A Communication Model for Industrial Theatre as a Negotiated Dramaturgy

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1. Introduction

This article proposes a model that effectively represents the communication process of the negotiated dramaturgy within the context of theatre performance. It begins by defining the negotiated dramaturgy within the context of industrial theatre before investigating several models of 'theatre as communication'. It analyses these models in terms of their applicability to the process of the negotiated dramaturgy. Finally, it proposes a model adapted for the negotiated dramaturgy developed by the authors.

2. Industrial Theatre—A Definition

Industrial Theatre can take on many different forms and have different objectives within an organisation. People generally use the term 'Industrial Theatre' with very little consensus regarding its meaning or function. It is used, in general, to define any theatre that occurs in an industrial setting. This broad categorisation ranges from a play informing people about HIV/AIDS, to actors role playing situations as part of staff training, to a piece of theatre that furthers the aims and facilitates more effective functioning of that particular organisation. Practitioners use it to achieve different objectives related to, for example, issue management, internal communications, promotion, advertising and awareness campaigns. The circumstances that it addresses are industry and issue specific. For example, Industrial Theatre may be defined as the use of drama and drama techniques to create learning and change in business environments. This is achieved by creating synergy between the disciplines of drama, organisational development and psychology in the design and

execution of projects (The Learning Theatre Organisation 2000). Industrial Theatre has also been defined as the use of drama and actors within a commercial setting, to sell a product or service, to put across a concept, to raise people's awareness and to enhance training (Actors Mean Business: (2000. http://www.enterprise.net/amb/industrl.htm).
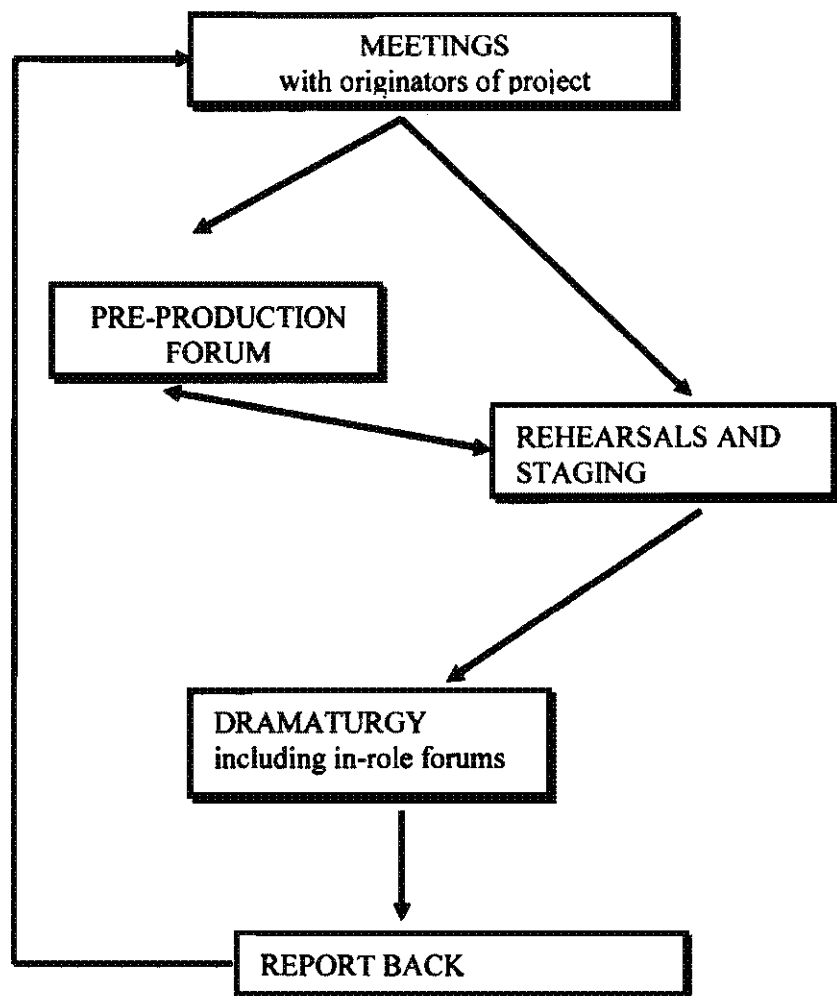
The tradition of using song, dance, mime and theatre as a form of communication is as old as the history of civilisation. In Africa this tradition is deeply rooted in the culture of its people. Mbigi argues that 'In Africa you cannot introduce change with a memo—you have to get the people emotionally involved in the process' (Skinner *et al.* 2001:307). He calls this using 'the burning platform', a process of problem solving used in African cultures, which are far more group and process oriented than traditional Western societies. Communication theory tells us that to successfully communicate we must use the signs, symbols and cultural codes which are relevant to participants in the communication process

Therefore, the model of Industrial Theatre set out here—that of a negotiated dramaturgy—is based on the two-way interactive nature of communication and the role of the theatre practitioner as a mediator and facilitator in the process of developing the negotiated dramaturgy within a specific set of cultural and social contexts.

3. The Development of a Negotiated Dramaturgy

The process of Industrial Theatre as a negotiated dramaturgy has five distinct stages. The first is the initial meeting which defines the mandate and the second the work of the small group forums in the creative-dramatic frame where one identifies the issues and where individual stakeholders negotiate the objectives and outcomes. The third stage is the rehearsal process where the practitioners create and rehearse the dramaturgy. The fourth stage is the dramaturgy (i.e., the interactive presentation within the dramatic frame). The stakeholders settle some of the issues in the forums while the practitioners deal with these and other issues in the dramaturgy. Within the dramaturgy stage one refers to 'in-role forums', where the attributes of a forum are present (in this case opportunities for free and open communication) but within the dramatic frame. The fifth and final stage is the 'feedback' stage where the practitioners report on the process to all stakeholders, not only to the originators (usually management). This includes the plans of action, solutions and suggestions. We now look more closely at each of these stages.

The Process of Industrial Theatre

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │        MEETINGS         │
                    │  with originators of project
                    └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
   │  PRE-PRODUCTION  │              │   REHEARSALS AND     │
   │      FORUM       │ ◄──────────► │      STAGING         │
   └──────────────────┘              └──────────────────────┘

              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │        DRAMATURGY           │
              │   including in-role forums  │
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              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │        REPORT BACK          │
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Figure 1: The Process of a Negotiated Dramaturgy

3.1 The Initial Meeting

The initial stage is the original meeting in which a particular organisation gives a mandate to a particular company to initiate an Industrial Theatre Programme. They present the topic and issues on which the practitioners will design their approach. At this meeting, the initiators provide the practitioners with information regarding the timing, issues, possible approaches, media and the sector of stakeholders involved in the process.

3.2 The Pre-production Forums

This stage involves the broadening of the stakeholder base to include all concerned sectors of the organisation. The stakeholders divide into small groups in an attempt to create synergies (Samovar *et al.* 1996:4). The practitioners keep the groups small to encourage the formation of interpersonal relations among members. The practitioners facilitate discussion allowing for diversity of opinions and ideas while allowing all the stakeholders to present their views on the issues.

The forums attempt to resolve the issues within their small groups while gathering material for the dramaturgy. For example, when discussing the possible ways a supervisor character should act in the play, they are in fact debating the overall operational procedure of supervisors. The practitioners should ensure that while the participants discuss the negative or incorrect operational procedure, they establish the correct procedure as well. Often the different sectors of stakeholders might disagree or have a different approach. The forum can encourage the practitioners to facilitate a negotiated settlement.

Often a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the situation is responsible for the objective of the campaign. Practical experience has found that contextualising the play and, in particular, the creation of the characters, helps establish better understanding of and empathy for each other. For example, management might be unaware of the domestic situation of many of the workers. This situation directly or indirectly affects the productivity of the worker. This knowledge might create the desired empathy and understanding that the stakeholders may use to help resolve an issue or improve conditions. This exercise encourages the participant to become aware of the 'sociocultural and autobiographical circumstances' discussed later in this article.

3.3 The Creative Process

This process has its roots in the collective creative processes of production

rather than the more 'traditional' approach where a director interprets a playwright's text and creates a production through a particular production process.

The collective creativity responsible for the creation of the negotiated dramaturgy addresses the 'tangential elements' that according to Hauptfleisch (1997:109) influences the communicative potential of the 'total performance event'. The stakeholders' realisation that they are part of the creative process enables them to identify with the 'image of the author' (themselves). The practitioner's performance within this creative process (his or her demonstrations of characterisation and use of accents in the pre-production forums) allows the stakeholders to identify with the 'image of the performer'. The site-specific venue directly relating to the objectives of the campaign and to the working environment of the stakeholders addresses the 'image of the place of performance' (the canteen or workshop or factory floor, for example). The stakeholders' knowledge of and participation in the creative process of the campaign as well as the intended perception that the campaign is for the benefit of the entire organisation, address the 'image of the occasion'.

The practitioners use the principles of creative drama as the catalyst to create the dramaturgy. Creative drama is usually associated with children and the notion of 'play'. However, its principles are applicable to the creative process. Creative drama is a dramatic learning activity, guided by a leader that allows participants to imagine, enact, and reflect upon real or imagined human experiences. Pinciotti (1993) and Woodson (1999) argue that it nurtures both individual and group skills, enhancing the participants' ability to communicate their ideas, images and feelings with others through dramatic action. The stakeholders share ideas as their imaginations define the story, the setting and the characters. This process is highly theatrical as practitioners encourage the participants to demonstrate (act out) their ideas rather than just talking about them. Personal experience shows that participants find it easier to express themselves in this way. For example, when a stakeholder struggles to share his or her idea or wants to reinforce its potential he or she often gets up and acts out the idea, sometimes alone, sometimes using others in the group. In many instances, this spurs the creativity of the others, thereby enabling the process. Undoubtedly, this varies from group to group but generally speaking this also develops high levels of cohesion (Moore 1997:84-93). It is essential for the practitioner to create this cohesion. From the outset, the various practitioners might see themselves as opposing each other (for example, management and trade unions). Johnston (1998:8-10) argues that practitioners can improve

cohesion by allowing the stakeholders to become aware of their similarities and of what they have in common (the general good of the organisation and what each person gains from it) and the need to focus on a common goal (the creation of the story and characters).

The pre-production forums establish the needs, formulate the objectives, formulate the message and establish the time frames. The participants create the plot and the characters to deal with the needs, objectives and message of the campaign, while also defining the dialogue. They then pass these on to the practitioners who use them in the rehearsal process when structuring and rehearsing the dramaturgy.

The practitioners rehearse the dramaturgy and conduct the pre-production forums simultaneously. This creates a 'feedback' channel between the stakeholders and the practitioners that allows for constant interaction on the story and characters as well on the technical correctness of the action and terminology.

3.4 Rehearsals and Staging

The practitioners base the story line and characters on the objectives established in the pre-production forums.

This dramaturgy is designed to give substance and form to the message (Huebsch 1986:7), while evoking 'feedback' on the negotiation issues. It functions as a three-dimensional demonstration incorporating speech, movement and sound, concerning the positive and negative attributes of the negotiation issues (De Marinis 1982:137, Williams 1996:371f). The dramaturgy allows the stakeholders to become the communicators with the same status and credibility as the 'original' communicator(s) or initiators of the project (usually management). Management becomes one of several stakeholders.

3.5 The Structure

The structure of the dramaturgy is vital for effectively communicating the intention of the message. Hauptfleisch (1978:37) states that the playwright manipulates the 'vocabulary' of a play, particularly the scenes and episodes within the total plot for a variety of purposes. In Industrial Theatre, the aim of the dramaturgy is to share an intended message with the stakeholders. The message (decided upon by the stakeholders) is broken down into objectives, which form the basis of each scene. Similar objectives are grouped together in

one scene. These scenes become individual units within the overall structure of the dramaturgy. The scenes operate as if the narrative running through the entire dramaturgy was independent of time. This structure is likened to the episodic nature of Brecht's theatre (Brecht 1964:279; Mitter 1992:44).

Brecht's Epic Theatre makes use of closed 'parable' plays structured episodically and focuses on a moral dilemma while allowing for vital questions to be unconditionally aired with a view to their resolution (Brecht 1964:76; Counsell 1996:82; Styan 1981:140). This approach allows the audience the opportunity to make its own judgement (Brecht 1964:71). Brecht's theatre presents a structure that allows practitioners to use theatre for public discussion (Brecht 1964:130f; Styan 1981:129f).

The Negotiated Dramaturgy shares the intentions of Brecht's epic theatre. It is therefore inspired by its structure. Each scene may be a play in itself and not necessarily be one scene in an overall play, or the scenes may refer to each other in order to establish cohesion. The practitioners style each scene as a 'well made play' using the Aristotelian concept of a beginning, middle and an end. These scenes have a horizontal organisation structure (Hauptfleisch 1978:39), meaning that they are linear in their progression, ie, the commencement of the dramatic events; the development of the dramatic events; and the conclusion of the dramatic events.

Morgan and Saxton (1987:5-7) operating from an educational drama context list four stages in the linear progression, namely: 'exposition'; 'rising action/complication'; 'climax/crisis' and 'denouement'. The negotiated dramaturgy approach favours this context as it clarifies the process and enables the participant to become more actively involved. Further clarification is gained by understanding that the 'rising action/complication' is achieved through dramatic tension. Listing the four stages mentioned above as: task; relationship; surprise; and mystery (O'Toole & Haseman 1986:19-39) creates a foundation from which to create the dramaturgy.

These self-contained episodic scenes form part of a larger structure that is styled on Boal's Forum Theatre. Using Boal's (1992:18f) 'rules of the game' to formulate the structure of the dramaturgy it should have the following characteristics.

The dramaturgy must clearly represent the nature of each character, identifying them precisely and accurately, so that the audience can easily recognise the ideas and beliefs of each character.

The solutions proposed by the practitioner must contain at the very least one consciously devised workplace error, which will be analysed during

the in-role forum. The play must present a mistake or a failure, inducing the stakeholders to finding solutions and inventing new ways of confronting the issue. The practitioners must pose good questions, allowing the stakeholders to supply good answers. This action must open the channels of communication, creating a free, enabling environment within which all parties can participate.

The negotiated dramaturgy can be of any genre. Surrealism or the irrational should, however, be avoided as the participants find these styles difficult to understand, thereby limiting their chances of becoming actively involved in the process. This tends to alienate the audience, causing them to struggle to understand the objectives rather than being able to concentrate on the issues that the objectives present. Therefore, the style does not matter, as long as the objective is to discuss, through the medium of theatre, concrete situations.

Practical experience shows that limiting each scene to two or three characters is the ideal. It keeps the scenes simplistic while enabling sufficient character development to deal with the issues and objectives.

3.6 The Characters

The characters are dramatic creations of typical people found within the organisation. Often they are stereotypes and caricatures designed to appeal to as many of the stakeholders as possible. Experience shows that these characters should be blatant in their actions and their intentions. The characterisation must be clear to the diverse audience and represent an employee of the organisation[1]. The concept of Brecht's 'Alienation Effect' assists the practitioners in this style of characterisation. Today scholars prefer

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[1] For example, the researchers conducted a campaign at Richards Bay Coal Terminal (RBCT) dealing with 'Value in Diversity'. In this campaign, the stakeholders collectively created characters belonging to management and unions. The characters were created from their own experience, drawn from their backgrounds and facing the issues that they had to deal with as individuals and as members of the organisation. This specific detail was used to create a stereotypical character that would be found at RBCT. The characters were identifiable to all the stakeholders. This also assisted the stakeholders with understanding each other and went a long way to establishing empathy for each other. This technique was instrumental in the campaign successfully achieving its objective.

the term 'distancing effect', as they believe that 'alienation' is an inaccurate translation of the German Verfremdungseffek.

Brecht's 'distancing effect' draws the audience's attention to a particular point or object (Brecht 1964:143f) thereby eliminating the 'magic' of the theatre. Often theatre is associated with the creation of a magic reality in which the audience sits backs and enjoys the spectacle. The magic of the theatre absorbs the audience and therefore they are not required to think about what they are watching. The 'distancing effect' encourages the audience to adopt an attitude of enquiry and criticism in their approach to the story of the play (Brecht 1964:136; Counsell 1996:102; Mitter 1992:44).

3.7 The Dialogue

The choice of dialogue is very important for the success of the campaign as a whole. This choice is more involved than just choosing a language, for example English and/or isiZulu. The participants need to choose a medium that guarantees the highest level of communicative success. Hauptfleisch (1997:89) outlines three premises that shape dialogue in South African theatre. These are applicable to Industrial Theatre and need to be considered by the practitioners when devising the dramaturgy.

The first premise concerns the general attributes of dramatic dialogue: His third premise is that:

- Dialogue on stage is artificial, it is a distillation of and selection from everyday language for the purposes of communicating a specific message under particular circumstances.
- Dialogue in performance is an integral part of the single communicative transaction.
- The playwright is not the sole creator of his dialogue form—it is also determined by a number of external social and cultural factors.

The second premise states that the nature of dramatic dialogue is shaped in part by three demands made by the dramatic form itself:

- a play has to communicate its message directly, by aural and visual means, to an audience at the very first exposure.
- Dialogue needs to be 'performable', i.e. it is to be a spoken language.

- dialogue in a performance must be understandable to an audience made up of a wide spectrum of the general public, and having a variety of backgrounds.

His third premise is that:

> Normal, everyday language, as spoken by the average man in the street, has a very limited range of expression. The aim of any artist—particularly a verbal artist—is to transcend the limitations of 'normal' human communication, to somehow say more than words can. Hence the enormous weight given to the non-verbal elements of performance, and hence too, to the basic artificiality of an enterprise which aims at being so much more than a mere mirror to be held up to 'nature' (Hauptfleisch 1997:89).

Hauptfleisch (1997:93-95) cites two types of dialogue found in South African theatre. He refers to 'citytalk' as the dynamic ever-evolving language spoken on the streets of South Africa, and 'theatretalk' as the language used in theatres in South Africa. His argument is that theatre is 'an artificial representation of life, not life itself', and that a 'play is a defined, purposely structured world created for a specific communicative purpose' (Hauptfleisch 1978:80; 1997:93-95). Playwrights manipulate language usage to show diversity within one language code, for example using Standard South African English and Black South African English to differentiate between the race or socio-cultural differences of the characters. The context of the negotiated dramaturgy is different to the context in which Hauptfleisch (1997:93-95) bases his argument. Industrial Theatre is intended for a multicultural, multilingual (and often a socio-economically diverse) audience. For this reason, it makes use of elaborated codes to facilitate sharing the message. Practitioners are encouraged to use code switching within the dramaturgy to reach this diverse audience. This puts greater emphasis on the non-verbal codes used in the dramaturgy thereby improving the chances of the message being understood. Added to this is the need for terminology specific to the organisation, essential for contextualising the dramaturgy and for achieving the objectives of the campaign. For the purposes of this study, Hauptfleisch's (1997:94) 'theatretalk' can evolve to become 'industrial-theatretalk'.

3.8 Performance Space

Generally speaking, the performance space is a site-specific venue within the organisation, for example the canteen, training centre or shop floor. A physical theatre (building) is not essential in Industrial Theatre, (nor is any theatre, for that matter). As Bheki Mkhwane of Sue Clarence productions puts it 'it doesn't have to happen on a stage with lights, it can happen under a tree' (cited in Bell & Seery 2000:10). Hauptfleisch (1978:126,182) argues that 'drama takes place wherever an actor and an audience meet'.

One of Peter Brook's (1972:11) most famous statements was that theatre could take place in any 'empty space'. Within this mindset, the negotiated dramaturgy makes use of Boal's (1995:18) concept of the 'aesthetic space'. Boal (1995:18) states that:

All that is required is that, within the bounds of a certain space, spectators and actors designate a more restrictive space as 'stage': an aesthetic space. This space may be a corner or centre of a room, on floor level, or it may be a raised space like the back of a truck. The space may be stationary or it may be mobile. For example, the researchers presented a campaign from the top of a flat-bedded truck moving around the site from one section to another.

Hauptfleisch (1978:183) and Helbo *et al.* (1987:6) argue that the relationship of the audience to the actors and the physical environment can be a significant factor in the overall meaning of the play. This is particularly relevant to the Negotiated Dramaturgy, as the stakeholders are actively involved in it. They should have the sense that the 'aesthetic space' belongs to them and that they are part of that space. The stakeholders' participation in the in-role forums (whether from their seats or in the space provided for the practitioners) automatically include them in the 'aesthetic space'. Within the creative drama approach of the pre-production forums the 'aesthetic space' is constantly changing too. As the participants act out their ideas, their immediate space becomes the 'aesthetic space'.

3.9 The 'Report back' Stage

The final stage of the negotiated dramaturgy is the 'report back' stage where the practitioners report on the successes and or failures of the process to the originators. They comment on the issues raised during the pre-production forums and in the dramaturgy. This includes the plans of action, solutions and suggestions. The type of 'report back' varies according to the brief given to the practitioners. The 'Report back' may be an informal discussion where the

relevant points are raised, a detailed written report that discusses the experiences and observations of the practitioners (This can include video and 35mm or digital still photography). It can also include conducting post-performance research to determine the effectiveness of the campaign, using questionnaires and compiling a research document that addresses the objectives of the campaign in detail.

4. Performance Studies

The investigation of theatre as communication has conventionally fallen under the ambit of performance studies. This area of study investigates the meanings that theatre creates. It encourages the study of meaning from both the senders' and the recipients' point of view. Helbo *et al.* (1987:5-7) divide the investigation up into the following categories:

Text: This is either the written score that precedes the performance or the spoken form in relation to other performance codes. The text is repeatable and enduring, which allows it to be transformed by the performance into voice, which is an ephemeral phenomenon. This transformation justifies the distinction between dramatic (written) text designed to be read, production text (stage direction and didascalia), and theatre text (the ensemble designed to be performed).

Speech: Speech poses the problematical question of the power of language. It therefore has to be approached through its interweaving with other performance codes such as gesture, facial expressions and props.

Stage Design: Included in stage design is lighting and sound effects. Lighting can be used to focus the audience attention on a certain part of the stage while drawing their attention away from another. The ongoing technological advancement of stage lighting has considerably increased the impact that lighting has on theatrical expression. Sound effects create a mood and impose a rhythm. It can also be used to structure space and punctuate a performance. The set encompasses the overall scenography of the theatrical event. Sets can be mimetic or symbolic. They can have a dynamic function or static function, or can be used to demonstrate the plasticity of the human body or it can be dispensed with entirely (cf. Braun 1982 & Grotowski 1968).

Stage/Auditorium Relationship: The interrelation between the performance
space and the audience raised questions concerning theatre aesthetics and
actor training. The performance may or may not demand an active response
from the audience. The emphasis in actor training varies as a consequence of
the performance functions desired: explanation through theatre of the
mechanics of everyday life, translation of universal myths, arousal of emotion,
exploration of the self, improvisation, acceptance or refusal of chance
occurrences to mention a few.

The preceding categories are based in an empirical listing of detail concerned
with the material substance of the performance rather than the object of
knowledge. This approach largely ignores exploration of the signifying
relationship that takes place as the spectator constructs meaning by making
connections across the spatio-temporal axis of the performance and develops
structures of congruity. This approach further suggests that the theatrical sign
is constructed and defined exclusively through the prior existence of the
performance tradition. The first three categories are primarily concerned with
the directorial vision, and do not establish how the performance object is
constructed and at what level it exists. The latter investigation is at most
philosophical and aesthetic, yet it has attracted many theatrical scholars. One
such group of scholars was collectively known as the Prague Circle.

4.1 The Prague Circle

Initial research into the systematic theorisation of performance was conducted
by members of the Prague Circle. These scholars focused on the semiotisation
inherent in the theatrical phenomenon. Honzl (nd:118-127) rejected
approaches restricted to the material reality of the stage. He argued that:

> ... total art can be seen to negate theatrical expression; the latter is
> ultimately no more than the sum, the juxtaposition, the 'co-ordinated
> presentation' of a number of material forms: music, text, actor, décor,
> props, lighting. The principle of total art, however, involves
> recognition that the impact of theatrical expression, in other words the
> strength of the impression received by the spectator is a direct
> function of the number of perceptions flowing simultaneously to the
> mind and senses of the spectator.

Valtruský (1976) argued that the process whereby all stage signs are rendered artificial is the basis for the transformation of all phenomena marked by theatrical convention into intentional signs. He argued that all events in the theatre are necessarily 'resemanticised' by the spectator. For example, the spectator perceives an unintentional sign such as a stutter or a scratch of the head as meaningful.

Bogatyrev (1971:517-530) reinforced the concept of stage semiotics through his notion of 'the excess of meaning' inherent in theatrical signs. He argued that this is what distinguishes theatrical signs from signs of everyday life. Mukařovský (1934:3-10; 1978) also studied the theatrical sign and believed that the performance signifier or 'text' was associated with a signifier established by the collective mind of the audience.

The Prague Circle also considered the system of stage meaning and they claimed that the denotative/connotative network was activated dialectically by the actor (Helbo *et al.* 1987:8). The overdetermination of the stage signifier led to the study of theatrical codes. Honzl (nd:118-127) observed the interchangeability of signifiers and the lack of limitations on the class of signifiers to which they may refer. The Prague Circle thus introduced the distinction between static and dynamic codes. These scholars were also interested in the hierarchy of codes in particular the way that meaning is generated and the shifting between verbal and non-verbal codes during the performance. These studies led them to create the concept of layering of codes (Helbo *et al.* 1987:8).

4.1.1 Variations in the Prague School

Following in the linguistic tradition, Georges Mounin (1969) used communication as the frame of reference for his analysis of the theatrical phenomenon. He used communication in the traditional linguistic sense (i.e. the intentional transmission of a message from the sender to recipient, perceived as such and entailing a response through the same channel). Mounin (1969:95) argued that authentic communication does not take place in theatre because communication can only take place if the receiver can respond to the sender through the same channel, in the same code or in a code that can fully translate to the codes of the original message. Mounin cited in De Marinis (1993:139) and Elam (1980:33) argues that for this reason theatre is stimulation and not communication.

This analysis was only applicable to the fictional world on stage. The stage/auditorium relationship seen in this perspective excludes any response

from the spectators other than merely applauding, hissing or booing. This position has since been largely abandoned by those scholars who wish to study theatre as a sub-section of the field of communication (Helbo *et al.* 1987:9). Ruffini (1974a:40) argues that in order for communication to take place in theatre, the communicator and recipient must know each other's codes. These codes do not necessarily need to translate, coincide or occur along the same channel (Elam 1980:35). De Marinis (1993:144) argues that '*all* performances intend to communicate *in the same way and to the same degree*, or that *everything* in a performance is meant to communicate' (e.i.o.). He argues that the audience responds through linguistic, paralinguistic and kinesic signs. The audience is aware of the codes used by the communicators and this enables them to comprehend and interpret the shared message. This act of knowing the codes while not necessarily knowing how to use them (Ruffini 1979:6) is what categorises theatre as communication (De Marinis 1993:140-142).

The idealist notion of the gap between the pre-production and the production has been replaced by a materialistic approach *in praesentia* to the performance event. Scholars are investigating the recognition of intention, aberrant decoding (see Eco 1977; 1978), and the delegation of pleasure (see Helbo 1975; 1979; 1983; 1985). Scholars now emphasise the reciprocal functions of the actor and audience in the theatrical event. They have established that the stage/auditorium relationship is socially marked, meaning that it is linked to a particular audience and its social-cultural context. Studies have also moved to focus on the language of theatre perceived in its production or reception functions within the context of a shared social experience. This focus created the use of the terms 'performance codes' which are conventions specifically applicable to the performance genre and historical period. 'General codes' are the linguistic, ideological/cultural and perceptual codes used in the investigation, while 'mixed codes' are the general codes that function in a specific performance context. An accurate description would be to describe communication in theatre as an enunciating collective that consists of two elements: The first is a discourse or combination of communicative acts. Theatrical discourse establishes a specific genre in that it displays its own rules of operation. It makes these explicitly readable in their own context while disassociating them from the everyday experience. The second is a situation of enunciation that conjures a dynamic set of relationships and contracts (either pre-existing or constructed by the performance) determined by the popular ideology (Helbo *et al.* 1978:9).

Performance studies constitutes the detailed analysis of the systems of production and reception. In the performance studies context, production is concerned with the work of the actor, speech, the relationship between fiction and the physical performance, the use of space and the construction of the performance text. In this context, reception is concerned with the visual composition and juxtaposition, the relationship between the readable and the visible, emotions, the role of the audience member, enunciation of/by the spectator and the verbalisation of the spectator (Helbo *et al.* 1978:13f).

As this article is concerned with the negotiated dramaturgy as corporate communication, it is necessary to investigate the various models that represent the theatrical process and to propose a model that best represents the negotiated dramaturgy.

4.2 Models of Theatre as Communication: The Pfister Models

Pfister (1988:3) graphically represents a unidirectional mode of theatrical communication as experienced by a reader of a dramatic text (figure 2). Pfister (1988:2) distinguishes between a narrative and a dramatic text. He argues that the difference is the speech situation (cf. Hempfer 1973:160-164) as the communicative relationship between author and receiver. He acknowledges Plato's *Republic* as the source of this distinction. Plato first pointed out this difference in Book 111 (1935:74f) where he discusses the difference between 'narration' (report) and 'imitation' (representation). These actions depend on whether the poet (playwright) him/herself is speaking or whether it is the character speaking. Pfister (1988:3) states that dramatic texts may be distinguished from narrative texts in that the former are consistently restricted to the representational mode. In this mode, the playwright never allows him or herself to speak directly.
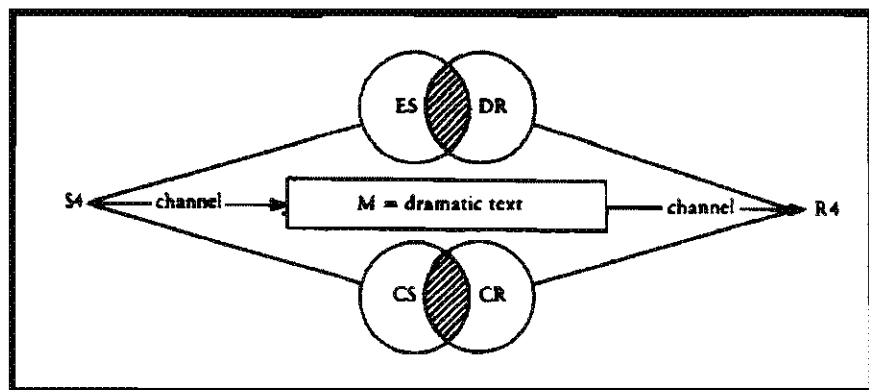

Figure 2: The Pfister Communicative Model for Narrative and Dramatic Texts

In this model, S4 is the actual author in his or her socio-literary role as producer of the work, for example as Henrik Ibsen is the author of the play *Hedda Gabler*. S3 stands for the ideal author, the character that the text implies is the subject of the entire work, which is the actor. S2 is the fictional narrator whose role in the work formulated by the narrative medium, in our example the character Hedda Gabler. S/R1 stands for the fictional characters communicating with each other through dialogue, e.g. Hedda, Tesman, and Judge Brack. R2 represents the fictional addressee of S2; while R3 is the implied or ideal recipient of the work, the audience. R4 stands for the recipient who reads the play at that time or all those that read the play at a later stage. The darker area represents the internal communication that occurs during a performance. The lighter shaded area represents the mediated communication system. In dramatic texts the positions of S2 and R2 are left vacant, as there are no actors or audiences involved in this process.

This model does not consider the other factors that influence the communicative process. Pfister (1988:3) has a modification to the above model which considers the other communicative factors (figure 3), i.e. the model is a representation of the external communication of dramatic texts (Pfister 1988:27).

Figure 3: The Pfister Model for External Communication System of Dramatic Texts

In this model, ES stands for the encoding code of the sender and DR for the decoding code of the recipient. CS stands for the content as encoded by the sender and CR for the content decoded by the recipient (Pfister 1988:27).

Pfister (1988:27) argues that the communicative process needs a channel, a message, code and a content as well as a sender and recipient. This channel forms a physical and psychological link between the sender and the recipient. The message is transmitted as a complex of signs along a channel. The codes enable the sender and recipient to encode or decode the message respectively, thus revealing the content of the message. Pfister (1988:27) states that the sender and recipients' codes are only identical in an ideal context. They overlap in the 'real world' to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore, the content decoded by the recipient is not identical to that encoded by the sender. The message itself is distorted by the channel's own noise.

4.2.1 Critique of the Pfister Models

The Pfister (1988:3) Communicative Model for Narrative and Dramatic Texts is essentially a reader's model. It therefore cannot effectively represent a dynamic process such as the Negotiated Dramaturgy. As this model is the basis for Pfister's Model for the External Communication System of Dramatic Texts (1988:27) it is necessary to analyse it in terms of the Negotiated Dramaturgy.

The dramaturgy in the Negotiated Dramaturgy is a performance. Although initially there is a 'dramatic text' and a 'production text', the dramaturgy is a 'theatre text'. Using Pfister's (1988) terminology, the practitioners are the ideal authors (S3) while the stakeholders are the ideal recipients (R3). The Negotiated Dramaturgy emphasises the use of creative drama, role-play and improvisation (see chapter 2) in the creation of the text during the pre-production forums and in the rehearsal stage. The dramaturgy is interactive and dynamic. This makes both the stakeholders and the practitioners the actual authors (S4) of the text. Similarly, both practitioners and stakeholders are the recipients (R4) of the text. This is applicable to both the Pfister (1988) models. The Negotiated Dramaturgy encourages direct communication between the ideal recipients (S3) and the characters during the in-role forums which are part of the dramaturgy stage of the process. The process should be bi-directional, demonstrating its direct link between the recipients (stakeholders) and the authors (practitioners). This uni-directional representation does not reflect the nature of the Negotiated Dramaturgy.

Pfister's (1988) Model for the External Communication System of Dramatic Texts incorporates encoding and decoding essential in any communication. However, the uni-directional nature of this model only allows for the actual authors (S4) to be the encoders and the recipients (R4) the

decoders. The Negotiated Dramaturgy encourages interaction between the practitioners and the stakeholders thereby allowing for a closer 'fit' between content and meaning.

The Negotiated Dramaturgy is a process consisting of five stages described above. The models described above do not effectively represent the process of Negotiated Dramaturgy, even though they have merit when examined as representations of the communicative process of 'traditional' theatre (the context for which they were intended) they. The study will now focus on two further models in an attempt to find one that represents the process.

4.2 Models of Theatre as Communication: The Hauptfleisch Models

The contemporary South African theatre theorist Temple Hauptfleisch (1997:3) sees theatre as a system and his diagram, Theatre as a System of Process (figure 3), demonstrates this. Hauptfleisch intended this as a model that 'delimited the domain of "theatre research"' (Hauptfleisch 1997:3). He argues that the model demonstrates how 'theatre operates as a complex and dynamic structure of inter-linked processes, to generate a particular theatre event within the wider systematic context of a specific community or society' (Hauptfleisch 1997:3). Theatre is an open system, which is constantly changing as it interacts with the larger systems of society. The model consists of numerous elements, which are also processes. These processes are heuristic in nature and encourage individual research. As this model was intended to demonstrate the overall domain of theatrical research, the entire model is too complex for the purposes of this study. It is therefore necessary to delimit the process and to investigate the elements that make up the overall process.

One of these elements is addressed in his earlier work where Hauptfleisch (1978) investigates the play as a method of communication. Hauptfleisch (1978:26) is concerned with the meaning shared in the theatrical encounter. He explains that:

> the *meaning* of a play is the product of the total effect achieved by a controlled transaction which involves all the cues (verbal, non-verbal, situational) provided by the author through the 'play-in-performance'. The play-in-performance thus becomes a communicative act, within a specific temporal and spatial setting, between communicators with

specific individual and group characteristics, specific role-relations, and certain conventional and shared assumptions (e.i.o.).

Hauptfleisch (1978) visually illustrates his reasoning as follows in figure 4:
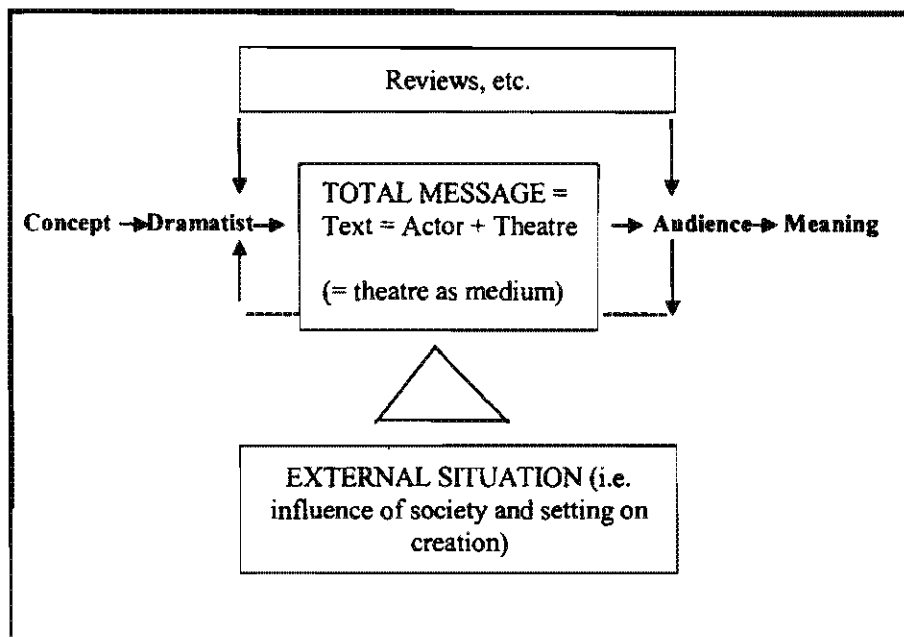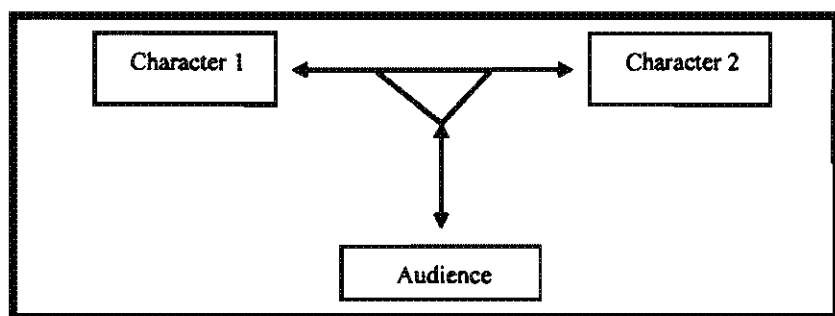

Figure 4 The Hauptfleisch Model of Theatre

In this model, Hauptfleisch (1978:26f) suggests that communication between the dramatist and the audience takes place by means of the 'total message' consisting of the textual and theatrical elements. The play in production constructs the medium. For Hauptfleisch, 'feedback' takes place in two ways. It occurs directly between audience and dramatist by means of reviews, box office returns and book sales. Indirectly, it occurs through the audience response in the theatre itself. The concept includes the story, incident or myth being communicated as well as the text, both verbal (dialogue, narrative, song) and non-verbal (theme, plot structure, character, rhythm, symbols, choreography, subtext). The internal situation is the physical theatre building

and the stage. It includes the technical qualities and facilities, the atmosphere, reputation, the stage/audience relationships, traditions and comforts etc. The actor represents certain verbal elements (such as improvised dialogue) and non-verbal elements (such as timing, voice, gesture, movement, make-up, wardrobe, lighting, set, props, music, dance spectacle, style). The external situation consists of elements including society, country, age, theatrical tradition and environmental circumstances.

Hauptfleisch (1978:24) believes that theatre is transactional. He argues that the 'total message' is shaped by the audience's influence as they act as a 'homogenous group of interacting individuals'. He furthermore states that this influence is not only exerted on the communicator (the performer), but also on the audience's own receptivity to the message. Hauptfleisch (1978:24) argues that the awareness of the audience is an essential part of theatrical work. Knowledge of its role is essential in the understanding of its effect in the communicative process.

Hauptfleisch (1978:88) illustrates the transaction between the performer and the audience as follows in figure 5:

Figure 5: Hauptfleisch's Model of the Transaction between Performer and Audience

This model represents a direct bi-directional communication channel between the characters in the theatrical event. The audience interacts with the channel and not with the characters directly. Hauptfleisch cites Kennedy (1983:11) who proposes this form of transaction between audience and characters. Hauptfleisch (1997:88-89,100) debates whether practitioners are able to circumvent the artificiality of the theatrical event. He believes that if the

characters are able to interact with the audience directly then:

> the world on the stage is a self-sufficient and closed community, with
> its own conventions for interaction, and this includes linguistic
> conventions. The relationship between that world and the one inside—
> and outside—the auditorium is thus circumstantial rather than direct
> and/or inevitable.

4.3.1 Critique of the Hauptfleisch Models

Hauptfleisch (1978) created his Model of Theatre by 'reinstating the general model of human communication' (Hauptfleisch 1978:25). This model is therefore uni-directional, moving from dramatist to audience. The researchers do not dispute Hauptfleisch's emphasis on the importance of the actor[2] in the medium. One accepts that the actor is an 'iconic sign *par excellence:* a real human being who has become a sign for a human being' (e.i.o.) (Esslin 1987:56). However, in the Negotiated Dramaturgy the practitioners'[3] role in the Negotiated Dramaturgy is larger than that proposed by Hauptfleisch (1978). He or she is not only a performer but must function as a facilitator during the pre-production forums. The practitioner is the mediator of the message. He or she interprets, shapes, selects, edits, emphasises and de-emphasises information that constructs the overall message. This includes what type of character he or she will play and what that character will say and do. This functioning removes the practitioner from the 'total message'.

The practitioner relies on the stakeholders to contribute to the concept and to the creation of the dramaturgy. Hauptfleisch (1978) has acknowledged a link between the audience and the dramatist. The 'indirect feedback' reflects the audience's response in the theatre and does not reflect their participation in the creation of the concept and dramaturgy. Hauptfleisch's (1978) 'external feedback' has little effect on the Negotiated Dramaturgy as box-office returns, and critics' reviews do not have the same impact as they would in 'traditional' theatre. The audience number has been established at the beginning of the campaign and it has no direct bearing on the overall financial profit of the Negotiated Dramaturgy. Similarly, the production is not reliant on good reviews in the media to attract people to come and see the production. Word-

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[2] This is the 'traditional' concept of the actor as used by Hauptfleisch.
[3] Practitioner here refers to professional people who work with the Negotiated Dramaturgy.

of-mouth is relevant as it may assist with encouraging stakeholders to attend the pre-production forums and encourage stakeholders to attend performances, particularly if there is more than one performance of the dramaturgy. In particular, the Negotiated Dramaturgy has a 'feedback' stage where the overall campaign is evaluated. The criteria for this evaluation include aesthetic and functional effectiveness.

Hauptfleisch (1978) recognises the importance of the *external situation* on the 'total message'. He acknowledges the role that society, environment, theatrical tradition and demographics play in the perception of the message. These elements are also important and have bearing on the Negotiated Dramaturgy. Where we also need to differ from the model is that the 'stage'of the negotiated dramaturgy is neither a self-sufficient nor a closed community. The relationship between world inside and the world outside is not circumstantial but rather direct and inevitable. This emphasises the fact that Hauptfleisch's (1997) model is not a suitable representation of the Negotiated Dramaturgy. This model cannot represent the communication that takes place in the pre-production forums.

As with Pfister's (1988) models, the Hauptfleisch (1978; 1997) models cannot depict the dynamics of the Negotiated Dramaturgy. While they may in part represent sections of the process they fall short in representing the process in its entirety. One can argue that the Negotiated Dramaturgy is a communicative process that uses theatre as well as other media to communicate. It is therefore inappropriate to use theatrical models to represent the entire process. A communication model needs to be developed to represent the process and components of the negotiated dramaturgy.

In most industrial theatre there is a developmental imperative present. As Mowlana (1987:5) observes,

> the meaning and philosophy of development is inherent in the value system of any community and nation in which a variety of economic, political, social and cultural activities are under examination.

The communication model representing the Negotiated Dramaturgy should draw attention to economic, political, social and cultural aspects that form part of the developmental imperatives. Similarly, it must reflect ongoing, dynamic two-way communication where all players are involved in the process on equal footing in terms of the creation, expression and interpretation of messages. If the participants are to communicate openly and freely, they need

to consider each other as unique individuals with their own biographical circumstances and as members of various cultural and social groups. Therefore, the model should reflect the individual history, society and culture of both the communicators and recipients and place these within a broader, societal and international context. As the interpretation of the message is important to the Negotiated Dramaturgy, the model should clearly represent the medium as the central part of the process. The model should reflect that the message can be housed in a variety of media made up of different codes.

5. A Graphic Communication Model for Development

In the following paragraphs we discuss a communication model (figure 6) that can be used in the development and analysis of negotiated dramaturgy within the context of industrial theatre.
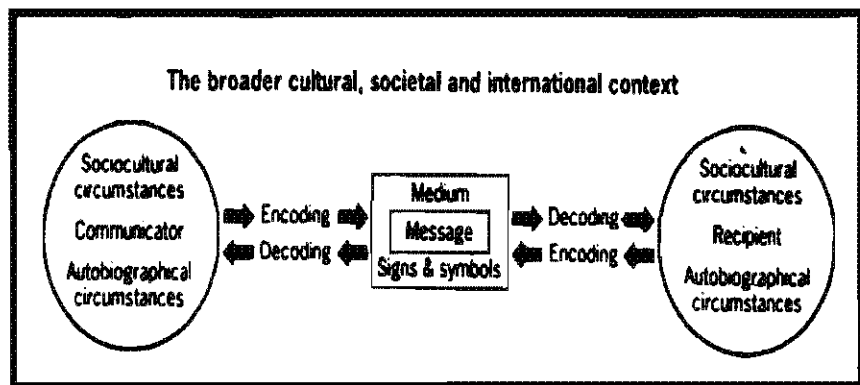
Figure 6: The Graphic Communication Model for Development (Mersham *et al.* 1995:55)

5.1 The Communicator

Typically, scholars refer to corporate communication practitioners as the source of the communication and the ones who are responsible for choosing the message (Huebsch 1986:6; Rensburg 1996:80; Verwey 1996:67). Mersham *et al.* (1995) argue, as many others have done in the past (e.g. van Schoor 1979; 1986) that the communicator 'exchanges roles' transactionally with the recipient on an ongoing basis.

Mersham *et al.* (1995:54) further argue that in corporate communication, the professional corporate communicator needs to consciously and explicitly become a recipient or a 'listening post' for messages originating from stakeholders such as employees. In this particular context, the meaning content and flow of the communication emanates from the stakeholders.

5.2 The Recipient
The recipients are actively involved in the process of creating and sharing of a message . In this model, the context of the communicator and the recipient is identical. This article has already defined the communicator as everyone involved in the process. *Ipso facto*, the recipient is also everyone involved in the process. The context of the recipient is then identical to that of the communicator.

5.3 The Message and the Medium
The medium is a message receptacle or that which provides the platform for the signs, symbols and codes of the message to be conveyed (Mersham *et al.* 1995:55). Each medium has its own set of encoding possibilities and structures. In this regard the model is influenced by McLuhan's (1964) observation that the 'medium is the message'. McLuhan (1964) argues that the message content and presentation is shaped and influenced by the medium through which it is expressed.

Mersham *et al.* (1995) argue that the communicator must use appropriate media, drawing attention to the oral nature of the majority of communication messages within an organisation. They also indicates that the inappropriateness of certain other media such as print and video in the development of corporate cultures in the South African corporate context where the broader workforce is involved. They argue for skills in encoding messages in the mother tongue of the communication partners as well as skills in the technology and techniques of the medium in question. Similarly, the model implies that it must not be assumed that all partners share the requisite skills in encoding and decoding the mediated message where more sophisticated technologies (e.g. corporate videos, CD Roms) and codings (e.g. technical jargon) are employed (Mersham *et al.* 1995:55).

This approach reminds us that signs and symbols are devoid of meaning in themselves. They only 'receive' meaning only in the sense that the

source assigns them a specific meaning and if the recipient attaches a specific meaning to them. The meaning of a sign depends not only on personal interpretation but also on collective agreement that may change across culture, space and time (Mersham *et al.* 1995:55-56).

The recipient's active participation in the communication process should be encouraged and recognised. The interpretation process may be robust enough to transform the message into the recipients 'own' message when it is re-expressed. Often, too much emphasis is often placed on the so-called 'effect' of the message upon the recipient. Mersham *et al.* (1995) therefore argue that it is important for the communicator to take active steps in encouraging the recipient to manifest his or her interpretation through a medium with which all the participants are comfortable. This makes it possible for the understanding or meaning attached to the original meaning to be evaluated.

5.4 The Autobiographical and Sociocultural Circumstances
In the model, the communicator and recipient are encircled by their sociocultural and autobiographical circumstances. Recognition of the sociocultural circumstances of persons involved in the communication process are essential in a country such as South Africa which is characterised by its sociocultural diversity. Language, culture, race, living conditions, social status and identification with specific communities and ethnicities are obvious factors that impinge upon communication in South Africa.

At the same time, individual circumstances must be recognised. Regardless of commonalties that link people in social structure, no two lives are the same in terms of individual experience (Mersham *et al.* 1995:57).

The sociocultural and autobiographical circumstances influence the perception and credibility of all the communicators and their messages in the negotiated dramaturgy. The knowledge of these circumstances establishes a definite context for the communication process. Mersham *et al.* (1995) stress the importance of the way in which the communicator manifests his or her ideas. In order to transfer thoughts, information, feelings and attitudes, the communicator needs to manifest these in a form that is accessible to all involved in the process. The model also suggests consciously monitoring the interpretations that are attached to messages by communication partners preventing them from remaining inner thoughts that the communicator assumes have been shared.

5.5 The Broader Cultural, Societal and International Context

This model also points to the importance of considering the broader societal circumstances in which the communication interaction takes place. This is illustrated graphically by the spheres surrounding both the communicator and recipient and the box around the triptych of the communicator, message and the recipient to represent the broad cultural, societal and international context. Mersham and Skinner believe that the societal (national) context is an important aspect of communication. For example, the trends towards affirmative action, transformation, restructuring and privatisation have all impacted on corporate communication. (Mersham & Skinner 2001:91-120; 145-170).

At the international level, globalism and global competitiveness, new digital communication media technologies, the concept of the African Renaissance, and South Africa's leadership role in many initiatives of the developing countries to play a greater role in international affairs, have also impacted on corporate communication and cultures (Mersham 2000; 2001; Meyer 2000.)

The return of South Africa to the community of democratic nations in the post-apartheid era has exposed its peoples to many more stimuli and factors that effect the way in which individual South Africans express and interpret messages. The model draws attention to the transactional, cross-cultural nature of communication, and also the need to take into account the broader national and international contexts that impact on the South African workplace.

5.6 Critique of the Model

The model contextualises the basic elements of communication (the communication triptych within the broader cultural, societal and international context. It is important for organisations to re-align their positions in the height of the new context in which they find themselves. Organisations are constantly attempting to improve their productivity so that they may be world players. Many Industrial Theatre campaigns are intended for this purpose. For example, the researchers conducted a campaign at Richards Bay Coal Terminal (one of the largest in the world) where the stakeholders were made aware of their role in the international business community.

The Negotiated Dramaturgy encourages the stakeholders to become part of the process at every stage. They are responsible for establishing the

objectives and proposing ways in which these objectives can be realised. The stakeholders are also responsible for creating characters and a storyline. In the dramaturgy they are encouraged to respond to the scenarios presented to them. In this direct communication with the practitioners they suggest possible solutions to the problems dramatised. They also take part in 'feedback' conducted at the end of the campaign. In order for this to take place effectively, they must be empowered as communicators sharing ideas, suggestions and comments with the other participants. The model represents this, assigning communicator and the recipient equal status within the process. He also shows that these roles are easily reversed showing the communicator and the recipient both encode and decode the signs and symbols that construct the message.

By acknowledging the individual's sociocultural and autobiographical circumstances the participants are able to overcome potential barriers to communication. Experience shows that such communication (considering the sociocultural and autobiographical circumstances of both the communicator and recipient) increases as the process proceeds. It becomes one of the 'rules' for practitioners in the facilitation process.

The original Mersham *et al.* model (1995) may be criticised because fails to represent 'noise' or factors that function as physical barriers to effective communication. The dramaturgy may be hampered by the nature of the physical environment in which it is performed. This can include bad acoustics, sightlines, seating, lighting and physical characteristics of the venue. For example, in one instance, Baker (2001) conducted a campaign where the dramaturgy was performed in a tent next to the din of a generator. In another example, the dramaturgy was presented outside, under trees, next to a noisy factory. The same researcher has also had experience of working during the pre-production forum in a venue situated in or next to a noisy canteen. Although the practitioners try to eliminate this type of 'noise' they are often assured by the organisation that certain venues are ideal, only to find out later that they are not.

6. Conclusion
Despite the above omission, the model is useful in a heuristic way to every stage of the Negotiated Dramaturgy, challenging and interrogating many of the assumptions made in textbook approaches to internal organisational communication which suppose the communication process as unproblematic

and straightforward. It draws attention to the enduring value of the ideal typical form of the communication model and challenges the assumptions of using 'standard' workshopping techniques employing print media, videos, mission statements in languages and cultural codes that may not be mutually comprehended by participants.

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