

CHAPTER 6

FROM TRANCE DANCE TO PaR: THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA¹

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INTRODUCTION

Theatre in Southern Africa has an immensely long history (the oldest known performances are the oral narratives and shamanistic dances among the San), but as there are no written records and precious few visual records from those early times, it really only becomes possible to conduct scholarly research from the time of European settlement and the earliest written records of theatrical performance and cultural life in the colonies.² Moreover, while ideas of theatre research and performance studies in South Africa – as we tend to define them today – are really creations of the 20th century,³ they also have substantial roots in socio-cultural processes which date back to the mid-19th century. Notable were the amateur and professional theatre and the advent of the professional critic (1880-1947), the rise of Afrikaner and African intellectualism and cultural nationalism (1880-1948) and the establishment of a Western education and university system (1829-1916),⁴ reinforced later by the introduction of drama and theatre studies at nine universities (1942-1975).

These processes, while originating in some innovative work in the first half of the 20th century and actually only coming to true fruition during the late 1970s, would pass through a number of significant phases, or tipping points (to use Malcolm Gradwell's terminology) *en route*.⁵ These were periods when a critical mass of significant factors were present in the society sufficient to shift, alter, enhance, supplant or otherwise affect cultural and/or academic paradigms. Below we consider five such moments in the history of academic theatre and performance studies in South Africa.

PHASE ONE: THE LITERARY LEGACY AND THE EMERGENCE OF ACADEMIC TRAINING IN THEATRE 1925-1935

The years preceding 1925 had been dominated by the trauma of the Boer war, the founding of the Union and the devastating Great War. In addition, the seeds were sown for a number of bitter short- and long-term problems, notably the issue of Afrikaner identity and nationality, and complex matter of the rights of the ignored black majority.

In the theatre developments came rapidly. Besides the established traditions of amateur English, Dutch and Afrikaans theatre, and a flourishing English urban theatre, we see a significant thrust towards professional Afrikaans theatre as well.⁶ The first Afrikaans companies took to the road in 1925, coinciding with the emergence of a generation of more serious and accomplished playwrights, who sought to emulate the European theatre and actually set the tone and style of Afrikaans theatre for the next three decades or more. By 1935 there would be more than 40 Afrikaans and English companies on the road, criss-crossing the country, playing rural towns as well as major cities.

In this context we become particularly aware of two strains in theatre reviewing and criticism that would dominate a large part of the mid-century: the pragmatic, journalistic writing in English newspapers, on the one hand, and the international, often more erudite writing by better educated cultural figures in Afrikaans newspapers and cultural journals, on the other. Unlike their English-speaking counterparts, who did not come from an intellectual tradition (few had a tertiary education until the 1970s), a number of the Dutch (and later Afrikaans) critics were university-trained individuals who had gone to Holland and Germany to study philology, philosophy or literature. They tended to have a European view of theatre and the arts, and adopted a far more intellectual approach to their craft. In addition, as part of the growing Afrikaans cultural movement, they desired not only to make art and write about it, but to study and chronicle their development and thus create a cultural identity for the Afrikaner.

Three significant publication events from this time stand out as harbingers of formal theatre research in South Africa. P.W. Laidler's anecdotal 1926 book, *Annals of the Cape Stage*, was not an enormously detailed or erudite account of events, but it was a very useful source of information and is still widely used in studies of English theatre in the Cape in the first two decades of the century.⁷

However, F.C.L. Bosman's monumental 1928 history of drama and theatre in South Africa (1652-1855) can be called, with some justification, the first true piece of theatre research on South African theatre.⁸ The result of formidable historical detective work based on a reading of all the available documents in the state archives and the state libraries of the country, it describes the history of colonial theatre (in Dutch, French, German, English and Afrikaans) in the country from the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 to the middle of the British colonial rule in 1855.⁹ Besides the books themselves, Bosman's primary legacy is his pioneering of the idea that theatre was a *performed* art form rather than a literary form. His students and researchers influenced by his work would continue the task of writing the history of theatre and dramatic literature in the country in the light of his philosophy.¹⁰

Valuable as this work is for understanding the colonial theatre in the region at the time, it paid hardly any attention to African performance and its contribution to the history of theatre here, or indeed to dramatic theory. It was left to a third writer, H.I.E. (Herbert) Dhlomo, to initiate this process. Founder, with his brother Rolf, of the Bantu Dramatic Society in Johannesburg in 1933, he had a clear vision for the cultural development of black South Africans and among his works are a series of remarkable articles which he published in the 1930s and 1940s exploring the nature and purpose of drama in (Southern) Africa. His philosophy of theatre sought to blend European notions of theatre with an understanding of African performance practice – this long before the advent of performance theory. The value of his ideas was not widely appreciated in the period under discussion, but they do constitute one of the first original attempts to devise a home-grown dramatic theory for South Africa.¹¹

PHASE TWO: PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK 1945-1962

Much of the research that followed on Bosman's epic project remained focused on generalized literary histories and overviews until the mid-1970s, with the notion of drama as performed art initially receiving scant attention and local writing in English or the African languages not being considered an important field of study.

However, professional theatre now established itself as a coherent system and by 1945 had become a much stronger and more diverse industry, a cohesive poly-system, consisting of a strong amateur base (among all language and population groups), a largely

itinerant rural Afrikaans theatre, a repertory English system in the cities, and emerging urban and rural patterns of music and dance performances among the Black population. In 1947 the National Theatre Organisation (NTO), the first state-supported theatre company in the British Commonwealth, came into being to (theoretically) provide theatre for the whole country, though actually limited of course to white Afrikaans and English touring companies. In 1961 this concept was expanded to lead to the establishment of four well-funded provincial Performing Arts Councils, responsible for theatre, music, dance and opera in the four provinces.¹² Their repertoires were largely European, English and American, with a smattering of original Afrikaans work, and the occasional English play by a local writer. At the same time, toward the latter part of the period, we see the first stirrings of more politicised work. For example, Athol Fugard made his appearance between 1956 and 1962, the musical *King Kong* (1959) introduced a new kind of urban performance, and a number of Afrikaans and English writers produced controversial works which changed the nature of local writing.¹³

Of course, this growth in practice was inevitably accompanied by a similar growth in the publication of commentary and reviews, most of the newspapers now having substantial arts pages and regular theatre reviewers, some of them not only academically well equipped, but well aware of international trends – particularly among the Afrikaans critics.¹⁴

Most importantly, this was the period when formal training in what came to be known as *theatre studies* would begin. Before 1935 some universities (Cape Town, Durban and Stellenbosch) had offered courses in voice and elocution, but the first formal departments were only established at the University of Cape Town's School of Speech and Drama (in 1942), the University of Natal in Durban's department of Speech and Drama (in 1949) and the University of Stellenbosch (in 1953).¹⁵ The structural models adopted were not the British or European ones, with their split between academic study at Universities and practical training in conservatoires, but something much more integrated, more akin to the North American model, with a blend of practical training and academic study being offered. It is pretty much the same system that is still in use.

Soon a distinctive difference had developed between the English drama departments and the Afrikaans departments. The English departments tended to adopt a very pragmatic approach of *drama*

training, with a focus on inculcating practical performance skills, with less emphasis on academic work and postgraduate research. The departments were often led by speech practitioners and actors (Rosalie van der Gucht, Elizabeth Sneddon, Robert Mohr and so on). The Afrikaans departments, initially also geared to skills training, gradually favoured a *theatre studies* approach, with a strong interest in the role of text-focused critic, researcher and historian. They were largely founded and led (or partially led) by academics or journalists rather than practitioners, who came from the Dutch/Belgian/German world of formal drama study (e.g. Geoff Cronjé, F.C.L. Bosman, Fred Engelen and Fred le Roux). It is from them and their students that the initial research and post-graduate work would come.

The impact of this groundwork phase of experiment and academic development is seen in the gradual increase in formal publishing of theatre research, with substantial monographs appearing in the seven years under discussion, and another seven appearing in the following decade. Besides a surprising number of overviews, histories and biographical studies by journalists,¹⁶ the period saw three substantial postgraduate theses being completed locally – one on Afrikaans and the other two on English playwriting in South Africa.¹⁷ They were largely summaries and overviews of the plays that had been written to date, with little or no theorizing or framing or serious critique. The most important point to be emphasised at this stage is that, while there was no clearly structured theatre research community as yet (or even a clear imperative to undertake such research), the focus of general cultural studies and literary research had clearly begun a slow but perceptible shift towards a much stronger interest in the performance aspects of local theatre and in local topics for research.

PHASE THREE: CULTURAL STRUGGLE, RADICAL THEATRE AND THE EMERGENCE OF ANALYTIC THEATRE STUDIES 1970-1985

The 1970s and 1980s were two of the most productive decades in more than 300 years of cultural activity, with the most exciting, diverse and politically relevant performances and events taking place. In addition, both the context and theatrical events of the period are perhaps more comprehensively documented than those of any other era, for it was the time of the political struggle for liberation in South Africa and there was a real sense of purpose to everything, including a deep commitment to, and engagement with, the work by artists,

commentators and audiences.¹⁸ In what became known as the cultural struggle, this commitment would profoundly interest two ensuing generations of artists and affect the way the arts were perceived.¹⁹

A core value of this movement was a belief in the potential of art as political weapon and its ability to change society and influence destiny. Besides the large-scale and opulent – often brilliant – work done by the Performing Arts Councils and the box-office successes of major professional companies, a range of important alternative theatre movements and facilities emerged in this period – including formally structured “poor” theatre spaces (The Space Theatre, the Market Theatre, etc.), radical companies (Theatre Workshop ’71, Junction Avenue Theatre, the Serpent Players, Glasteater/Glass Theatre, Bahumutsi Drama Group, etc.), informal (often unknown) township venues (where underground performances by performance poets, actor-playwrights and other artists took place) and the many municipal and school halls where the touring township musicals of Gibson Kente and others were presented. The National Arts Festival (popularly known as the Grahamstown Festival) was also founded 1973, in response to an important drive for identity and recognition among the various cultural groups in the country, and would grow rapidly to have a powerful long-term effect on theatre in general and the way the theatre system would develop.

Beyond the sphere of formal theatre, these two decades of political struggle are also synonymous with the emergence of what is today generally referred to as “applied theatre”. By the late 1970s the idea of utilizing theatre processes in order to try to heal, change, educate, inform and otherwise empower people and thus perhaps also to change society, had become an important element in the practice of many theatre-makers and cultural activists, and would continue to grow in importance. The variety of activities and methods included the playmaking strategies of workshopped political theatre (deriving from Brecht, Boal *et al.*), Drama in Education (DIE) and Theatre in Education (TIE). Later, the practice would be expanded to include Psychodrama, Drama Therapy, Socio-drama, Theatre for Development and Community Theatre, and similar methodologies, as well as the more commercial fields of Live Advertising and Industrial Theatre. These practices would become a core part of the university training programmes, academic and professional conferences and theatre research, particularly in the 1980s and later.

In this context six additional drama departments were now founded to fill the need created by the expanded professional theatre,

extensive radio services and eagerly awaited television service (launched in 1976). These departments, their faculty members and especially their students were important role players when theatre became an active weapon in the struggle for liberation, and would all contribute to the experimentation and intellectual debate. Not only were they to be the makers of protest theatre, but they also became the theorists for, and the documenters of, the cultural struggle.

Significantly the developments described above had come precisely at a time when the state, through its Department of Education (DOE), actively began to promote research and postgraduate study, requiring the universities to up their “research output”, in line with the international “publish or perish” philosophy. In support of this aim, the Department introduced a number of interesting incentives over the years, many of them of importance to the arts.

For example, in 1968 the DOE founded a semi-autonomous research institution called the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which in 1971 acquired an Institute for Arts, Language and Literature, with a subsection called the Documentation Centre for the Performing Arts. Founded by P.P.B. Breytenbach (1971-1973) and Rinie Stead (1973-1978), it initially collected archival materials and published bibliographies. Restructured as the Centre for South African Theatre Research (CESAT) in 1979 and headed by Temple Hauptfleisch (1979-87), it proceeded to undertake active research, its projects being largely statistical, methodological and sociological studies of audience attendance (1979-1981), interest in the arts in South Africa (1983) and theatre history. CESAT closed down in 1988, when its materials were transferred to the State Archives in Pretoria.²⁰

Another DOE incentive of the 1980s was a unique rewards system for research outputs, part of the Department’s tertiary funding formula. To encourage publication, this scheme pays institutions a substantial and specified amount per output unit produced by their academic staff. Since many institutions pass (part of) the money on to the particular department or individual researcher, this became a source of considerable additional research funds for prolific writers. Willingness to undertake research and publish their findings soon increased, particularly once academics overcame the fear that the system would be used to censor and control publication. The system in turn had a stimulating effect on publishers and editors.

In this favourable environment a number of associations and institutions now emerged, seeking to organize and promote theatre and theatre-related research and practice.²¹ Their conferences and seminars would generate a number of research initiatives, including a stronger interest in publication and ultimately four major journals. Most of the South African academic literary journals would take articles on drama, though not that many were on offer. However, in the period under scrutiny, conscious attempts were made to found journals on theatre and performance. Among them *S'Kets* (published sporadically between 1973 and 1979) stood out as a valuable resource on township theatre, alternative theatre and theatre by black writers, directors and performers. Three other important journals were *Teaterforum* (founded by Elize Scheepers of the Drama Department at the University of Potchefstroom for CHE, late 1970s to 1986), which supplied a forum for lecturers in Drama Departments, *The SAADYT Journal* (founded 1979 by South African Association for Drama and Youth Theatre), which focused on the theory and practice of educational theatre forms, and *Critical Arts* (founded in 1980 by Keyan Tomaselli and John van Zyl at the University of the Witwatersrand), which dealt more widely with media and cultural issues, but published some trenchant work on theatre and performance issues over the years.

While there clearly was a stable academic environment for theatre study by the early 1970s, most of the theatre research activity was still located in literature departments and the research published – with a few important exceptions, such as the writing of the prolific and inspiring Stephen Gray²² – tended to be somewhat conservative in approach, concentrating on biographical studies of playwrights and the analysis of published texts, rather than studies of performers, performances, and the theatre and performance system.²³ However, by the 1980s a number of new theses and book-length publications were radically changing the direction and focus of research in the country. For example, a 1981 volume edited by Robert Kavanagh, made a profound impression with its introduction of non-traditional work from the arena of protest theatre and popular theatre.²⁴ A similar shift came in 1984 when Hauptfleisch and Steadman's collection of four plays appeared, the first book since Bosman's pioneering work to seek to discuss a more representative range of local playwriting and production traditions.²⁵ In addition, three publications on various aspects of Afrikaans theatre appeared in this period.²⁶

However, the most notable year was probably 1985, when four important doctoral projects dealing specifically with black South African performance were completed by Peter Larlham, David Coplan, Robert Kavanagh and Ian Steadman respectively.²⁷ Larlham introduced the study of rural indigenous performance forms, while Coplan, Kavanagh and Steadman discussed black urban performance, introducing a strong cultural materialist approach which was to influence such studies for much of the 1980s and into the 1990s.

Following on this initial burst of activity, other individual researchers also made significant contributions (through research reports, theses, articles, lectures and books) to broaden the scope of theatre research beyond the narrow confines of written literature or formal theatre. More than 40 publications appeared in the period. Particularly prominent in this were the contributions over a range of activities of notable academics such as Keyan Tomaselli, Stephen Gray, Johan van Zyl, Ian Steadman, André P. Brink, Lynn Dalrymple, Martin Orkin and Ari Sitas, and through them, of many of their students.

One very particular result of this burst of research energy was an increased interest in interdisciplinary research, and specifically in the work of cultural anthropologists and what VeVe Clark might have termed “theatre archaeologists”, as theatre researchers began to look for more specific links with the pre-colonial past.²⁸ A critical factor for those 20th-century theatre researchers who chose to study these pre-colonial and pre-literate cultures is that in any pre-literate performance one is dealing with a set of oral, visual and kinetic activities, taking place in a world where no orthography or any (extant) tradition of written history existed. It is specifically in this period and the following phase that we see major advances being made in interpreting and using the findings of the new cultural archaeology and anthropological research, and adapting them for use in theatre and performance studies.²⁹

PHASE FOUR: RE-VISITING THE PAST, COPING WITH THE FUTURE, RETHINKING THE PARADIGMS 1988-1994

This phase coincided with the democratization process and was an extremely volatile and interesting one, during which the future of the theatre and the shape and role of the theatre industry was heavily debated in a diverse number of forums and publications. It was also a time of some self-doubt and uncertainty among artists, writers and academics, since much of the *raison d'être* for the period preceding

had been the liberation struggle – without the struggle, what would one write about or build performances on? Yet, interestingly enough, this very uncertainty actually seemed to stimulate publication and research in a number of ways. Building on the infrastructure created and the theoretical and methodological advances of the 1980s, the decade following 1988, saw another burst of activity, with the pressure to publish increasing, a South African Association for Theatre Research being founded, a marked increase in students for drama departments and candidates for postgraduate study, and a conscious attempt by academics and artists to return to international participation after the ending of the cultural boycott.

The 1980s trend towards founding research facilities (centres and institutes) at various universities continued, with the Centre for Theatre and Performance Studies (CENTAPS) at the University of Stellenbosch (1994-2009) perhaps being the most specifically focused on theatre and performance.³⁰ This clearinghouse and information centre was an active research centre engaged in a number of research programmes on the theory, history and function of theatre in South Africa, as well as being the publisher of the seminal research publication *South African Theatre Journal (SATJ)*.³¹

Like the years 1984-5, this short phase produced a significant increase in doctoral studies³² and a large number of important articles and at least sixteen substantial book publications, from traditional histories to more radical and innovative studies of alternative performance forms in the country, notably oral performance and dance. Some of the most important contributions came from Martin Orkin, J.C. Kannemeyer, Astrid von Kotze and Liz Gunner, all of them managing to extend range of the field of study in some way or another.³³

PHASE FIVE: 1997-1999

The final period comes just at the point when the country's old theatre system, which had been under intense scrutiny and threat at the start of the 1990s, had finally been dismantled and much of its energy had shifted to the vibrant and widespread festival circuit which had emerged since 1994 and to the new generation of small, non-conventional urban performance venues.³⁴ On the other hand, the academic system was now well entrenched, open to (if not yet financially accessible to) all citizens, and most importantly theatre and performance studies was a recognized field of postgraduate study and was being suitably funded by the state.

This secure status is well illustrated by the three years preceding the new millennium, when more than 60 Master's and doctoral studies were completed and 12 substantial books appeared.³⁵ Perhaps the most influential of these were Loren Kruger's *The Drama of South Africa. Plays, pageants and publics since 1910*, one of the best overviews of the history of theatre and performance in the country since Bosman's 1928 publication, and Duncan Brown's *Oral Literature and Performance in Southern Africa*, a significant contribution to our knowledge of indigenous oral performance.³⁶ This work was supplemented by other perspectives on the history of theatre and the plays published between 1997-9 by Bernth Lindfors, Lizbeth Goodman, Martin Orkin, Kathy Perkins, David Graver, Rolf Solberg and Temple Hauptfleisch.³⁷ However, what now becomes an issue of some concern – or at least of some intellectual interest – is the fact that, unlike the previous periods discussed, the majority of the academic work published is the work of academics attached to foreign institutions, not local researchers – despite the incentives in place.

I suppose that in part this had to do with the nature of the state's incentive system itself, which favours the publication of articles in academic journals rather than in books, but it also has something to do with a growing dissatisfaction among the faculty of arts departments at tertiary institutions regarding the role of the artist-lecturer and the research element in creative work.

The point is that the reward system has never recognized *creative outputs* as the equivalent of formal articles or books, and to this day adamantly refuses to do so. Two strong and compelling arguments have always been made for their exclusion: (1) the process of making art is an autonomous activity with its own unique infrastructures and funding and reward systems; and (2) it is difficult to obtain peer reviews of outputs. This issue of Practice as Research (PaR) thus became a very important focus of the academic debate in the 1990s – along with the efforts by various institutions to establish practice-based doctoral programmes in South Africa, something the government is strenuously resisting.³⁸

The reasoning behind this drive to accredit PaR processes derives in part from an active international movement in this regard, but also from two local factors, namely the increasing importance of applied theatre practices and a marked growth in experimental work by performing companies utilising performance to explore identity and the processes of understanding and healing, as well as recovering the

past.³⁹ Such processes not only constitute areas of practical research endeavour, but are also keenly studied by a number of researchers, including Yvette Hutchison, Mark Fleishman, Nadia Davids, Juanita Finestone, Liz Mills and Alex Sutherland.

PaR and the related issues would become an even greater factor in the decade ahead, as performance research began to adapt itself to addressing African realities.

CONCLUSION

The problems confronted by the PaR movement are, of course, far from unique to South Africa, for the core issues have become points of spirited debate internationally, with much being published and a number of initiatives having surfaced in other countries, particularly after 2000.⁴⁰

Since 2000 numerous and sometimes radical changes have been made to the tertiary education system in South Africa and the campaign to improve research output has intensified. Further incentives were introduced, most controversially a rating system for researchers based on their output and reputation. The response of the research community was diverse but intense, and included more fiery debates on the issue of PaR. Part of this process led to a state-sponsored pilot research project by Mark Fleishman and representatives from a number of drama departments, seeking ways to set up a peer review system for creative research outputs.⁴¹

In addition, these interests have led to a series of groundbreaking conferences over the past ten years, including three Dramatic Learning Spaces conferences organised by Veronica Baxter at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, the 2007 International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) Annual Conference held at the University of Stellenbosch, an Applied Theatre conference organised by Warren Nebe at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2009, and an IFTR-sponsored seminar on academic writing, hosted in 2010 by the University of Stellenbosch for African scholars. The first three of these meetings were dominated by the PAR debate.

So, in conclusion one might say that we have almost come full circle – from the explorations carried out through participatory oral narratives, trance dances and communal performances among the earliest inhabitants of the continent, we seem to have arrived back at a point where notions of performance and notions of research intersect and are being expanded. Perhaps this may be the ideal

springboard from which one might proceed to new ventures in theatre and performance research beyond the limits of the post-colonial.

NOTES

- 1 This article uses ideas proposed in three earlier pieces: "Drama and Theatre in South Africa" In: *The World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre* – Vol. 3: Africa (Ed. Don Rubin, London: Routledge, 1997); "Rating the Theatre Practitioner: A South African Case Study" In: Shannon Rose Riley. *Mapping Landscapes for Performance as Research: Scholarly Acts and Creative Cartographies* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009), and "Lady Anne's Blog: Some Initial Thoughts on the Evolution of Theatrical Commentary in South Africa". In: *Critical Stages* 2(1) April 2010.
- 2 This does not mean that extensive archaeological and cultural historical research has not been done to enable us to "read" and understand the records left by pre-colonial peoples. See endnote 29.
- 3 I use the term "theatre research" in the way it is broadly used by the IFTR and TRI, despite the fact that this European-American view is clearly open to challenge and contestation by writers and thinkers from other parts of the globe. See, for example, most recently Linda Tuhiwai Smith's thought-provoking book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books, 1999 and *Methodology of the Oppressed* by Chela Sandoval, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- 4 The first was the University of Cape Town (1829).
- 5 See Malcolm Gladwell *The Tipping Point How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little Brown, 2000). Also interesting is Philip Ball *Critical Mass: How One Thing Leads to Another* (London: Arrow Books, 2004).
- 6 Driven by the Afrikaner nationalist movement and the arrival in South Africa of a number of qualified Dutch and Flemish performers, such as revered actor-manager Paul de Groot, who brought professionalism and literary acumen to his productions. They provided much needed in-service training in Afrikaans to a host of performers.
- 7 P.W. Laidler *Annals of the Cape Stage* (Edinburgh: William Bryce, 1926).
- 8 F.C.L. Bosman *Drama en Toneel in Suid-Afrika Deel 1 1652-1855* (Pretoria: J.H. de Bussy, 1928). Bosman would continued studying theatre in the country to the end of his life, his other works including a variety of shorter summaries of the history in English

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- and in Afrikaans, as well as a second volume, F.C.L. Bosman *Drama en Toneel in Suid-Afrika Deel II 1855-1916* (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1980).
- 9 The formidable collection of material used to undertake this project make up part of the Bosman collections housed at the State Archives in Pretoria and the Nasionale Afrikaanse Literêre Museum (National Afrikaans Literary Museum) in Bloemfontein.
- 10 The most comprehensive were Ludwig Binge's *Ontwikkeling van die Afrikaanse Toneel 1832 tot 1950* [The development of the Afrikaans theatre 1832 to 1950] (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1969), and Jill Fletcher's *The Story of the African Theatre 1780-1930*. (Cape Town: Vlaeberg, 1994). The internet-based Encyclopaedia of South African Theatre and Performance (ESAT) currently being compiled by Stellenbosch University's Drama Department, is also largely indebted to Bosman for its data on early theatre.
- 11 More immediately successful were Dhlomo's attempts to stimulate an interest in theatre among the youth in the urban settlements, leading to the gradual growth of many other amateur theatre and performance groups in the various black townships around the cities. The articles and his dramatic works would most fortuitously be rediscovered and published in the 1970s and 1980s, becoming part of the theory of the new, alternative, South African theatre as articulated by the writers and theorists of the cultural struggle of the 1970s. See H.I.E Dhlomo *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Nick Visser (in Special Issue: *English in Africa* 4, 2: 1-76, 1977), H.I.E Dhlomo *Collected Works* Eds Nick Visser and Tim Couzens (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985) and Tim Couzens *The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985).
- 12 The Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB), the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT), the Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State (PACOFs) and the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC).
- 13 One of the most influential periods South African theatre was 1956-1962, with new work produced including *The Cell* (1956), *No Good Friday* (1958), *Nongogo* (1959) and *The Bloodknot* (1961) by Athol Fugard, *Moeder Hanna* (1956) and *Die Verminktes* (performed as *The Maimed*, in London in 1960) by Bartho Smit, *Germanicus* (1957) by N.P. van Wyk Louw, *The Kimberley Train* (1958) by Lewis Sowden, *Try for White* (1959) by Basil Warner and *King Kong* (1959) by Harry Bloom, Pat Williams and Todd Mitshikiza (1959).
- 14 A good case in point was W.E.G. Louw, one of the most prominent critics of the 1950s and 1960s and later an influential and powerful

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- arts editor, who not only had a doctorate, but claimed to have seen over 1 000 European performances during his frequent visits to the European continent.
- 15 The oldest form of training (beyond pure apprenticeship) in the country had always been private drama and elocution classes, most of them affiliated later to the SA Guild of Speech Teachers (founded 1945).
- 16 Pioneering actor-director André Huguenet's rather self-aggrandizing autobiographical work *Applous! Die Kronieke van 'n Toneelspeler* [Applause! The Chronicles of an Actor] (Cape Town: HAUM, 1950) provides a thoughtful insider's view and acute analysis of the way theatre worked during the previous two decades. Other works discussed influential producers (Muriel Alexander, the Hanekom family, African Consolidated Theatres and the Stodel family), the *King Kong* production and children's theatre in Cape Town and Johannesburg.
- 17 L.W.B. Binge *op. cit.*; L.D.M. Stopforth, *Drama in South Africa*. (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Potchefstroom, 1955); B. De Koker, *South African Playwriting in English 1900–1950. A Survey*. (Unpublished DPhil, University of Pretoria, 1969).
- 18 “The Struggle” or “The Liberation Struggle” normally refers to the period after the Sharpeville shootings (1960) and the 1976 uprisings up to the negotiations of 1989-90. This includes the “armed struggle” and the “cultural struggle”.
- 19 In its narrower, specific sense the term “cultural struggle” refers to the period when culture and the arts were consciously used as a weapon in the struggle against apartheid and the Nationalist regime (1963–1990). The struggle did much to shape the artistic and critical theories and practice in the period, producing and condoning a specific kind of political art, but – in the eyes of many – at the expense of artistic freedom and artistic standards.
- 20 Later part of the South African Centre for Information on the Arts (SACIA) in Pretoria. Also deriving from the HSRC documentation project in the 1970s were the Afrikaans Nasionale Letterekunde Museum en Dokumentasie Sentrum (NALN) [The National Afrikaans Literary Museum and Documentation Centre] and the National English Literary Museum (NELM) established in Grahamstown. Both Centres are still invaluable sources for literary and theatrical materials.
- 21 Besides trade associations, there was the Centre for Cultural and Communications Studies Unit (later the Centre for Culture, Communication and Media Studies – CCMS) at the University of Natal, founded and run by Keyan Tomaselli, and a number of

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- academic associations, such as the Association of Drama Departments of South Africa (ADDSA) and the South African Association for Drama and Youth Theatre (SAADYT).
- 22 E.g. Stephen Gray *Southern African Literature. An Introduction* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1979), Stephen Gray (Ed.) *Athol Fugard*. (Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1982) and Stephen Gray (Ed.) *Stephen Black: Three Plays* (Johannesburg: Ad Donker, 1982).
- 23 See Temple Hauptfleisch "Theatre research in South Africa". In: *Critical Arts* 1(3), October 1980:11-22.
- 24 Robert Kavanagh *South African People's Plays*. (London: Heinemann, 1981). This book was initially banned, but later unbanned for academic use.
- 25 Temple Hauptfleisch and Ian Steadman *South African Theatre: Four Plays and an Introduction*. (Pretoria: HAUM Educational, 1984).
- 26 J.H. Senekal (Ed.) *Beeld en Bedryf*. [Image and Act] (Pretoria: J.L.van Schaik, 1978), Charles Malan (Ed.) *Spel en Spieël. Besprekings van die Moderne Afrikaanse Drama en Teater*. [Play and Mirror, Discussions of the Modern Afrikaans Drama and Theatre] (Johannesburg: Perskor, 1984), André P. Brink *Aspekte van die Nuwe Drama* [Aspects of the New Drama] (Pretoria, Academica, 1986).
- 27 Peter Larlham *Black Theater, Dance, and Ritual in South Africa*. (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), David Coplan *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press/London: Longman, 1985), Robert Kavanagh *Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1985) and Ian Steadman *Drama and Social Consciousness: Themes in Black Theatre on the Witwatersrand until 1985* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1985).
- 28 See VeVe Clark "The Archaeology of Black Theatre" In: *Critical Arts*, 1981, 2(1): 34-50.
- 29 Notable in this regard have been the research and publications of J.D Lewis Williams and his colleagues at the Rock Art Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, the research on oral narrative and literature carried out by a wide range of scholars in the years 1975-1995, including Harold Scheub, Isabel Hofmeyr, R. H. Kaschula, Jeff Opland, Leroy Vail and Landeg White, M. I. P. Mokitimi, Duncan Brown, Liz Gunner and others, and the research on traditional dances among the Xhosa, Zulu, Venda and other indigenous peoples by Edith

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- Katzenellenbogen and her students at the University of Stellenbosch in the 1980s.
- 30 Three other resources from the 1980s are the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS) at the University of Natal in Durban, the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA) at Rhodes University and the Centre for the Study of African Language and Literature (CESALL) at the (former) University of Durban Westville. The Mayibuye Centre for History and Culture in South Africa at the University of the Western Cape was founded in 1991 and in 2001 became part of the Robben Island Museum, its archives being called the UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, but still housed in the Centre on the campus.
- 31 *SATJ* was founded in 1987 by Temple Hauptfleisch and Ian Steadman as the first academic theatre journal which complied with the demands of the state's publication reward system (discussed above). *Shakespeare in South Africa*, edited by Laurence Wright for the Shakespeare Society of Southern Africa and published by the Institute for the Study of English in Africa began in 1988.
- 32 E.g. Walter Greyvenstein *The History and Development of Children's Theatre in English in South Africa*. (Unpublished D.Litt. et Phil. thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, 1988), P.J. du Toit *Amateurtoneel in Suid-Afrika*. [Amateur theatre in South Africa] (Pretoria: Academica, 1988), Julian Smith *Toneel en Politiek: 'n Voorlopige dokumentering en ideologiese verrekening van kontemporêre swart Afrikaanse toneelaktiwiteit in die Kaapse Skiereiland*. [Theatre and Politics: A provisional documentation and ideological exploration of contemporary black theatre activity in the Cape Peninsula] (Bellville: Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland, 1990) and Zakes Mda *When People Play People: Development Communication Through Theatre*. (Johannesburg: Zed Books/Witwatersrand University Books, 1993).
- 33 Martin Orkin *Drama and the South African State* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1991), J.C. Kannemeyer *Die Afrikaanse Literatuur 1652-1987* [Afrikaans Literature 1652-1987] (Pretoria: Human en Rousseau, 1988), Astrid von Kotze *Organise and Act. The Natal Workers Theatre Movement 1983-1987*. (Durban: Culture and Working Life Publications, 1988) and Liz Gunner (Ed.). *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994).
- 34 See, for example, articles in Temple Hauptfleisch, Shulamith Lev-Aladgem, Jacqueline Martin, Willmar Sauter and Henri Schoenmakers (Eds) *Festivalising! Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) and Rolf Solberg (Ed.) *South*

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- African Theatre in the Melting Pot. Trends and Developments at the Turn of the Millennium.* Interviews by Rolf Solberg. (Grahamstown: ISEA, 2003).
- 35 Data derived from the Nexus database of registered research of the National Research Foundation (NRF) in April 2010.
- 36 Loren Kruger. *The Drama of South Africa. Plays, pageants and publics since 1910* (London: Routledge, 1999) and Duncan Brown (Ed.) *Oral Literature & Performance in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999).
- 37 Bernth Lindfors *Africans on Stage* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999), Rolf Solberg *Alternative Theatre in South Africa: Talks with prime movers since the 1970s* (Pietermaritzburg: Haded Books, University of Natal Press, 1999), Lizbeth Goodman (Ed.) 1999. *Women, Politics and Performance in South African Theatre Today* 1. *Contemporary Theatre Review. An International Journal* Vol. 9, Part 1 (London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999), D. Graver (Ed.) *Plays for a New South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), Kathy A. Perkins (Ed.) *Black South African Women. An Anthology of Plays.* (Cape Town: Cape Town University Press, 1999) and Temple Hauptfleisch *Theatre and Society in South Africa: Reflections in a Fractured Mirror* (Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik, 1997).
- 38 PaR is the acronym for Practice-as-Research, but the field is also referred to as – inter alia – ‘Research-into-Practice’, ‘Practice-based Research’, or ‘Performance-as-Research’ by various writers.
- 39 Notable recent examples include Mark Fleishman and Jenny Reznik’s Magnet Theatre, Gary Gordon’s The First Physical Theatre Company, Brett Bailey’s Third World Bunfight, Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler’s The Handspring Puppet Company, and Eric Abraham and Mark Dornford-May’s Isango Portobello company.
- 40 In addition to a number of recent books see, for example, *Performance Studies international (PSi)*, the *International Federation for Theatre Research*’s working group on *Practice as Research (PAR)* and the *Practice as Research in Performance (PARIP)* Project at Bristol University.
- 41 Mark Fleishman, Veronica Baxter, Temple Hauptfleisch and Alex Sutherland *Testing Criteria for Recognising Practice as Research in the Performing Arts in South Africa, with particular Reference to the Case of Drama and Theatre.* An unpublished report on a research national project commissioned by the NRF, 2009.