

Towards a methodology for theatre research: A South African perspective



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CESAT publication No. 6

Towards a methodology for theatre research: A South African perspective

Temple Hauptfleisch

Pretoria
Human Sciences Research Council
1984

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ISBN 0 7969 0155 4

Prys: R5,40
 (AVB uitgesluit)

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FOREWORD

The function of the Human Sciences Research Council is to initiate, undertake and co-ordinate research in the human sciences in South Africa. This commission is a vast one which implies that funds and support be supplied to researchers and research units, that research projects be undertaken to study a wide spectrum of social and cultural problems and that specific data-bases be set up covering areas of concern. This inevitably demands that - particularly where one is dealing with areas of inter- and multidisciplinary interest - specific attention be paid to basic research and methodology.

An area in which basic research of this nature has long been wanting, is that of the arts and of theatre studies in particular. For this reason the HSRC has initiated a specific research programme to study research trends world-wide and to develop specific methodological approaches to theatre in the South African context.

This report, the first formal report in an envisaged series devoted to specific problem areas, is based on two visits to the USA and Europe undertaken by the head of the Centre for South African Theatre Research (CESAT) in 1982 and 1983/4. It is intended to suggest certain basic points of departure for the future identification of priorities and approaches in theatre research in South Africa and to outline the role CESAT can play in the field.

It is hoped that the publication of these findings will stimulate further discussion in an important area of cultural study and facilitate further exploration of our complex and exciting cultural heritage.

K.P. PRINSLOO

Director: Institute for Research into Language and the Arts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has been the result of the efforts, advice and help of numerous individuals and institutions. To all the many people who set aside time to talk to me: I hope this report in itself reflects the large debt I owe. Then to the following, a special word of thanks:

The Human Sciences Research Council for giving me the opportunity to visit the various centres abroad and the time to write up the results.

The staff of CESAT, for their help in collecting, interpreting and editing the data - and their patience in bearing with me through numerous versions of this text.

Eunice Reyneke for her painstaking editorial and professional share in preparing the report.

The Graphic Arts section of the HSRC, and Mynie Stobbe in particular, for their meticulous work on the diagrams.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Theatre research (or "Theaterwissenschaft", "theaterwetenschap", "recherches théâtrales") is a distinct new scientific discipline but one not generally accepted by the academic community as yet. Certain writers claim with some justification that it has not even fully established its credentials (Van Kesteren, 1982, in particular), while others tentatively trace its origins from the mid 1950's with the appearance of an awareness of the communicational character of theatre (Schoenmakers, 1982). The novelty of the discipline has of course not prevented or even retarded the formation of a number of prestigious research institutes devoted to the study of theatre, particularly in Europe (Antwerp, Amsterdam, Paris, Munich, Lund) and, somewhat differently structured, New York, nor the development of a number of methodological approaches to the subject, albeit largely adapted from other disciplines (literature, semiotics, reception studies, sociological and psychological experimentation). Nevertheless, despite an almost 3 000 year tradition of performing arts, the study of drama and theatre has always remained in the rather nebulous limbo of being part of "poetics", a literary form studied by literary scholars, or of being simply a form of cultural history, having to do with cultural "events" - unfortunately less tangible and more ephemeral than many others. The result has been some compelling studies of dramatic texts (from Aristotle's Poetics, to the modern critics) and useful studies of theatre history (Allardyce Nicoll and colleagues), but all with a certain myopic focus on theatre as a text or theatre as cultural events at a particular time and place.

A theatrical event, a performance, is much more than that, and the growing discipline of theatre research is designed to cope with this wider and more complex concept of theatre. In the following report we take a look at some of the possible implications of such redefined concepts of theatre and theatre study.

1.1 The origins of this project

This study originates from the basic commission given to the Centre for SA Theatre Research (CESAT), namely to study South African theatre¹. Simply stated in this way, the commission is open enough to accommodate anything - and this is a very real problem.

As pointed out above, theatre studies² or theatre research is a new but growing discipline which needs definition and refinement. One not only has to know how to study theatre, but more basically, what to study³. It is only when armed with such fundamental understanding that one can enter the virtual tabula rasa of South African theatre studies.

Besides this obvious need to redefine the parameters of the discipline, the last few years have also seen a growing need for very specific and specialized information on South African theatre. The result has been increased pressure on the facilities and staff of organizations like CESAT, the National English Literary Museum (NELM), and the National Afrikaans Literary Museum (NALN), demands again not always easy to meet from within the limitations of traditional "theatre studies" and a traditional "theatre archives".

Clearly what is required is a certain amount of basic research on the nature of theatre and the various methods which are currently available for studying it, with specific reference to the South African situation.

1.2 The research procedure

In view of the foregoing requirements, CESAT has initiated a long-term

-
1. See the publication CESAT: An introduction to the Centre for SA Theatre Research. HSRC, 1984.
 2. This term has lately been replaced by the term "theatre research". They are used interchangeably.
 3. See section 3 below.

research programme entitled "Basic studies in theatre research", a programme intended to encompass a number of largely theoretical projects focussing on matters such as the nature of theatre and approaches to studying it. This first project in the programme had as its aims the following:

- (a) To look at the concept of "theatre research" and the state of the discipline.
- (b) To define the domain of theatre research.
- (c) To outline some of the requirements of a comprehensive theatre research methodology.
- (d) To suggest ways in which practical approaches to theatre research in South Africa may be developed.

The report has been compiled from data gathered in various ways. These include:

- (a) Two visits abroad (1982, 1983-4), during which contacts were made with colleagues and institutions in various centres in Europe and America.
- (b) Three previous studies by the author (1978, 1980, 1984).
- (c) A survey of relevant literature (see bibliography).
- (d) Discussions with colleagues at two local conferences during 1983, namely the SAVAL Conference (Bloemfontein) and the ADDSA Conference (Stellenbosch)⁴, when two papers, dealing with aspects of the theory contained in this publication, were read and their implications thrashed out.

4. SAVAL = South African Association for General Literary Theory (SA Vereniging vir Algemene Literatuurwetenskap); ADDSA = The Association of Drama Departments of South Africa

- (e) Discussions with and comments by colleagues in CESAT and the Centre for SA Literature Research (CENSAL) at the Human Sciences Research Council.

This work is the result of an evolutionary process, consisting of ideas shaped by reading, observation and discussion over the past five or more years. It is primarily intended as a first probe, an attempt at verbalizing and giving some shape to ideas on a research strategy for theatre studies in South Africa.

2. PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THE DISCIPLINE

Numerous factors may influence the acceptance of theatre research as a full-fledged scientific discipline, and in the course of this exploratory study the following seven appeared to be significant:

2.1 Negative attitudes towards "scientific research"

A student of the arts almost invariably shies away from the concept of scientific research in his field, for he instantly has visions of quantification, measurement and sterility, while he truly believes that the arts are not quantifiable. For this reason the primary approach to theatre studies in the past has either been hermeneutic, focussing on the explication of a given text, or historiographical, relating the various events which led to the present situation (this includes biographical studies). (Cf. for example Van Kesteren, 1982, 9ff.)

2.2 A need to define the object of study

There is little agreement on what exactly one is to focus on when studying theatre, or how to see theatre: is it an art or a social process? If an art, who is the creator? What is the role of the performing artist, the technician, the theatre manager, etc.? While this problem of defining the focal-point faces most student of the arts,

it is rarely so complex and crucial as in theatre studies, for the dichotomy drama and theatre (to differentiate text-based and performance-based studies) is endemic here. It has been institutionalized in most universities world-wide, where drama is studied in literature departments, and performance is the focal point of drama departments (Cf. Arnott, 1971; Van Kesteren, 1982; Birringer, 1983).

2.3 A need for suitable theory and research methodology

Precisely because of the foregoing two points, and in particular because of the inability of practitioners of theatre studies to decide where they actually belong (in literature departments, in drama departments, in theatres, in research institutions), a specific explanatory theory and research methodology for the study of theatre has not yet been fully developed so far. There are of course plenty of descriptive theories about the nature of theatre. Aristotle, Dryden, Lessing, Nietzsche, Coleridge, Goethe, Schiller, Archer, Freud, Chekhov, and a multitude of twentieth century poets, philosophers, psychologists and literary theorists, as well as theatrical practitioners have added their insights - one need but glance at Barrett H. Clark's European Theories of Drama to become aware of the range. However, most of their theories are theories about the nature of an art form, and are not theories useful for designing research (Schoemakers, 1982 and 1983; Van Kesteren, 1982; Coppieters, 1977; Tindemans et al, 1981.) This problem is closely linked to the next one, for so much of what passes as theatre research today is based on borrowed theories and methodologies, without being consolidated through a central, theatre-oriented focus.

2.4 The need for a framework for interdisciplinary research

Theatre, being multi-dimensional and created through a multi-process, is actually amenable to study from many points of view. A variety of theoretical and methodological approaches borrowed and augmented from other, more established disciplines (literature, communications science,

sociology, psychology, historiography - even economics, administration science and similar areas) thus become useful. Today such external help is quite common (see for example the studies undertaken by the Instituut van Theaterwetenschap at the University of Amsterdam, or the 1966 Baumol and Bowen - and the 1980 Throsby and Withers' - studies of theatre economics).

The problem with this new activity, for all the objectivity and energy it brings to theatre research, is that it so often lacks a coherent frame of reference. Unless it is bound by a strong focus on the primary object of study and unless the research is undertaken within a realistic framework of theatre oriented planning, all that happens is that the service disciplines are enriched and our knowledge of theatrical processes and the art of theatre remains as scanty, unfocussed and fragmentary as always. (Schoenmakers, 1982; Tan, 1980; Lefevre, 1981; Van Kesteren, 1982; Tindemans, 1971; Coppieters, 1977; Woods, 1980.)

2.5 The need for a taxonomy of the theatre

A simple corollary of the above-mentioned two problems (2.3 and 2.4) is the need for a common and universal vocabulary for communication between researchers focusing on theatre and their colleagues in other disciplines as well as the industry. Because the potential research teams could consist of a number of individuals from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, this need is almost inevitable (cf. Van Kesteren, 1982, in particular on this point). Also necessary is a taxonomy of research areas, for the classification of publications, research projects, etc. This in particular is to aid in solving the problem raised above in section 2.4. (Attempts being made in the USA are documented in Woods, 1980, while a first South African categorization is provided in Hauptfleisch, 1980.)

2.6 A mouthpiece for theatre researchers

At present, though there are numerous journals catering for theatre

studies, they are mostly traditional in approach and editorial policy. Some of the most significant work, particularly on South African theatre, is therefore published not in theatre journals, but in publications where the focus is one of the service disciplines (i.e. sociology, psychology, semiotics, anthropology, economics, etc.). For this reason an efficient bibliographical service is an important aid. However, the ideal is still a theatre research journal which can serve as co-ordinating forum for the promotion and co-ordination of research and theatre as a unique phenomenon which needs to be studied in terms of its own conventions and its own needs. Not even such a prestigious journal as Theatre Research International, despite its title and the fact that it is the mouthpiece of the International Federation for Theatre Research, is able to fill that vacuum. In South Africa today the only academic theatre journal is Teaterforum, with Critical Arts producing occasional issues on theatre. Scenaria is a regular but popular journal for the performing arts.

* 2.7 Training of theatre researchers, and job opportunities⁴

While this is the last of the problems to be mentioned, it is perhaps the most fundamental one of all, for traditionally the two disciplines which have studied drama and theatre have either been interested in textual exposition (literature departments) or the training of actors and teachers (theatre departments). The students taking those courses have only those expectations, so they make no further demands. The result is:

- ✓ . The teaching staff itself has no training in research.
- ✓ . There are no incentives for staff to get the training or introduce courses in training. This is particularly reinforced by the arran-

4. Here I deal only with the current situation in South Africa, although overseas too, judging by the papers read at the 1982 ATA-Conference, the situation is not satisfactory.

gement university staff have whereby any theatre production may be presented for promotion purposes in lieu of research publications.

- . There are no research components built into the theatre courses.
- . There are inevitably few job opportunities for theatre researchers. Although the utility of the current historical and hermeneutic research is not high, such trainees can at least get positions in literature or dramatology departments⁵, but a person trained in other forms of scientific research is considered to be less useful there. Theatre companies and other commercial establishments do not usually have positions for people interested and/or trained in theatre research. (Cf. Scheepers, 1978 and 1983 for one view of drama training in South Africa today.)

3. THE DOMAIN OF THEATRE RESEARCH

The object of study in theatre research must be the entire scope of the theatre phenomenon. It sounds a simple and self evident statement to make, but as pointed out in the introduction this is not so. The point is: theatre is "made" by a large number of people, influenced by, involved in and passing through many processes along the way. What then is the domain of theatre research?

Depending on the particular theoretical or discipline orientation of the individual researcher, the focus may be any of the elements involved in making theatre. However, little theatre research theory is as yet available to integrate all these elements in a manageable whole. Since the mid-fifties, when the concept of theatre was finally being extended beyond the acts of writing and staging plays only, particularly through the theoretical ideas evolved by the sociologists of art and the communicationalists (Schoenmakers, 1982, traces an awareness of audiences

5. I.e. the study of the dramatic text, within a drama/theatre department.

from writers such as Bruford, 1955, for example), a large number of models have been evolved to explain and in some way define the scope of "theatre"⁶. Most of these models derive from communicational models and see theatre as some kind of communicational system. In this section a few of these models will be illustrated, in order to indicate some of the parameters of the object theatre.

At its simplest the classic communication model looks like this:

Figure 3.1



This is a linear model, assuming one-way communication and later models have largely been refinements of this particular one, trying to make provision for the multitude of other factors involved in any interaction between human beings.

Applied to the arts this simple model would most probably look like this:

Figure 3.2



6. Models are used here in the sense outlined by Gorrell (1981) when he defines a "precurative theoretical model" in terms of four major functions (p.129 ff). He says that such models typically:

"(1) delineate and suggest some of the primary questions and puzzles in need of examination and clarification; (2) restrict, isolate, simplify and systematize the domain under investigation; (3) provide a universe of discourse or way of talking about certain aspects of the objects or phenomena under investigation; and (4) provide explanation sketches and the means for making predictions."

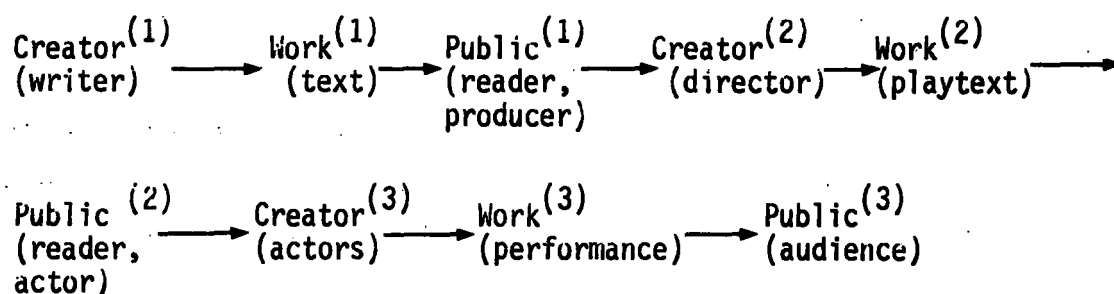
7. The painter, writer, composer, etc.

8. This may be the reader, the visitor to a gallery, the audience, etc.

What is transmitted or communicated by this process may be termed a "message", i.e. some idea, impression, feeling or experience.

However, once we move into the area of the "performing arts", the model, even in these simple terms, becomes somewhat more complicated, for there is not one, but possibly a number of "creators", more than one "work of art", even more than one potential "public". To illustrate, consider the following suggestion regarding theatre:

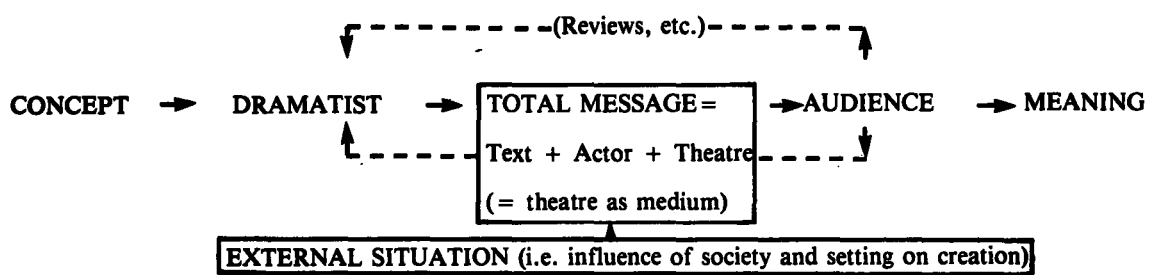
Figure 3.3



This again is extremely simplistic, but it does point to the complexity, and possibly to one of the reasons why an encompassing theatre research theory has been so long in coming. It has all along been simplest to focus on one or the other of the various communicational processes taking place, i.e. that of creator⁽¹⁾ which is the playwright (writer → text → reader/producer), or that of creator⁽²⁾ (the director) (director → playtext → reader/actor), or that of creator⁽³⁾ (the actors) (actors → performance → audience).

If one were to extend the linear model demonstrated above, two recent views might be of use. The first is that of Hauptfleisch (1978), where theatrical communication is seen as a single transactional communication between a dramatist and an audience in a theatre:

Figure 3.4

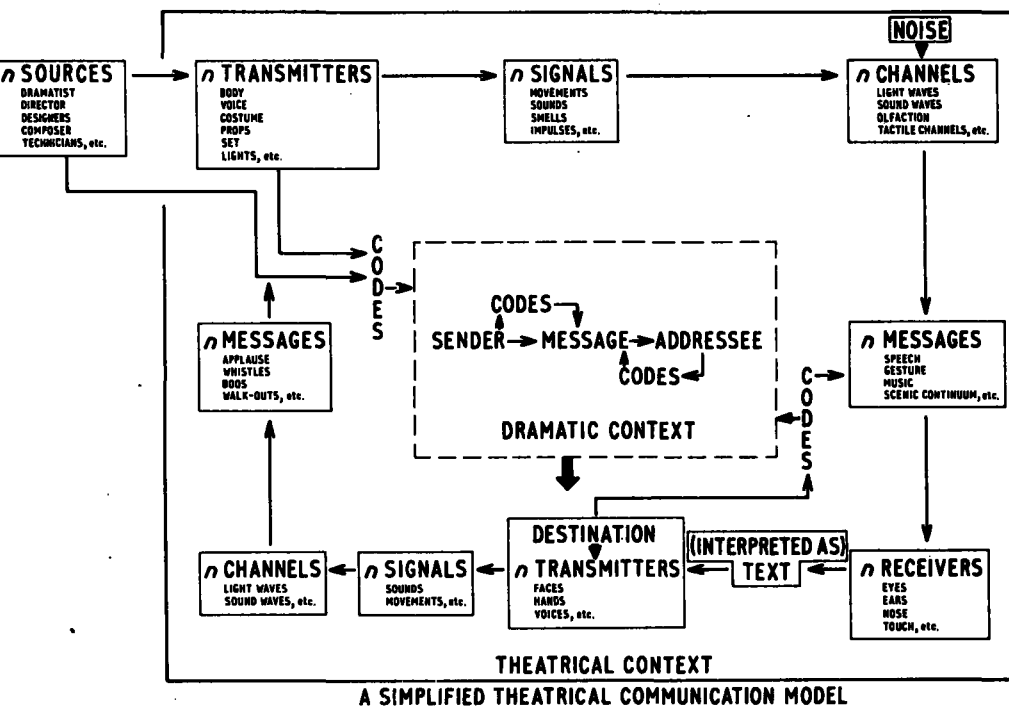


This model, when extended to its full complexity, compares a large number of units, as illustrated in figure 3.5 (at the end of the publication).

The point of this model was to try and establish, for the literary scholar, what the full range of theatrical vocabulary might be. It is a model therefore which does not really allow for the multiple communicational transactions illustrated above in figure 3.3, although later discussion of the model does point to an awareness of that factor.

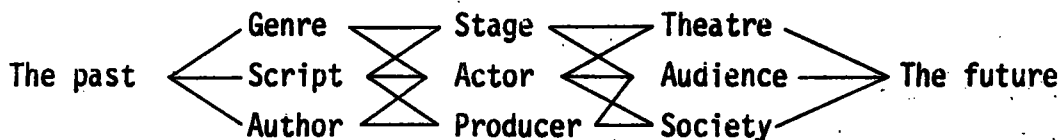
Also based on the assumption that theatre is a means of communication, Paul Elam (1980, p. 39) proposes a semiotic model (figure 3.6) which is mostly different in format (although it is still based on the sender/receiver approach), but makes clear provision for the interpretation of the play as text. On the other hand this model again does not refer to the social, cultural and environmental context in which the play is made, read and produced.

Figure 3.6



An interesting model, conceived by one of the pioneers in the field of theatrical readings of playtexts, John L. Styan, (1975), provides us with a useful chronological view of the creative process:

Figure 3.7



It is this chronological approach which Henry Schoenmakers (1982, 1983) found most useful when he looked for a model on which to base his research design. Like Hauptfleisch, he opted for a simple linear model instead of the more intricate models suggested by semioticians (e.g. Elam, figure 3.6 above), for he sees it as more useful for research design. He takes it somewhat further however, establishing as root metaphor a chain of connected processes, rather than using the familiar sender/receiver approach. It is a model based on Kindt and Schmidt's (1979) literary model and he in fact uses the original model when he deals with what he calls "dramatical" (as opposed to "theatrical") communication (figure 3.8,⁹) then uses it to design one for what he then terms "theatrical" communication (figure 3.9).

While this specific model again does not at one glance show the extent of the influences operating on the total communicational transaction (as for example does the one in figure 3.4), for it is primarily aimed at reception research, it does provide useful "focus points" for research purposes. It also deals as comfortably as Elam's does with the optional receiver (i.e. reader and/or producer) at the end of the dramatical model.

9. Figures 3.8-3.13, 4.1-4.2 and 6.1-6.3 appear at the end of this report.

Based on the foregoing models, on a study of certain "taxonomies" of theatre research (cf. for example Woods, 1980 and the work of the Theatre Research Data Center, Brooklyn College) and on many discussions with colleagues, the following model of "theatre" as a potential object of study is proposed (see figure 3.10).

In this model the channels of communication and interaction are represented by the solid lines between the various units. The lines also represent possible lines of feedback, for each line symbolizes a transactional relationship between the units.

Each unit again might be a process (enclosed by a square) or an artefact (in a circle). In the case of the process there may be one or more artificers and each square can be broken down in greater detail to provide information on the process occurring in each case. For example, in figures 3.11 and 3.12 I suggest such models for the processes itemized as "Performance Input" and "Participating Response" respectively. The same can - and should eventually - be done for every one of the squares in the model. It might also be taken further, as Schoenmakers illustrated with his adaption of a model from Lindsay and Norman (1977), which is provided in figure 3.13. Here the approach is psychological and focusses solely on the item "reception process" within figure 3.12. One can carry on with this kind of refinement ad infinitum, in whatever way the specific needs of the research may lie.

Clearly this is an ideal model, but no rigid or static one. Any of the units may be removed, altered, shifted or replaced in order to deal with specific performances. To use this model to represent the performance of a traditional Zulu wedding ceremony for instance, would be entirely possible, but would require a free interpretation of many of the units, and the removal of many others which would not apply in that particular case. A performance of Hamlet by a performing arts council on the other hand would most probably involve all units.

4. THE IMPLICATIONS THESE MODELS HAVE FOR THEATRE RESEARCH

Taking the model in figure 3.10 as an outline of the total field of study for the theatre researcher, one might now come to conclusions as to what "theatre research" could entail. In the first place it is clear that as stated in the introduction of this report, the object of study in theatre research is something much more complex than a simple text with a fixed meaning. Theatre has many unique characteristics, among which there are the following:

- . It is a social phenomenon.
- . It is fundamentally a communicational medium.
- . It is a communal creation.
- . It is created by means of a number of indentifiable, but integrated "processes" involving numerous inputs by many artificers.
- . Its final "artefact" is a controlled "free" occurrence, unique and unrepeatable, re-created nightly in a specific environment.

From this it is clear that the ideal study of theatre is virtually unattainable, for the artefact itself, the performance, is entirely transitory and can never be brought to a dissecting table. Nevertheless, having stated that, it is also true that there is a great deal that can be studied, including the numerous processes involved in creating the performance and the more permanent artefacts that result - the text, the film, the review, the subtler but very real cultural, social and other reactions, and so on. Enough in fact to ask for a sound theory and methodology for theatre research, a methodology which will for example enable us to interpret the specific theatre event in terms of its inputs and outputs and its short and long term impact on the entire socio-cultural world.

In terms of the above, the model in figure 3.10 has some value in determining what are to be the parameters of any specific research topic. Say for example one wished to study a certain director's creative input in a certain performance (e.g. how did Francois Swart "create" the first production of P.G. du Plessis's Siener in die Suburbs?). Such a study would not simply imply studying and comparing the original text (Text⁽¹⁾) and the director's final working text (Text⁽³⁾), for creative input has links way beyond the few scribblings on paper. In figure 4.1 some of the more important areas of study which would be essential are suggested. (For simplicity's sake, it has been abstracted from the main model, but should be seen within the larger pattern.) And of course, for each of these, the entire process is of value, not simply the existence of a particular unit. This for example would be important to establish how internal modifying processes (i.e. comments of administration, fears for public response, attitudes within the company, etc.) actually helped shape the final performance of Siener in die Suburbs.

In figure 4.2 another model is provided, this time having the internal modifier itself as focus. In the previous example the focus was largely the character, ideals, working methods and so on of an individual. In this case there is no single artificer, but the process itself is to be studied. As a result the interrelationships become even more complex. Of course the complexity may vary from play to play. Obviously today the internal demands for modification (i.e. self-censorship, etc.) would be different for a play by Athol Fugard than, say, one by George Bernard Shaw.

When one considers the patterns illustrated in figures 4.1 and 4.2 it becomes clear that the research techniques of conventional theatre studies (textual analysis, descriptive documentation, cultural-historical study) are useful, but inadequate. It is in view of these needs that certain theoreticians have adapted new approaches, such as semiotics, reception aesthetics, the sociology of art and content

analysis, from other disciplines for use in theatre studies. However, to date such invaluable advances have been made as new research in their own right, and not yet as part of a comprehensive and integrated theatre research paradigm. Also, they have been partial advances, leaving many aspects of theatre unaccounted for.

Take for example the case presented in figure 4.2. Should one wish to study the various aspects raised in that particular model it would require, at the very minimum, some basic knowledge of the following areas:

textual analysis (text⁽¹⁾, text⁽³⁾); economics (financial input); sociology (socio-political situation; societal response; the various conventions); communications and psychology (participatory reception; direct response; environmental input); administration sciences (administrative input; internal modifying procedures); theatre studies (creative input; performance input; performance).

Depending on the nature of the particular area of focus, the degree of expertise required might vary, but the fact remains that the approach needs to be multi-disciplinary and cognisance will have to be taken of the diverse variables involved here.¹⁰

There are two obvious approaches to such research. In the first instance one might bring together a research team made up of experts from the various fields. It is a useful but expensive approach (cf. Schoenmakers, 1982, also the work of the Centre Recherches Théâtrales in Paris).

10. The model in Figure 3.10 can also be the starting point for a categorization of research areas according to the approaches used. See for example Hauptfleisch, 1980. (Also the publication: CESAT: A guide to the Centre for South African Theatre Research where this matrix is discussed. A copy of the matrix is provided as an appendix.)

Another approach is to train a theatre researcher in the basics of the various service-disciplines. Neither the above solutions are ideal, although both evince specific advantages and disadvantages. In the first case one theoretically has the highest degree of expertise, but creating a unified research approach is difficult. In the second case the ideal of a unified theatre-oriented approach is retained, but the level of expertise must inevitably suffer.

DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY FOR THEATRE RESEARCH

Clearly the answer to the problem outlined above lies somewhere between the two extremes noted. What one is eventually looking for is a methodology for dealing with the specific and unique nature of theatre and this can probably only be attained through a many-phased programme of development based on an awareness of the nature of theatre, the insights of numerous service disciplines, and a specialized training course (or courses). At least the following eight phases of development seem to be called for:

Phase 1: The construction of a suitable model of theatre as an object of study.

Phase 2: The identification of the units for research and the development of a basic research infrastructure to undertake phases 3 and 4.

Phase 3: The identification of the research approaches required and, in conjunction with experts from the appropriate fields, the development of procedures with which to deal with each unit and problem identified. This all in terms of the model devised in phase 1.

Phase 4: The construction of a comprehensive theatre research theory and a paradigm which can encompass the specific methods identified in Phase 3.

Phase 5: The development and institution of training procedures to train researchers in the use of the various techniques involved, in close collaboration with research institutions. The trained researchers to eventually serve as co-ordinators of research teams assembled to study specific phenomena, using the new theatre-specific techniques.

Phase 6: The completion of fundamental studies of the processes of theatre-making, undertaken as a co-ordinated series of research programmes.

Phase 7: The construction of a comprehensive theory of theatre and theatre studies, based on the findings of the research undertaken in phase 6.

Phase 8: The setting up of research teams, consisting of theatre-trained researchers as project leaders, and employing expertise and data drawn from service disciplines - to deal with individual research topics in terms of 7 above.

Fundamental to the outline given above is the need for a comprehensive and co-ordinated research strategy,¹¹ one that can ensure a goal-oriented research pattern on the one hand, and a flexible programme on the other to allow for the involvement of all potential research manpower, including students and freelance workers.

6. A RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

To undertake the kind of research suggested in section 5 will require an extensive and sophisticated research infrastructure, which would, apart from the necessary financing, include the following:

-
11. Strategy: i.e. a plan of action whereby the issues that need to be studied may be dealt with on a national and co-ordinated basis.

- (a) a complete data-base (consisting of comprehensive theatre archives, a theatre museum, a central collection of theatre statistics, a specialized theatre library and a video and sound archives);
- (b) a specific research-oriented, interdisciplinary training-course for theatre researchers (that will provide training in disciplines such as dramatology, production research, cultural history, architecture, sociology, communication, ethnology, education, statistics and economics);
- (c) a co-ordinated system of experimental and creative theatre workshops to which authors, researchers and theatre artists may be attached on a full-time or part-time basis, with a view to undertaking specific research projects for the development of the theatre;
- (d) a central co-ordinating body to help determine priorities, to monitor research in order to prevent overlapping and unnecessary duplication; and to help carry out priority projects;
- (e) sufficient trained researchers with enough opportunities for full time employment;
- (f) a mouthpiece in which new research can promptly be brought to the attention of researchers and new trends and theories discussed and evaluated.

Should one think of this as part of an integrated network it may be illustrated in the form of an organigram (see figure 6.1 at the end of this publication).

The proposal, an ideal based on lengthy discussion with numerous colleagues here and abroad, as well as some of the pioneering work of

Carlos Tindemans and his colleagues (vide Bibliography), is - like most of the other suggestions in this document - intended to elicit discussions about the nature of theatre research. Possibly the most important element in the figure is the central position assigned to training institutions and the close interaction required with the practical world of theatre, education, the media and research.

Should we now draw the same figure for the current situation in South Africa, it looks like the organigram in figure 6.2.

Clearly effective research - as defined in Section 5 of this study - is impossible at present. More alarming in a way is the fact that there is a lack of two-way co-operation in so many areas, particularly regarding the role of the training institutions, a situation which in practical terms means that:

- 6.1 While training institutions train numerous drama teachers, these new teachers are not used effectively in schools, or do not teach drama at all. Thus the long term aim of creating audiences suffers.
- 6.2 Training programmes for actors and directors are not always geared to the specific, but constantly changing needs of the industry, a frustrating issue on both sides.
- 6.3 The trained critics are not employed by the media, or if so cannot use their expertise to the full - for on the one hand the course has not been geared to the requirements of the media but is based on academic theories and on the other the media seldom has interest in the educational role of the critic.
- 6.4 There are not enough trained researchers to deal with even the most crucial problems in the field, for the dramatological and literary approach taught cannot cope with many of the real issues faced today.

It would seem then that there is a need to move - even if only gradually at first - towards a comprehensive theatre research infrastructure for South Africa, one based on the suggestions implied in figure 6.1. Possibly it may eventually look like the situation outlined by figure 6.3, a model to be read in conjunction with figure 6.1.

Central to this model is something which does not exist yet, but which is urgently needed, namely an Arts Council for South Africa. Such an arts council can, through its funding and organizational activities (indicated by bold arrows), stimulate and promote, not only creative work but also research and training. Theatre research in turn will be invaluable to such an arts council.

Another important addition to this model is the introduction of controlled, dynamic theatre workshops - where writers, actors, researchers and audience can get together to create new work as well as study theatrical processes. 'Workshops' in South Africa so far have largely been improvisational sessions, not full scale theatre laboratories in the Brooksonian or Grotowskian sense.¹² With our dynamic multi-cultural possibilities, South Africa can lead the world in this kind of facility if it were properly controlled and documented.

Finally this model provides for a wide range of co-operative ventures - between training institutions and the research organizations; and between the various kinds of training institutions themselves. Theatre being such a multi-disciplinary activity, teamwork is an essential element of an attempt at progress in the art and the academic discipline it has spawned.

CONCLUSION

Theatre research in the comprehensive sense that it has been used in this study, is a relatively new, wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary field, in which there is as yet little basic research theory, few grand masters and a multitude of possibilities for original and creative academic work. In South Africa these possibilities not only beckon - they challenge us to involve ourselves.

12. See Peter Brook, 1972 and Jerzy Grotowski, 1975.

Figure 3.5

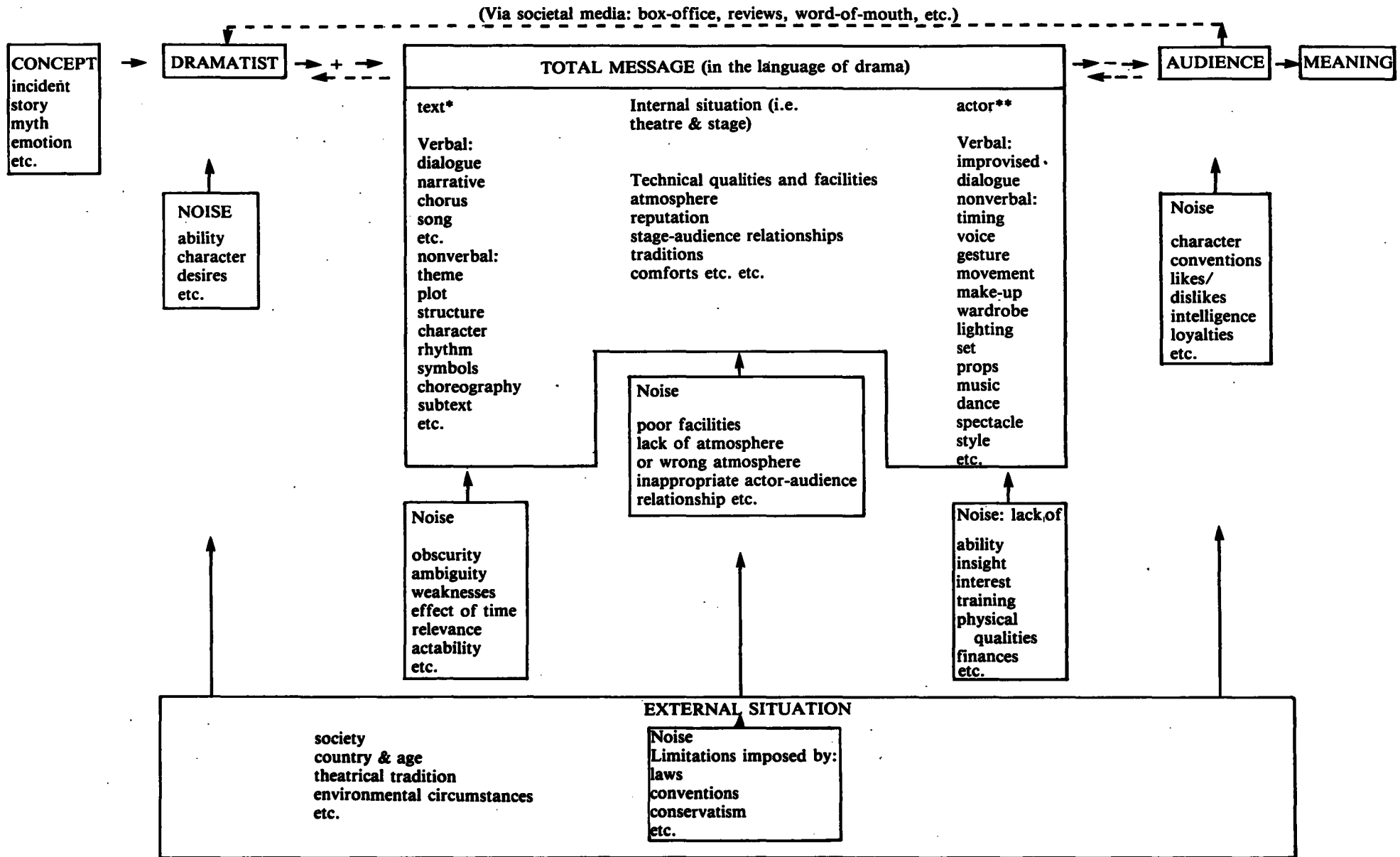
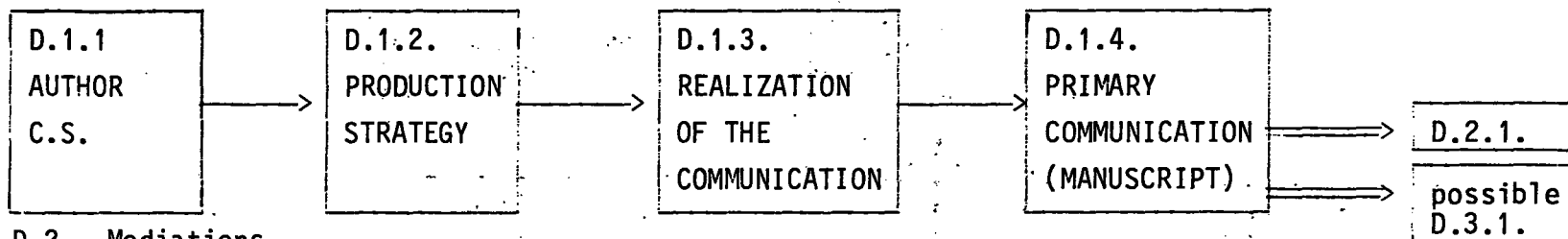


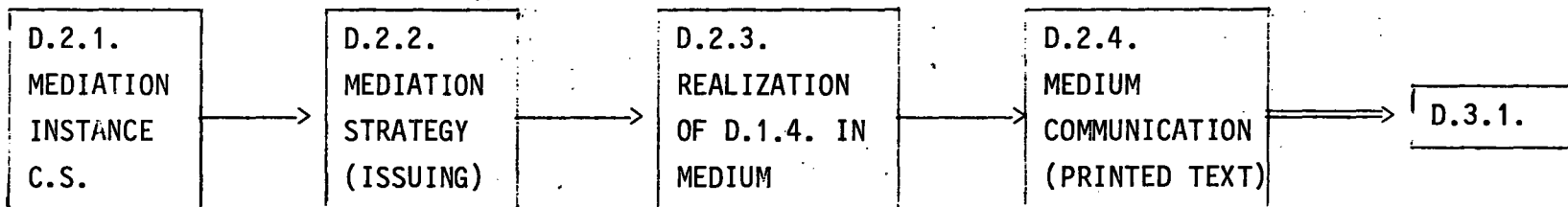
Figure 3.8 Sketch of the dramatical communication

(According to Kindt & Schmidt 1979; from Schoenmakers 1979)

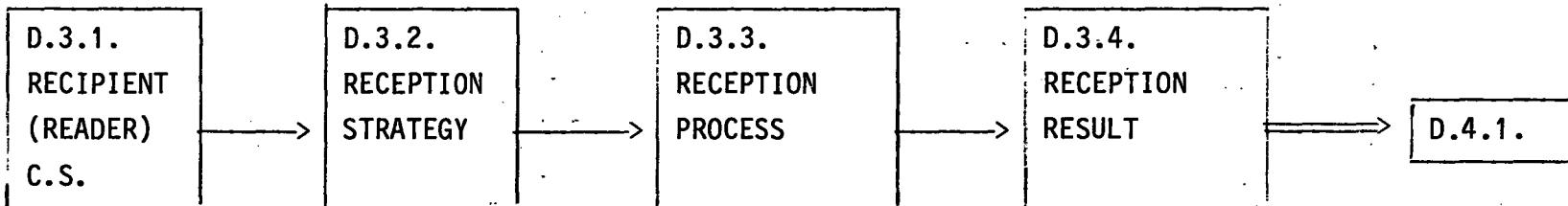
D.1. Production of the communicate (Dramatext)



D.2. Mediations



D.3. Reception



D.4. Informationprocessing

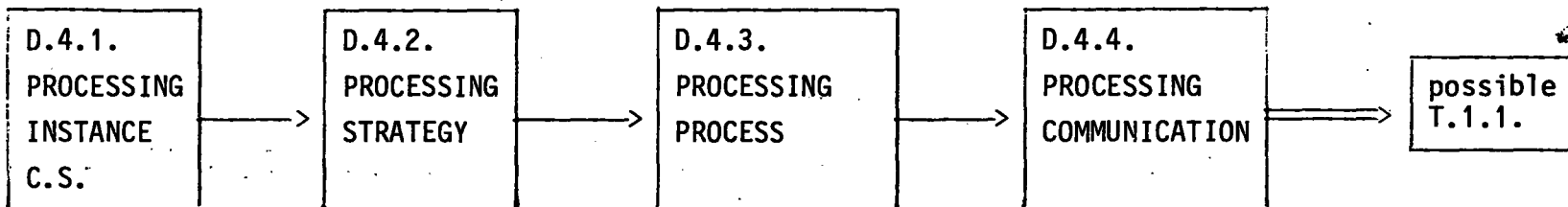
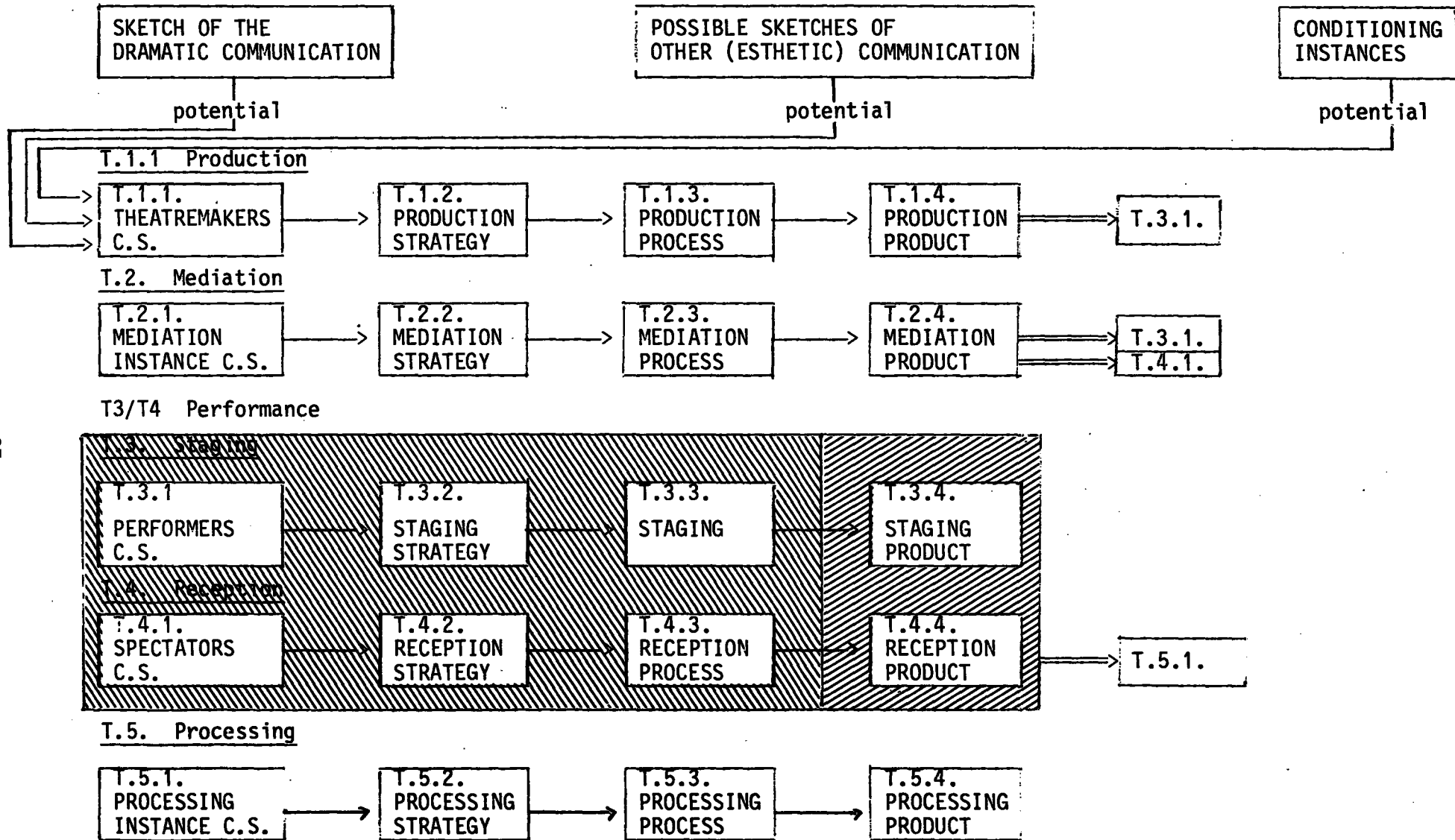


Figure 3.9: Sketch of Theatrical Communication

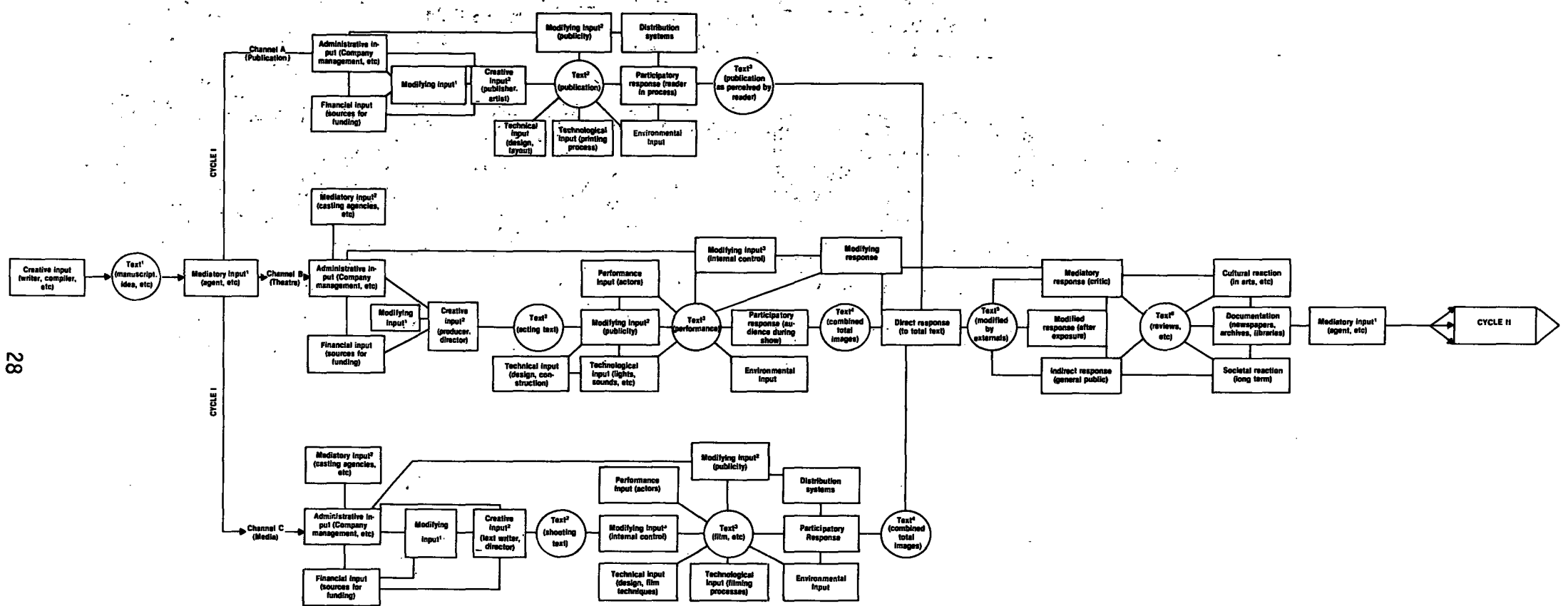


C.S. = Condition system

—> = Leads to / Can lead to

==> = Can become an element of (becomes an element of) the c.s. of

FIGURE 3.10
MODEL: THE OBJECT OF STUDY IN THEATRE RESEARCH



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SUPPORTIVE SYSTEMS:	TRAINING	EXPERIENCE	RESEARCH	INFORMATION	PROMOTION REWARD	FEEDBACK	PUBLICITY		
GENERAL INFLUENCES:	SOCIO- CULTURAL SITUATION	SOCIO- POLITICAL SITUATION	ECONOMIC SITUATION	HISTORICAL INFLUENCES	SOCIETAL CONVENTIONS	SOCIETAL STRUCTURES	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS	DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS
INFRASTRUCTURES:	TRANSPORT	TELECOMMUNI- CATIONS	ENERGY	TECHNOLOGY	INDUSTRY	MEDIA			

KEY:
 One-way process
 Two-way process
 A process
 An artefact

FIGURE 3.11

PERFORMANCE INPUT¹

ORIGIN	PARTICIPATORS	PROCESS								PRODUCT OR ARTEFACT
	(Condition system)	STAGING STRATEGY			STAGING PROCESS					STAGING PRODUCT
TEXT ³	Performers and Director	First meetings	Blocking	Learning words	Initial run-throughs	Adjustments	Full rehearsals	Polishing	Dress rehearsals	PERFORMANCE
CHOREOGRAPHIC SCRIPT ¹	Performers and Choreographer	First meeting	Blocking	Initial run-throughs	Adjustments	Full Rehearsals	/			
MUSICAL SCORE	Performers and Musical Director	First meeting	Block-ing	Initial runthroughs	Adjust-ments	Full rehears-als				
SPECIFIC INFLUENCES:										
Individual background	Individual characteristics	Individual training	Individual experience	Environmental factors	Group dynamics	Etc.				

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PARTICIPATING RECEPTION ²

ORIGIN	PARTICIPATORS	PROCESS								PRODUCT
		RECEPTION STRATEGY			PRIMING		RECEPTION PROCESS			
TEXT PERFORMED	AUDIENCE	DECISION MAKING	BUYING TICKETS	PREPARATION	CONDITIONING	PRE-SHOW INTERACTION	RECEPTION ¹	FEEDBACK ¹ CYCLE	RECEPTION ²	MEANINGFUL PERFORMANCES
							INTERACTION WITH NEIGHBOURS			

SPECIFIC INFLUENCES

Individual background	Individual characteristics	Exposure to media	Individual pre-priming (Knowledge of play, etc.)	Individual environmental factors	Geographic factors	Etc.				
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30

Figure 3.13 Information processing in the theatre
 (Adapted from Lindsey & Norman 1977)

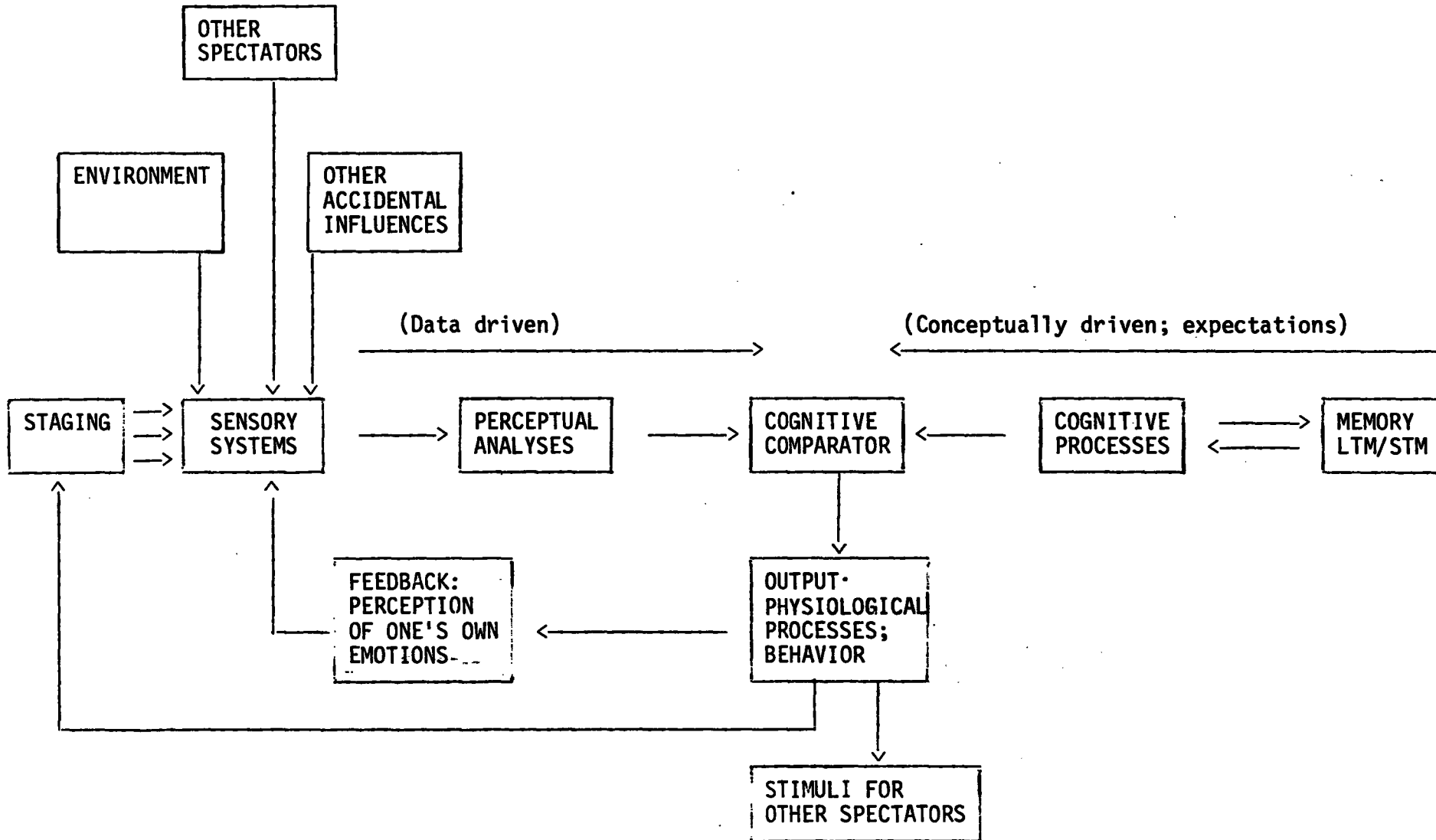


Figure 4.1 Research Matrix: Looking at a particular director's treatment of a specific play

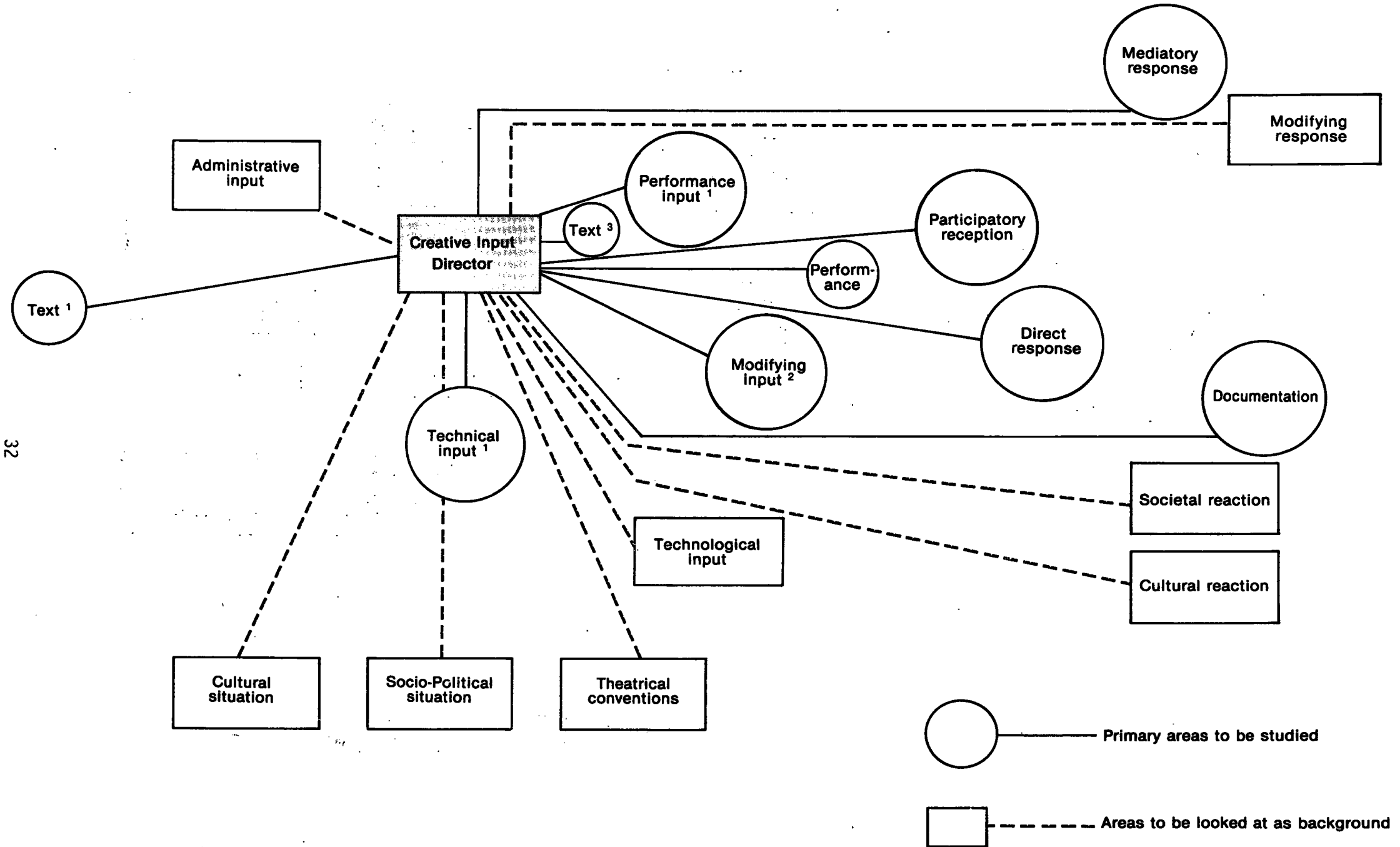
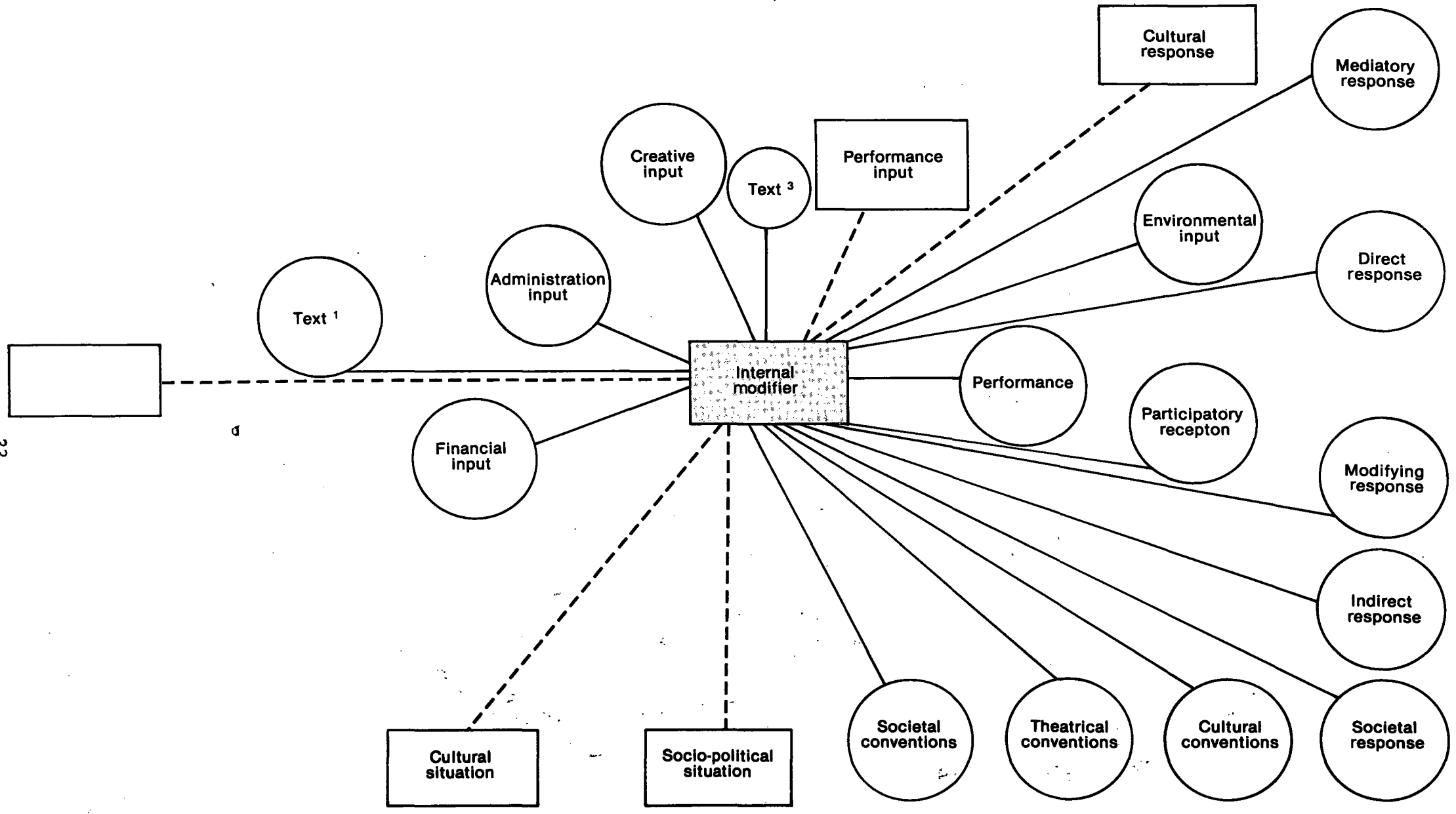


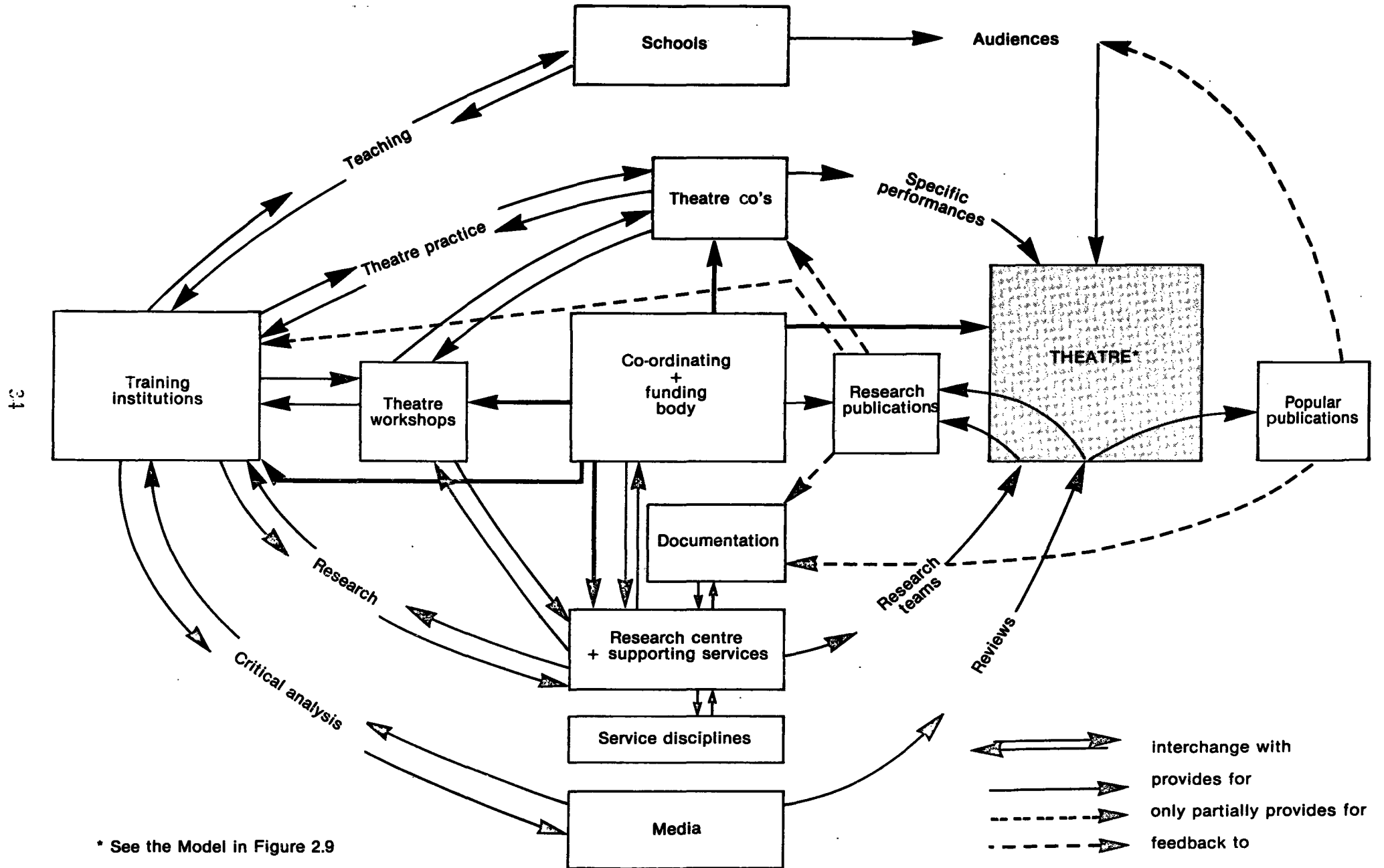
Figure 4.2

Research matrix: Looking at the influence of the internal modifier on the form and content of a particular performance



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Figure 6.1: A basic infrastructure for theatre research



* See the Model in Figure 2.9

Figure 6.2: The research infrastructure existing in South Africa today*

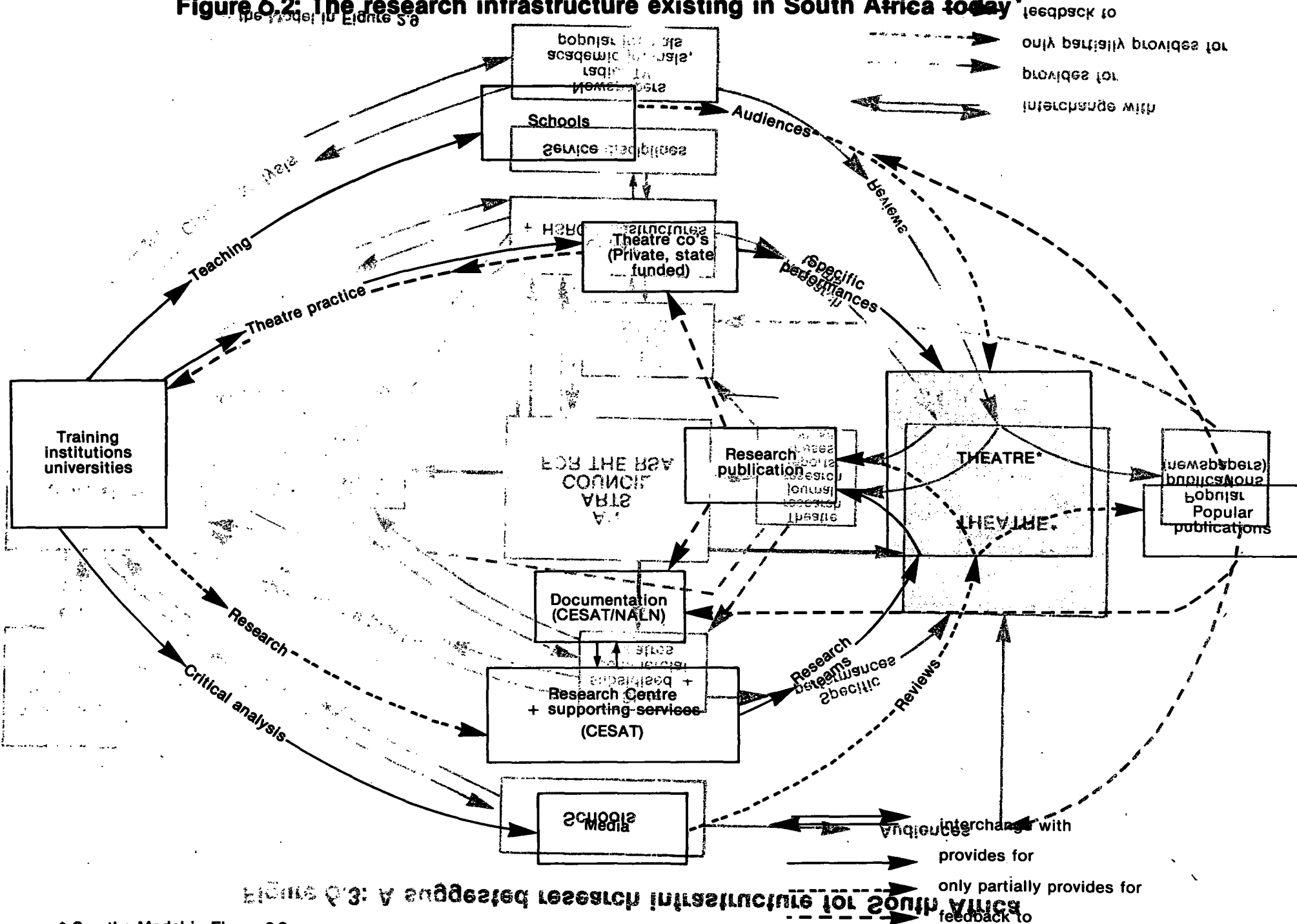
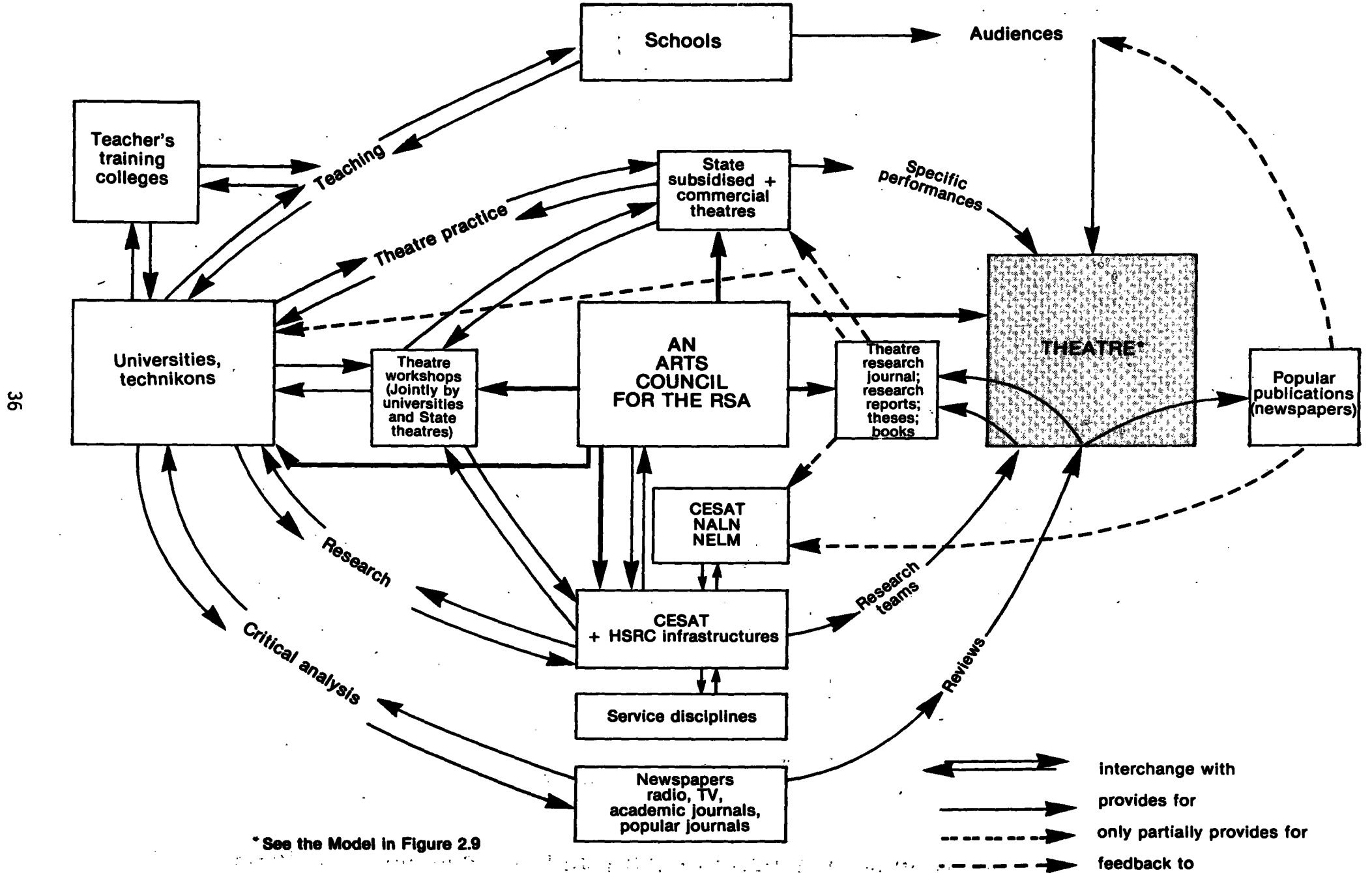


Figure 6.3: A suggested research infrastructure for South Africa

* See the Model in Figure 2.9

Figure 6.3: A suggested research infrastructure for South Africa



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APPENDIX

REGISTERED THEATRE RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA : 1969 - 1979

	A PRECONDITIONS				B THE THEATRE ITSELF						C FUNCTIONS			
	Theatre tradition	Socio-Economic milieu	Socio-cultural milieu	Socio-political milieu	Communicator (Playwright)	Text	Interpreter (Director, actor)	Interpretation (Production)	Context (Theatre + Administration)	Receiver (Audience + public)	Socio-cultural role + function	Political role	As psychological tool	As Educational tool
1) Theory	3 1,2 %		2 0,8 %		1 0,4 %	6 2,3 %	7 2,7 %	2 0,8 %		1 0,4 %				7 2,7 %
2) History	31 12,0 %		1 0,4 %		1 0,4 %			1 0,4 %						1 0,4 %
3) Statistics														
4) Description	3 1,2 %		2 0,8 %			1 0,4 %		3 1,2 %						7 2,7 %
5) Analysis + evaluation	21 8,1 %		3 1,2 %		74 28,6 %	38 14,7 %	12 4,6 %	8 3,1 %		1 0,4 %	1 0,4 %		2 0,8 %	5 1,9 %
6) Bibliography	9 3,5 %				1 0,4 %									
7) Practical development								2 0,8 %						
8) Empiric research experiment										2 0,8 %				
TOTAL	67 25,7 %	0	8	0	77	45 47,1 %	19	16 13,5 %	0	2	1	0	2	20

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