlike all other animals, he is endowed with reason and discourse" (Aristotle). Man as a gifted being is a political being.

Politics, therefore, is a social moral doctrine, so that the collective is superior to individual interests, that is, the common good is superior to the particular good, and the state intervenes in social life to ensure harmony and equalise social needs (Aristotle 1993: [sp]).

For these reasons, Plinio Marcos's dramaturgy reveals a political gaze when criticising power that meets only individual needs and does not care about the less favoured and marginalised. As much as Plinio Marcos wanted a theatre without political or partisan engagement, his very way of exploiting language and bringing such human creatures to the stage in situations and inhuman spaces redolent with deprivation brings into focus a political view of the playwright on society.

The writings of the São Paulo playwright reveal historical and ideological beliefs, even if he understood his theatre as something that was not intended to protest, social ills are revealed in his dramatic language. The use of the colloquial tone as a characteristic of his dramatic text did not prevent his theatre from achieving artistic quality and refracting the society of the time, the 60s and 70s of the twentieth century in question.

His world is a dirty world, unredeemed by the smallest light of humanity, in which sordid characters fight exclusively for money amidst the most clumsy corruptions, a world that offers no glimmer of redemption. The language is of a very violent crudeness (Cacciaglia 1986:133).

This crude language exposes an environment of the excluded, which were rarely represented except in cases where their images were used for protest. Real evidence of the situation of marginalised people did not occur in the Brazilian theatre. From this perspective, Plínio Marcos represented a rupture, generating a certain scandal amongst the public. It is the reason why he caused fear in the authorities of the military dictatorship of the time. Very quickly, his plays were censored, since they were considered immoral. For Flexa (2006: [sp]), "banned en bloc, for many years Plínio Marcos was the most persecuted and unknown Brazilian dramatist".

The few citations and a certain devaluation of this playwright, by critics and scholars of theatre in Brazil, are evidenced in the lack of research about his plays in the academic context. Plínio Marcos did not obtain full recognition of his plays at the time of their production. However, the quality of his work in relation to modern Brazilian dramaturgy was recognised later by theatre critics such as Sabato Magaldi. According to Magaldi and Vargas (2001:368), "the most important event of 1966 almost went unnoticed, at the beginning: it is the debut of *Two Lost in a Dirty Night*, by Plínio Marcos"⁵.

In contrast, critics of relevance, such as Rosenfeld (1997: 55-56), saw something dangerous in the execration of violence:

Acknowledging the aesthetic viability of aggressive and violent theatre, as well as the often just motives of its manifestation, does not imply believing, first of all, in its general value and in the necessary effectiveness, in the sense of shaking the conformity of large portions of the public. Violence can certainly work - and has worked - in the case of excellent or at least interesting scenes and plays. [...] But to make violence the supreme principle, rather than

⁵ The first set of *Two Lost in a Dirty Night*, written and directed by Plínio Marcos, takes place at the Meeting Point Bar of the Galeria Metr pole in S o Paulo in 1966. The impact comes initially from its extremely stripped form: only two men talk, Paco (Pl nio Marcos) and Tonho (Ademir Rocha), in a poor flophouse, about hard survival. The roughness of the dialogue reaches grotesque and absurd contours, perceptible in the fight unleashed around a pair of shoes. The climate of hopelessness and growing despair will lead to the physical assault and murder of Tonho.

just an element in a valid aesthetic context, seems contradictory and irrational.

It is noticed that the violence exposed on the stages begins to be questioned and at the same time imitated, becoming something common and even empty in many instances. It is precisely in this that Plinio Marcos differentiates himself, because his production does not seek merely to show off violence but rather to interpret it as the setting and situation of a series of characters who live a marginal culture, in which the social mask falls, revealing vulnerabilities through language.

Bornheim (1992:12-14) asserts that modern theatre tended towards Realism, yet not everyone was able to differentiate the 'realisms' that appeared. However, it is worth mentioning the realistic writing of some authors such as Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg who produced works that:

[a]re texts that allow understanding, and intensely, of the decadence of the bourgeois class, the dishonour of a certain social structure; they often deal with small problems of characters doomed to failure. They are parlour pieces devoid of a wider historical horizon. Often, action unfolds from positivist prejudices or blind determinism, which impedes any larger human dimension (Bornheim 1992:12-13).

At this point, the naturalism of some of Plinio Marcos's works derives precisely from the polyphony present in the speech of the characters to reveal aspects of a larger human dimension, in which language is not an appeal, but rather the way in which the characters extrapolate and attack certain stigmas and dogmas of a contemporary capitalist society.

The plays of Plinio Marcos have come to be considered authentic works of art, for it is clear that they were not intended merely to shock the public unnecessarily. One can even understand that denouncing a reality which needs to be corrected, would eventually protect society from the evils that undermine it. The artistic treatment of the situation is never gratuitous, but it analyses a social phenomenon in depth. For Magaldi (1998:210-211), the language, if mitigated, would distort the psychological characterisation and the situation.

Thus, the language of Plinio Marcos does not value sensationalism, which aims at sales, as if it were a product of the cultural industry, but on the contrary, in language

lies the non-falsification of certain situations occurring at a social level. The polyphonic and carnival movement reaches its counter-cultural nuance, that is, in the speech of the characters which is authentic to their own lived world, be it good or bad.

Magaldi (1998:220) tries to define the depth of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967):

In *Razor in the Flesh* one can do a psychological examination. It is defined as the vomit of the disinherited ones of life who are suffocated by unjust conditions. I find it difficult to admit another reading although I am aware that, for example, the corrupt attribute their bad characters to the whole world; homosexuals extend their taste to other men and the religious see the sign of the deity in any manifestation. I cannot omit, however, that there is another way of looking at the play.

The expression "vomit" used by Magaldi has in itself the connotation of something dirty, badly digested. It is as if society throws away that which causes it disgust, even though it produces them, feeds them and then expels them. It is also possible to understand the historical moment to which Plinio Marcos refers in this play, which has much to do with the time in which he lived, and the reason his plays were censored.

The playwright was persecuted by the dictatorship that forbade his plays from being exhibited. Such situation caused indignation in the author, but he did not give up, so much that on one occasion he affirmed:

I, for seventeen years [1973], have been a playwright. Seventeen years ago I paid the price of never writing to please the powerful. Seventeen years ago I had my premiere [*Barrela*] forbidden. The loneliness, the misery, nothing overwhelmed me, nor diverted me from my path as a critic of society, an uncomfortable and even provocative reporter. I'm in the field. I do not run. I do not leave. (Marcos [sa]: [sp]).

This fact did not prevent the author from wanting to stage his productions, maintaining the style and the themes of his writing. The playwright continued to produce plays that told the reality of people who lived in urban Brazilian centres. He did not stop portraying the facts of society, but sought to reveal elements in a marginalised and relegated society which had to accept what the government imposed on them.

In the case of the characters of Plinio Marcos their reality is one of misfortune. For Oliveira (2000:139), the characters are capable of the most ignoble acts, in a scenario that does not offer any glimpse of greatness or remission. The language is built without any refinement and the dialogues develop with much harshness and violence.

It is perceived that language becomes the vehicle of the liberation of feelings of disillusionment caused by the lived social reality, and employed by the author as a social mask.

The description of the characters of Plinio Marcos evolves to the extreme, for humanity can be grotesque and monstrous to the point of losing its human aspect, yet hiding reality would be a distortion of this environment and its living realities.

The strange humanity - if it deserved such a name - that inhabited his dramas, composed of third-class prostitutes, the unemployed, pimps, homosexual waiters, did not properly constitute the people or the proletariat, in the dramatic forms imagined until then. They would rather be the subpopulation, the sub-proletariat, a slagheap of people that had not reached even the lowest rungs of the capitalist hierarchy (Prado 2001:103).

Plinio Marcos arrived at the delineation of his characters from his position in life, above all, from his experiences. As a journalist and astute observer he did not let anything go unnoticed, later understanding the theatre as a space to reflect on human miseries.

The marks of his experience, in certain social situations, are established in many of his works, as in *Barrela*⁶, in which the playwright is inspired by an incident which happened and was reported in Santos. However, the reflection and insight into situations of a psychological nature are made by Plinio Marcos to problematise conflicts in capitalist society, for example in *Barrela*, where Plinio Marcos criticises the Brazilian prison situation.

⁶ According to the playwright, the story of *Barrela* was inspired by a fact that occurred in the 1950s, in the city of Santos; in which a boy was arrested for fighting in a bar and ended up being violated inside the prison, or rather, raped, suffering rape by everyone in the cell. The title of the play follows: *Barrela*, which in the language of marginal *Barrela* means rape.

The complete theatrical work of Plinio Marcos comprises of 37 works, of which 27 are within the classification of adult theatre, 6 short texts and 4 works for children's theatre (see details in Appendix 1).

The first work written by the author was *Barrela* in 1958, which had its debut on November 1, 1959. However, what seemed to be a moment of ascension in his career as a playwright became a disappointment, since his first play, after its first performance, was censored, and banned for 21 years. Despite this banning and its curtailed appearance, the play drew attention through the way in which Plinio Marcos worked certain aspects proper to the dramaturgy. According to Magaldi (2003:95):

[i]t is almost unbelievable that a young man of 24 years (Plinio Marcos was born in 1935 and died in 1999), without any theatrical and literary experience, having only acted as a circus clown, wrote a play with such mastery, a precise notion of dialogue and of dramatic structure, completely clean of useless ornamentations.

Curse words, evidenced in his dramaturgy, appear in almost all his plays, but if "Barrela" means rape in the universe of prison slang, the scenes would be false without the presence of words of low slang, since in this the marginal universe curse words do not have to be hidden, used in an veiled way, but rather they are used as a grotesque language.

3.2. *Razor in the Flesh*. A cutting-edge play.

Plinio Marcos's work echoes as if it were a razor in the flesh of the people who read it, said Rosenfeld (1993:157). "Razor in our flesh", shows all the poverty and rot that exist in the underworld of society'.

Marked by an exacerbated naturalism, *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a one-act play where the story is based on a triangular relationship composed of a prostitute, a pimp and a homosexual janitor, who gather in a flophouse room, and express the contradictions of society in relation to power and submission.

They are characters who are distanced from standard bourgeois society, but who exist only because they are fruits of the same society that denies them. These representatives of minority groups in the play live an existential conflict in which the

dialogues are full of obscene words. One can observe this fact from the dialogue between the prostitute, Chrystal Scarlet and the character Vado, her pimp:

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - That motherfucker is messing with you, I know! She did exactly the same thing with Maria's guy. Snitched to him that she was avoiding clients because she was knocked up. The guy went there and beat Maria up. The poor woman lost the baby from the beating she took. Then, while the poor bitch was recovering in hospital, the bastard comes out easy-easy with money from 102's earnings. Anyway, Maria's an idiot. She came out of the hospital and took the shit back (Marcos 2008:03).

In this passage the prostitute speaks ill of another prostitute, however, she herself goes through worse situations with her pimp. The curse words are justified by the marginal environment, by the situation and by who is speaking them. The plot revolves around the disappearance of money that Chrystal Scarlet leaves for Vado on the nightstand next to the bed. Every day before leaving for work in the streets Chrystal Scarlet leaves the money for her pimp. When he wakes up Vado realises that the money is not there, and then, furious, Vado stays in the room awaiting Chrystal Scarlet's return to receive an explanation. To free herself of Vado's accusations, Chrystal alleges that the homosexual, Velvet, who works as a janitor at the flophouse, would have entered to clean and seeing that Vado was sleeping had stolen the money. The three characters then begin to experience a drama of violence and corrosion.

This episode of Velvet's theft of Vado's pimp money detonates a series of violent and discriminatory actions that will be unleashed throughout the play.

The three characters demonstrate aspects of the human condition in a state of despair and decay. *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is a tough picture of the underworld of the untamed classes with violence, oppression and a language considered vulgar by formal standards.

As Rosenfeld (1993:157) said in his critical analysis of the play:

[e]veryone uses and exploits and is used and exploited in what is most intimate and personal to each of them. In fact there is a constant dispute over the domination of the other through strength and humiliation.

3.2.1 The characters of *Razor in the Flesh*.

I acknowledge the non-totalizing feature of the text in this section. The intent of this section is not to focus and elaborate on notions of gender, race, and queer theory in relation to the characters in the play, especially the homosexual character Velvet. In the context of this study, the play *Razor in the Flesh* and the characters themselves are not the main point of this research. Rather, the play serves as a catalyst for a series of processes on the director's work. I know that there are no restrictions regarding making links between theatre and theoretical and social issues in the South African context, However, I chose to keep within the limits of the translation, adaptation and stage process of a play of Brazilian origin which was inserted in to the South African context, choosing to point out its unfolding within a transcultural and intercultural environment, pursuing thus an artistic theatrical study on the work of the director translator and adapter. The questions of gender and queer theory within the construction of the character's identity in *Razor in the Flesh* could be developed from the gender studies by Judith Butler (1993:55), which clarify to us that body materiality is also marked by discursive formations. This means, according to the author, that the most material and indisputable part of our body is also elaborated and interpreted and so we are talking about construction. The author states that gender is not simply a performance, a theatrical act that "someone" simply chooses to represent. Performativity, according to the author, is the overall process of the constitution of gender, of the internalization of norms that are stylized in the body and which create an effect of substance, resulting in an overall assimilation of the new gender. It follows that performance may be a part of this process. For the purposes of my research, rather than focusing on this aspect of the characters, that in my view would escape the poetics of theatrical making, I chose to focus on an aesthetic and artistic theatrical study on the work of the director translator and adapter.

Chrystal Scarlet is an old-fashioned prostitute who sells her body to live and is able to support her pimp with money. In a significant moment of the production Chrystal Scarlet asks the crucial question of the text: "... Are we people?" (Marcos1967:21).

Can all the characters that Plinio displays in his text be called "people" or human beings? This question of Chrystal Scarlet also makes us consider if we are someone

in society, or just objects manipulated by those who have the power. In several moments of the text Chrystal Scarlet seems tired and hopeless to change her life, but because of the necessity of survival she is forced to submit to the situation of exploitation, oppression and humiliation. For she herself does not consider herself a person, but rather as an object used by other people. "The bastard stayed on top of me for over two hours. He huffed, snorted, drooled, snorted some more, complained a lot. Stupid son of a bitch. That's what finishes us ... That's what tires us" (Marcos 1967:22-23).

Chrystal Scarlet is a prostitute who dreams of having a life of peace and love with her passion, Vado. "... We just want to come home, have a nice guy who's good to us, take that funk off, and get rid of all the shit from the shitty world out there" (Marcos 1967:22). Instead of receiving affection and warmth from her companion, Vado, when she returns from prostitution, Chrystal is always humiliated by Vado because of her age and the degrading situation:

VADO - You should retire. Thirty years of whoring would tire anyone.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT -I was born just like any one. Innocent. Thirty years ago, I was a little baby.

VADO - Do not push it, you old bitch. You are the veteran of veterans.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - I'm only thirty.

VADO – Old slut!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – Disgusting pig! (Marcos 1967:18)

Chrystal Scarlet is a character who is constantly physically and emotionally attacked by Vado who despises her for not being able to afford his crack addiction.

The following is an adapted, unpublished passage used for this production, where Vado attacks and humiliates Chrystal Scarlet with a series of words. The original version has the same amount of words and low calibre insults that can be seen in this adapted version. But the words in the original work are quite regional to the Brazilian context, so they would not make sense in the South African context.

VADO – Don't piss me off! Don't try skelem a skelem. You're not going to make me look stupid.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - I don't want to make anyone look stupid.

VADO- Sorry for you, if you try.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – I just don't get what your problem is.

VADO – You don't, right? Now, look, you shameless whore. (*Vado shows his empty pockets.*) Do you get it now?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – Are you broke?

VADO - I'm broke! Skint. Papsak. Papsak, you bitch!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - And it's my fault?

VADO – Good for nothing slut! You fucking cunt! Who do you think you are? (Marcos 1967/2017:04).

In another passage Vado expounds categorically the relationship he maintains with Chrystal Scarlet:

VADO – Why do you think I'm here? Come on, tell me. (*pause*) Didn't you hear? Answer! Why? D'you think that I put up with you for what?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - I know, ... I know ...

VADO - You know, right? So say it. Why do I put up with you?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Ok, Vado. I know...

VADO - Then say it! Say it! I want to hear. Say it once, before I bliksem you. Why do I stay with you?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Because of the money.

VADO – Say it again, you ugly bitch! Again! Say it again! Come on!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Because of the money.

VADO - Repeat it one more time!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Because of the money.

VADO - Louder, you filthy whore!

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Because of the money!

VADO - That's right. I'm with you for money. Just because of the cash. You know that. I'm here for the dough. Because of the money! That's right. And if you don't make it easy for me, I'll break your nose. I'm Vado Tsotsi (iSkebengu), I'll get rid of you easy, easy. I am like this (*gestures with fingers indicating many*) with women wanting to give me the goods. You know that too. Don't you? (*pause*) Do you know or don't you?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - I know ... I know ... I know, yes (*She cries.*).(Marcos 1967/2017:04-05).

For Vado, Chrystal Scarlet is sexual merchandise that serves to sustain his vices and vagaries. That is the meaning of Vado's relation with Chrystal Scarlet.

Vado is Chrystal Scarlet's pimp, a violent man, addicted, macho and prejudiced. Vado has no respect and no consideration for Chrystal Scarlet. He is always trying to impose the law of the strongest. He is the symbol of the violent, marginal male who beats and oppresses women. Vado controls and exploits Chrystal Scarlet in a life of prostitution to be able to sustain his crack addiction and his partying life.

He is a character with contradictions and who, despite his imposition of physical force and verbal violence, presents weaknesses. In an episode of the text where Vado obliges Velvet to smoke a crack pipe with him, Vado is so vulnerable under the hallucinogenic effect of crack that he shows his fragilities and sexual contradictions. This scene is the only time that Vado is weak, and where Velvet does not let himself weaken, but ends up waging a psychological and seductive fight with Vado. Velvet defies Vado, and when this happens, Velvet manages to humiliate Vado by saying that he is "macho" with only the weakest. Velvet faces up to Vado and says that he is not the same as Chrystal Scarlet who accepts Vado, and challenges Vado by saying that Vado never beats a man stronger than him.

This scene also symbolises a moment of control and oppression of the pimp, Vado by Velvet.

VADO - She's going to smoke with me now. I won't let her leave clean. Come smoke, you little bitch!

VELVET - I don't want it now.

VADO – Don't fuck around and take it.

VELVET – Don't feel like it anymore.

VADO– Don't feel like it? Here it is. Stick it in your mouth.

VELVET - I told you I don't want to.

VADO - I'm telling you to smoke.

VELVET- You're not *my* man, don't tell me what to do.

(Vado jumps on top of Velvet)

VADO - Smoke this crack!!! *(Vado gets desperate and grabs Velvet by the neck.)*
(Marcos 1967/2017:16).

Vado is the symbol of the social male who demonstrates his masculinity through a heterosexual image and strength. In a certain part of the play, Vado reveals an ambiguity regarding his sexual orientation, a situation that leaves Chrystal Scarlet in doubt as to the masculinity of her 'macho' man.

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT - Your business is moffies. I saw that today.

VADO – So what now, old woman? Are you jealous of Velvet?

CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – You should be ashamed of yourself, (Marcos 1967:19).

Velvet is a homosexual who works as a janitor in the boarding house where Chrystal Scarlet and Vado live. He is also addicted to drugs, so he steals money from Chrystal Scarlet and Vado's room to buy drugs and pay for the sexual services of a boy who works in a bar near the boarding house where he lives. Velvet uses the stolen money to buy pleasure with the bar boy.

Velvet completes the marginal triangle of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). From Velvet's entrance on the scene, a series of violent acts and seduction are unleashed. Unlike Vado, Velvet does not hide his position and his role as a marginal, effeminate gay, transforming a scene of oppression between him and Vado into moments of sexual pleasure. Velvet is the counterpoint of Chrystal Scarlett and her fragility, because he faces Vado imposing a personality that does not fear aggression or any act of physical violence:

VADO - I'll fuck you up.

VELVET - Pass it, then. (*Vado hits Velvet.*)

VADO - Like that?

VELVET – Hit me again.

VADO – You're disgusting!

VELVET – Hit me, you idiot. Hit me

(*Vado is defeated. impotent.*)

VELVET - Do you see, Chrystal Scarlett, how you deal with a man?

VADO - Shut up, moffie!

VELVET - Come and beat me, you asshole!

VADO – You'll see, you crazy faggot

VELVET - You can hit me. Here's my face.

VADO - Fag! Fucking fudge-packer, disgusting pig! Shameless thief!

VELVET - Hit me, man. Hit this face, I'll turn the other cheek. Like Jesus Christ.

VADO – This moffie is a disgrace!

VELVET - Did you see how I embarrassed the man, Chrystal Scarlett? Poor guy. He's all awkward. Poor little thing! See Vado's face, Chrystal Scarlett. Go cosset him. He is sad. Go on, silly woman. Go and please your man. Go, Chrystal, (Marcos1967:14-15).

This passage demonstrates how Velvet manages to transform a situation of oppression into one of pleasure and supremacy over the pimp, Vado, in order to show how he cannot dominate him with the same methods used on Chrystal Scarlet. Sábato Magaldi (1967:[sp]) thus characterises the characters of Velvet and Vado:

Velvet and Vado, as well as prisoners of vice, feeding on a melancholy illusion: the first obliged to steal the money with which he would try to obtain the affection of a boy, and the second, wanting to appear condescending, because he would arrange women more beautiful than Chrystal, but actually taking his livelihood out of her fatigue.

Yan Michalski (1967:[sp]) expresses his vision of the characters as follows:

(...) the three characters of "Razor in the Flesh" - a prostitute, a pimp and a homosexual - are not mere clichés determined by the conventionally accepted image of the categories of prostitute, pimp, homosexual: they are human persons of flesh and bone that need not only fight for a piece of bread and a marijuana cigarette, but also receive and give affection, assert themselves before others, feel safe, be admired.

The characters express violence, submission and the need for self-affirmation as a way of survival.

In *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) at all times there is a character who sells himself to buy another, in other words, to buy the attention of people, attention and affection that every human being needs. Vado knows this, knows that Chrystal Scarlet needs his attention, as much as Velvet needs the attention of the boy from the bar he loves. Knowing this, Vado ends up apparently becoming the strongest character of the plot. As such he is a symbol of a macho, prejudiced, violent society that attacks at all times so as not to be attacked. At any moment, he attacks the other 'weak' characters to impose his 'strong' condition, but when Chrystal Scarlet watches the scene in which Vado attacks Velvet, who does not let himself be intimidated by challenging Vado's 'courage', she realises that she can be stronger and also attack Vado. Velvet leaves the scene and at that moment there is a psychological fight between Chrystal and Vado. One humiliates the other, but Vado does not get carried away by Chrystal's assertiveness. He knows her weak point and starts calling her old and says he'll leave her. Chrystal, in a desperate act of freeing herself from that pressure of fearing he would leave her, picks up the razor and says that if he does

not show interest and fulfil his pimp role (have sex with her), she'll cut him with the razor. For a moment she is stronger than he is, but as Vado is much 'cooler' about human feelings, he is able to turn the tables, seducing her with sweet words, and he regains control of the situation. He then exits the scene, leaving Chrystal Scarlet alone in bed crying and eating a polony sandwich and asking if he will return home.

Plinio's plot shows a social reality of underdeveloped countries such as Brazil and South Africa, in which the idea of domineering and being dominated prevails, that is, the strongest in one way or another dominates the weakest. The strongest arm themselves with weapons and tricks to persuade the other characters, especially Chrystal Scarlet, who is totally confused and emotionally unprepared to face a psychological battle.

Sabato Magaldi (1967:[sp]) affirmed in a critique to the *Estado de São Paulo* of September 12, 1967, the following:

The great ovation, at the end of yesterday's production, at the Theatre Maria Della Costa, proves that the authorities did the right thing, releasing *Razor in the Flesh*, after so much incomprehension of censorship. The applause in the opening scene, repeatedly, came, like an emotional discharge to balance the annoyance provoked by numerous dialogues of violent dramaturgy. Brazilian theatrical literature has never produced a play of truth as deep, of such authentic warmth, as crude denudation of human misery as that of Plinio Marcos.

Alberto D'Aversa (1967:[sp]) on September 19, 1967, corroborates Magaldi's previously quoted assertion that:

Razor in the Flesh tells us a neighbourhood history, a 'tranche de vie' (that would have pleased Zola and Antoine), between a prostitute, her lover and a gay. A story so banal, that it would have no interest in the gutter press; whose rhetoric is so pathetically useless, that it would not even work for television soap opera. And with this old and worn out material, with this tango theme 'guardia vieja', Plinio was able to construct a playful play of humanity, in which the melodrama assumes the dignity of realism, in which the conventional becomes psychological and the rhetorical becomes tacit poetry.

It is noticed that the criticism for the play *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) is positive and shows admiration for the dramatic quality presented, not only for the swear words that make the production strong, but as an aesthetic project in its own right. The

depth of psychological and social criticism that the play carries astonished critics of the substance of D'Aversa and Magaldi.

3.3. The work of the theatre director and the influences on the directing of the South African production of *Razor in the Flesh*

As a theatre director I have several technical and methodological influences from diverse theatre directors and scholars. Some of these theories complement each other, and others differ in thoughts and techniques, as is the case between Stanislavski and Grotowski. But my work as an artist is to converge and use these different and similar ideas in my theatre interests as a director. In a screening process I make my selection and use only what is pertinent and necessary to reach my artistic and ideological proposal.

From the theoretical point of view, in defence of the position of theatre directing, I would argue that the construction of a vision needs a distance, a technical and sensitive external look that is led by the director. There are divergences between an aesthetic perception seen from 'outside' or 'inside' the scenic process, the latter being necessarily limited to the partial view and influenced by the emotional experience of being inside the scene. Generally, actors adjust their own perception of the scenic fact into the parameter of the audience's reaction – knowing well that it is impossible to understand the audience as a homogeneous entity. The audience laughed: then it works; they moved in their seats, coughed, did not laugh: then it did not work. But how often is public laughter compulsive? Superficial? Before laughter, theatre productions give rise to other and rarer reactions, such as marvelling, perplexity, commotion, pity, that tense silence and that waiting state that contains a revelation. Using the audience as a director one runs the risk of trivialising. The director is a bridge, a filter, a border that guarantees a non-banal encounter between two aesthetic worlds.

In this process of staging *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) I sought to rely on the teachings of some of the theatre masters such as Stanislavski (2015), Oida (2014), Artaud (1984), Mouchouch (2010), Grotowski (2001) and Brook (1999), with whom I have been in contact since the beginning of my training as an actor and director. In the role of director, I am strongly influenced by Stanislavski's ideas for finding his

structured method, which enables me to conduct my study and research of the theatrical text more safely and consciously.

In *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), I worked specifically with Stanislavski's *The Creation of a Role* (2015), which uncovers the problems surrounding actor training and engages in textual analysis, preparation of specific roles from the first reading of the play and development of the first scene. His method shows ways to proceed and dissects the actor's work for the performance of a role. Stanislavski also fosters an idea of erudition in the intellectual formation of the actor and the director which enhances understanding of the text and provides the underpinning for the creation of the whole.

Another great influence in this process is the work developed by the Japanese actor and director based in France, Yoshi Oida (2014). What greatly interests me is the ritualistic and sacred way in which he relates to theatre. His formation took place within the tradition of Eastern Japanese theatre, and in the heat of the practice of Western European theatre, as one of the main actors of the theatre company of Peter Brook. His teachings on interpretation and direction are permeated by the philosophy of theatrical (*No* and *Kabuki*), religious and martial art traditions.

In the process of the production of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), I tried at all times to guide the rehearsals within this atmosphere of concentration at work. There was a ritualistic process in the way we dealt with space, the cleansing of the rehearsal environment, the preparation of the body and collective warm-ups, that is, all the preparation for the beginning of the work was regarded as very serious, following some of Oida's practices.

The action of cleansing not only the body, but also the environment has a spiritual dimension rooted in the origins of the Shinto religion. According to this tradition, the god Isanagi washed his body to purify himself after a journey in the underworld of death. As he cleansed his divine skin by removing the contaminations from the underworld, various entities, gods, and multitudes were created. In this cosmology, cleanliness is linked to creation. It is a positive, powerful action, and not simply something that means just getting rid of dirt (Oida 2014:24).

In terms of daily life, cleanliness implies proper respect for oneself, and is also an active way of preparing the mind and body for disciplined work.

In *Razor in the Flesh's* rehearsals I felt the need to cross the border between body and word, dismantle the clichés of spontaneity and seek the essence of the movement, rebuild the sincerity of the actor from his first step. Every new process is a search for the just measure of dramatic representation between reality and stage illusion. The staging of a theatre production goes through stages of research in which artistic and biographical experiences connect.

There is no recipe. Each story to be told points to its own form - an effective communicative provocation for that moment of life, those working partners and that audience; you cannot crystallise the style. In theatre, we deal all the time with the imponderables of life, its ephemerality, chance, the organic. As Brook (1992:[sp]) says, any scenic convention, even the most solid, must be demolished and restaged with every new production. This act of demolition and restaging, this critical look (provoking crisis) is, for me, the space of theatre directing. It seems to me that the role of the director is to foster an environment of interaction so that the actor remains present and the audience alert.

This interactivity makes the spectator feel present: we are all here, now. As Artaud (1984:[sp]) says, the theatre begins where the word ends; it is not (any longer) written literature. It is performance, that is, transformation of the aesthetic perception of the present. Of course, the vehicle of the work is the actor, sometimes author, sometimes the author's delegate. So it seems to me that another function of directing is to enhance the 'self-directing' of the actor. It is the art of premeditation. It is a question of instigating, proposing or providing the actor with the means for his success in that space of free encounters and events that is the stage, where poetry emerges as a collective work, in co-authorship with the audience and with the degree of imperfection of living phenomena. The director seeks not only to create an artistic product, but the ways and means of production of art. A work of art is not a 'closed' object, like soap ready for consumption, but an 'open' script that needs the inexhaustible creative hunger of viewers and remains available to the most diverse and unexpected interpretations - considering the very high degree of subjectivity embedded in the act of looking. It is a matter of inventing and preparing in detail, during the rehearsals, a game that others (actors / spectators) will play. Each, of course, will play his own game: he will watch his own production. It strengthens me

to trust in it and, as Grotowski (1992:[sp]) says, the production is in the viewer's head.

Rehearsing is not forcing things to happen. It is a tense and patient attention that aims to recognise the means to the success of the actor in the game of scenes. At the same time, it is necessary to decide on what has to be split, cut, selected and sacrifice other possibilities and decide with rigor, persistence and even say, cruelty, as Artaud (1984) states.

For this production, I pursued some of the ideas of Antonin Artaud, where he seeks a theatre of the visceral and cruel. The cruelty cited by Artaud is emphasised as the place of discomfort and bodily discomfort, because it is within that imbalance that theatre arises. According to Artaud (1984:43), theatre is equal to the plague because, like it, it is the manifestation, the externalisation of a fund of latent cruelty by which all the malicious possibilities of the soul are located in an individual or in a population. The dramatic and visceral narrative of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) was an opportunity to seek in the work of the actors that cruelty that provides the limit and the ecstasy. Devoid of any social moralism, I as director sought to pursue some of these ideas of the theatre of cruelty, overthrowing social masks and valuing the ceremonial rite of theatre as a proposal for catharsis.

This posture of creative imbalance of the actor potentiates his own body and voice (material of the art) in a scene. He risks, just like any player; his success depends, of course, on how much he will be able to stay alert and 'open' even within a 'closed' score. The blocking needs to be living, as if he were creating it there, in the moment. Being alert to the state of danger on stage, taking the comfort from the actor by placing him on the edge of the cliff, testing his resistance, emphasising his vertigo - is a function of directing.

To challenge the actor to get rid of everything that 'works' and disobey the cues, knock down their virtuoso hang-ups, disorient them, and pull the carpet of text out from under them, eventually creates obstacles for sudden solutions to appear on the scene as decisions. Rather than resort to what the actor already has mastered, it appeals to his energy reserves - his creative hunger - and trains the emotional muscles hitherto inert. Paradoxically, it is restrictions that strengthen and allow freedom - not *from something* but *for something*. Art has to do with friction -

producing difference in encounter. We were infested by the virus of agreement. But without resistance there is no fire. Without imbalance there is no discovery of movement.

Since there is no form without content, there is no content without form. The whole body of the actor is expressive. Even naked, he carries habits, histories and ideology. He is an arsenal of biographical memories, a machine of civilised gestures that each identifies with its own natural and spontaneous way of being. To alienate the actor from himself, to make him aware of the clichés that make up his 'spontaneity', can train him to distance himself from the character's behaviour and to describe him as another while still experiencing his emotions. In dramatic theatre, the actor's body hosts 'others', his presence is fictional and his sincerity is built.

In terms of Grotowski's (1992:[sp]) thought, I would say that it is evident that I cannot exist without actors as I can without costumes, without scenery, without lighting, without props and without text. But the actor, in turn, cannot exist without a spectator and, as Brook (1999:[sp]) would say, the director is a proto-spectator. The actor is the lyric of performance writing that the spectator reads and interprets. His presence is incomplete: there is a margin on which the other (director, spectator) enters, transits, imagines and reacts in a dialectical and collaborative relationship. The director becomes, especially in partnerships that remain in time, an arsenal of saved possibilities and goals, not waste, but seed that fertilises the creative ground of rehearsals. His perceptual imagery - everything he feels and thinks with his stomach, heart, viscera - becomes visible *through the body of the actor*.

For Margot Berthold (2001:533), the functions of the theatre director would be the following: "the first response that comes to mind is the traditional one: to serve the work. The second is to take the work forward, prolonging the work of the playwright. The third challenges the work." It may be said here that Vilar (1992:91) concludes that the work of the theatre director "consists in transporting a written work from the imaginary domain of reading to the concrete plan of the performance".

However, being a tributary to the playwright or, in the first instance, to the text, is no longer common in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. As Abreu (2004:11). says:

Taking a text as a starting point, as a pretext for aesthetic elaboration has become a usual practice with the rise of collaborative processes, since collective creation is founded as an attempt to retake practices in which there is no primacy of the author.

Thus, "questions of style are no longer conditioned by the time, but by the individual: they are at the personal discretion of the director" (Berthold 2001:530). But it is possible to evoke a characteristic of the 'theatre of the director', namely the succession of stagings of the same work. Berthold (2001:[sp]) states that in one instance, there were sixteen stagings of the same play which led critics of the time to draw up a "comparative analysis of theatre directing". Duvignaud (1992:630) also refers to the confrontation of the representation of similar works, presented by different directors, which provoked a critical attitude for those who no longer wanted to unilaterally enjoy a work without witnessing the different readings that have been undertaken and, then, develop their own critical position.

From this information and from what we see in contemporary theatre productions around the world, we can assume that theatre directing seeks to imprint a personal identity, a singular characteristic in language, a particular reading of the work from the director's perspective. Maybe the search for new models already deconstructs an instituted knowledge and gives new contours to artistic enjoyment. To not drift, it is necessary to be anchored. As Berthold (2001:534) says:

The director cannot simply be a mere "servant" of the work, because a play is not a rigid and definitive thing, but once launched into the world, it takes root in time, acquires a patina and assimilates new contents of consciousness. ... Only insofar as the director feels like a servant and exponent of his time, he will be able to fix the way of seeing in common with the crucial forces that shape the nature of an epoch.

Despite so many theoretical and aesthetic 'models', ideas about directing have never been reduced to an instruction manual. The normative of this function always revolves around the choices that the director makes about the actors' relationship with the text (and its playwright, eventually), with the technical elements of the production and, finally, with the audience. Roughly, scenic directing is summarised in the articulation of these elements.

Just as there is no rigid steering model, it seems that the very definition of what becomes the theatre director becomes inadequate if displaced from the historical context. Obviously, the answers given by Berthold (2001) speak of a point of view closely related to the European historical context, situated at a time when the great directors stood out for the grandiloquence of their staging plays from famous authors.

The director's role has always been 'anonymous'. "The régisseur was a kind of quasi-automatic regulator" (Kessel in Ceballos 1992:616). It is a fact that through the ages and therefore to the present day the theatre director performs a function that is eminently prior to the relationship with the audience - that is, it develops before any spectator can experience fruition, so it becomes a work that is at the same time independent of the public and where the public is indispensable.

If the main characteristic of the theatre act is the interpretation of the work of art, an open process of formulation of "aesthetic experience" (Jauss 2002:41), when considering the role of the director and the context where the works are located in history, we are once again reaffirming that, from the point of view of aesthetic experience, the theatre director is the first spectator of the theatrical work of art because it is up to him to transpose the quotidian work into the public imagination, or rather to liberate the spectator from the real to the symbolic, but also to point out ways to develop the scene of the characters, but it is the actor who has to get there step by step.

3.4. The director's work from a transcultural perspective.

As it is art in motion, theatre is always updating itself. Nowadays, under the influence of the post-dramatic, the role of the director is blurred where the staging is in the hands of other 'functions'. Not only the author, not only the actor and not even only the director are responsible for the creation of the production. Also, scenographers, wardrobe and costume, sound and lighting technicians start to create the "production's text" (Toro 1992:44) or the "production's writing" (Almeida 2008:106).

A new hierarchy changes the statute of the scene and the "isms" - naturalism, realism, among others - so traditionally rooted throughout the 20th century in the

setting of theatre classics signed by the greatest playwrights, lose their grandiloquence.

The 'outside perspective', widely used to refer to the possible readings that the play can evoke, ceases to be exclusive to the viewer and it is up to the director to orchestrate a new totality of signs that, together with the text, the work of the actors, the technical elements and their aesthetic and ideological configuration, are unified and are concretised in the relationship with the public.

But while some of these boundaries are still difficult to delineate, it is known that the "director will always be a spectator of profession" (Grotowski 2007:212). His accurate eye can articulate, within his references and his imaginative universe, those elements that will constitute an aesthetic experience for the spectator. From this point of view, and considering the historical course of theatre directing, some reflections about the director's office in a transcultural perspective need to be made.

From the outset of this project it was clear to me as a director that *Razor in the Flesh's* set-up would take place within an environment of multiple cultural aspects that would derive from the author, the director, different mother tongues, a diverse cast, and different marginal aspects of Brazilian and South African cultures. Therefore it was important to think about how to operate the directing of the whole process in this transcultural environment.

I would like to stress here that I consider the notion of transculturalism as the central point of this discussion, since it recognises that theatrical practices and traditional cultural expressions are different spaces of existence and that, even though there are innumerable analogies and similarities among these multiple universes, there is a need to address the differences.

Already in 1940, Malinowski (1973:07), in the prologue of the classic work of Fernando Ortiz, "Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar", clarifies, in an exemplary way, the notion of transculturalism:

It is a process in which both parts of the equation are modified. A process in which a new, composted and complex reality emerges; a reality that is not a mechanical clutter of characters, not even a mosaic, but a new, original and independent phenomenon).

This process is the result of exchanges at the crossroads of the practices and teachings of the arts and cultures. So I think of transculturalism as the act of interaction between individuals of different cultures in open interaction for possible changes, re-readings and giving new meaning.

Starting from this idea, my work as director sought to emphasise my particular work model of my theatre education in Brazil, my customs, beliefs and ideologies, and to play openly with the different cultures of the actors.

As Jesus (2015:[sp]) points out, in a transcultural approach cultures are studied in comparison with each other in a perspective in which all cultures seem off-centre to all other cultures. Here, in this experience of exchanges and re-readings, as a transcultural director I sought to understand and shape all this diversity in a universal unity stressing signs of Brazil and South Africa within a South African marginal context and reality.

Unlike Pavis (2008) who uses the term interculturalism to define the innumerable artistic-cultural exchanges between peoples, I consider here, in this process, that the notion of transculturalism is more appropriate to think about exchanges such as these, because at its core it is the question of the complexity of such relations, through hybridisms and confluences that lead to something changeable and variable.

Interculturalism, as Pavis (2008:03) points out, operates in the sense of an appropriation of one culture by another, making evident issues of socio-political, economic and cultural power inserted there, since the target culture absorbs from the source culture "what it needs to respond to its concrete needs".

Already transculturalism, as Moraes (2007:35-36) elaborates, deals with a hierarchical destabilisation between such relations, according to two phases: that of the deculturalisation, which constitutes the loss or uprooting of elements of a culture; and that of neoculture, which points to the assimilation of elements of two cultures in the sense of creating another.

From this perspective, transculturalism in the process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) sought to go beyond a strictly culturalist view, by overcoming the concept of culture as a 'particular way of life' of a particular culture of the diverse South Africa or Brazil. The 'way of life' of transculturalism in this process of staging *Razor in the Flesh*

(2017) is globalised given the influence of the pop culture patterns of the two countries, in order to provoke the emergence of a new aesthetic that can also be recognised by a South African audience.

Moraes (2007:22-23) also emphasises that 'inter' issues have given way to those that contain the prefix 'trans', which means that the relationships between identities go beyond simple cultural exchange; they occur in order to transform what already exists into something new, both multiple and original. He summarises: "Through hybridisation, new spaces are opened up, with the destabilisation of traditional and hierarchical structures of power".

The idea of travelling as a universal order of movement between peoples, (Octavio Ianni in Moraes 2007:24), whether it be a real or metaphorical, geographical or symbolic displacement, is consistent with the perceptions and learning forms of some 20th century and contemporary directors. It is perceived that the notion of transculturalism is a decisive contribution to reflect contemporary scenic practice, both in the academic sphere and in the artistic, places of constant cultural contact and tension.

Ortiz (1995:134) is emblematic on this issue, leaving a theoretical legacy through his notion of transculturalism:

We understand that the term transculturation better expresses the different phases of the transitive process from one culture to another, because it does not consist only in acquiring a distinct culture, which is what the Anglo-American acculturation voice accurately indicates, but that the process also implies necessarily, in the loss and uprooting of a previous culture, what could be called a partial deculturation, and in addition, it means the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena that could be called neoculturation.

Reflecting on the transcultural practice of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), which took place in the movement of Brazilian and South African cultures, I realise that the production was not limited to reproducing the aesthetic of either of these two cultural and scenic traditions accurately, but rather it revealed the friction of such knowledge and cultures in the search for an original and innovative resolution of these two cultures. This is where theatre directing, in a transcultural perspective, moves toward other possible ways of conducting a staging process.

In theatre creation as an epistemological procedure for the construction of knowledge in the field of the performing arts, André Luiz Antunes Netto Carreira and Beatriz Ângela Vieira Cabral (2006:13), in the introductory article "Theatre as Knowledge", of the book *Methodology of Research in Scenic Arts*, state:

The production of research in theatre represents, therefore, an effort to re-dimension the phenomenon of the spectacle in its most varied manifestations, in the contemporary context. This implies the permanent reinvention of its meanings and opens the field of research for new places of theatre phenomenon, considered as a fundamental element in the definition of the processes of cultural construction).

It is this movement between the knowledge and practices of the arts that interests me as a possibility for reflection and construction of knowledge of theatre directing, having as a central axis the artistic-cultural transculturalism existing in creative processes. All these transcultural experiences are also part of the unfolding of the work that the director has been building throughout history, taking on new contours according to the transformations of an era. Therefore, the duties of the director's office were shaped as social relations were changing. Cultures were mingling as theatre accompanied these changes and interactions. Theatre directing was also re-enacted according to the needs found in its historical route.

CHAPTER FOUR: STEPS OF THE STAGING PROCESS OF *RAZOR IN THE FLESH* (2017).

4.1 *Razor in the Flesh* (2017): Staging Process.

From the beginning of this process of research and directing of the staging of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) there was a methodological plan of the whole staging process. Much of this process of preparation of the production, such as studies, rehearsals and exercises, was based on my experience of theoretical studies and practices within my training as a director. As a reference, I chose to use Stanislavski's (2015:24-30) practice of study and analysis of plays, round table work with the actors, discussing concepts and elements that would compose the production, readings, characters, blocking, physical actions, narrative rehearsals and dramatic laboratories. All phases of the construction of the production were proposed and conducted by myself as the director from start to finish.

The aesthetic, ideological, and practical and theoretical know-how of the theatre director is what manages and conducts the process of staging a production for theatre.

The director could also be considered as a provocateur. It is he who sets out to judge the sketches – the scenic design; outline of performance; lighting sketch and so on before the creative agents are involved in the staging. These sketches later become the theatrical performance when in the presence of an audience, under the director's authority and from his own perspective. The director's stage project ends when the spectator's work begins (Neto 2007:117).

The theatre director we refer to in this research is understood as the creative artist who conducts the process of staging the theatre production. He is the director who seeks at all times to understand and shape the theatre presentation according to his particular vision; according to his understanding about the facts of his time, based on solid and deep general knowledge. According to Jean Jacques Roubine (1998:123), "the director's work consists of producing an idea about the scene and developing an aesthetic model for the production".

In order to better understand the universe of the work of a director and the steps that compose a theatrical staging process, I opted to develop a theatrical method that is more systematic, to think of each element of the construction of the production and to organise the studies and the rehearsals in stages.

The process described below makes up the theatrical direction methodology that was used to set up the *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) production at the Lier Theatre at the University of Pretoria on 1, 2 and 3 June 2017. The process of directing the staging of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) described here is only one of several possible ways of ordering ideas, understanding the text, the word, the action, the character, the setting, the lighting and ultimately all the elements that can make up a theatre production. No concept or proposal of this production comes as standard. For if we are dealing with theatre and art, we know that in practice there are so many exceptions and contradictions that it becomes impossible to create rules.

Theatre presentations can be created from various forms, such as improvisations, collective creations, scripts, plays, poems, themes, physical exercises and so on. But here, to better explain my purpose, I refer to a hierarchical and traditional system of work, that is, a process of rehearsals organised from the director's conception of a particular text, which in this case is *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). I chose to conduct the process of staging and theatre directing in this way following this system of steps not because I thought it better or more important, but in order to work in a well-structured manner and to exercise the abilities required of a theatre director.

4.2 The text: *Razor in the Flesh*

Razor in the Flesh (1967) is an example of the Brazilian Plinio Marcos's dramaturgy which remains a classic due to the rawness of the dialogue in which three characters live a game of domination that reproduces the moral misery created by suffering social injustices. The prostitute, Chrystal Scarlett; her protector the pimp, Vado; and the homosexual janitor Velvet, live in the confinement of an ordinary but seedy hotel.

The story revolves around the disappearance of money in the room where Vado and Chrystal Scarlett live and which Velvet is responsible for cleaning. Every night before leaving for prostitution work on the streets, Chrystal Scarlett leaves money for her

protector. Upon waking Vado realises that there is no money left on his nightstand. When Chrystal returns from prostitution, she finds her man furious. Vado accuses Chrystal Scarlett of trying to fool him. Chrystal then suspects Velvet entered the room to clean, taking advantage of Vado sleeping and stole the money that was next to the bed. From there a whole physical and verbal conflict begins in an atmosphere of tension and despair.

Razor in the Flesh is the pathetic portrait of the underworld that widens into the macrocosm of the difficulties of relationship in a marginal life. Lacking values that convey transcendence to the human adventure, the characters exemplify the horror of exploitation, when one becomes an object for another only the taste of misery remains (Magaldi 1998:[sp]).

Written in 1967, the play caused a scandal at the time. It still stands today as a realistic current drama because of the way Plinio Marcos conducts the action, with almost naturalistic veracity, but also by establishing dramatic content far more complex than a mere photograph of the real thing.

The three characters assume changing positions with each other, each having his moment of dominion over the others, in a struggle of weaknesses brought from other battles already lost. Without escape, condemned to solitude and social death, they simulate, as a final request of love, a definitive defeat of their lives. There is no melodrama or mocking solidarity with the victims, but a reality based on dramatic conflict.

The play makes an impact through the focus on the conflict between the characters – presented with stark honesty - and the presence of profanity, which "establishes a dialogue of total truth" (Magaldi 2003:95). In a statement to Edla van Steen, Marcos (2008:69) says: "I used a dirty word, not because I wanted to make a portrait of language, but because my vocabulary really did not have twenty words"..

Even after being translated from Portuguese to South African English and adapted to the South African context, *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) reaffirms how Plinio Marcos's dramaturgy is universal in the underworld of the marginal. It is a lasting text that goes through generations as a faithful portrayal of the lives of those who suffer from moral

misery and lack of education. Marginal characters sunk in disgrace are common figures in underdeveloped countries like Brazil and South Africa.

4.3 Process of preparation and conception of the production by the director

After being sure of the choice of text I started the preparation of the production, which consisted of a preliminary study of the work. The chosen text was worked on and understood in a broad analysis before starting to work with the actors. In this solitary phase of the production's preparation process, the director needs to read, write, rewrite, draw, watch good movies, listen to music, search for photos, paintings, drawings, sculptures. It is necessary to nourish oneself with aesthetic, theoretical and ideological references for the formation of ideas and to define the visual aesthetics of the theatre production. As part of the director's study, I read exhaustively and carefully the text *Navalha na Carne* (1967), the original version in Portuguese and the English version, *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), which I freely adapted to a South African context.

[...] [R]eading can be defined by the view: the perspective of the one who looks, the one who looks at an object, a text, whether verbal or not. This view can be direct, crossed or skewed, according to the reader, the viewer, the observer, his life baggage, the social context in which he is inserted: moment and space (place), his expectations, which some call project, intention or object (Coracini 2005:19).

This process of reading allowed me to know the text in depth, identifying the theme of Plinio Marcos, which is the subject discussed in the play, what the idea is of the text, the basic reason why the play develops. That is, it gave me in depth knowledge of the narrative and the dramatic textual material I was working on. Having finished this part of the textual study, I began to think about the relationship I would like to establish with the audience. It would be a relationship of transparency and closeness. With an audience seated around the scenery, it would be an intimate production through the proximity of the actors to the audience. There would be a physical and energetic bond, a dramatic intensity that flows from the 'stage' to the audience.

The intimate theatre presupposes a small space that catalyses and amplifies the emotions put in the scene by the actors. The proximity of the audience to all the elements that compose the production along with the actors' interpretation, which does not give space for the audience to hide or take refuge from what is happening on the stage (Cavalcante 2009:[sp]).

Everything happens close by, with the breath of the actors wafting and their sweat splashing on the spectators. The audience is almost incorporated in the scene; a truth is seen and felt close by.



Photo 1: panoramic photo of the scenario of "Razor in the Flesh" in June 2017, at the Lier Theatre at the University of Pretoria. Photographer: Anderson Barroso.

The production was structured to tell the story of these marginal characters in order for them to be understood and to lead the thoughts, emotions and sensations of the audience who watched everything closely, testifying through the hyperrealist interpretations of the actors, to this story that appears to be real and raw.

Within this intimate space, I demanded from the actors a realistic and visceral interpretation. This was achieved through scenes that do not allow the audience to

escape the reality of the situation, and a heightened interactivity between the actors who, eventually, address some spectators directly, looking into their eyes. It is a very real production without filters, which reveals itself in a very exposed way, a cruel situation lived before a group that is its own audience.

My approach or theatrical proposal in *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) could be characterised above all by the quest to put evil on the stage. It is theatre that does not propose positive, pedagogical paths, that does not aim to create convictions. On the contrary, it addresses precisely what we carry with us without pride: all the oppression and all that evil that, even if we make every effort to hide, exists in us. It is theatre that seeks the visceral through the bias of misery, decadence and the body, because "it aims at the total organic and physical transformation of the human body" (Artaud 1984:[sp]). It transforms the body into another body built differently to the everyday body, a body 'in life', an 'extra - quotidian' body, dilated and energetic.

I defined the 'language', the system of codes and symbols that I chose to narrate the story of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), assuming that the language of the production is nothing more than the form of expression used by its creator, or the director of the production. There are universal and definitive languages, but art is personal. The language of the artist is what differentiates one work of art from another. In this way, instead of trying to fit into a certain aesthetic language, I sought as a director to create my own language, my own expression from my technical and theoretical knowledge and from my experiences and visual preferences.

As a director I sought to create a dramatic, visual aesthetic from my interpretation of South African culture in parallel with my Brazilian culture, illustrating in the production elements of both cultures. "To direct means to assign rational or emotional meaning to fictional matter" (Neto 2001:68). I sought to intermarry the marginal pop realities of these two underdeveloped countries, creating in a suspended reality, a reality reinvented by my directorial perspective. In terms of practicality, this recreation of a new reality for the scene of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) was based on the creation of an aesthetic that shows a visceral reality that metaphorically resembles the lives of ferocious animals in cages in the scenery, the soundtrack and the dialogue of the characters. The whole space of the scenery was closed with bars to give the idea of an animal enclosure. The suspenseful

soundtrack was a counterpoint to the visceral, realistic interpretation of the actors. It is an apparently realistic play but presents ‘fantastic’ elements in the scene in its narrative which makes a new reading of the original version possible.

But I had to consider that this theatre production is prepared for a certain audience, and in this case it is the South African public, because without it the work has no meaning. It is necessary to make itself comprehensible for this audience.

The audience is the most revered member of the theatre. Without an audience there is no theatre. Each technique learned by the actor, each curtain and platform on stage, each analysis carefully made by the director, each coordinated scene is to the delight of the audience. They are our guests, our evaluators and the last element on the wheel that can then start spinning. It gives meaning to the production (Spolin 2005:11).

Concern for the audience seems to me to be a difficult limit, because the production should not be too personal and hermetic to the point of not being accessible by the audience but also should not concede and facilitate to the point of annulling the artistic and creative will of the director. Therefore, some of the expressions and slang of this language colloquially spoken by the characters of Plinio Marcos were adapted so that they could equal the receiving culture, that is, to make themselves understood in the context of South Africa.

Below is a comparative table with examples of this translation and adaptation of the slang and expressions in Brazilian Portuguese to the English in the context of South Africa.

Brazilian portuguese	English in the context of South Africa
VADO – Não me torra o saco! Tenho malandragem para dar e vender. Não vai ser você que vai me fazer de idiota.	VADO – Don’t piss me off! Don’t try skelem a skelem. You’re not going to make me look stupid.
VADO – Eu estou duro!Estou a nenhum. Eu estou a zero. A zero, sua vaca.	VADO - I’m broke! Skint. Papsak. Papsak, you bitch!
<i>(Vado acende o cachimbo de crack e da uma tragada.)</i>	<i>(Vado lights the smoking pipe and takes a drag.)</i>

VADO – Muito bom !	VADO - Lekker!
<p>VELVET – Desculpe, Não vou morrer por causa disso. Não quer eu aqui, me mando e pronto. Nunca estou onde não me querem. Alis, so vim aqui porque que me chamaram. Mas ja vou indo. Tchau mesmo! <i>(da alguns passos - pause)</i></p> <p>Pensei que era o homem deste galinheiro que cantava de galo. Mas me enganei. Quem manda aqui é a galinha velha.</p> <p>CHRYSTAL SCARLETT – Galinha velha é a tua mãe!</p> <p>VELVET –Pos acarapuça porque quis.</p>	<p>VELVET - Sorry, I won't die because of that. You don't want me here, Fine, I'll leave. I never stay where they don't want me. Actually, I just came here because you called me. But I'll be going. Bye! I thought it was the cock in this chicken coop who was ruling the roost. But I fooled myself. The boss here is the old stuffed turkey.</p> <p>CHRYSTAL SCARLETT– Old stuffed turkey is your mother!</p> <p>VELVET – If the shoe fits</p>

Another important item in the preparation of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) was the use of the signs in the production and their respective symbolic meanings.

A sign is a stimulus whose mental image is associated in our consciousness with another stimulus that it has the function to evoke. In other words, signs are words, objects, gestures, sounds, expressions and images that correspond to ideas, abstractions, concepts and universes that are more complex than reality can express (Amaral 1998:14).

As director, I tried to compose the production's aesthetic with various symbolic objects according to my own references, making metaphorical relationships between the setting, soundtrack and the actors' interpretation. As a conceptual proposal, I tried to make the hotel room scenery a cage, where characters in constant conflict resemble voracious animals. The soundtrack of suspense complemented this animal aesthetic.

The visceral Kafkarian interpretation sought this animalistic idea in the relations between the characters, through the marginal dialogues and barbs of the play. This relationship between animal and interpretation of human existence is also present in the culture of South Africa. In the traditional tales of isiXhosa culture that are called

"Intsomi", there are animal characters that reflect human issues. These animals are part of the stories and are interpreted by storytelling artists at the time of the story. According to Mkonto (2009:91), when these animals appear in the stories they reflect real-life situations and play significant roles in the expression of social themes of the day. In this sense I find in the "intsomi" a relevant relation of signs to dialogue with the Kafkarian animalistic idea. Finnegan (1978:346) notes that the animals of the isiXhosa tales are portrayed as thinking and acting as humans, in a human environment.

Some signs are obvious and primary, others are more complex, but all serve to unravel an abstract universe beyond its own concreteness. As a director it was important to define some signs and understand their meanings before starting work with the actors. It is in thinking about the articulation of these elements and the way they are put on the scene that we understand the importance of the work of the director as the element that will perform this text (Carvalho 2014:06).

Mastery over the elements, in addition to appreciably reducing the risks of misrepresentation of the production, increased the depth with which the theme was approached throughout the stages of the process.

I tried to establish atmospheres in the text, the environment in which each action happens, each scene, and the play as a whole. A production can have an atmosphere of suspense and tension, but this does not prevent scenes of this same production having an atmosphere of seduction, fantasy and passion, etc. The atmosphere of each scene was very well-defined, so that the production was not flat, with no nuances, without surprising and interesting elements for the audience that watched.

After that, it was time to enter into the structure of the narrative, the characters, the conflicts, the relationships. My work as a director at that time was like surgery, splitting the text, opening, cutting, shredding, knowing the innards, and then recomposing, stitching, until I found the desired shape for structuring the production. This surgery done in the text by the director serves to demarcate, divide the small parts that form the whole, observing each one, knowing the causes and consequences of each word, each character, each action. Much of this deep contact

with the text structure I had already made during the translation and adaptation process. For, to translate, it is necessary to know the work and words in depth.

This surgery was done on the characters: who they are, what they are for, what they say, what they think, where they come from, where they are going, what their goals are, what their past is, what their future is, how they behave, how they act, how they speak, how they move, how they see themselves, how others see them, what their feelings are, what their thoughts are. Finally, it was necessary to make a complete X-ray of each character. Then to interrelate them: what do they do among themselves, what do they say to one another, what do they feel for each other, what are their antagonistic forces, what are their allied forces, what are the antagonistic forces, what are the conflicts that are implied, what moves each character and in which direction?

As a director I examined each individual line of the characters and their intentions, making a well-structured design of understanding of the whole story, giving solidity to the production. The greatest goals at that time were to master the characters, their relationships, and the narrative of events. This solitary stage of the director's work was for me the primal preparation moment of the staging of the production. For it was here that I defined what the aesthetic and theoretical references would be that could help me in the round table rehearsals, in the work with the technical team and in the course of all the practical work with the actors.

[...] [T]he preliminary study of the director allows several readings of the production; proposals for activities; reference texts; analysis of dramaturgy; biographical data about the playwright, the director, the actors, the set designer; glossary; suggestions of bibliography for research of the history of theatre and others that aim to map possibilities of reading the spectacle (Koudela 2008:[sp]).

This part of the preparation work of the production happened before any other step of the staging process but it was an ongoing task that continued deepening and transforming in the course of the rehearsals. What I describe here was preliminary to the work as a whole, but for each stage of the rehearsals, as a director I always needed a few hours of preparation before meeting with the actors so that I could think and prepare the rehearsal plan for us to know what we were going to pursue and thus bring alertness to the rehearsal and thus ensure results.

4.4 Rehearsals and round table work

Here the director's work with the actors begins, here the director's ideas begin to take shape and at this stage of the process all information can be useful.

The round table rehearsal, as the name suggests, is a theoretical rehearsal, with all the participants sitting around a table, studying the text and using many other materials that may come to add to the construction of the production. The round table rehearsal precedes the practical part of the rehearsals, and so in the early round table rehearsals it is not yet time for the actors to read the text whilst moving, gesticulating or characterising characters, but rather this is where theatre as a collective experience is born.

The round table reading space allows a contact with the concepts of the director and the staging, an access to the imagination of the other actors, and a perception of how the opus affects them. An exercise in analysis of the text that brings us closer to the author and his universe, and even to some creative flights that artists allow themselves, perhaps, protected by exposure of body movement and design (Moreno 2009:66).

In the first round table rehearsal a 'white' reading was made, which consists of the first contact with the textual material by the creative team together, which in this case is the cast and the director. It is a reading to understand the text, for identification of the characters, an uninterrupted reading, a concentrated reading of the lines of the text, in the collective of the whole team that is reading. It is a reading without the concern of characterisation, a collective reading where each actor and actress reads their character and the director reads the stage directions. In a white reading everyone accompanies the unfolding of the plot together. It becomes a reading of recognition of the play's plot. It can be seen as a 'birth' reading, a reading where something is born, where one begins to gestate the first ideas of the team together.

At this stage my focus was on helping the actors understand the text that they would interpret in depth. After two white readings where we had an overview of the play, we set out for another type of reading. In the next rehearsals we tried to do a more thorough and in-depth reading: a reading with pauses for analysis of the dramatic elements of theatrical writing.

The round table reading rehearsals have as a principle to analyse the text that is put in motion, removing doubts about: the composition of the character, the understanding of the theme and intentions of the author, sense and rhythm of the text, images to be valued, searching for forms to better interpret the text, etc. From this text-centric valuation, the actor must emerge identifying himself little by little with his character; first physically and then emotionally (Neto 2001:68).

Using the same process we analysed the text, the lines, the intentions of the characters and the whole universe of the marginal characters of Plinio Marcos. Marginal characters who, according to Enedino (2008:05), are considered those who are targets of the psychological uncertainties derived from the fact of being inserted in a process of change and of cultural conflicts, that occur from the clash between two different cultures, superimposed on a relationship of domination.

From an understanding of the universe of decadence and misery present in Plinio Marcos's work it was possible to build an understanding of the psychological and physical issues of each of the characters. We prepared and discussed certain scenes, speeches and physical actions following the stage directions, always making theoretical notes and relating to other concepts, aesthetics and materials like films, texts and photos. It was a way of concretising thoughts, giving substance to the text and speeches, contributing with intellectual material to the moment of the construction of the scene and the characters by their respective actors.

Round table rehearsals can last for many days or weeks, depending on the time you have to perform the task. Although long and exhaustive, this phase was very important for the actors' comprehension of the text. During these sessions, as the director, I started to present to the actors the ideas about the production that I intended to follow; about the language that we would use, how we would develop the narrative, who the characters are, where the action happens, the theme to be developed. I started to explain my concept for the production, the structure that the production should have, the aesthetic of the work, the form of the interpretation, and so on.

At this stage of the work I tried to expose my ideas as director as much as possible, so that the actors could understand, question, discuss and even change interpretation, if that were the case. In this process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), this

was the moment when the actors accepted a broad understanding of the production that I as director was proposing. After all had become aware of my director's proposal, the text and what should be done to execute the production, we still did not know how to do it but I had in mind what to do. The 'how' was developed in the rehearsal period, with the help of the interpretive ability and creative power of the actors and the director.

After the white readings and a few readings of analysis and discourse, the actors began to outline some intentions in the speeches of the characters. At that point, the characters began, though timidly, to come to life. About the round table process Celso Nunes (1989:83) says:

[...] it is evident that, sitting in front of each other, as the readings succeed and the actors are more confident about what they will have to say after a certain cue, with a simple lift of their eyes, they find their interlocutors right in front of them, available and present, facilitating the beginning of the interaction.

Therefore this round table process was fundamental for the actors to understand rationally who the characters were that they would interpret. The readings were always interspersed with discussions and questions because I believe that at this point in time the understanding of the text should be assimilated by the actors so that all of them can be able to make use of these ideas naturally and collectively. Round table rehearsals lasted for one month, with three rehearsals per week. This routine was maintained until the actors were already assured of a sufficient theoretical base to begin the practical work. Within these theoretical bases, besides the information of the text and of the director, there was also research on the author. A process of study by stages: the marginal language of the author's writing, adaptation to the new context, psychological studies of the characters, the cultural relationship between Brazil and South Africa, and so on.

In the final round table rehearsal, we tried dramatic readings. Without my interruption, the actors were standing, on the move, experimenting with small gestures and putting on stage some expressive possibilities of the characters, with nothing yet blocked or pre-established. These dramatic readings of the text are so that the actors could experience the contact with the story as a whole, working on the characterisation of their characters from the reading. They served as a counter-

engagement exercise among the actors, a constant search for the appropriation of the text and for the speeches, dialogues and scenes in general to become organic. These readings continued until days before opening night.

The characterisation of a good reading does not only concern itself with the technical capacity for articulating the words that are to be understood by the viewer, but at first it is mainly about the understanding of the text and the meaning of this text for the actors, it is about the appropriation of the text by the group from the trajectory of each one (Lobo 2011:44).

As a director, I sought to leave the actors free, giving each one the power to express the words and intentions of the text from their own understanding within a South African context. The dramatic readings also served as an exercise in appropriating and learning the lines of the play. It was a production in progress that sprang from reading. After all the theoretical discourses on *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) and the dramatic readings of the same text, we felt confident and ready to begin blocking the play.

4.5 Blocking rehearsal of production

Blocking is the trajectory, the movement of the actor in the scene, created by the director. It is not just a realistic movement, or the shortest distance to be traversed between two points, or a casual displacement of the character. It may even be all that, but it goes further. It is a stylised movement, because it represents the movement recreated from the director's style and the production's aesthetic concept.

In the language for scenery, blocking refers to the placement of the actor. Blocking encompasses all movements performed by the character, including scene entrances and exits. It also refers to the part of the gestural language that does not belong to the characterisation of the character. Through blocking, the director or the actor, must create a language of gesture and movement that is a symbolic expression of the affective and social relations of the characters. Regardless of style, blocking results primarily from the will and emotions of the characters (Palcobh 2004:[sp]).

For this staging of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) I decided to pursue an interpretation in the performance of the actors that I call visceral hyperrealism. It is an accentuation in the interpretation in order to extract what is more real in the work of body, speech

and the gestures of the actors. It consists of the representation of reality in an extremely meticulous and distant way, removing any disbelief or subjectivity of those who watched the scenes. A super-truth that causes shock in the audience.

Within this same universe of the scene that looks like the real one, in some moments of the production we introduced another concept in the actors' interpretation and movement, which was the dark expressionist movements, inspired by the film *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922) by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. It is a film that is characterised by a dark atmosphere and suspense, with frightening characters, thanks to an excess of drama both in acting and make-up and also in set design.

Blocking is a stylised movement, because it corresponds to the interpretative precepts of the creation of the actors according to my indications as the director from the references cited above. As a director, it was my task to follow the aesthetic and conceptual proposal of working on the blocking and interpretations of the actors, realistic movements with the dramatic expression of German expressionism⁷ in an atmosphere of suspense within the South African context. All these references together seem to cause great confusion in this overlapping of concepts, but that is how this process took place. Blocking can also be a utilitarian movement, because it works so that the director can move his characters in fulfilment of his objectives, as a chess player does with his pieces. Blocking is a drawing that the director performs on stage through the body of the actors according to his aesthetic concept of the production. A drawing that can serve to fill or empty the spaces, to create or to dismantle forms to make the movements and gesture of the character more beautiful.

Some directors prefer to let the actors move intuitively as they say the text, and then turn these movements into blocking, adjusting them to their aesthetics, modifying them according to their conception.

⁷ German Expressionism was a cinematographic style that peaked in the 1920s, with films such as Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) and *Nosferatu: A symphony of Horrors* (1922) by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau. It was characterised by dark themes of police suspense and mystery in an urban environment, bizarre and frightening characters, a distortion of the image due to excessive drama in both performance and makeup and fantastic scenery to recreate the human imagination.

The production *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) was my first theatre directing in a language that is not my mother tongue. Because I did not feel completely safe in directing actors in English, I tried a well-controlled directing process that could give me security in what I was doing and could also be understood by the actors. Therefore, in this sense I preferred to design precise and objective movements of the actors in the scene so that they absorbed these blocked movements within their own bodies. "The way the body organises information is as if it were organising thinking" (Tolentino 1999:[sp]). A precise organisation of the blocking throughout the text is required for the actors to execute and assimilate these movements during the rehearsals.

There are several ways to record blocking for a play. The most common are the description or design of the blocking in the original text. In the description we have the strictly related blocking cues (Vado is lying in bed under the light of the lamp looking at the pictures of a pornography magazine. / Enter Chrystal Scarlet, she turns on the general light of the room and goes near the bed where Vado is lying. She crouches down in front of the bedside table next to Vado and begins to undress, first removing her earrings, shoes, stockings and etc.)

Some blocking indications are usually in the text. The whole movement of the play comes from joining the movements and gestures indicated in the text, with the movements that the director needs for the development of the narrative, and movements that have no apparent use but which are important to add information or aesthetic forms. These trajectories punctuated with pause, gestures, changes of direction, follow a logic, a sense, and above all serve the action and the narrative of the play. The blocking, the flow of the movement, must be inserted in the design of the production.

I tried to use the stage in its entirety. Only half a metre separated the audience from the scene. The audience was in an arena format around the stage. The set on the stage was a decaying motel room that was demarcated by several carpets that covered the whole scene. The blocking, when it was ready for the rehearsals, was passed on precisely and objectively. As a director, I tried to block each scene with maximum precision and detail. Then we repeated each blocking a few times so that the actors could make the movements organic and fluid.

At first it all seemed very false, but in the course of the following rehearsals, after many repetitions we tried to make everything more natural, organic and vital. To make everything more organic and vital I sought to do energetic training with the actors who tried to 'break' with the rigid stereotyped movements so they could discover their hidden potential and protected energies.

This exercise, called energy exhaustion, created by Luís Otávio Burnier (1985), creator and director of the theatre group LUME, is based on Grotowski's research. It is an intense and uninterrupted, extremely dynamic physical training that aims to work with potential energies of the actor. In short, the exercise takes place with a series of movements like running, jumping and bringing attention to the body itself. It comprises a long physical training session that can take from 2 to 3 hours, until the actor arrives at a state of exhaustion.

Luís Otávio Burnier (1985:31) believed that physical exhaustion could be a gateway to these potential energies because, in a state of limitation of exhaustion, the psychic defences become more malleable:

When the actor reaches the state of exhaustion, he has been able to "cleanse" his body from a series of "parasitic" energies, and finds himself at the point of finding a new, "fresher" and more "organic" energy flow than the precedent.

In confronting and overcoming the limits of his physical exhaustion, the actor 'purges' his first physical, psychic and intellectual energies, provoking the encounter of new organic energy sources that will give truth in the blocking and make the production more organic in general.

The blocking process was dedicated to blocking the entire play. In some stages the scenes were worked separately because the text had been divided into units during the round table work which facilitated the blocking. Working with the units separately reduces the risks when blocking some scenes of having movements that flow more naturally, and others that do not. The blocking rehearsals were done in a space with the same dimensions of the presentation space, so that the necessary adjustments in space change did not end up changing everything. From the beginning of this process of practical rehearsals I tried to work with all the scenery and objects that make up the production. Even though I did not have the definitive setting, I

improvised a similar scenario for the rehearsals that could support the blocking, structuring the ideas of the director and the construction of the characters. Below is a picture of the rehearsal space.



Photo 2: Panoramic photo of the rehearsal scenario for the production "Razor in the Flesh" in the Drama department of the University of Pretoria. Photographer: Anderson Barroso.

In these blocking rehearsals, the actors were executing the blocking in relation to the text since these two elements are interconnected. It was during this stage that the actors were assimilating and learning the blocking to be executed and the text to be said, merging speech and movement, until after several rehearsals, one seemed to be a consequence of the other and it began to flow in a true and organic way. As a director, I thought it would be safer to work on the blocking soon after the round table rehearsals so as not to run the risk of having the play blocked randomly by the actors. The actors in their creative processes, when they move repeatedly, tend towards what they have created intuitively, so that the director struggles to transform and personalise the blocking. So I tried to block the whole play immediately after the round table rehearsals.

4.6 The investigation of characters rehearsal with actors

For this staging of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), one of the points of my work that I was most concerned with was the work of the actors in the construction and characterisation of characters. The 'character' translates ideas, actions, thoughts, by their own means but without their own will - since it is performed by an actor (Roque 2011:42). In this sense we tried to understand the marginal universe of the figures, so that the actors could have autonomy in the characterisation of their characters. Especially dealing with the corrosive and marginal characters of Plinio Marcos, I tried at all times to prioritise the character rehearsals, choosing them as one of the most important elements of the play. The Brazilian theatrical critic Sabato Magaldi (1998:210) defined the characters of Plinio Marcos as "cut with a spirit of synthesis, which strengthens their essential features. Marginalised in the underworld in which they live, so to speak, they crawl their feelings [...]".

It is important that these young actors, who interpret more mature characters, have control of the universe of these figures. The narrative, discourse, action, movement, intention, lighting, colour, and breath of the scene, all that exists in the drama of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) takes place through the character, depending on him or in relation to him.

In these rehearsals, where the focus was on the study of the characters, as director I sought to stimulate the actors to find the feelings and reality of the characters through their own experiences of life and also in subjects such as movies and photos. Life appears and presents itself as reality to the individual at every moment, and is interpreted with coherence as it is felt (Simoes 2010:35).

Life is a reality built out of emotions, sensations, intentions, thoughts, fears, insecurity, joys, sorrows, in short, with all the psychological attributes of the characters. Coherent and emotional aspects such as: what he says, what he does, his physical behaviour, his age. Everything that has been uncovered and defined about the character in the round table rehearsals must be transformed into behaviour, attitude and action according to the marginal characterisation for the reality of the South African context. In real life, human beings act, speak and behave as a result of their cultural formation and their psychological characteristics. In this

process of character construction our focus was on the characterisation of the characters according to the chosen context. They are marginal characters of a white and coloured biotype of poor origin in the urban peripheries of South Africa. I have a view that South Africa is a country of great cultural and ethnic diversity, which is divided among whites, blacks, coloureds, Indians etc., which allows for diverse contexts in a single country. I tried to maintain the cultural context and the biotype of the characters according to the actors' own biotype: a white actor and actress of Afrikaner origin and a coloured actor of Zulu origin, all of whom speak English.



Photo 3: Photo of the "Razor in the Flesh" scene, directed by Anderson Barroso in June 2017, at the Lier Theater at the University of Pretoria, depicting the actors Chad Jhonston, Danielle Britz and Renaldo Botha. Photographer: Wesley Smith.

In the construction of these marginal, South African characters of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), we created a psychological world that justified this marginal and decadent behaviour of each of the characters, from the actual reality of South Africa.

According to Simoes (2010:36), any individual constructs their reality based on and with reference to their knowledge of the society in which they are inserted, taking into consideration their individual situation and its limits. This process is definitive to give

veracity to the production, because the spectator identifies with or contests the characters from the belief that he has in their internal motivations. If the spectator is not convinced by the characters, their relationship to the production will be superficial and void. So we tried to fill each of these characters who live in misery with a 'marginal soul'. This stage of the rehearsals required that the actors activate the vital principle of the work, which is to give truth to their actions, gestures and speeches. This work of giving 'soul' to the characters is quite abstract, and depends very much on the actor, his intuition, his intellectual capacity, his understanding of the whole, and his interpretive abilities.

Besides this subjective part, the character rehearsals also had another more objective part, which deals with the coherence in the construction of the characters; a continuity of the first discussions that we had at the beginning of the work. In the part that deals with the coherence in the construction of the characters our focus was on finding all aspects of the characters: physical, behavioural, psychological, social, etc.

Here, as director, I led the actors to concretise the actions, working on the details, always having as the main objective to deepen and solidify the character. There are a thousand ways of doing or saying everything, and as a director I must get the actor to express each of these things in a precise and unequivocal way, according to the characteristics of each character. Thus the character rehearsals served for the actors to structure their characters, from the general behaviour to the appearances, giving coherence and vitality to the production as a whole.

4.7 Narrative text structure rehearsal

In the narrative rehearsal I sought, together with the actors, understanding and comprehension of each scene and each speech, so that the actors became aware of what they were talking about, doing and everything that was happening around them. We seek to communicate the text clearly and objectively. The fable must comprise a single action, which forms a coherent and complete whole in itself, having a beginning, middle, and end, so that it is a perfect living organism which can produce pleasure that is peculiar to it (Aristotle 1993:[sp]).

The search for this coherence in the narrative led me as a director to analyse the structure of the text along with the actors. Here again, from director I became a surgeon, cutting up the play, dividing it into small pieces, and working the events, one at a time. The narrative is the exposition of the facts, and is given by the sequence of the events of the play. So it is necessary to work them one by one, repeating each one as many times as is needed.

At this stage, where the actors already knew the blocking and had the text already memorised, I asked the actors a lot of questions because they needed to be aware of the reasons that led their characters to act and the consequences of each action, not only for their own character but of all the other characters in the plot.

It was a minute analysis from moment to moment. To help in the study of these moments of the text, I divided the whole play into 24 units of small blocks of scenes so that we could work and clean up the whole play in detail. What happened? How did it happen? Who does it? What is done? What is said? Why is it said? What is the message? What is the thought? What is the most important act or speech or gesture of the scene? What are the consequences of events? What are the causes? Who are the opposing forces? What strengths do they add? What is the role of the characters in the scene? What is the purpose of each one? What are the desires of each character? What is the purpose of each? What are the obstacles? This was the time to reaffirm and clean up what I had built up until then. Here, each scene was rehearsed several times, and each of these questions was answered, as well as many more that emerged during the process.

After the end of this process I began to work each unit and scene of the play in random order to streamline the rehearsals.

A play is not narrated in an uninterrupted way. Normally, several small narratives overlap in the same drama, enriching and making what is being exposed more complex. In this way, the narrative of the play undergoes ruptures, deviations and returns, requiring great ability in the treatment of the story by the director.

My work as a director has always been to guide the actors in the sense of objectifying and clarifying the narrative, marking in detail these ruptures, changes of

direction and returns, creating an abstract and complex design of the narrative of action, without departing from the basic discourse of the backbone of the story they are proposing to narrate.

To narrate is not only in the sense of linking a sequence of facts to verbally explicate an event, but in the sense of the Benjaminian narrator, to advise, to show points of view, to convey, in fact, experiences (Matias 2012:[sp]).

When I speak of narrative, I am referring to speeches, movements, gestures, actions, and all the elements that add up to tell a story. A phrase, a look, a cough, an insinuated gesture, everything that is done in the scene, however small it may seem, means something, gives some information to the audience, and therefore, it is part of the narrative.

But the narrative in the theatre is not only perceived by verbal insertions. It marks its presence equally by the way it organises events throughout the production, whether by articulating various independent scenes that do not align linearly or by proposing time hops to pick up past events or show possibilities for the future, or by making abrupt spatial changes from one place to another without showing the paths that took the characters to there (Matias 2012:[sp]).

For this reason, it was important that in this stage we intensified the rehearsals to do a good job of 'cleaning': eliminating all the elements that did not contribute to the narrative of the play or to the creative proposal of the director.

As a director I tried to construct one scene at a time, step by step, and repeat each of the scenes thoroughly, until the actor, through repetition, begins to make the speech, gestures, blocked movements and even thoughts of the character organic. It is meticulous work, to particularise each minimal element that composes the scene, that is: to add, to diminish, to increase or to eliminate pauses, to emphasise gestures, words, looks, or whatever is important for the narrative, and to lead the spectator to the place that you want them to arrive.

4.8 Adjusting the rhythm rehearsal

The rhythm of the production is the concurrence of all rhythms contained in it, which includes the internal rhythm of each character (the rhythm of the internal action), the

external rhythm, the rhythm of the sequence of speech, actions, and movements, the rhythm of the transformation of the lighting, the rhythm of the soundscape the combination of the rhythm of each character in the scene. In the end the rhythm is the harmonious combination of all the cadences and pulsations of the production. As a director my role was the orchestration of these rhythms.

Organising the time of representation involves producing a meaning and speculating a construction of the world in articulating expectations for the viewer, so that he "cares" to follow the progression of events unfolding in front of him (Castilho 2008:141).

Just as in the narrative rehearsal where we worked on each scene separately so that each fragment of the narrative becomes autonomous and comprehensible in itself, in these rhythm rehearsals we first worked with each scene individually, and then the whole play.

Each scene has its own tempo, regardless of what comes before or after it. Also as in the narrative, I tried to work the rhythm in a non-linear and uninterrupted way: pauses, alternations and changes are always welcome for the production to be dynamic and interesting for the audience.

For each scene, it was necessary to find the time required for the internal action of the characters, respecting the rhythm of each one. There was also the time for the pauses, the hidden movements, the time each speech and action took to develop. Each of these times is different from one another. Therefore as a director I had to be a conductor, regulating and organising these rhythms within my concept of the production, in a harmonious, intelligent and precise way.

The rhythm generates the duration of an action through a line of homogeneous or varied tensions. It creates a pause, an expectation. The spectators, sensorially, experience a kind of pulse, a projection of something they often do not perceive; a breath that is repeated several times, a continuity that denies itself. In sculpturing time, rhythm becomes time in life (Savarese 1995:211).

Accuracy in controlling these rhythms is important insofar as it avoids the exacerbated acceleration of some rhythms in the comprehension of the whole. In the original version of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) in Portuguese, the plot is situated on the outskirts of São Paulo, so the verbal language and gestures belong to the codes of

cultural customs of that Brazilian reality. Even with the work adapted to English and the South African context, it is necessary to remember that the spectator watches the first time, and that they need a fraction of time to see, hear and understand each piece of information intellectually and affectively. If they do not have this minimum time, the information given will be incomplete for them.

In this orchestration of the rhythms of the scenes, speeches and intentions of the characters, I was concerned about not letting the rhythm of the production slow down or become too fast so that the audience would not understand, making the production monotonous and uninteresting. The viewer receives information, decodes it and is immediately ready for the next snippet. If it does not arrive then, a gap in the narrative opens up, and his attention is dispersed. When this happens, something absolutely formidable must happen in the scene to rescue the attention of the viewer, otherwise he would remain unconnected until the end. I am not proposing here a continuous sequence of speeches and uninterrupted actions. Just as, for one thing, an actor can be immobile in a scene, without saying a word, and apparently nothing happening, without the audience losing interest. But for that to happen it takes something strong and true to occur inside the actor through the character, becoming subtly visible to the public. Even the character's internal actions must maintain a precise, definitive and rigorous rhythm.

In these rhythm rehearsals, it was important to work on the scenic dialogues between two actors acting against one another, since the progress of this communication between the characters is the decisive factor for the rhythm of the production.

After working each scene individually in a random order, it was time to work on the rhythm of the whole play, in the original sequence of the new text which had been freely adapted to a South African context. As director I was rigorous in maintaining the integrity of the rhythm in each scene, because with the passing of each rehearsal, the rhythm becomes a mean of the rhythms of the play, causing the rhythm of each scene to disappear, leaving the production with a homogenous breath.

4.9 Technical rehearsal with the entire support team

The technical rehearsals were the time when the backstage team, the lighting operator, the sound operator and all the support staff joined the production in practice. At this stage the technical aspects were the focus of attention of my job as director. All the technical operations of the production were tested in order to achieve accuracy. In these rehearsals we worked exhaustively on the smooth run-throughs of the technical actions and the execution time of each of these actions.

A technical rehearsal is composed of several occurrences of expressive actions that occur simultaneously and dynamically and that influence each other. They are not independent moments, but they have a certain autonomy, constituting the event of the technical rehearsal (Goffman 2002:[sp]).

Every second lost by technical delay is an eternity on stage. If the sound operator needs to put on a particular song between one gesture and another of the actor, he needs to know what fraction of time there is between pressing the button of the system and the sound coming out of the acoustic speakers. He has to time the time it takes to execute this action, and thus, will know when it should be effectively initiated.

In order to give efficiency and seek harmony between lighting and sound operations with the actors' interpretation, we worked hard in handling the execution time of each of these operations. These fractions of a second exist and are very important for the sound and lighting operators and backstage, but they cannot exist, in any hypothesis, for the actor, let alone for an audience that watches everything from a distance of less than one metre from the stage.

Our technical rehearsals lasted a week, but in other cases it may take as long as is necessary for the production to reach the required accuracy. The technical equipment available in our theatres, sometimes of dubious quality, may require a longer rehearsal period.

Even with sound equipment and computerised lighting, there is always an infinitesimal amount of operation time, of the finger on the button, of the operator's thought. This space of time, however, cannot be null in the progress of the

production. The good operator is invisible: the lighting, the sound, or whatever he commands, must seem magical to the audience.

To achieve the magical and enchanting effects of sound and lighting, I worked during some rehearsals with the technicians pursuing this artistic precision and technical invisibility. As Magalhaes (2006:29), states, the rehearsals are events designed to observe, detect problems and find formulae to eliminate them.

As the director I gave the team all detailed indications of time, intensity and pace of each technical execution. Like all work performed in a group, the continuity, precision and concentration of the whole team in a single objective was a prerequisite for the accomplishment of a good production. And that is what technical rehearsals and run-throughs are for.

4.10 Final touches and polishing rehearsals

The final touches rehearsals started when I, in the role of director, considered the play almost ready, missing just a few finishing touches. As the director and person responsible for guiding this theatre production, I realised that this was the moment of the staging process of the production where this phase of rehearsals turns to the director's own poetry, his aesthetic concepts, his formal rigor, his taste, his creative artistic sensibility. Here the director analyses the production itself and realises if it has really achieved what he was looking for. The finishing touches happened a few days before the premiere, and here, I watched the performance several times, appreciating what was working, and especially looking for the flaws. After three intense months of rehearsals, research and the production of the production itself, it took maturity and astuteness to know how to evaluate the result obtained without the blurred vision of insecurity, the stress of the premiere or of problems unrelated to the work itself. The good part of these final rehearsals was when I was able to realise how much satisfaction there was in seeing the production ready as the director, but still, retouching, arranging and redoing things in search of perfecting details.

At this stage, I was able to rehearse fragments of the play, making my aesthetic precepts stricter. We worked for the last time with the blocking of the play, rounding, widening, polishing the blocking, making it more beautiful and fluid like

choreography. I also tried to pay attention to the speeches and sounds, improving the movements, the volumes, the timbres. In this phase the director activates the x-ray and does not let anything pass that does not contribute to the development and beauty of the scene. I lightly retouched the scene, making the composition of the images more fluid. I also tried to reorganise the movement of the actors' bodies, stretching, tensioning or relaxing the musculature. In these final rehearsals, as a director I tried to make my signature in the production clearer and more personal and to reaffirm my language.

4.11 General rehearsal

A general rehearsal is the last rehearsal prior to the release of the play. Here we had the presence of my Masters supervisor who attended some rehearsals and could give us feedback on our work in general. As a director I marked opening week to be the days of general rehearsal. In the first general rehearsal we tried to present the production completely integrated, without interruptions, as if it were opening night. We did vocal and physical warm-ups. We tried to focus on our work as a whole, using costumes, make up, etc. We agreed with the technical staff on when to open the doors of the theatre for the audience, the route of the audience to their seats, the moments in which the announcements warn the public of the beginning of the production, the timing of the stage lights coming up announcing the beginning of the production, the final moments of the production, the actors' gratitude to the applause of the audience, the exit of the stage actors and so on. Nothing that happened was improvised; everything was strictly blocked and rehearsed.

After the rehearsal was the moment of conversation between the director, the actors and the technical team to correct any mistakes. And again, we tried to make everything run smoothly, just like at the premiere. We ran through it as many times as it was necessary, until everything went as planned. After feeling satisfaction in seeing the collective work in harmony, with the pleasant result, I dismissed the cast and the team to rest, and so we continued doing these same run-throughs every day until opening night.

In the final rehearsal on the day of the premiere, everything happened again as it had to be in the premiere. Just because there was no other chance, everything had to happen perfectly, as was previously rehearsed.

In this rehearsal, as a director I sat in the audience and watched the production to the end, without interrupting. There was nothing more to rectify, no more comments to make. What I watched there in that final rehearsal was the production, completely ready.

As legend has it in the Brazilian theatrical tradition: "If the final rehearsal has not been good, the director should not be discouraged because a bad rehearsal precedes a good debut." Being a theatre person with the traditions and the customs of this art, on the day of the premiere, minutes before we entered the scene, we gave one another our hands and with energy and focus we wished all actors and the team in general a strong "shit". This expression of French origin (*merde*), corresponds to the English expression "break a leg", and is used by theatre people to bring all the votes of luck and success that no other word can express.

4.12 Reflection after the process

This process of translation and creation showed me how much the development of the director occurs mainly from practical experience of the construction of scenes and from the technical and aesthetic solutions that are involved in the staging of a theatre production. Each story to be told and production to be staged points to its own shape. In this process it became very clear to me that there is no recipe ready to be followed. The director's work is in constant development and keeps changing. The process is cyclical and as the director makes choices and decisions so these in turn influence him. A particular production involves a concept and aesthetics which the director himself chooses; and in this process he is involved in a dialogue with all the possibilities of choice available to him. In theatre, we deal all the time with the imponderables of life, its ephemeral nature, chance, organicity. One cannot crystallise into a closed style. In this sense, this process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), made me realise that I need to direct more productions. For this purpose, I have set myself the goal of directing two productions a year, so that my practice as a director can mature and I can find my own method, developing my vision of the world

as an artist and theatre director. The work of the director concerns not only an artistic product, but the ways and means of the production of art. However, the theatre director is first and foremost a creative artist. The theatre production is an 'open' script that needs the inexhaustible creative hunger of viewers and their interpretations - considering the very high degree of subjectivity embedded in the act of looking. It is a matter of inventing and preparing in detail, during the rehearsals, a game that the actors will play.

Part of this process has been, for example, to get actors to immerse themselves deeply in this decadent marginal culture where prostitutes, drug dealers and pimps live, following the references given by the director for them to extract what could serve the staging. Such references were important since, for the creation of a work of art, obviously, starting points are necessary. The staging process was always linked to a methodical research of images, texts (this dialogue with the marginal culture of Brazil and South Africa), articulation and body (the visceral dimension of a realistic interpretation), and understanding of character. And that methodical approach proved to be a strength of this production and is a method which I will continue to use in future work as a director. For those involved in the work of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), the idea of 'process' (ie. the continuing discoveries and learning involved in rehearsals rather than making set choices) was not an abstract concept, but was embraced each day as something to be welcomed and invested in. Thus, through the emphasis on process, this concept became layered within the work of art, always sought, not in terms of finding right or wrong decisions, but in the succession of procedures, mechanisms that could give the actor the energy to continually seek to find what he visualises for his character.

In the final analysis, another important aspect to be noted in this *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) experience was the dialogue with other artists and teachers who were instrumental in the production and contributed to the constructive criticism, which enabled me to understand and visualise certain issues not previously perceived by me, perhaps because of my closeness to and my involvement with the work in general. Often the director ends by letting slip by unnoticed issues of the scene or the actors' interpretation, while solving other issues that in his view are more urgent and primal. The subtle problems go unnoticed. This experience made me believe that good theatre needs time and dedication for its construction. The next time I

direct, I will spend four to five months of rehearsals together with the actors, in an exercise of theatrical creation very similar to the traditions of theatre groups seen in France, Italy, Brazil, Argentina and also in other countries that have a tradition of theatre and circus. Rehearsing *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), in two and a half months was a bit rushed, which did not give us time to try other aesthetic ways and possibilities. However, the production achieved a visual coherence that worked effectively with the visceral text of Plinio Marcos.

The young actors demonstrated maturity in the scene and a dramatic force in their interpretations, which reflected the concept chosen by the director: the construction of a super realistic and visceral production, surrounded by an intimate audience, who witnessed everything that happens in the scene very closely. The feeling of suffocation was absolutely essential so that the work of Plinio Marcos could be realised. It was a marginal drama in a climate of suspense and terror. The text 'cut like a razor': the embarrassment of the audience before the violence of the words of the text disappeared giving rise to a terrifying catharsis. This was revealed from observations of the audience's reaction while watching the show as well as testimonials of the impressions of some people of the general public at the end of each night of presentation. During the run of the play, it was common to see the audience reacting emotionally to the dialogues of the text and the interpretation of the actors. In many cases the reactions were perceived in the audience's face. People were turning away their faces or covering their eyes so as not to watch the acts of brutality in the scene. In some viewers apprehension was visible in their hands and their bodies. Some members of the audience felt remorse. They were uncomfortable in front of the visceral realism of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017). There were people crying at the end of the show, extremely touched by the sad and decadent ending of the Chrystal Scarlet character.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the study

I had, in Walter Benjamin's (2008) theory of translation, one of the main theoretical substrates, which provided me with the basic clues to understand the process of translation. In my first translation of *Navalha na carne* from Brazilian Portuguese into South African English, I tried to do a direct translation of the work, without adapting the context, or facilitating the language for the arrival environment. It was a translation seeking the essence of words. This first translation experiment followed the translation mode according to the thought of Benjamin (2008), where he advocates a translation that comes from the original, and more often than not from the glory of the success of the original.

Regarding the appreciation of an art work (poem, play and etc.), Benjamin (2008), emphasises that it is not relevant to know how the translated work will be received. Any reference to a particular audience, or its cultural exponents, would divert the work from its real meaning. For Benjamin, the task of the translator is to draw the deepest essence from the source language, to allow to flow what he calls pure, supreme language, that is, the development of that original language through translation, since there will be the enrichment of the translator's language which will print on the original his linguistic and social experience. Thus, for Benjamin (2008), the translator would be one who reconciles different languages through a process of maturation that would occur at the time of translation. Therefore, Benjamin's theoretical positioning shows that: 1) the task of the translator does not have reception as its end goal 2) translation does not prioritise communication but rather the essence of the text; and 3) translation does not represent or reproduce meanings. Thus, there is a compromise of translation with the original, which does not imply the affinity between languages, but the complementarity between them.

Taking into account this view of Benjamin of the importance of the essence of the text, one can consider that the work of the translator gains more autonomy in a certain way. For Benjamin the idea of translating goes far beyond the simple task of making certain texts accessible to a group of readers who would not have access to a certain text if it were not for translation. Thus, what is important to emphasise from Benjamin's thinking is that translation is a survival of the original.

In a second process of translation, I tried to take into account the cultural and historical aspects of the arrival context in South Africa. The first experiment of translation into English in the Benjaminian form serves as the base text for a second translation and adaptation to the context specific to the reality of Pretoria where the play was presented. In this sense, the second process sought theoretical support in the studies of the specificities of translation and theatrical adaptation. As a counterpoint to Benjamin, Pavis (2008), believes and considers it important that the public be taken into consideration by the translator. Pavis (2008:128) believes that the staging should be foremost for the theatre translator. He, however, points out that the public should clearly and immediately understand the theatre text translated at the time of the staging, which allows the translator, in dialogue with the director, to make adaptations and comments, providing information that the audience needs to understand characters and situations. If theatre is an art, where the audience is an essential part of the artistic event, then, as Spolin (2005:11) says, "the audience is the most revered member of the theatre". Therefore, it is necessary to generate the claim that the translated work be totally 'understandable' for this target audience.

It is important to bear in mind that this process of translation, adaptation and theatrical staging took place in a transcultural context where, above all, respect and openness to the culture of the 'other' was defended, without, however, overestimating it or rejecting the culture of the original. This process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) was transcultural by harmoniously understanding the interaction between individuals of different cultures, always being open to possible changes and transformations stemming from cultural interaction among those involved.

Since the first studies of the text and studies of the historical realities between Brazil and South Africa, the dialogue between the actors and the director was essential so that a harmony between the source culture and target culture could prevail within this hybrid context. As a director with a Brazilian cultural origin, at certain times it was necessary for me to remove certain customs and ethnocentric habits expressing the culture of origin to give space to the South African reality. The local reality was recreated in dialogue together with the poetry of Plinio Marcos. At that time the rehearsal room became a frontier environment of exchange, blending, translation and re-creation. It displayed the transculturality between knowledges.

In this process the role of the director, besides translating, was also to sew together cultures, to problematise and to elucidate questions, provoking the expressive bodies of the actors in search of a truth and a transcultural and hybrid aesthetic that could synthesize the two cultures into one, and thus be imprinted as the face of the production.

The need to do an adaptation within the actual process of translating *Navalha na Carne* (1967), a contextual adjustment of certain points of the original text, was so that the performance could dialogue with the current and diverse Pretoria audience. The adaptation sought to find within the contemporary marginal vocabulary of South Africa an equivalence in the meanings of the metaphors and slang present in the writing of the original text in Portuguese. As already seen in Chapter 2, according to Brisset (in Bastin 1998:06), the adaptation is a "reterritorialisation" of the source work and an "appropriation" on behalf of the public of the new version. In order to complete this idea of adaptation for the public and at the current time, Santoyo (1989:104) says adaptation is a form of "naturalisation" of the play for a new environment and time. The objective is to achieve the same effect achieved previously but with an audience who has cultural baggage which is different from the one in which the work was created. Through these methods of translation, retranslation, adaptation and re-readings, a version of the text of Plinio Marcos was constituted for the context of South Africa, which served as a basis for staging the theatre play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017).

Within this environment of inequality and cultural diversity that constitutes Brazil and South Africa, I tried to make a comparative study of the current social problems and a survey of the issues of oppression and injustices that occurred in the course of the history of these two countries. We have different stories but the problems are similar. Brazil and South Africa, with their young democracies, have been trying to eliminate problems such as social inequalities, unemployment, health crises and previous looting of natural wealth. The similarity between the two countries is not only in this. As discussed earlier in chapter 2, both Brazil and South Africa suffer from serious social problems because of the aftermath of exploratory colonialism, slavery, and apartheid in the specific case of South Africa. As Braga (2010:[sp]) states, both Brazil and South Africa have in common the fact that their settlers have benefited from a slave system of human exploitation to maintain power, hold production

resources and promote exploitation of land, all of which came to perpetuate and enlarge the emergence of marginalised classes, just like those characters seen in *Razor in the Flesh* (1967). In this sense, I recognise the characters of Plinio Marcos as being marginalised figures similar to some peoples excluded from South Africa. The history of injustice and almost similar oppression of the two countries served as a basis for the process of adaptation of the Brazilian context to the South African. The historical problems of South Africa were used in this process as justification to conceive the characters of the work of Plinio Marcos in the marginal context of the South African.

Perhaps, because it is the second capital in the world with the largest number of embassies, following only Washington D.C., Pretoria has a very plural and international cultural dimension, representative of the world today. At the same time the city has a strong regionalist characteristic of black African cultures and Afrikaans culture. And in this plural environment that constituted the staging of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), my work as director of the production sought to avoid focusing on a single identity, so that the collective adventure of all could prevail.

The notion of a regionalised performance of character by the actor, which evokes stereotypes, was confronted so that we could build a synthesis of the inhabitants of Pretoria, as an international city, in which borders are questioned and cultural diversity exists. My work as the director was affected by this internationalism in Pretoria in the staging and performance. It was necessary to accept the displacement of the specific regional component of the theatre production to integrate a plural and globalised entity whilst maintaining some characteristics of the place.

With regards to the difficulties encountered in the work of the theatre director in a foreign country, I can perceive from my experience that the foreign language is an obstacle. Even though I knew how to speak English, and studied my translation of the English text, and the meaning of each word in the text, still, at times, the sound aspect of the Afrikaans language and accent of the actors sounded weird to me, because I already knew many of those dialogues of *Razor in the Flesh* (1967) in the original version in Portuguese very well. About this strangeness, Banu (2011:398) says:

the actor in the host country will almost always be perceived by the foreign director as "disappointing." The director who is now outside his cultural background no longer has his actors who, intensely, allowed him access to certain images of the body and voice, in most cases unrecognisable elsewhere, as well as the differentiated sonority of languages.

My feeling as a foreign director in not working with actors who speak the same language as I do, reminds me of the writer who ends painfully in the exile of his language, because the actors are the language of the director. Without them, the foreign director always has the feeling of a lack, the lack of an achievement realized before and never attained in another context.

As far as poetry in Plinio Marcos's dramaturgy is concerned, I was able to distinguish as the director of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), that the author works with the synthesis of characteristics in the construction of the characters, in such a way that instead of harming their complexity he tends rather to strengthen it, especially with regard to existential aspects.

The growing force of the conflict is established through language, with frantic dialogues, which from the perspective of theatre as a 'double', asserts that the playwright managed to transform the banal into existential conflict in its most basic notion of life or death. The theatre, in Artaud's (1984) perspective, is life's double. In this sense, the dramatic production of Plinio Marcos approaches the conception of the relations between artistic production and society. However, the playwright did not interpret reality as a mimesis, he problematised it. He indicated conflicts from the human sphere superbly in the actual characters in a play.

Plinio Marcos, in *Navalha na Carne* (1967), built an artistic production that dialogues with life, in its most precise sense, in which individuals are relegated to the lowest rung of the human condition and their only protection is the masking of their vulnerability, be it physical when it comes to the environment, or social as regards the attitudes of the characters and the use of language. The theatre of Plinio Marcos works with human relations and language in revealing identities and subjectivities, which can be a weapon of attack. When the goal of the character is to hurt the other, Marcos uses the exaggeration of certain characteristics as a resource to reinforce the monstrosity of the other. Vado, for example, calls Chrystal Scarlet a "disgusting old whore," "a piece of shit," says that her companion is an "ugly rotten slut".

Asserted in these hyperbolised expressions is the reinforcement of the grotesque, of the monstrous.

The language of the characters is polyphonic, permeated by social voices in tension. Vado, Chrystal Scarlet and Velvet present discursive formations that are not unique to them, but carry preconceptions and notions arising from their coexistence and the history that pervades the existence of each one. By using slang they indicate the tonalities of the punitive voices, coming from the social and institutional sphere. The discourse of the characters is modelled by the socio-historical question of language, because due to the change of social role, the discourse tends to adapt and be shaped depending on the moment and the environment that provides and makes possible certain lexical choices and not others. The obscene language is evidenced in Plinio Marcos's play as a weapon to hurt via cynicism and insult.

Plinio Marcos, in extrapolating the social and political rules of the time with regard to the use of language, performs a process of carnivalisation of the figures and dialogues in the scene. Institutions and rules regarded as sacred are desacralised. In this movement a series of social problems linked to political and economic issues are revealed. It is from this humanity, in its crudeness, that the playwright makes a reading of a degraded world without possibilities. In this sense, the assertion that his theatre deals with dramas and truly human issues becomes a possible understanding for the production of Plinio Marcos. Humanity, as revealed by Marcos, is not restricted to the superficiality of mundane and prosaic occurrences but, above all, the play delves into the infamous situations that make up man at his most fundamental levels, including the psychological, social, economic and existential.

As for the staging process with the actors, *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) took place within a system of studies and essays divided into stages, organised from the director's conception as seen in Chapter 4. It was part of enabling the opportunity to work in a well structured manner and exercise the abilities required of a theatre director.

Even with the director being at the head of the whole staging process, it can be said that the creation of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) sought at the same time to level the relations between the director and actors. The process of theatrical staging and adaptation occurred in a transcultural and hybrid environment where all these

creators and others put their experience, knowledge and talent into the service of the construction of the play, in such a way that the limits and scope of the contribution of each of them became imprecise.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Reflecting on this study, I realise that one of the limitations of this research is that it is restricted in the process of translation, adaptation and staging of the play *Razor in the Flesh* (2017), to the specific context of South Africa. Although the study is apparently limited in this focus between Brazil and South Africa, it does identify the stages that constitute a production in a transcultural environment and draws attention to the importance of social and cultural issues that touch the marginalised in South Africa. The relevance of a study of theatre production in a context that encompasses two different countries with similar social problems and different languages elucidates a theatrical practice among a creative team in a collaborative spirit, where harmony, dialogue, hybridization and transculturalism prevail.

5.3 Contribution of the study

Although the study analyses only the particular process of *Razor in the Flesh* (2017) to the South African context, it contributes to understanding the work of the theatre director in a foreign environment. It is a reflection on the poetics of a director in transculturalism. The process of directing this production, described in Chapter 4, is presented as a plan of the stages that constituted this production, created from the director's vision. In another aspect, this research contributed to the dissemination of Plinio Marcos's dramaturgy in South Africa, making the translation of this work available in English in the theatrical text bank of the University of Pretoria.

The strength of this study is therefore in the interdisciplinarity of relating cultural, social and linguistic issues in a theatrical setting where the artists involved potentiate a theatrical creation, breaking the frontiers of ethnocentrism.

5.4 Conclusion and central question of the research

What constitutes a process of translation, adaptation and theatre staging conducted by the director?

The work of translating, adapting and directing the theatre production of *Navalha na Carne* (1967) was part of a process of formal and systematic study of the constituent

stages of translating, adapting and putting together a theatre text. The translation process was seen as a complex transposition from one language to another, taking into account its cultural and historical aspects, and pursuing the essence of the text. It required searching through the arrival language, which in this case is English, for an equivalence to the source text. The theatre text has a specificity that needs to be taken into consideration at the time of translation. This specificity is the power that the text has to be materialised, that is, assembled, to be taken to the stage, and therefore the work of the translator/director in that first moment is to capture the essence that he finds in the original text.

The moment of textual translation by the director also constitutes part of the study for the future step of staging the work in question. For it is after a thorough study of words, in the understanding of the dialogues and in the text in general that the translation begins. At the time of textual autopsy and transposition of languages, the director begins to be provoked by possible feedback, scene solutions and is presented with some dramatic aesthetic insights of the text. As Grotowski (1992:277) states, the director has a first glimpse of the play when he reads the text, then the director must draw from this still confused vision, which is not the conception, but the dream of a theatre production. With the translated text in English the round table discussions and reading with the actors follow as the next task. Always being open to possibilities, retranslations, changes and adaptations of Brazilian expressions to other expressions of local origin is required. This staging process sought at all times to allow the individuals involved in the construction of the production to find their truths through their own aesthetic paths and experiences whilst embarking on a journey of intense anguish, questioning and discovery. That is why I reaffirm that at first the richness of a creative process lies precisely in its imperfection, in the search for doubts and in the attempt to find the answers. As we work with imperfection, we glimpse the possibility of transformation and this causes the process to be renewed every moment, becoming genuine and provocative.

The theatre director is therefore the artist responsible for conducting these stages and organising the constituent elements of a theatre production. He is also responsible for formatting the theatre production according to his particular vision of the world, choosing aesthetics and symbols of his preference when working directly with actors and other technical creative artists. The director's job is to show the

actors ways that they can develop the scene with more awareness and escape from easy and stereotyped expressions and movements. He conducts the development of the plot and the unleashing of the scenes with coherence, rhythm, nuances and truth. A theatre production may consist of several parts; it must present itself before the public as a complete picture. And the principal person responsible for bringing together the various elements of the theatre is the director. Therefore, I conclude that the setting up of a production is based on a complex process of textual study of the work, psychological analysis of the characters, studies on the author's poetics, concept and visuality of the production and many other questions such as: technical, aesthetic, philosophical and human relations involving the actors, technical staff in general and the public.

This process proved to be an efficient, rich and satisfactory form of theatrical creation and conception from the point of view of the artistic results achieved during the round table discussions and the rehearsals. This system of stages of the creation process provides a practical experience in depth and a systematic reflection of some moments of the process, to serve as a basis and object of study for groups and people interested not only in the analysis but also in the practice of theatre production.

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APPENDIX

Plinio Marcos's adult theatre is composed of the following works: *Barrela* (1958); *The puppets* (1960); *While ships dock* (1963); *Hat on cobblestones for someone to kick* (1965); *Report of a bad time* (1965); *Two Lost in a Dirty Night* (1966); *Day will come* (1967); *Razor in the Flesh* (1967); *When the machines stop* (1967); *Paper men* (1968); *Journey of an imbecile to understanding* (1968); *The Lilac Lamp* (1969); *Prayer for flip-flops* (1969); *Balbina de lansã* (1970), musical; *Open Market* (1976), operetta; *Noel Rosa, the village poet and his loves* (1977), musical; *Jesus-Man* (1978); *Under the sign of the discoteque* (1979); *Wanted, a damn report* (1979) theatre adaptation of the novel of the same title, written in 1976. *Madame Blavatsky* (1985); *Ballad of a clown* (1986); *The Purple Stain* (1988); *The final dance* (1993); *The Murder of the Great Fucking Dwarf* (1995) Theatrical adaptation of the novel of the same title. *The Man of the Way* (1996) monologue adapted from a tale of the same title, originally titled *Forever On*; *The boat of the wolf* (1997); *Chico viola* - (unfinished) 1997.

His short texts include the following works: *Verde que te quero verde* (1968); *Alas, I miss the savage* (1978). *In what will give this* (1994); *Indian does not want whistle or nhe-nhe-nhem* (1995); *Capillary reading* (1997) and *The soul of the Tietê* (1991).

His production in the children's theatre included the following titles: *The adventures of the rabbit, Gabriel* (1965); *The rabbit and the jaguar (history of the Brazilian beasts)*, (1988); *Rat Assembly* (1989); *Be yourself* (unfinished).

Footnote

The authors mentioned compose a group of modern writers that elevated Brazilian theatre to another plane: Oswald de Andrade (1890 – 1954) was a Brazilian writer, essayist and dramatist; author of the plays: *The King of the Candle* and *The Man and Horse*. Nelson Rodrigues (1912 – 1980) was a playwright, journalist, story-teller and chronicler, known as the most influential dramatist in Brazil. Jorges Andrade (1922 – 1984) was a Brazilian dramatist and writer; author of the classic *A Moratoria* and various other plays. Ariano Suassuna (1927 – 2014) was a Brazilian dramatist, essayist, story-teller, poet and professor. Author of the play *Auto da Compadecida* and the novel *The Stone of the*

Kingdom. Gianfrancesco Guarnieri (1934 – 2006) was an Italian naturalised Brazilian actor, director, playwright and poet. He was an outstanding actor in the Teatro Arena in São Paulo and his most important work was *They don't use Black-Tie*. Vianinha (1936 – 1974) was a Brazilian playwright, actor and director of theatre and television and militant communist. Augusto Boal (1931 – 2009) was a Brazilian theatre director, playwright and essayist. He was one of important figures of international contemporary theatre and founder of the theatre of the oppressed.