

**TRACING THE DIRECTORIAL PROCESS OF THEATRICAL TRANSLATION:  
A PRACTICE-LED CASE STUDY**

By

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree Magister Artium (Performance) at the University of Pretoria is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

A.M. Davel

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to trace how the theatrical translation process, specifically within the genre of musical theatre, can be systematically approached by a director. Through practice-led research, this study documents the directorial process that was followed in order to translate the playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical* from the American source context to the South African context. The intent of the process was to ensure that signifiers of the culture – as set out in the playtext – shifted to become indicative of the cultures of the performers who were cast in the production or target text. The first research phase addressed the theoretical framework of the study and the distinctions between theatrical translation, adaptation and variation were contemplated in order to substantiate the use of the term translation in the two-tiered translation approach suggested. In the second research phase, relevant dynamics in theatrical semiotic processes were used to analyse the playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical*. In this, the first tier of translation, the dissertation surveyed the signs at work in the playtext taking cognisance of the ideological and aesthetic codes within the source text. Then, the corresponding social and textual codes within the socio-cultural domain to which the playtext was translated were investigated. The third research phase and second tier of translation occurred on the level of the *mise-en-scène*. Here, the directorial strategy was to engage the performers actively in the translation process, by including their respective artistic and cultural paradigms in the translation of the playtext and the characters contained therein. The translation of the playtext was explored within the cross cultural – and more specifically the intercultural – theatrical framework by allowing the multicultural and multilingual cast to source their diverse, cultural backgrounds and unique social codes as well as South African theatrical codes in order to place the musical in the South African context. The fourth and final research phase reflects upon the intercultural translation of *Bat Boy – the Musical* and considers, not only the efficacy of the directorial process for the translation of a musical theatre playtext from one cultural context to another, but also how this particular form of American musical theatre resonates within the multicultural and multilingual South African society.

## **KEYWORDS**

Musicals

South African Musical Theatre

Theatrical Translation

Theatrical Semiotics

Cross cultural Theatre

Intercultural Theatre

Multiculturalism



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

South African theatre has a long history of importing, localizing or ‘transplanting’ American and European playtexts in productions produced on local stages in pre- and post-Apartheid contexts (Hauptfleisch 2007:3-4). In an attempt to localize the work and speak to a broad audience the text, characters and plot of a theatrical work are often translated from one cultural paradigm and one aesthetic paradigm<sup>1</sup> to another. Such theatre works are found across many genres of theatre, including musical theatre.

The aim of this research is to trace how the theatrical translation process, specifically within the genre of musical theatre, can be systematically and methodically organised by a director. Through practice-led research, this study will document and define the directorial translation process to be followed in order to translate the source text of *Bat Boy – the Musical*<sup>2</sup> (hereafter *Bat Boy*) from the source American (West Virginian) framework to the South African context so that the signifiers of that culture as set out in the original playtext shift to become indicative of the cultures of the performers who were cast in the production.<sup>3</sup> Thus, exploring how this particular form of theatre, the American musical, can resonate purposely within the multicultural and multilingual South African context. In providing a systematic, directorial approach and process for the translation of a musical theatre playtext from one cultural context to another, this study will add to research in the field of South African musical theatre.

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<sup>1</sup> In doing so, the ideological contexts of such translations/localisations/adaptations may also be transported. This will be addressed later in the dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> *Bat Boy – the Musical* is an American musical with a book by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming and music and lyrics by Laurence O’Keefe, based on a June 23, 1992 Weekly World News story about a half-boy, half-bat, dubbed ‘Bat Boy’, found living in a cave. The musical premiered at the Actors’ Gang Theatre in 1997 and opened Off-Broadway in 2001. The Weekly World News was a largely fictional, news tabloid featuring bizarre cover stories often based on supernatural or paranormal themes. Published in the United States from 1979 to 2007 and renowned for its satirical approach to news, its characteristic black-and-white covers have become pop-culture images widely used in the arts. The Weekly World News continues to exist as a website. Co-incidentally, the lead story from August 6, 2012 was that US Presidential candidate Romney is to choose Bat Boy as his Vice President (Lake, F. 2012:[sp]).

<sup>3</sup> It was proposed that the cast be representative of the diverse cultural peoples of South Africa and that the appropriation of the source text be achieved by drawing on the cultural heritage, identity and paradigms of the individual cast members.



## 1.1. Research problem, objectives and approach

### 1.1.1 Research Problem

There has been little or no structured research within the field of contemporary South African musical theatre in print in English or Afrikaans that could be found in the scholarly discourse. Whilst existing research on musical theatre in general, centres mainly on the historical development of the musical or the study – from a musical perspective – of the musical as literary text, there is little literature which explores how musical theatre communicates with its audiences (Taylor 2012:3). Concurrently, research in musical theatre in South Africa seems limited to the township musical and the works of Gibson Kente, the recent impact of the festival circuit<sup>4</sup> on local theatre and the emergence of the uniquely South African style of crossover theatre.<sup>5</sup> Attempts to localise or theatrically translate musical theatre productions to the South African context – in order to speak to a broader South African context – are commonly seen on South African stages. However, since there is a lack of available literature on South African musical theatre in general<sup>6</sup> there appears to be no available research constructing a framework for the structured directorial organisation of such a translation.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1.2 Investigative Question

How can a systematic directorial approach to the theatrical translation, of the musical theatre playtext<sup>8</sup> of *Bat Boy – the Musical* into a contemporary South African context, be constructed?

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<sup>4</sup> The various types, history and impact of such festivals have been recorded in a number of publications and this subject was most recently covered in depth by a doctoral dissertation by Herman van Zijl Kitshoff. (Van Heerdan 2008:56)

<sup>5</sup> The term 'crossover' theatre was coined by Temple Hauptfleisch and he describes this phenomenon in his book *Theatre and Society in South Africa: reflections in a shattered mirror*. This form of theatre uses elements of musical theatre and will be discussed in the body of the dissertation.

<sup>6</sup> Since the commencement of this research some advances have been effected within the field of contemporary South African musical theatre such as the Master's Degree in Drama (submitted in 2013 at the University of Stellenbosch). This thesis by Etienne Esterhuysen is titled, *Die Vorm en Funksie van Musiek in die Musiekblyspel en die Kabaret*. This thesis attempts to address an area of crossover theatre which is briefly based on a text by Marlene van Niekerk and was published under the title *Die Kortstondige raklewe van Anastasia W.*

<sup>7</sup> The choice of the use of the term 'translation' (as opposed to other terms such as 'variation' or 'adaptation') will be discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> In this study the term 'text' will be used to describe the literary script as written while the term 'playtext' will be used to describe the theatrical version of the text which implies an intervening interpretive process between the text and its ultimate 'reader' otherwise known as the audience (O'Brien 1998:14). The

### 1.1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to create an approach through which the American based musical theatre playtext of *Bat Boy* can be theatrically translated into a production that resonates with the contemporary South African context.

#### 1.1.3.1 Pre-production Research Objectives

- To contextualize the genre within which the study is placed by:
  - providing a brief overview of the development of musical theatre;
  - identifying the elements of this genre and how the post-modern musical has expanded upon these characteristics;
  - discussing the development of musical theatre in South Africa so as to position the translation appropriately within the South African theatrical context.
- To explore the three main concepts within which the study articulates by:
  - discussing relevant theories and principles within theatrical translation studies which can be employed in the translation of the playtext;
  - identifying relevant dynamics in semiotics to be used as a strategic tool to define, analyse and describe the processes involved in the translation of the playtext;
  - to explore and define the dynamics of cross-cultural theatre;
  - to devise a strategy based on the above to do a theatrical translation of the musical *Bat Boy*.
- To provide a theoretical analysis of the existing playtext to facilitate the first tier of translation

#### 1.1.3.2 In Production Research Objectives

- To employ Stanislavsky's acting technique called the magic 'if' as a means of actively involving performers in the theatrical translation process and to enable them to use their respective cultural paradigms to facilitate the second tier of the translation of the playtext;
- To document the second tier of translation in order to explore the applicability of the approach developed.

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playtext is shaped through the directorial and rehearsal process and is ultimately realized in the performance of the production.

### 1.1.3.3 Post Production Research Objectives

- To provide a reflective review of the process and production including considerations of director and cast;
- To identify shortfalls of the study;
- To identify further study possibilities.

### 1.1.4 Research Approach

John Creswell (2009:3) advances that there are two main types of research paradigms: qualitative, quantitative and also a combination of these two paradigms, namely mixed methods. While quantitative approaches test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables, qualitative research involves exploring the meanings ascribed to social or human problems (ibid 4). The distinction between the two is often explained in terms of either using numbers (quantitative) or words (qualitative) but Creswell suggests that rather than assume that these approaches are polar opposites they can be viewed as different ends on a continuum. Mixed methods research combines elements of both these forms. Whilst the original criticisms and resistance to qualitative research are beyond the scope of this study, Denzin and Lincoln (2011:3) assert that such research has now become a field of study in its own right which crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter.

This study falls in the qualitative research paradigm which according to Denzin and Lincoln is “the world of lived experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture” (2005:8). They define qualitative research as a situated activity which locates the observer in the world and in which qualitative researchers study phenomena in their context and try to make sense of or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (ibid 2-3). Qualitative research prefers inductive approaches and encompasses a wide range of research strategies and methods. Whilst such research relies on non-numeric data or words, empirical materials which can be used include “case study, personal experience, life story, interview, artefacts, cultural texts or productions, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:4). In order to understand the world better, qualitative researchers use interconnected, interpretive

practices which can include semiotics, narrative and statistics and they also draw on various approaches and methods such as ethnography, participant observation and cultural studies, among others (ibid 6). As qualitative research covers such a wide range of subjects it seems that no specific method can be given priority over another but the qualitative researcher uses the aesthetic and material tools, strategies and methods of his own particular craft and if necessary can also piece together or invent new tools (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:4).

For this qualitative study the methodological approach that I will adopt is one of practice-led research. Phillips, Stock and Vincs (2012:[sp]) use the term practice-led research (sometimes referred to as practice-based research) to include degrees that include both a creative and a written component. The research occurs through the practice which informs the methodology, content, context and conceptual frameworks of the research design and the record of the practice or the practice itself becomes part of the thesis. In this type of research the practice itself is considered to be a central part of the examinable component however it is not always necessarily so and it may only constitute a part of the methodology. They also point out that while some use the terms 'practice-based research' and 'practice as research' interchangeably they however make a distinction between 'practice-based research' which involves research embarked on through live performance to contribute to fields other than performance and 'practice as research' whereby the research conducted into performance practice can develop knowledge about the forms, genres and uses of performance itself with regard to their relevance to broader social and cultural processes (ibid). In terms of this distinction the scope of this study would fall under 'practice as research' but the more encompassing term 'practice-led research' will be used to describe the methodology of the study.

Haseman (2006:4) suggests that unlike more traditional forms of research in which the research design flows from a central statement or problem, practice-led researchers do not necessarily begin with a problem statement or question but construct experiential starting points from which practice follows and that the research outputs are made through the language or form of the researcher's practice such as the game for the computer programme designer, the dance for the choreographer or in this case the musical for the musical theatre practitioner. He, along with others in the creative community, criticises the emphasis on written outcomes (Phillips, Stark & Vincs

2012:[sp]) and suggests that approved qualitative and quantitative research methodologies fail to meet the needs of researchers within the arts, media and design (Haseman 2006:1). He posits that practice-led research is a potent strategy for such researchers and proposes a completely new paradigm for research best understood as performative research.

However, since such terminologies are still evolving and are the subject of much debate it will be assumed for the purposes of this study that the study falls under the larger umbrella term of qualitative research and that the methodological approach used is practice-led research, fuelled by a research question. The study includes both a written and a practical component and is divided into four research phases:

The first research phase conducts a review of prior scholarship on theatrical translation studies, theatre semiotics and the cross-cultural/multicultural/intercultural theatre debate. The next two phases are concerned with the theatrical translation of the playtext, *Bat Boy*. Within these two phases, the two-tiered approach to the translation of the playtext is described. The first tier of translation occurs at a theoretical level and is contained within the dramatic discourse. The second tier of the translation is practice-led and occurs on the level of the *mise-en-scène* including the rehearsal process and the production itself. Within both tiers relevant dynamics contained in semiotics are used as a strategic tool to define, analyse and describe the various processes. Journaling is used extensively in the second, practice-led translation tier. The fourth and final research phase includes the collation of all the information pertaining to the two-tiered translation of the playtext and the finalization of the theoretical, written component of the study.

#### 1.1.4.1 Research Phase 1

In this phase the review of prior scholarship takes place. Firstly, the genre of musical theatre and the development of the post-modern musical are outlined so as to couch the proposed translation within the broader context. Secondly, I explore theatrical translation studies in the context of cross cultural theatre as well as the semiotic concepts applicable to the translation theatre process with a view to establishing a directorial strategy which will actively engage the performers in the translation process by including their respective artistic and cultural paradigms. Chapters 2 and 3 report on this research phase.

#### 1.1.4.2 Research Phase 2

In this second research phase the investigation and theoretical analysis of the original playtext is completed. Here possible alternatives for the shift of the signifiers of the source culture are identified and the first tier of translation is completed. Chapter 4 reports on research phase 2.

#### 1.1.4.3 Research Phase 3

The next phase will be practice-led as the director and performers enter the rehearsal process and a second tier of translation takes place. As part of the directorial process, the performers will be encouraged to incorporate Stanislavsky's technique of the magic 'if' to respond to the material from their own aesthetic and cultural paradigms. This phase also includes the chronicling of the various warm-up exercises, activities and guided improvisations designed by the director so as to facilitate the next tier of translation. Through reflexive research which includes journaling from both the director and members of the cast, the rehearsal process and culmination thereof, the production itself, is recorded with regards to the following criteria:

- extra-textual factors including casting choices in relation to the historical contexts of the source and target texts;
- representation of specific markers of identity, including race, gender and sexuality;
- arrangement of theatrical time and space, including costume and set design;
- dramatic language, spoken or performed, including verbal, musical and gestural languages and choreography (Gilbert & Tompkins 1996:9);
- the manipulation of the established narrative and performative conventions of musical theatre (ibid).

Chapter 5 reports on this research phase.

#### 1.1.4.4 Research Phase 4

The final phase is the collation of all the information regarding the translation process and the resultant translation with intent to ascertain the efficacy of model established for the directorial process of theatrical translation and the worth of the study. At the completion of this phase I will also try to ascertain the shortfalls of

the study and also identify further study opportunities. This research is contained in Chapters 6 and 7.

## **1.2 Chapter Outline**

Whilst this section reflects the research phases as listed above, it indicates the breakdown of each individual chapter.

### **Chapter 1:**

This chapter provides an overview of the context of the study and its aims as well as presenting the alignment of the chapters within the structure of the research.

### **Chapter 2:**

This chapter discusses the history of musical theatre in general as well as its development in South Africa to enable the director to position the original playtext of *Bat Boy* accurately within this framework thus allowing for a starting point for the translation.

### **Chapter 3:**

This chapter is devoted to discussions of the three main concepts of the theoretical framework within which the study articulates. The first includes an analysis of the concept of translation for the theatre, which substantiates the choice of the term translation in the title of the study. The second speaks to an investigation of how the intended translation articulates within the cross-cultural and intercultural theatrical framework and the third provides a brief overview of the study of semiotics for the theatre, an understanding of which can assist in facilitating the process of theatrical translation.

It is not the aim of this study to do in-depth analysis of translation theory, the intercultural theatre debate or semiotics but the examination of these three concepts is undertaken with a view to establishing a model to be used as a tool in the analysis of the playtext of the musical *Bat Boy*. Specifically with regards to the semiotics or the use thereof, this study does not claim to be a semiotic analysis of *Bat Boy* but certain relevant semiotic strategies, concepts, terms and procedures are accessed to trace the translation process from the source playtext to the production.



#### Chapter 4:

The purpose of this chapter is to trace pre-production directorial engagement which is necessary for the practice-led research. Firstly, a critical analysis of the existing playtext of *Bat Boy* is undertaken and then the first tier of the translation is explored as the playtext is investigated while referencing not only the general ideologico-aesthetic codes of the South African situation but also the codes governing the South African theatrical framework so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the South African context. The relevant dynamics within the theatrical semiotic framework will aid and inform this process.

It should be noted that in this pre-production phase and without prior knowledge of the cast members, whose individual cultural backgrounds engendered subsequent changes to the text, the potential shifts of the elements in this first tier of translation were only provided as options to be considered by the ensemble in the rehearsal process. Whilst the analysis of the text and potential shifts were assessed and speculated upon in the pre-production phase and it was attempted to make the casting choices as congruent to the analysis and preparation as possible, the director had to make allowances for 1) the actual performers cast in the production and their distinct cultural backgrounds and 2) the organic, workshop process which occurred in rehearsals.

#### Chapter 5:

This chapter describes the start of the second tier of translation which occurred on the level of the *mise-en-scène*. This chapter includes the rehearsal process and traces the methods used by the director to guide the performers through the workshop process and includes reflexive, self-observation from both the cast and the director. The workshop process was designed to release the performers from pre-conceived notions about the text, to free them from inhibitions, to allow their natural instincts to guide them and to this end, the notion of Stanislavski's magic 'if' was used as the theoretical baseline and the point of departure for the warm-up exercises, activities and guided improvisations. The aim of the rehearsal process was to encourage the cast to interact with the text from their own cultural paradigm and to facilitate the second tier of translation.



### Chapter 6:

Referring back to the model established in Chapter 3 this chapter describes the production itself and how the resultant translation articulates within that model.

### Chapter 7:

The final chapter represents the fourth and final research phase of this dissertation and considers the value of the tools proposed with which the translation was effected as well as ascertaining the efficacy of the resultant translation. The chapter also considers the shortfalls of the study and identifies any new research possibilities which were uncovered in the course of this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### MUSICAL THEATRE IN CONTEXT

This chapter will briefly and broadly discuss the historical development of musical theatre to contextualise the genre within which the study is placed. It will further attempt to identify the elements of musical theatre which characterize the genre as well as providing a succinct overview of the development of this form of theatre in South Africa so as to frame the proposed translation of *Bat Boy – The Musical*. Whilst a more detailed history of musical theatre – and musical theatre in the South African context – falls outside the scope of this dissertation, the information presented here serves to highlight key moments in the development of the genre in order to couch the proposed translation in a broader context. The outline of the musical theatre genre itself will allow the director to position the original playtext of *Bat Boy* accurately within this framework thus allowing for a base line starting point for the translation. The overview of the local field of work will enable the director to place the translation appropriately within the South African theatrical context taking into account the elements of musical theatre as described in this chapter.

#### **2.1 Definition of Musical Theatre**

Mille Taylor (2012:1) states that while sung music, visual live performance and narrative are all characteristic components of musical theatre<sup>9</sup> works today, it is nearly impossible to define the exact nature of these elements or their relationship to each other. She affirms that more precision in the definition is problematic due to the enormous diversity of the works of musical theatre. In his discussion of what a musical is, Thomas Hischak (2008: xii) posits that the form of the musical is diverse and that the definition of what exactly comprises a musical seems inextricably entwined in the history of its development on stage, screen and television. His view that musical theatre has thrived in an unprecedented variety of forms and styles and represents a hybrid art is echoed by Patrice Pavis (1998: 227), who states that “[m]usical theatre is a huge building site where every imaginable relationship between the materials of stage arts and musical arts are tried out and tested”. The term ‘musical theatre’ is used to describe productions which

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<sup>9</sup> Taylor (2012:1) uses musical theatre as a generic term to include musical drama, musical comedy, jukebox musicals, dance musicals and all the sub-genres thereof that are performed live in theatre and thus excludes film musicals. She also uses the term interchangeably with the term ‘musical’.

are also known as musical comedy, musical play, musical farce, musical spectacle, “just plain” musical (Green 1976:v), revue, operetta and sometimes, if offered for commercial run, opera<sup>10</sup> (ibid) but the term can also be used in a more global sense to include amongst others, variety, cabaret, pantomime, plays with song and benefit shows (ibid). While the current definition of musical theatre seems elusive, understanding of this complex theatrical genre and the elements thereof can be made clearer by a discussion of the historical development of musical theatre.

## **2.2. Background to the development of Musical Theatre**

In an attempt to clarify the genre of musical theatre a brief investigation of the development of the musical must be undertaken. Throughout history, dating as far back as the Palaeolithic era, and encompassed in almost every culture is a theatrical tradition of music and dance (Kislan 1980:1) and John Kenrick (2008:18) asserts that “[S]howtunes have been around for 2500 years”. The ancient Greeks included music and dance in their stage productions and the Romans copied and expanded these forms and traditions. During the Middle Ages music and singing formed an intrinsic part of the religious dramas, mystery plays and the entertainment provided by travelling minstrels (ibid 27). The European Renaissance saw musical theatre evolve further; from the raucous Italian Commedia dell’arte, to Moliere’s collaborations with Jean Baptiste Lully to create musical comedies for the court of Louis XIV, to English Jacobean plays which were the forerunners of court masques and opera (ibid). Songs and music were also used in the plays of Shakespeare, whether to further the plot or to provide extra entertainment during the presentation (Lindley 2006:3).

While there is great debate as to whether musical theatre is descended from Grand Opera or whether they are equal offshoots as they both have their roots in Ancient Greece and Rome (Kenrick 2008:28) that is far beyond the scope and interest of this study. However, by the eighteenth century both Ballad and Comic Operas were very popular in Britain and these were favoured in all the colonies including the United States (Kislan 1980:15). From the nineteenth century onwards there seemed to be an equal but different emergence of musical theatre traditions from Europe and the USA. In Paris in the 1840’s came the rise of French and Viennese Operetta (Ganzl 1995:13-36) and

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<sup>10</sup> In this instance Green refers to opera proper but more recently opera and musical theatre have been grouped under the umbrella term ‘music theatre’.

simultaneously in Britain came the rise of Music Hall, Pantomime and Gaiety Theatre (ibid 41-71).<sup>11</sup>

Whilst the origins of musical theatre may lie in London, Paris and Vienna it was the United States with the influence of the traveling minstrel shows, Vaudeville and burlesque that became the world leader in the production of musical theatre shows (Kenrick 2008:96-118). As early as 1767, in Philadelphia, the American Company tried to present *The Disappointment*, the first credited musical (Jones 2003:1) but it was deemed unfit for the stage so when *The Black Crook*, an extravagantly staged melodrama with music and dancing (Kislan 1980:65), premiered in New York in 1866 it demonstrated the potential of a musical theatre book show. This five and a half hour long epic ran for 474 performances. Kenrick points out that it was not necessarily the first such musical but it was the first to become a nationwide hit, going on tour as the railroads in the USA expanded and reaping in vast profits (2008:67-68). Miller is even less forgiving, referring to *The Black Crook* as “an accident that combined a bad play with a ballet troupe” (2007:6). The musicalized version of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852)<sup>12</sup> by George L Aiken preceded *The Black Crook* and perhaps better fulfilled the criteria of what musical theatre became in the next century: presenting both challenging subject matter and the full use of non-diegetic songs to further the story. It has been described more as a melodrama with music (Railton 2003:[sp]) but as Thomas Riis (1986:268) asserts, even though music was often used to heighten emotion in nineteenth century drama, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* seems “especially apt for musical cues” (ibid) so much so that it should perhaps own the title of first American musical.

Whatever the controversy surrounding the first known original American musical, Miller (2007: 6) affirms that musical comedy appeared on Broadway around 1900. Just after the turn of the twentieth century Florenz Ziegfeld and his *Follies* epitomized the glamour

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<sup>11</sup> Most notably from England was the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration which essentially elevated musical theatre both as an art form and a business (Kenrick 2008: 91-93). Not only did they revolutionize stage direction as Gilbert ruthlessly directed the scenes himself (ibid 84) but their system of completing the lyrics before writing the music was only adopted much later by another famous musical theatre duo Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II (Ganzl 1995:153).

<sup>12</sup> *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was based on the best-selling novel of the same name by Harriet B Stowe (Riis 1986:268) and dealt with the issue of slavery in the United States. By December 1952 only months after it was first published there were nine productions playing in New York alone (ibid). George Aiken’s show was originally produced by CG Howard and opened in Troy, New York in 1852 and went on to play at New York’s National Theatre in 1853. Aiken’s script was used as a blueprint in many productions presented throughout the remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Railton [sa]:[sp]).

of what is now referred to as Old Broadway but it was his most loved musical that redefined the musical theatre genre. In 1927 the watershed production of *Show Boat* hit Broadway (Kenrick 2008:202-205). It signalled the birth of the book musical, where song, dance and dialogue are all integrated and also proved that musical theatre could be used as a medium to tackle serious social issues. Although it spawned no immediate trends, 16 years later *Oklahoma!* began the influential partnership of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II which transformed musical theatre forever:<sup>13</sup> from then on, all aspects of the musical had to serve the dramatic purpose (Kenrick 2008:248). This ushered in the Golden Age of the “Broadway” musical (Miller 2007:44) and with it also the movie musicals of the 1950’s and early 60’s. Although, it should be noted that even before the Rodgers and Hammerstein II collaboration, movies had already had a musical component with scores completed by the likes of Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, the Gershwins and Jerome Kern (Hemming 1999:32/156) and danced, sung and acted by the likes of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers (ibid).

In the 70’s two major trends influenced the development of the musical namely, the rock musical and the emergence of the most misunderstood form of musical theatre (Miller 2000:27/28), the ‘Non-linear’ or ‘Concept Musical’. This later form is defined by Miller as a musical where the “story is secondary to central message or metaphor” (1996:11). Ethan Mordden (2003:8) elaborates that a concept musical is:

“a presentational rather than a strictly narrative work that employs out of story elements to comment upon and at times take part in the action utilizing avant-garde techniques to defy unities of time, place and action”.

Each concept musical by its very nature extends the definition due to the fact that no two are alike and because of the complex relations between naturalism and stylization or rather, the multifaceted integration and separation of the arts (Mordden 2003:9). On the other hand, *Hair* (1967)<sup>14</sup> apart from being a concept musical, also heralded the arrival of the rock musical.<sup>15</sup> At this time it became clear that there was an unofficial war being

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<sup>13</sup> Please see the discussion of the Rodgers and Hammerstein II partnership which follows later in section 2.4 of this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> All dates indicate the opening of the show on Broadway unless this was predated by an opening on the West End, or the show never opened on Broadway and then the date refers to an Off-Broadway or other opening.

<sup>15</sup> Please see the discussion of *Hair* which follows later in section 2.5 of this chapter.

waged between the two Broadway greats: the American, Stephen Sondheim whose intricate harmonies and integrated scores appealed to theatre intellectuals and the British, Andrew Lloyd Webber whose predominantly sung-through and flamboyant yet repetitive, pastiche-like scores were overwhelmingly well received and preferred by the theatre going audiences (Kenrick 2008: 339,356).

In the 1980's Europe also made an impact on Broadway mainly due to Claude-Michel Schonberg and Alain Boublil whose *Les Misérables* and *Miss Saigon* were massive hits (Miller 2007:158-159). At this point the huge multi-national corporation Disney moved in with the budgets to create impressive spectacles but not leaving much room for creativity and experimentation. While some feared that the Great White Way<sup>16</sup> was becoming a theme park, Miller (2007:180) asserts that the 1990's was the decade that would return American musical theatre to its "gutsy, provocative, muscular roots with shows like *Bat Boy*" among others. *Bat Boy* (1997), like the controversial musical *Hair* before it, was a workshop production which opened Off-Broadway and, at this juncture, a discussion of this branch of musical theatre is necessary.

Off-Broadway initially referred to the location of a venue and its productions on a street intersecting Broadway in Manhattan's Theater District, the hub of the theatre industry in New York. The term later became defined by the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers as a professional venue in New York City with a seating capacity between 100 and 499, or a specific production that appears in such a venue.<sup>17</sup> The archives<sup>18</sup> of the league have records of Off-Broadway shows dating back to 1958 as well as three productions preceding this. According to the archives the first great Off-Broadway musical was the 1954 revival of Berthold Brecht and Kurt Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* and Off-Broadway also boasts the longest running musical in history, *The Fantasticks* which had a 42 year run from 1960.

According to Ken Bloom and Frank Vlastnik (2008:94), the Off-Broadway movement started in the 1950's as a reaction to the commercialism of Broadway and its acquiescence to the larger producers. Michael Smith (1966:159) asserts that the real

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<sup>16</sup> Colloquial reference to Broadway

<sup>17</sup> Definition of Off-Broadway in Actors Equity Association: Agreement of rules governing employment under the Off-Broadway agreement. [O]. Available: [http://www.offbroadway.org/images/files/pdfs/ob\\_rulebook\\_12-16.pdf](http://www.offbroadway.org/images/files/pdfs/ob_rulebook_12-16.pdf). Accessed 2014.02.11

<sup>18</sup> The Lortel Archives. [O]. Available: [http://www.lortel.org/LLA\\_archive/index.cfm](http://www.lortel.org/LLA_archive/index.cfm) Accessed 2014.02.11

birth of the Off Off-Broadway movement can be dated to September 27, 1960, with the opening of Alfred Jarry's *King Ubu* which opened at a coffee house. The programme of the production reaffirmed a commitment to the return of the original vision of Off-Broadway in which the theatre of the imagination is substituted for big budgets and where plays that would otherwise be impossible in commercial theatre could be presented (ibid).

In this way Off-Broadway created an outlet for a new generation of creative artists and added greatly to the new avant-garde theatre movement in the United States (Crespy 2003: as quoted in Olsen 2005:349). A large number of Off-Broadway musicals have had subsequent runs on Broadway including, amongst those mentioned above and others, *A Chorus Line* (1975), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1983), *Urinetown* (2001), *Avenue Q* (2003), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005) and *Spring Awakening* (2006). Jones (2003:358), in keeping with Miller's review of *Bat Boy* above, lauded the political satire *Urinetown* as "heralding a return to those kinds of shows from the past decades in which a 'serious musical' and 'entertaining musical' were not a contradiction in terms".

Smith (1966:176) described the ethos of Off-Broadway creators as one which encouraged the working toward their own vision and standards and defining their own goals. This ethos in which the liberty to explore, grow and experiment counted more than impressive surroundings (ibid 159) seemed irreconcilable with the Broadway of the 80's and 90's and where, at the turn of the century, the new millennium ushered in the "jukebox" musicals. These musicals like *Mamma Mia* (1999), *We Will Rock You* (2002) and others became known as 'Popsicals' (Ryan 2005:[sp]) – musicals using well-known pop songs. Most of these musicals, a good example being *Good Vibrations* (1998) – featuring the music of The Beach Boys<sup>19</sup> – had contrived books<sup>20</sup> which were manufactured around the popular hits of mega, pop groups. Whilst offering little substance and affected storylines, the popularity of the music underscored by massive budgets generally guaranteed the success of such shows.

Today, as in other parts of the world it seems as though the future of American musical theatre is uncertain: the old diehards insisting that the showtune is in danger of becoming

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<sup>19</sup> The Beach Boys are a very successful pop group from the 1960's.

<sup>20</sup> The term 'book' refers to the plot and themes of a musical as will be explained further on in this chapter.



a dinosaur and that Broadway serves mainly as a tourist trap offering matinee children's entertainment<sup>21</sup> while others insist that although Broadway is perhaps "no longer the place to go see the adventurous, the genuinely new, the inspiring, the surprising" (Miller 2007:222) musical theatre remains ever popular (Taylor 2012:1).

Even as the early musical theatre of the United States was an amalgamation of European, African and indigenous folk music so the evolution of the Broadway musical continually drew on such diverse sources so as to make the classification of the elements or characteristics of a musical, which will be attempted in the following section, challenging.

### **2.3 Characteristics of a musical**

While the elements of a musical are hard to define considering the diverse nature of the genre there are, according to Elaine Novak (1988:3), certain characteristics that apply to most musicals:

1. Musicals are produced as a result of a collaboration of a large number of people: bookwriter, composer, lyricist, producer, director, performers, choreographer, musical director, orchestrator and designers of scenery, costume, lighting and sound to mention a handful.
2. There are usually stage conventions that the audience must accept such as characters breaking into song or dancers adding their talents to a number.
3. Musicals are presentational and do not attempt to make the audience believe they are watching real life onstage. However, audiences accepting of the stage conventions can empathize with the characters and content of a musical as much as a realistic or representational play.
4. Musical theatre performers need to be multi-talented due to the nature of the productions.

Richard Kislán (1980:4) elaborates on the first point above in stating that "[m]usical theatre is the most collaborative form of the arts". It is an artistic system which not only encourages the use of more than just the spoken word for the realization of dramatic ideals but also prioritizes "nonliteral dramatic revelation" (ibid). He refers to musical

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<sup>21</sup> Kenrick's concluding section on the history of Musical Theatre is titled: *Is the Musical a Dead Artform?* and contains numerous quotes by theatre personalities and critics on Broadway's dire situation. [www.musical101.com/future.htm](http://www.musical101.com/future.htm) retrieved 07/08/2012.



theatre as ‘total theatre’ (ibid). In the development of this genre there was no partnership which was as influential or had as much impact on the creation of this total theatre than that of Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960).

#### **2.4 The Book Musical and the contribution of Rodgers and Hammerstein II**

As mentioned previously, prior to *Show Boat* in 1927 musicals took the form of musical revue shows such as the Ziegfield *Follies* in which pretty dancing girls and songs were used purely for entertainment. The songs in these contrived musicals provided no dramatic function and could be easily transposed from show to show. Whilst *Show Boat* laid the foundations it was Rodgers and Hammerstein II’s *Oklahoma!* that cemented the introduction of the book musical where the songs and musical numbers were used to further the plot. This musical and the following eight stage musicals<sup>22</sup> produced by this duo generated certain patterns which characterized musical theatre for the next two decades (Novak 1988:8). This framework advocated the primacy of the book, using song and dance to advance the plot or reveal character (ibid). Whilst Kislán (1980:143) goes as far as to say that the creators of *Oklahoma!*, Rodgers and Hammerstein II “liberated the creative musical theater (sic) community from the tyranny of formula and the sure bet” these musicals created a formula of their own which included the use of two sets of lead couples to further the traditional ‘boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl at the end of the show’ plot. The first couple were typically classically trained vocalists to sing the poignant love-songs and the second were the comedy couple with comedic duets and often fun yet intricate dance numbers, quintessentially established by the characters Ado Annie and Will Parker in *Oklahoma!*. However, an essential component of the integrated musical was that the comedy was developed out of the characters and situations rather than the slapstick jokes previously associated with musical comedy. This collaboration also introduced the concept of the ‘dream ballet’ which was used in more than a number of musicals which were to follow. (A bastardized version of such a ‘dream ballet’ is included in *Bat Boy – the Musical*.)

These Rodgers and Hammerstein II productions achieved the total collaboration (ibid 138) mentioned as Novak’s first characteristic of musicals above, achieving the forging

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<sup>22</sup> The collaboration of Rodgers and Hammerstein II produced nine musicals until Hammerstein’s death in 1960: *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *Allegro* (1947), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951), *Me and Juliet* (1953), *Pipe Dream* (1955), *Flower Drum Song* (1958) and *The Sound of Music* (1959) as well as the film *State Fair* (1945) and television musical *Cinderella* (1957) (Kislán 1980:123).

of many arts into a coherent whole. This led to the birth of the notion of the ‘integrated’<sup>23</sup> musical which demanded an “homogenous synthesis of dramatic, theatrical and performance components” (ibid 142). However according to Kislán (ibid 143):

“Integration implies more than synthesis; it implies the successfully co-ordinated ability of all elements of a musical show to push the story forward out of proportion to the individual weight of each element. Not only does each element fit perfectly into an integrated show, each functions dramatically to propel the book forward”.

While this formula set the tone for many of the musicals of the 50s and 60s, including the likes of Frank Loesser, Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows’ *Guys and Dolls* (1950), with the birth of the ‘concept’ musical heralded by Hal Prince’s *Cabaret* (1966) the rules began to change. The following section will describe the development of the concept musical and how this advancement irrevocably changed the face of musical theatre.

## **2.5 The development of the concept musical and the diffusion of the post-modern musical**

Carol Ilson in the prologue of her book credits Hal Prince with the introduction of the concept musical saying that he “chose the largely untrod road of innovation and dared to be different. He stretched the Broadway form to its limits” (1989:2). Prince, along with others such as Jerome Robbins and Stephen Sondheim, launched musical comedy on a new path. However, the seeds of this new form of musical theatre were in fact sown before *Cabaret*. In 1957 Prince as producer, Robbins as director-choreographer and Sondheim as lyricist collaborated on a show that would irrevocably alter the form of musical theatre, *West Side Story*, a musical tragedy.

Although Prince viewed *West Side Story* less as a breakthrough and more as a pinnacle of what had gone before it definitely proved that musical theatre was much more flexible and expressive than most people had thought. Whilst *West Side Story* is driven by

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<sup>23</sup> This concept of the integrated musical has in recent years been problematized and I will return to this discussion towards the end of the chapter.

character and specific plot, all the elements of book, score, choreography and design were woven seamlessly to support what Robbins defined as the show's central theme: "the futility of intolerance" (Lawrence 2001:243). This was also the first 'danced-through' musical. Robbins made use of dance vocabulary as narrative for the young, inarticulate gang-members. *How* the story was told was as important as the story itself. Another first was that Robbins demanded credit not only for direction and choreography but also for the concept.

Then as the 1960's began, Prince was influenced by the work and direction of Joan Littlewood especially her production of *Oh, What a Lovely War* (1963), which he believed had fractured the form of musical comedy by discarding central characters and a story line. So too did it discard the rule that all the songs should grow out of the scenes and it was in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), also produced by Hal Prince, that this well-established rule, that of integrating the songs into the action, was well and truly broken. Stephen Sondheim had to unlearn the practice and used the songs as breathers which did not advance the plot but were a respite from it. This musical told a story in a vaudeville style with stock characters and it was a musical farce in which the story and the characters were subordinate to the comedy.

Prince went on to produce *Fiddler on the Roof* with Robbins as director. At first glance *Fiddler* is a book musical in the sense that it seems driven by character and narrative but on closer inspection the use of imagery makes this musical a mile-stone in the development of the concept musical. The stories of the three daughters form a metaphor for the breakdown of their society. Robbins recognised the theme – the dissolution of the old order, and it was with this in mind that the opening number "Tradition" was born. Robbins' vision of what *Fiddler on the Roof* was all about extended to every aspect of the show. The dissolution of the old ways; or the struggle of parents to preserve the old traditions; gave the show a universality which found resonance with people of all races and creeds. Ilson holds that "[w]orking so closely with Robbins on *Fiddler* no doubt helped Prince to eventually incorporate this specific defining of a theme in a production into his own method of directing" (ibid 99). Prince himself said, "I learned from Robbins how to

prepare a concept musical – although I hate the term – but Jerry had an aesthetic view – a vision of the visual elements of the production”(ibid 37).<sup>24</sup>

*Fiddler* was also Prince’s first collaboration with Boris Aronson with whom he would initiate changes in the way the American musical looked. Prince states, “Over the years Boris and I moved further and further away from [n]aturalism, from props and doors and tables and units, wagons with rooms on them, until with *Follies* there were no tables, no chairs, no doors, no windows” (ibid 101). *Fiddler* was a resounding success and proved that a musical could be based on a concept and Prince became interested in furthering Robbins’ ideas and establishing musical theatre as a serious art form.

At the same time *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964) opened on Broadway and ran for only nine performances. Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents were determined to buck conventions and were ambitious in their desire to create an absurd social satire. This musical – like *Cabaret* which was to follow – had a split personality; one half book musical, one half social commentary which rejected naturalism and broke the fourth wall. Sondheim’s music echoes these distinct personalities with traditional show tunes used for the insincere characters (which in and of itself, turns the song into a commentary) and more romantic, complex music for the genuine characters. The show’s outrageous subject matter and sharp social commentary broke the rules of traditional musical comedy but alienated audiences so much so that Miller (2001:54) was forced to ask “[w]ere audiences for the original production hostile because they didn’t get it or because they did?”

By 1966 Prince, also desiring to find a form of socially responsible musical theatre, directed *Cabaret*. While the show seemed to portray a time in history, the power of the piece lay in the fact that it was entirely relevant to the political climate of 1966.<sup>25</sup> A surprise on the part of the designer, Aronson was an element that literally forced the audience to confront themselves – a large mirror hung above centre stage and reflected the audience. *Cabaret*’s greatest flaw lay in the fact that the concept musical was only

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<sup>24</sup> As quoted from an interview with Harold Prince, The South Bank Show, 23 June 1978, London Weekend TV.

<sup>25</sup> Racial tensions in the USA were at boiling point and race riots were occurring countrywide. Malcolm X had just been assassinated and Martin Luther King Jnr’s first march from Selma to Montgomery had taken place in 1965. Prince at one stage wanted to end the show with footage of the march and the Little Rock riots but decided against it (Miller 1996:30).

beginning to take shape. This was unknown territory and Prince and his collaborators essentially created two shows, a realistic book show with traditional musical comedy numbers and a concept musical with songs that commented on the action and the central message of the show. The schizophrenic nature of the show was evident in the two worlds that Prince created. The one area contained the 'real' world, the Kit Kat Klub and the boarding house and the other was representative of 'the mind' where some of the emcee's scenes took place. This 'limbo', in which the emcee commented on the action, illustrated the psyche of the German people. As Miller (1996:31) says "If the show's concept is the central character than the Emcee is certainly the personification of that concept". In directing *Cabaret* for the screen in 1972, Bob Fosse kept only the songs that belonged in the Klub or commented on the action and the fully-fledged concept musical was accomplished.

What began with *Cabaret* reached fruition in *Company* (1970), but this was not before a very different musical opened in 1968. Miller (2001:66) asserts that while *Hair* introduced the rock musical it also paved "the way for the non-linear concept musicals that dominated musical theatre innovation in the 1970's".

"*Hair* criticizes and satirizes racism, discrimination, war, violence, pollution, sexual repression, and other societal evils. It is a psychedelic musical in the true sense of the word. The show is made up of a barrage of images, often very surrealistic, often overwhelming, coming at the audience fast and furious, not always following logically; but when taken together, those images form a wonderful, unified, and ultimately comprehensible whole" (ibid 67).

*Hair* developed not only out of the social climate of the 60's but also out of the New York's experimental theatre movement influenced by the works of Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski and Antonin Artaud (ibid).<sup>26</sup> It was a show that rejected every convention of traditional musical theatre and brought rock music to Broadway but it was a show that was a monumental hit.

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<sup>26</sup> Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999) was a Polish director and innovator of experimental theatre, his technique of 'poor theatre' did not rely on theatrical devices and focussed on the skills of the actor. (Schechner & Wolford 1997:xxv) Peter Brook (1925 - ) is a British theatre and film director and innovator, famous in avant-garde and counter-culture circles (Helfer & Loney 1998:ix). Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) was an actor and director who advocated a 'theatre of cruelty. His work appealed to the subconscious mind and he believed that the bourgeois audiences would have to be subverted, forced against their wishes to confront themselves (Harrop & Epstein 1982:248-251).

*Hair's* original Off-Broadway producer, Eric Blau,<sup>27</sup> bowed out when Joseph Papp guaranteed the show an eight-week run but he went on to create cult musical *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* (1968) along with Mort Shuman. This Off-Broadway musical used twenty-six of Brel's<sup>28</sup> songs and reflected his thoughts on life. It has no plot or characters to speak of, yet its central theme: that of man's struggle to survive, is seemingly universal. This is a show about ideas, a philosophy, and this unites the independent songs and allows the piece to work as more than just a revue (Miller 2001:91/92).

As the 1970's approached the time was ripe for a complete concept musical. Once again it was a Prince/Sondheim collaboration that took centre-stage. Miller (2001:67) contends that "*Company* established the concept musical as a new kind of show that contains snapshots, ideas, questions presented without linear logic or plot". It deals with the loneliness and alienation of people in big cities, New York in particular, and their desperate struggle to find love. *Company* has no logical time frame, one is never certain if the parties represent one birthday or a series of them. The scenes are episodic, self-contained vignettes and the songs comment on the action rather than grow organically from it – with the notable exception of "Barcelona". Sondheim, as he did in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, breaks the convention of using songs to further the plot. His use of rhyme is apparent in the witty commentary songs which the characters use to cover up their emotions but is noticeably absent from those songs in which raw emotion is uncovered. Here Sondheim also made extensive use of motifs in the score to connect characters and events. The main character in *Company*, Robert, observes and comments on the characters surrounding him and their relationships. This, along with the episodic structure of the show, is reminiscent of Berthold Brecht's (1898-

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<sup>27</sup> An interesting aside: Blau was responsible for introducing authors James Rado and Gerome Ragni to University of Cape Town educated Galt MacDermot who shaped the distinctly African feel of the music of *Hair*.

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Brel (1929-1978) was a Belgian singer-songwriter who performed thought-provoking theatrical songs (Clayson 1996:3).



1956)<sup>29</sup> techniques; a comparison also drawn with Cabaret; however Prince was quick to refute this, citing Meyerhold<sup>30</sup> and Piscator<sup>31</sup> as his influences (Ilson 1989:144):

“I’m tired to death of reading how influenced by Brecht I am. I am not influenced by Brecht. I don’t like Brecht all that much. That whole alienation thing. Alienation by definition is alienating. And I want to be enveloped, engaged in the theatre” (ibid).<sup>32</sup>

*Company*’s main theme of people in an urbanised society struggling to maintain their individuality and individual feeling was enhanced by Aronson’s plexi-glass and steel set inspired by the Lincoln Centre (source). In a revival at the Donmar Warehouse in 1995 the set was minimalistic, specific and yet vague all at once, which although completely different to the original was as effective in enhancing the concept.

Following closely on the heels of *Company* was *Follies* (1971). Another Prince/Sondheim partnership, it cemented the arrival of the concept musical. Originally called *The Girls Upstairs* and written by James Goldman, its main theme revolved around the collapse of dreams with age. Prince used a photograph of Gloria Swanson standing in the rubble of what had been the Roxy Theatre as the visual metaphor for *Follies*. There is a virtual blurring of time as past and present becomes intertwined with four younger actors representing the main characters as they had been thirty years earlier. The figures of the past were dressed in black and white in contrast to the older members in full colour. The shadows or ghosts continually intrude on the action until they almost take over forcing the leading characters to confront their past and in so doing decide to change their futures. Although *Follies* won critical acclaim and seven Tony Awards it lost \$685000 and Prince lost many of his long time investors (Ilson 2000:195).

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<sup>29</sup> Berthold Brecht (1898-1956) was a German poet, playwright and director who developed various theatrical techniques which he believed would allow the audience to evaluate the social implications of his productions critically and so effect change. One of the most important principles of his self-termed ‘Epic’ theatre was the ‘Verfremdungseffekt’ which distanced the audience from the action (Brockett 1992:220). Brecht used music and song in almost all his plays (Harrop & Epstein 1982:229) for the same basic purpose of alienation and gestus (ibid). He collaborated with Kurt Weill (1900-1950) on his famous musical, *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) which was a socialist comment on a capitalist society.

<sup>30</sup> Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) was a Russian and Soviet director and producer, he experimented with staging methods and was a proponent of symbolism in theatre. He was arrested, tortured and sentenced to death by Stalinist forces in 1940.

<sup>31</sup> Erwin Piscator (1893-1966) was a German director and producer who along with Brecht furthered the Epic theatre with sharp political comment. His influence on European and American theatre, especially in the use of still and cinematographic projections, was extensive.

<sup>32</sup> As quoted from Allan Wallach, “Harold Prince” Newsday, 3 February 1980, NYPL Clipping Folder.

At this point the work of Bob Fosse needs to be examined. In 1972, a year after he had revised *Cabaret* for the screen, he directed *Pippin*. Although he demanded no credit he introduced the Brechtian character of the Leading Player and turned the rather quaint work into a dark, disturbing piece of theatre. Miller (1996:189) contends that in the rejection of the ‘Happily-Ever-After’ formula and an ending shrouded in compromise and doubt, coupled with its playing off in real-time, it is one of the most realistic musicals ever produced. The themes of the musical include the search for fulfilment and the disillusionment which many young people experience and these are cleverly illustrated not so much by Pippin but in a Brechtian twist, by the actor playing Pippin. Instead of finding true fulfilment the actor decides not to participate in the grand finale and instead settles for a life in which he feels “Trapped. But happy”. This ending is supposedly not part of the script and “[w]e witness the Leading Player losing control of the show, so that the show both admits its artifice and pretends to reality simultaneously” (ibid 193).<sup>33</sup>

It was in 1975 that Fosse created a work that firmly established the concept musical. It was however a musical completely driven by the plot, but it was the fusion of form and content that made it so revolutionary. As with *Cabaret* and *Pippin* before, Fosse used the false glamour of show business as a metaphor for life (Miller 2000:14). *Chicago* is set in the Prohibition era of the 1920’s yet its themes are as relevant today as they were then. The main premise of the show is that any society, who through the media glamourizes criminals as celebrities, is as depraved as the perpetrators of the crimes themselves. The brilliance of this musical in its original form is how cleverly it satirises the media and the violence-craving public by using Vaudeville as the language of the piece.<sup>34</sup> The audience while completely aware of Roxie’s and Velma’s<sup>35</sup> guilt finds them entertaining and seductive but “by enjoying their performances, we acquit them” (ibid 15). Fosse’s supposition that publicity subverts justice is supported not only by this show in which Billy’s courtroom antics secure Roxie’s freedom while an innocent woman hangs, but

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<sup>33</sup> The device of admitting the artifice of the theatrical experience is one which the playtext of *Bat Boy* uses repeatedly and this will be discussed further in Chapters 4, 6 and 7.

<sup>34</sup> Vaudeville itself was notorious as a platform for any type of celebrity – a slightly upmarket version of the freak show, so the idea that the murderesses aim to become vaudeville stars is not too far-fetched. Each song in *Chicago* is reminiscent of a specific performer or Vaudevillian form of entertainment. Mama Morton’s character, for example, is more than suggestive of the Vaudeville star Sophie Tucker. Billy’s striptease is descended from Sally Rand’s celebrated fan dance while Mary Sunshine is a direct imitation of Julian Eltinge, a famous vaudevillian drag queen (Miller 2000:28-30).

<sup>35</sup> Roxie and Velma are the two lead characters in *Chicago*, both guilty of murder, although Roxie is later acquitted due to the degree to which her trial is sensationalized by the media.



also by the world in which we live where it appears that often in celebrity cases the courtrooms have become circuses and trials are not presided over by legitimate judges but by the media.

At the same time as Fosse was working on *Chicago*, Michael Bennett was directing a concept musical of his own, influenced perhaps by his work with Hal Prince on *Company* and *Follies*. This production was based on real-life and many of the characters were founded on experiences of the dancers involved in the workshopping process, not all of whom got to play 'themselves'. Again the tenets of form and content are fused. *A Chorus Line* was a show about show business with no scenery and no costumes and it went from workshops to an Off-Broadway production to a runaway Broadway hit (Novak 1988:10).

By this time the notion of the concept musical was an undeniable fact in the history of the musical theatre. However, it did not signify the end of the book musical. As evidenced by the short and costly runs of some of the above-mentioned productions many audience members remained insistent that musical theatre should be merely entertaining. They rejected musicals which attempted to include serious subject matter and often only seemed to embrace the non-threatening, feel-good shows. Why, however, should musical theatre be immune to the global modernist<sup>36</sup> and post-modernist<sup>37</sup> trends affecting other forms of drama? And so this resistance did not dissuade certain writers from advancing the path of the concept musical. And here, a brief look at the continuing works of Stephen Sondheim is necessary.

According to Kislán (1980:150) for "Rodgers and Hammerstein, book meant story. For Sondheim book means idea". The concept is all important, and the book or concept determines direction, performance, choreography, design and orchestration (ibid). *Pacific Overtures* (1976) was more about the clash of two cultures than the specific story of Commodore Perry. The show styled on the Japanese Noh and Kabuki forms of theatre

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<sup>36</sup> Modernism is a philosophical movement which emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth as a result of the emergence of a fully industrialized world. The philosophy questioned traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and activities of daily life. Modernism affirms the power of human beings to create, improve and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology. Modernism sought to modify existing modes of representation by pushing them towards the abstract or introspective (Childs 2008:4).

<sup>37</sup> The post-modernist movement was formed partly in reaction to the ideals of modernism with the works of Derrida, Foucault and Rorty reflecting the postmodern symbolism (Grenz 1996: 7) and signifying the end of a unified world view (ibid 12). The postmodern ethos reinforces a respect for difference and an emphasis on the local as opposed to the universal (ibid).

clearly illustrated this. In *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), the action takes place retrospectively which shattered the notion that a story had to be told in chronological order. The score too develops backwards with reprises being heard before the songs. The audience gets the opportunity to look back and see what lead the characters to their respective endings (beginning). Unfortunately this alienated most audiences as the Frank they meet in the beginning is bitter and disillusioned and evokes no sympathy from the viewer. This is another show that examines the ethics of show business. Sondheim comments on the dichotomy between staying true to one's artistic integrity and commercial success. More recently and in a similar vein, Jason Robert Brown's Off-Broadway musical *The Last Five Years* (2002) also commented on the ethics of the entertainment industry as well as playing with chronology. The timeline of the female lead, Cathy – a struggling actress, runs in reverse starting at the end of the marriage and her partner, Jamie's – a novelist – runs in chronological order starting from just after their first meeting. The couple 'meet' in the middle at their wedding. The oppositional chronology succeeds where *Merrily We Roll Along* failed; the poignancy of the failed relationship is evident in every scene and the audience feels for both characters to a great extent. Reverting back to the works of Sondheim, in *Into the Woods* (1988) the fairy tale format is used to provide commentary on some of the most basic and pervasive issues that our society faces. The characters face the existential crisis of having to accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their decisions.

*Assassins* (1989)<sup>38</sup> created by Sondheim and John Weidman is a quintessential concept musical. It uses songs to comment on the action and has no linear plot as time frames are continually blurred as assassins from different periods are brought together. The show is a revue of both songs and dialogue scenes that are connected thematically though do not tell a linear story. Like the Sondheim musicals *Company* and *Follies*, this is a character study, but before the show is over one realises that the assassins aren't the only characters being examined; the character of a country is also under scrutiny, a country in which the unattainable American Dream and lax gun control have provided a handful of neurotics with both the motive and the means to kill a president (Miller 1996:22).

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<sup>38</sup> *Assassins* opened Off-Broadway in 1990 and on the West End in 1992. Due to its sensitive subject matter criticising the American dream, at a time when the USA was fostering patriotism in order to support its involvement in the first Gulf War, it did not transfer to Broadway until it was revived in 2004 (Robinson 2014:47).

Here, Sondheim also uses characters to represent concepts: the Proprietor as the personification of the aberrations inherent in our society, the Balladeer as folksinger who represents the public and more importantly the story-telling tradition passed down through the generations which has at its core the triumph of good over evil. It is ironic that in “Another National Anthem” the assassins figuratively overcome the Balladeer as they literally force him off the stage. Sondheim and Weidman challenged one of the basic tenets of American life: the American dream. They proposed that this national philosophy which gives rise to so many optimistic hopes and desires, also spawns resentment and bitterness.

Since 1975 various other writers and composers have also added to the genre of the concept musical. Among others: Stephen Schwartz’ *Working* (1978) and Kander and Ebb’s *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*– the latter also directed by Hal Prince (Ilson 2000:xi). However as the body of work grows and diffuses the term concept musical becomes less specific. The term has been applied to musicals that are based on a central concept or theme and have no linear story such as *Company* and also to musicals where the central concept is more important than the story. Some concept musicals are entirely plot driven like *Chicago*, the relationship between form and content earning this musical the label ‘concept’. It has also described musicals that are in essence character studies for example *A Chorus Line*. It can also describe musicals in which the form or *how* the story is told is all-encompassing for example Andrew Lloyd Webber’s *CATS* where the role of choreography and its relationship to the narrative is all important.

Of course, the term has been vaguely applied to any musical which doesn’t fit into any other category and as such the term has lost its precision and clarity. What is clear is that musical theatre genre was irrevocably altered and the function of musicals extended to beyond that of mere entertainment and story-telling. The development of the concept musical also had far-reaching consequences in terms of the elements which comprise musical theatre as will be evidenced in the following section.

## **2.6 The elements of musical theatre**

According to Novak (1988:15-25) there are four main elements of a musical:

- The Book which is made up of Plot, Character, Thoughts (or the main themes or concept), Dialogue, Placement of songs and dances and Stage directions.
- Lyrics – words of the songs
- Score – music of the show
- Dances – choreographed harmonious and rhythmical movements to musical numbers and/or movement contained in scenes

As to the relation between these elements in today's post-modern musical, there is no hard and fast rule. Taylor (2012:1) asserts that in musical theatre today there is no definite or key formula in terms of the relationship between the narrative, music and song. It can be seen that some musicals contain a linear narrative and have well defined book scenes such as *Bat Boy – the Musical* (1997)<sup>39</sup> while others do away with linear time-lines completely (Taylor 2012:1) such as those discussed above. Some musicals are completely sung through or through composed such as *Les Misérables* (1985) or *Rent* (1999) while others use music metatextually or diegetically (ibid).

Some musicals like *A Little Night Music* (1973) or the Disney productions base their narrative on films while others use novels or plays as their inspiration such as *Show Boat* (1927) or *Cabaret* (1966) respectively. Sondheim and James Lapine's *Sunday in the Park with George* took its inspiration from one of Seurat's paintings. Some musicals are based on the life-stories of famous composers or musicians such as *BUDDY! The Buddy Holly Story* (1989) or *Jersey Boys* (2005) while others form stories around the music of current rock bands such as Green Day's concept musical *American Idiot* (2010) or British band Madness' *Our House* (2002).

Certain musicals such as *BoyBand* (2000) - which references the rise of *Take That*,<sup>40</sup> only have musical numbers where they would fall realistically, as in a rehearsal, concert or performance setting, while others use music and song to continue the action when the emotive content of the scene becomes too heightened for the dialogue of the book scenes as in *Parade* (1998). *Parade* is a biographical musical recreating a moment in

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<sup>39</sup> *Bat Boy – the Musical* opened at the Actors' Gang Studio in 1997 and Off-Broadway in 2001 when it's run was cut short by the 9/11 tragedies (Miller 2002:[sp]).

<sup>40</sup> *Take That* was a British pop boy-band. The lead singer, Robbie Williams made a controversial break from the band and continues to have an enormously successful career as a solo performer (Scott 2006:[sp]).

history whereas other musicals such as such as *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982) create character stereotypes. Other contemporary musicals have no discernible narrative and are merely linked by a musical theme such as *Songs for a new world* (1996) which composer Jason Robert Brown terms a “theatrical song cycle” and Miller refers to as a collection of independent song-scenes held together by the composer’s musical habits (Miller 1999: [sp]).

Where the musical style is concerned, some musicals use rock music as in *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973) while others use R’n’B (rhythm and blues) and gospel, for example *Dreamgirls* (1981) (Taylor 2012:1). Still other musicals are opera inspired such as *Phantom of the Opera* (1986). Taylor (2012:33) points out that whether the musical is comic, dramatic, jukebox or conceptual a “part of the emotional material and some of the narrative information is communicated in song” and thus the voice and vocal delivery is an important element of musical theatre. Whilst she does refer to a ‘musical theatre style’ of singing she posits that musical theatre has incorporated a huge variety of popular musical styles and that each style has its own “aesthetic and cultural associations” (ibid 53-54). It should be mentioned here that the songs from the musicals of the 1950’s until the mid-60s were the popular music of the day; songs from shows were heard on the radio and in films, hence the development of the ‘Great American Songbook’ (Graham 2013:7).<sup>41</sup> In direct opposition, after this era, ‘popular music’ often determined the musical style of certain shows. In the 80’s one musical managed to make the cross over to the pop charts possibly due to the composers being pop stars themselves. ABBA’s Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus created the hits ‘One night in Bangkok’ and ‘I know him so well’ from their musical *Chess* (1988) which became chart-toppers around the world.

In terms of the visual spectacle some musicals tell their stories almost exclusively through dance, such as *CATS* (1981) which has a classical and contemporary dance base or *Contact* (2000) (Patinkin 2008:521,522). Other musicals use tap dance as their medium of expression as in *42<sup>nd</sup> Street* (1980) while still others use ballet as the point of departure as in *Billy Elliot* (2005) or *On Your Toes* (1936). A combination of various dance styles including jazz, tap and acrobatics with more recently the addition of breakdancing, has been termed show or stage dance (Novak 1988:24). This style which Novak (ibid) argues

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<sup>41</sup> The ‘Great American Songbook’ is a term used to denote the canon of the most important and most influential American popular songs from the 1920’s through the 1950’s. These songs came principally from Broadway theatre, musical theatre and Hollywood musical film.

is often used in musicals “is the exciting, dynamic type of dance that Michael Bennet did for *A Chorus Line* (1975) and Bob Fosse choreographed for *Dancin’*”. In any discussion of dance in musicals the pioneering work of Bob Fosse’s<sup>42</sup> choreography must be mentioned and his style is well demonstrated in, amongst others, his original version and Susan Stroman’s Broadway revival of *Chicago* (1975 & 1996). An entire musical, *Fosse* (1999), pays tribute to the contribution and influence of his work (Patinkin 2008:512) but even this particular style or alternatively, the type of dance which has come to be known as theatre dance or ‘Broadway’<sup>43</sup> is by no means indicative of the musical theatre genre as a whole. Contemporary musicals can use diverse forms of dance such as *Bring in ’da noise, bring in ’da funk* (1996) which used tap dance informed by Hip Hop and Funk rhythms or *Spiderman* (2011) which uses aerial acrobatics and stage flying. In addition, many musicals have very little, if any dance at all, for example *Passion* (1994).

Also, when discussing the visual aspects of the genre the production design of musical theatre must be considered. Again there is no hard and fast rule to be applied. Some musicals are staged within a traditional proscenium arch design whilst others can be performed in a variety of settings including in the round, for example the 1973 revival of *Candide* (1956) and *Spring Awakening* (2006) (Patinkin 2008:325,527-528). Some musicals have vast, moving sets such as the 1970 production of *Company* whereas others have very simple sets such as the 1999 revival of the very same musical at the Donmar Warehouse (ibid 411-413, 520). The sets of some musicals rely heavily on audio-visual aids such as in *We Will Rock You* (2002)<sup>44</sup> while in others the design calls for parts of the set to be built into the audience, for example *Starlight Express* (1984).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Bob Fosse (1927-1987) was a Broadway dancer and became an influential director/choreographer developing his own recognizable style of dance characterized by turned-in legs and feet, sensual pelvic movements, intricate hand movements and the use of props including gloves and hats (Cutcher 2006:22-34 and Young 2009: 174-178).

<sup>43</sup> That this style of dance is recognised in popular culture is evidenced by the hit television dance show *So You Think You Can Dance* on Fox network which references various dance styles including, Hip Hop, Jazz, Contemporary, Ballroom, Latin and ‘Broadway’. So it appears that Broadway has given birth to a particular style of dance but the nature of this style is as hard to define as the musical theatre genre itself as each specific ‘Broadway’ dance number references a specific musical or choreographic style within musicals and this ‘Broadway’ style is by no means common to every musical.

<sup>44</sup> The eight screens used in the original production cost more than two million pounds and were revolutionary at the time (Tondeur [sa]:6).

<sup>45</sup> This production was staged at the Civic Theatre in 2013 and director Janice Honeyman was allowed to interpret and design the first non-identical copy of the show (Artslink 2012:[sp] & Joburg Theatre 2012:[sp]).



Whilst the investigation of movie musicals is beyond the scope of this study, a few examples are useful as they also clearly demonstrate the divergence of the musical theatre genre. Movie musicals range from the more traditional book musicals such as *Gigi* (1958) to the adaptation of the pop opera *Evita* (1996). The diversity in terms of the structure of narrative and music and song is clearly demonstrated by the controversial *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001)<sup>46</sup> – in which Hedwig tells his/her story through extended, sung monologue. In direct comparison Pink Floyd's anti-establishment and anti-war *The Wall* (1982) uses very little dialogue and includes animation accompanied by music with and without lyrics to explore themes of isolation and alienation.

Whilst most authors of musical theatre history recognise the diversity of the genre they identify as significant the development of the 'integrated' musical where book, lyrics, music and dance combine to form an integrated whole (Taylor 2012:56). The successful collaboration of Rodgers and Hammerstein II banished the "musicomedy as it raised the 'integrated' musical to the seat of power and influence" (Kislan 1980:142 emphasis in original) and it seemed that from then onwards the musical followed a very definite, integrated format. Kislan (ibid 43) goes on to describe this form of integration as more than synthesis where each element fits into the show but also drives the show. He describes the balance between drama and music and posits that the primacy of the book commands that the song must serve the play with a greater emphasis on lyrics. However, more recently this description of the homogeneity of dramatic, performance and theatrical components has been challenged as musical theatre continued to develop and "alternative musical theater (sic) practices evolved to threaten all the fundamental values of the creative musical theater (sic) establishment" (ibid 148).

Sheldon Patinkin (2008:529) points out that any art form in order to remain vital needs to be "submitted to frequent questioning, stretching, pulling, battering and even ripping to pieces" but that "[m]ost art forms are fortunate in that they don't require collaboration to the extent that musicals do". Lynn Ahrens (2008:xxiii) the award winning writer of *Ragtime* (1997), in her foreword to *Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course*, concurs and refers to the tireless efforts of the writers, directors and music staff of musicals to weave the spoken word, movement and song into a seamless dramatic structure. Taylor (2012:56) however, suggests that term 'integration' needs to be

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<sup>46</sup> The film was an adaptation of the 1998 Off-Broadway production of the same name.

redefined and argues that “musicals that are regarded as ‘integrated’ present a coherent narrative but that the narrative may be signified through individually disjunctive or alienating elements rather than a fusion or integration of elements”. She elaborates, arguing that voice, music, action and song all signify in differing ways and that use of song in musical theatre allows the audience to be simultaneously aware of the musical atmosphere and emotion and of the actual performer behind the character.

This, in line with Brecht’s technique of making strange, highlights the artificiality of musical theatre which generally presents itself as realistic (ibid 62). Taylor also cites many of Stephen Sondheim’s works that through various techniques, including non-linear structures and use of a narrator or chorus as well as challenging the audiences’ expectations of the plot, have a distancing effect.

This is not to say that the end result is not a coherent or integrated production but that the interaction of the elements of the musical and theatrical worlds is more complex than the general use of the term ‘integrated’ (ibid 63). Taylor also argues that even the ‘though composed’ musical – in which the structural opposition between narrative and musical number is deemed to have been destroyed – can signify as much through disjunction and juxtaposition as through continuity (ibid 59). She concludes by theorizing that:

“Musical theatre is entertaining in the ways it signifies, through gaps, dissonances and disruptions that audiences blend together to produce an experience of synchronous similarity, in the clearly embodied stories and characters with which audiences can empathise, and most of all in the excesses and voluptuous sensations it creates for its audiences to experience” (ibid 171).

Within the context of musical theatre as outlined above it should be noted that *Bat Boy* can be defined or classified as a contemporary American rock musical which has a traditional narrative book format – there are clearly delineated book scenes out of which the musical numbers grow. Whilst in format the show is a book musical the dominance of concept over plot makes the production a concept musical. At no point does the musical expect the audience to believe that the story could be real but the subject matter is presented in a way that the audience is captured by the journeys of the characters and



in so doing the themes of prejudice and tolerance are explored. This study will attempt to document the theatrical translation of this show into the South African context – a country in which these overlying themes of discrimination and tolerance are so relevant – thus a basic examination of the development of the musical theatre genre in South Africa is required.

## **2.7 The development of South African Musical Theatre**

Although the clarification of, and the varying relationships between, the elements of musical theatre are problematical to define, what is certain, is that the diverse theatrical genre that has become known as the “Broadway Musical” (Gänzl 1995:74) has been adopted in many other countries, not least of which is South Africa.

South African theatre history is steeped in a British colonialist, Afrikaner nationalist and indigenous theatre and performance history. Historically music, singing and dancing existed as performance customs in pre-colonial Africa. Hauptfleisch (1997:50-51) asserts that the use of the body as mimetic element (dance) along with narrative (praise singing) and the rhythmical (musical) base are important factors in indigenous South African performances. These religious and social rites, rituals and ceremonies included song and dance or similar forms of heightened vocality and physicality. Over time, many of these ritual and ceremonial traditions adapted into, amongst others, oral poetry, dance competitions, jazz and by the 1960’s, the township musical (Hauptfleisch 1997: 73).

However, these indigenous performance traditions were irrevocably influenced by the arrival of the Dutch, British and French garrisons whereby privileged South Africans were introduced to Shakespeare, Chekov, Moliere, the Gilbert and Sullivan farces, Broadway comedies, pantomime, vaudeville, cabaret, revues and the American musical (ibid 1997:73-74). These ‘imported’ theatre forms entered the country mainly from Britain and Australia and became so entrenched that by 1910, South Africa’s British theatre heritage formed the basis for the country’s theatre practice until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hauptfleisch 1987:181). This theatre tradition made use of a range of genres and works from the Western canon<sup>47</sup> and mainly followed two streams; the first being works mirroring British

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<sup>47</sup> The term ‘canon’ is used to describe key concepts, texts, theories and authors in scientific or artistic disciplines (Jubber 2006:321) and thus in this instance the Western canon refers to works from the West, specifically from the European and British traditions. Generally, postcolonial literature is held to repudiate this canon (Marx 2004:83).

theatre forms, aesthetics and themes, or transpositions of themes and content through the British form (Statahaki 2009:9, 10-11). The second stream, African (or Black) theatre found its home in the townships, drawing on theatre and performance traditions from pre-colonial performance forms to works mirroring the British (Hauptfleisch 1997:181) and other imported theatre forms. Transpositions of themes and content via the British form became quite popular as a form of African theatre (Statahaki 2009:9, 10-11). African theatre just like its 'white' counterpart was diverse in its offering. This chequered history leads Hauptfleisch to conclude that there is "no one, single unadulterated tradition of theatre in South Africa" (1997: 74).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and under Apartheid, theatre became organised along cultural and racial lines. Firstly, what is referred to as the 'Eurocentric' tradition included both the colonial and the Afrikaner nationalist position (Hauptfleisch 1997:14). "Both these approaches were conservative, conventional and based on the written tradition" (ibid). In the 1950's the government funded the National Theatre Organisation (NTO) which provided professional theatre for South Africans and was instrumental in training performers, technicians and authors who went on to create the dynamic theatre of the sixties and seventies (Hauptfleisch ESAT [2013]:[South African Theatre]). This national theatre was not 'national' at all though and catered mainly for the white, privileged population and ignored the needs of the black communities. Consequently the African (or Black) theatre tradition grew in the townships. It drew on eclectic roots and similar to South Africa's racial segregation, it followed a path of "separate development, deprived of funding and appropriate venues" (ibid). Similar to other theatre genres, musical theatre also found its home in disparate cultural spheres and two separate traditions existed under which Musicals were produced.

### **2.7.1 Eurocentric Musicals in Apartheid South Africa**

Following the 'Eurocentric' tradition many international musicals have been and continue to be successfully staged in South Africa. This tradition was started by, amongst others, the Graaff-Reniet Amateur Dramatic and Musical Society which was founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was renowned for their notable Gilbert and Sullivan productions. There were similar societies around the country and the Johannesburg Operatic and Musical Society (JODS) was founded in 1919 (ESAT [2010]:[Johannesburg Operatic and Musical Society]). Their first productions included Otto Harbach and Oscar Hammerstein II's

*Rose Marie* (Standard Theatre, 1939) and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance* (1940). A revival of Romberg's *The Desert Song* (also created by Harbach and Hammerstein II) was presented in 1952. In 1961 Anthony Farmer directed Ivor Novello's *The Dancing Years* and the operetta *Naughty Marietta* as well as staging Frank Loesser's Broadway musical *The Most Happy Fella* at the Civic Theatre in 1962. Following that Farmer also staged *Show Boat* for JODS in 1963. This production at the Civic Theatre starred New Zealand baritone Inia te Wiata and the Capedium Choir and due to popular demand, played at the Civic again in 1964. JODS then toured this production to African Theatre's Cape Town venue, the Alhambra, where the Eoan group replaced the Capedium Choir (ibid). In 1965 Ricky Arden directed *Little Mary Sunshine* at the Alexander theatre. Frank Loesser's musical *Guys and Dolls* was staged at the Civic in 1965, directed and designed by Farmer. It returned for another sell out season at the Civic the following year. Pat Bray and Tom Arnold secured the rights to Cole Porter's *Around the World in 80 Days* for JODS in 1966. Anthony Farmer staged the production at the Civic, with choreography by Wendy de la Harpe and music conducted by Bob Adams. 1967 saw three musicals produced by JODS, Cole Porter's musical *Kiss me Kate*, Rodgers and Hammerstein II's *Carousel* as well as *Man of La Mancha* which Geoffrey Sutherland directed and choreographed. The JODS production of *South Pacific* at the Civic was staged by Brickhill-Burke<sup>48</sup> and designed by Keith Anderson in 1969. *Applause* starring Janis Paige and Gay Lambert was staged at the Civic in 1971. Anthony Farmer designed the set, Otto Pirchner directed, and choreography was taken over from Geoffrey Sutherland by Wendy de la Harpe after dissatisfaction from the director. This proved to be the last JODS production at the Civic as they now owned the Alhambra Theatre in downtown Johannesburg. This opened in 1977 with *A Night to Remember*, directed by Farmer. An unsuccessful production of George and Ira Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*, directed by Taubie Kushlick and starring Ben Masinga and Betty Mthombeni opened at the Alhambra in 1978 (ibid). However, 1979 saw the end of sixty years of JODS productions (ibid). JODS continued as a hiring company for costumes, drapes, props, scores and scripts and rehearsal studios even after selling the Alhambra to theatre impresario Pieter Toerien<sup>49</sup> in 1980 (Tucker 2011:[sp]).

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<sup>48</sup> This partnership will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

<sup>49</sup> More of Pieter Toerien's contribution to musical theatre will be discussed in section 2.8.3 in this chapter.

Apart from JODS there were other producers staging Eurocentric musicals in South Africa most notably the Brickhill-Burke partnership. Famed actress Joan Brickhill and her husband Louis Burke staged a series of long running and well-attended productions from the mid-1960's to the mid-1980's (Rawlins 2014:[sp]). These productions ranged from *Oklahoma!* (1964) to *Gypsy* (1975) and many were performed at His Majesty's Theatre in Johannesburg which had opened doors in 1946 (ESAT [2012]:[His Majesty's Theatre]). To celebrate His Majesty's 30th birthday Brickhill-Burke staged *Follies Fantastique*, starring Joan Brickhill, Alvon Collison and Beni Mason. Brickhill and Burke staged the Broadway hit *I Love My Wife* (1978) and Neil Simon's *They're Playing Our Song* (1980) with score by Marvin Hamlisch and lyrics by Carole Bayer Sager (ESAT [2012]:[His Majesty's Theatre]). Brickhill also starred in their musicals as Miss Hannigan in *Annie* in 1978, and the title roles in *Hello Dolly* in 1980 and *Mame* in 1982 (Rawlins 2014:[sp]). Their production of *Hello Dolly* saw the end of the Brickhill-Burke lease at the theatre and subsequently its closing (ESAT [2012]:[His Majesty's Theatre]). The Brickhill-Burke contribution to home-grown South African musical theatre will be discussed a little further on in this chapter as they were also "among the pioneers of black musicals" (Kennedy 2014:[sp]). This partnership also produced the musical *Meet me in St Louis* on Broadway in 1989 which was critically acclaimed and won a Tony award as well as garnering four other Tony award nominations including one for Brickhill's choreography (ibid).

Before its closure His Majesty's Theatre however was the home for many musicals including Stephen Schwartz's *Pippin* (1975) starring amongst others Hal Watters, Sammy Brown, Jo-Ann Pezzarro, Bess Finney, Taliep Petersen and Andre Hattingh. This was produced by another influential partnership in South African theatre Des and Dawn Lindberg who had also produced *Godspell* (1973) across South Africa and staged *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1979) starring Victor Melleney, Judy Page and Annabel Linder at His Majesty's Theatre (ESAT [2012]:[His Majesty's Theatre]). At His Majesty's Theatre Taubie Kushlick and Don Hughs presented Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* (1975). By 1977 however the theatre was in serious financial difficulty and *A Night of 100 Stars*, starring actors who had agreed to complete a two-week run free of charge, opened (ibid). *Grease* starring Danny Keogh, Leonie Hofmeyr, Eckard Rabe, Bruce Millar and Sue Kiel, was also staged here in 1977 and ran until the following year.

Now, mention needs to be made of the government funded Performing Arts Councils (PACs) under whose umbrella musicals were staged. The four PACs were formed in

1963 and like the National Theatre Organisation before them catered almost exclusively to elite audiences in the white metropolitan areas (Van Heerden 2008:20). Indigenous culture was not promoted and even Afrikaans writers were marginalised. The PACs were well-resourced centres with state of the art facilities, resident orchestras as well as drama, ballet and opera companies (Meersman 2007:29). The Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal (PACT) was based in The State Theatre in Pretoria, the Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB) in the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town, the Performing Arts Council of the Free State (PACOFs) at the Sand du Plessis theatre in Bloemfontein and the Natal Performing Arts Council at the Playhouse in Durban (NAPAC) (Van Heerden 2008:20).

Before the opening of the State Theatre in 1981 PACT had staged musicals at various other venues including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in 1975 at His Majesty's Theatre. The following year PACT again staged *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* with Alvon Collison replacing Richard Loring as the Narrator and Tim Rice, on a visit to South Africa, stepping in as Pharaoh (ESAT [2012]:[His Majesty's Theatre]). Brickhill-Burke revived *The Sound of Music* also at His Majesty's in 1976 for PACT. In 1980 NAPAC's Christmas production was the musical called *Christian*, later renamed *Follow that Man*, inspired by Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and was staged at His Majesty's in 1980 (ibid). It was written by Nick Taylor and starred Taylor and Barry Kent.

Once the State Theatre had opened, PACT staged Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice's *Evita* (1981) there, starring Jo-Ann Pezzaro, Sharon Lynne, Gé Korsten and Eric Flynn and directed by Geoffrey Martin as well as *The Merry Widow* (1983) starring Roberta Palmer and Gé Korsten and directed by Neels Hansen (ESAT 2014: State Theatre). Anthony Farmer directed *Show Boat* (1984) starring Bess Arlene, Mayo Miza with Ed Barrett and Pieter Niemann). *The King and I* starring Joe Stewardson and Judy Page was produced at the State Theatre in 1986 and which also had a run at the Civic theatre in Johannesburg. PACT, NAPAC and PACOFs presented Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot* (1989) as well as *My Fair Lady* (1990). *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1991) which introduced a young Taryn Sudding, was also a combined performing arts councils' production. PACT presented Lerner and Loewe's *Brigadoon* in 1991, François Swart's production of *Gigi* (1992) and Lisa Kent's *Me and My Girl* (1993) (ibid) as well as a

production of *West Side Story* (1996) for which American director/choreographer Alan Johnson was imported to recreate Jerome Kern's choreography. Geoffrey Sutherland, Andrew Botha and Graham Scott's production of *Queen at the Opera* was also staged at the State Theatre in 1996 followed by <sup>50</sup>*Oklahoma!* (1997) directed by Philip Godawa, with musical direction by Graham Scott and choreography by Bryan Hill. *Fiddler on the Roof* was presented in 1998 as well as yet another production of *\*Buddy! The Buddy Holly Story* (1998/1999)<sup>51</sup> and *The Wizard of Oz* starring Taryn Sudding as Dorothy in 1999. In 2000 *\*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* directed by Johann Swart was onstage when the decision was made to close the State Theatre due to financial mismanagement (Van Heerden 2008:29-31). While the resident companies (ballet, contemporary and opera) were disbanded, and all administration and support staff let go with immediate effect, the run of the musical continued to full houses and was even extended.

Over this same period, another state subsidized theatre was the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg which apart from hosting many of the JODS productions until 1980 also presented many musicals. In 1982 the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association hosted Jerome Lawrence's *Mame* as a joint production with Brickhill-Burke. They also co-produced a new version of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1983) Louis Burke directed *Barnum* for PACT here starring Mark Wynter and Paul Ditchfield alternating the lead role in 1983 (ESAT [2014]:[Johannesburg Civic Theatre]). *Godspell* directed by Des and Dawn Lindberg and starring Sam Marais returned for PACT in May 1986 as well as a NAPAC production of the *The Pirates of Penzance* directed by Geoffrey Sutherland and starring amongst others Clive Scott. Together with PACT, CAPAB and NAPAC the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association presented *A Chorus Line* in 1992. PACT's production of *Buddy! The Buddy Holly Story* featuring Craig Urbani was staged here in 1993. In conjunction with Des and Dawn Lindberg the Johannesburg Civic Theatre Association produced a revival of *Godspell* (1994) and Janice Honeyman's production of *Hair* (1994). The afore-mentioned production of *Queen at the Opera* was also staged here in 1995/6.

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<sup>50</sup> \* denotes musicals in which I was a member of the cast.

<sup>51</sup> There had been a combined Arts Council production and nationwide tour of this show in 1993/4 playing at the Civic theatre, the Natal Playhouse and the Nico Malan Theatre in Cape Town.



However after the first democratic elections in 1994, the adoption of the White Paper on Arts, Heritage and Culture by the department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (1996) and the restructuring of funding for the performing arts this tradition of musical theatre changed. Before these transitions are addressed it is necessary to look at the other tradition in South Africa under which musical theatre flourished.

### 2.7.2 The home-grown Musicals of South Africa

Under Apartheid and over the last half-century South Africa has also developed a rich history of home-grown musicals which have not only been performed here but also exported and successfully displayed overseas. The first of such home-grown musicals was *King Kong* (1959) which was presented at the Wits University Great Hall and subsequently had a very successful run at the Prince's Theatre (1962) in the West End, London, launching the careers of stars such as Miriam Makeba & Todd Matshikiza. The musical told the story of the meteoric rise of township boxer, Ezekiel Dlamini who was known as “King Kong”. The tragic plot also portrays his descent into alcoholism and gang violence while depicting township life in stark relief. After being found guilty of his girlfriend’s murder and denied the death penalty for which he had asked, Dlamini was found drowned in an apparent suicide attempt. Whilst the musical was not an overt political statement the show highlighted the situation of black South Africans. The song “Bad Times, Sad Times” was considered a comment on the much publicized Treason Trial<sup>52</sup> which had begun in 1956. So much so, that Nelson Mandela<sup>53</sup> himself congratulated Todd Matshikiza "on weaving a subtle message of support for the Treason Trial leaders into the opening anthem” (Matshikiza & Matshikiza 2000:95-96).

The success of *King Kong* led to the rise of what is termed the ‘township musical’ which was developed by entrepreneurs such as Gibson Kente and Sam Manghwane (Hauptfleisch 1997:75). By the mid 1970’s Kente had become one of the most successful producers of popular theatre in the country (ibid:29) and these ‘African’ musicals which used the format of the American musical whilst telling South African stories became a specific and influential form of hybrid theatre (ibid 58). These township musicals spoke

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<sup>52</sup> The Treason Trial was held in Pretoria and lasted almost four years. Finally, all the accused including Albert Luthuli (ANC president), Walter Sisulu (secretary), Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela were acquitted.

<sup>53</sup> Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918-2013) was the first black president of South Africa. His inauguration occurred only after the first democratic elections in 1994 and after his release from a 27 year jail term for conspiracy to overthrow the state imposed by the Apartheid government in the Rivonia trial of 1962.

mainly to the black experience and Kente himself concluded that "black-produced, black acted shows for black audiences were the only viable direction for black theatre to take" (SouthAfrica.info 2009:[sp]). These productions also served a didactic purpose quite apart from their sheer entertainment value, drawing attention to social issues especially on the part of Kente a concern with education, the prospects of young people and generational and family issues (Gaylard 2011:178).

Andrew Horn (1985:6-7) however, criticizes township theatre and Kente's works *How Long* (1973), *Too Late* (1974) and *Mama and the Load* (1979) in terms of the form, the "melodramatic plots, sensational subject matter (murder, adultery, prostitution, alcoholism, crime, witchcraft), fast-paced action in a multitude of scenes, and generous, if not always logically integrated, helpings of song, dance and exposed breasts"(ibid) as well as content. Horn maintains that while Kente's theatre may have made some social ills visible it never exposed the source of evils and inherently upheld the status quo and the governing hegemony (ibid). Kente's distance from resistance politics brought him into conflict with black consciousness movements and he was labelled at best a mere "township entertainer" and at worst "a traitor to the black cause" (Gaylard 2007:178) for Kente's musical *Sekunjalo, the Naked Hour* even received a state subsidized run at the State Theatre in Pretoria in September 1988. Even though his musicals rarely overtly criticised the ruling regime so as to avoid persecution from the repressive Apartheid state, Kente still spent six months in prison after his film *How long must we suffer* (1976) was banned. And Kruger (1999:149-53) notes that indirectly, certain characters or the treatment thereof in his productions would draw attention to the political plight of those in the audience. The success of Kente (known as the father of township theatre) can be attributed to his understanding of his audience and township life and "his fusion of song, dance, comedy and melodrama to create a unique form of musical theatre, drawing on his roots in traditional performance and church music" (Gaylard 2011:1780). The format of the township musical as developed by Kente prepared the way for a most powerful and significant piece of theatre, *Sophiatown* (which will be discussed further, later in this section).

*King Kong* had created a new genre and many musicals were to follow. The more serious *Sponono* (1961) produced by Alan Paton and Krishnah Shah opened on Broadway in 1964 and this successful tradition continued into the seventies with *Umabatha* (1970),



produced by Welcome Msoni and the Theatre Workshop Company, performed at the World Theatre Season in London in 1972 and *Meropa* (1974). *Meropa*, originally named *Kwa Zulu*, produced by Brickhill Burke Productions, had the distinction of being the first South African production ever to be performed for multi-racial audiences. Even whilst spawning these African musicals this hybrid form of theatre, the township musical (Hauptfleisch 1997: 58) was influential in what became a most significant movement, the political protest theatre which came to the fore in the 1970's. The protest plays were "fast-paced revue sketches in which the actors sing, dance and mimic" (Maree 1998: 18) all the while providing political commentary on the despair and deprivation endured by the black people of South Africa. These plays "provided a vehicle for white South Africans to hear, see and understand the black struggle for human rights: to conscientize them and make them question their social conditioning in Apartheid South Africa" (ibid). Apart from the use of musical numbers and choreographed dances (to transcend language barriers), a key element in these productions was the use of language and the development of multilingual theatre seeking to represent the South African society at large (Hauptfleisch 1997:96). This form of theatre successfully crossed cultures uniting the disenfranchised black population and the forward thinking white South Africans.

While audiences for protest theatre grew at home giving a voice to the disenfranchised black population, the mid seventies saw South African musicals continuing to have large success at home and overseas. In 1975 both *Ipi Tombi* (which had opened in South Africa in 1974) and *Meropa* were performed in London, at Her Majesty's Theatre and The Piccadilly Theatre respectively, to great accolade. *Ipi Tombi*, although successful in both traditionally white theatres and the black townships before receiving international acclaim, sparked major controversy over what was perceived as the "blatant exploitation of its cast and the cultural heritage it represented" (ESAT [2012]:[Ipi Tombi]). The legacy of *Ipi Tombi* is a double edged sword: many of the songs became local and international hits, most notably "Mama Thembu's Wedding" and "The Click Song" (immortalised by Miriam Makeba) which have both become mainstays of popular South African culture. The show also launched the successful careers of its artists including amongst others Margaret Singana (ibid). However, the show was criticized for the vast division of labour in terms of the white management of black talent<sup>54</sup> (Kruger 1999:131) as well as the

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<sup>54</sup> The controversy surrounding the subject matter and the presentation thereof, as well as the division of labour in this (and other such musicals), is beyond the scope of this study.

tradition of black musical theatre which it advanced. This tradition reaffirmed existing perceived notions of 'African' culture via the sensational plot lines and stereotypical characters which conformed to white prejudices (Colleran 1998:230). These traditions became features of subsequent productions. After a run at the Market Theatre the "fiercely political" (Miller 2007:173) South African protest musical *Sarafina*, written by Mbongeni Ngema opened Off-Broadway in 1987 and then transferred to Broadway. Jeanne Colleran (1998:233) contests Miller's view of *Sarafina* stating that the musical "enacts no political critique". She maintains that unlike Ngema's prior works *Woza Albert* (1981) and *Asinamali!* (1987) which depicted historical events of Apartheid's repression and first played to township audiences, *Sarafina*:

"grafts some features of a theatrical form born in resistance and struggle on to one born of profit and apoliticality, and becomes in the process the worst case scenario of cultural syncretism" (ibid).

In contrast David Kramer and Taliep Petersen's *District Six*<sup>55</sup> opened in 1987 enjoying enormous success then, and also in subsequent productions.<sup>56</sup> Once again musical theatre was effective in drawing attention to political and social issues which were not able to be addressed in any political forum. In 1988, embracing a very similar theme, *Sophtown* was co-produced by the Market Theatre and Junction Avenue Theatre. Structurally this show takes the form of the township musical but in its combination of music, dance, melodrama, laughter and Brechtian technique it "reconstructed the social life and cultural aspirations of urban blacks and the resilience of this culture despite suppression by Apartheid" (Kruger 1999:96). In the show's appeal, across all cultural and racial lines, "*Sophtown* is political theatre at its most devastatingly persuasive" (Hauptfleisch 1997:62). This hybrid form of uniquely South African theatre and to which Hauptfleisch (1997:60) refers to as 'crossover theatre' marries various techniques and traditions, incorporating narrative, mime and music to form integrated performance (ibid).

Then, in 1994, the result the protest theatre had desired and the culmination of political reform occurred as South Africa celebrated its first democratic election. This had far-reaching effects on musical theatre in the country.

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<sup>55</sup> The musical dealt with the forced removals from the area of the same name in Cape Town.

<sup>56</sup> It broke the Baxter Theatre's record for the longest running production in 2002/3. (District Six – the musical [Sa]:[sp])

### **2.7.3 Musical Theatre in the post-Apartheid South Africa**

When South Africa celebrated its first democratic election in 1994 Apartheid was officially dismantled and along with the adoption of democratic policies multiculturalism was constructed as the social ideal. South Africa was hailed as the ‘rainbow nation’ and ‘simunye’<sup>57</sup> (Craighead 2011:260) adopted as a slogan almost immediately. In answer Richard Loring’s *African Footprint* was performed on the eve of the Millennium in front of Nelson Mandela and world leaders on Robben Island and for a global television audience. The show has also been featured on the on BBC’s Royal Variety Show (2000) as well as subsequently continuing to tour the world with great success. *African Footprint* was billed as a musical introduction to Africa and it was very much a statement about the new South Africa and its future course which the show professed would be a great one (Kornhaber 2004:5). The message portrayed was one of racial and cultural harmony and the promise of prosperity (ibid). However, what this production in its naïve optimism, and in essence what the ‘we are one’ slogan failed to recognise is that multiculturalism is an ideal, prefaced on the presumable equal value of the cultures involved and equal access (Craighead 2011:60) and that equality, financial stability and racial harmony was still out of reach of most South Africans.

Mention here also needs to be made of *Umoja – The Spirit of Togetherness* (2000), a song and dance troupe formed by Todd Twala and Thembi Nyandeni which eventually featured 40 singers, dancers, drummers and marimba players (ESAT [2012]:[Umoja]). After a successful run in South Africa, *Umoja* transferred to London’s Shaftesbury Theatre (2001). As with *African Footprint*, this triumphant musical celebrated South African music from tribal to gumboot, Sophiatown jazz to Kwaito today as it journeys through history. The production continued to tour internationally and enjoy recurrent local runs<sup>58</sup> and *Africa Umoja* is now billed as South Africa’s longest running musical boasting a 12 year (albeit intermittent) run (Gauteng.net [sa]:[sp]). While the high-energy show is undoubtedly successful, one in which “they dance like demons, sing like angels, and drum like magicians possessed” (The Daily Telegraph)<sup>59</sup> one wonders if this can be attributed to the fact that the show is trapped in the tradition of black theatre made for

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<sup>57</sup> Isizulu word meaning ‘we are one’.

<sup>58</sup> *Africa Umoja* was supported by music producer Joe Theron who bought and renovated The Victory Theatre with a view to setting up a home for the dance group which opened the theatre in 2005 and then continued to tour.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted on The *Africa Umoja* official website: [www.africaumoja.com](http://www.africaumoja.com).

white consumption, confined within the *Sarafina* legacy which has “proven to be immensely lucrative and become the almost inescapable model of how black South African theatre should be made” (Gevisser 1995:11).

Both *African Footprint* and *Africa Umoja* were private initiatives which would become the way forward for musical theatre in South Africa for in 1996 the White Paper on Arts, Heritage and Culture was adopted by the newly formed Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST). This paper would in effect lead to the collapse of the old state funded theatre system. In place of the old PACs, the National Arts Council (NAC) was established to which artists could apply for funding. Unfortunately the budget given to the NAC was less than that removed from the PACs and was also to include crafts, literature and visual arts. It had “been assumed that the budget allocated for the white population of 4 million would be enough to cover the cultural activities of now 40 million people” (Meersman 2006:300). The old PAC theatres were transformed into receiving houses for any artist to hire with their funding from the NAC. Ironically this has had the opposite effect to what was intended. With the funding cuts the theatre rents were forced upwards and only wealthy producers have the money to hire the theatre infrastructure. Since the maintenance of the theatres occurs at taxpayers’ expense these urban cultural institutions are still heavily subsidized and historically disadvantaged provinces still receive almost no funding. (Meersman 2006:301).

With the demise of the old PACs, coupled with the disappearance of the support for anti-Apartheid theatre, the future of musical theatre has been left entirely in the hands of the private sector and post 1994 three trends have emerged.

Firstly, there was the rise of the Dinner theatre or what could be termed the Barnyard theatre phenomenon (Van Heerden 2008:74/75). In the days following the end of Apartheid several smaller independent theatres opened. Most were dinner theatres at which patrons could eat and drink while watching revue-style shows. Only a handful of these theatres have survived commercially most notably the Barnyard Theatres which became a franchised chain throughout the country (ibid). The Barnyards provide an informal, relaxed atmosphere (often showing sporting events on big screens in the auditorium as a draw-card or on televisions in the smoking room during the shows themselves). These theatres showcase juke-box productions which move from one

venue to the next. This type of entertainment has proved immensely popular with its niche market. However its patrons, while not ‘high-brow’ theatre goers, are also not representative of the multicultural new South Africa. On occasion the Barnyard has produced the odd musical including \**The Rocky Horror Show* (2005), \**Grease* (2006/7) and *Buddy! The Buddy Holly Story* (2008) but these were generally scaled down, low budget versions and were not overly well received by regular Barnyard patrons.<sup>60</sup>

Secondly, there was a proliferation of Arts festivals (Hauptfleisch 2001:169). A large number of festivals take place over the country and the number grew exponentially following 1994 although not all have survived the test of time. The long established Grahamstown festival always had as one of its aims to “establish, empower and maintain the cultural heritage of English Speaking South Africans” (ibid 172). Post 1994, fears brought about by the reduced control exercised by Afrikaners over arts and culture (indeed, over politics and the country itself) resulted in the establishment of the Afrikaans festivals such as the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees (KKNK) and Aardklop in an attempt to preserve the Afrikaans language and cultural heritage (Van Heerden 2008:55/56). Apart from many musical revues and light music performances the musical pantomimes \**Brolloks en Bittergall* (1998) and \**Die Spook van Donkergat* (1999) were presented at the KKNK directed by Liz Meiring and Hannes Muller with musical arrangements by Didi Kriel. The following year Muller and Kriel collaborated on a large scale, original Afrikaans musical *Antjie Somers*<sup>61</sup> which was the retelling of an old Cape folk-story in which an inter-racial love story was highlighted. The production starred Zane Meas and AJ van der Merwe and subsequently toured the Cape and Gauteng.

However, all the above-mentioned did very little to encourage black or indigenous theatre (Van Heerden 2008:64) and in 1997 the Macufe Festival was started to try and redress the imbalance. In the beginning this festival did little to encourage indigenous theatre focussing more on song and dance (ibid 65). Whether the festivals are just an interim measure as the arts try to find a way in the murky theatrical waters of the new South Africa (Van Heerden 2008:71) they illustrate what is perhaps the biggest criticism of multiculturalism: that it gives rise to closed communities or groups and is too focussed

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<sup>60</sup> A letter of complaint was received during the *Grease* run from a Barnyard regular stating that while “the songs were okay, why was there so much talking?”. (I had been a member of the cast at this time and the story was circulated amongst the cast to much mirth!)

<sup>61</sup> On this production I was Choreographic Assistant to the Choreographer, Christopher Kindo.

on difference and diversity as opposed to social cohesion (Meer and Modood 2012: 177 & 182-190).

Also while the festivals are able to provide funding for a select number of productions most artists have to put up the show budgets themselves hoping to recoup their costs through ticket sales. Over the last few years however it seems that fewer festival-goers were attending the shows, preferring instead to stay in the beer tents watching the free entertainment provided by the larger sponsors. Another problem is that a large majority of these shows do not translate well outside of the festival environment (Hauptfleisch 2001:174) and what is certain is that the artists cannot survive from festival to festival alone.

Thirdly, a few select producers like Pieter Toerien have risen to the challenge, firstly bringing tours of international shows and casts such as *Les Misérables* (1995) to South Africa and then footing the bill to produce international musicals featuring stellar South African casts to our local stages (Tucker 2011:[sp]). Many of these productions have been carbon copies of the international shows and the production teams of directors, choreographers and designers have been brought from overseas. Pieter Toerien Productions gave South Africans the opportunity to see, among others, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *CATS* (2001/2, 2009/10) and *Phantom of the Opera* (2004, 2011/12) and Disney's *The Lion King* (2007). Hazel Feldman and Showtime Productions presented *FAME* (2003/4), *Rent* (2007) and *Dreamgirls* (2011). *Saturday Night Fever* (2008) was produced by Richard Loring Productions in association with Jacaranda 94.2 and Big Concerts and *Footloose* (2009) was presented by Bernard Jay of the Joburg Theatre. Toerien and Feldman have also collaborated to produce hits such as *High School Musical* (2008), *Dirty Dancing* (2012) and *Jersey Boys* (2013).

As theatre and musical theatre productions in particular are becoming increasingly more expensive to mount the end result of the receiving house model is that it encourages highly commercialized work, either produced overseas or inspired by international trends. This has reduced indigenous artists to mere copycats and impoverished local culture and again quoting Meersman (2006:302): "It is distressing that what should have been a formidable and fascinating cultural explosion after democracy could be turning into a sycophantic whimper".



Whilst some smaller productions like Jervis Pennington's award-winning *Scribble* (1991) an intimate, genuine show highlighted the lives of a small segment of the South African population other productions such as *Milestones* (1999)<sup>62</sup> tried to reflect life in the new South Africa, the search for a new South African identity and a new theatre. However in musical theatre, as with other forms of theatre:

“there was an unwillingness among artists, sponsors and audiences to explore and expose the contradictions in the new South African society. Reluctance to criticise the excesses of the new government or corruption in the new elite went together with a fear of being labelled a racist or a supporter of the old regime” (Van Graan: 1996 as quoted by Van Heerden 2008:198).

While Apartheid ruled in South Africa the government had funded the 'Eurocentric' art forms and international funders provided the resources for the generation of anti-Apartheid theatre (Van Graan 2006:282). With the need for protest theatre dead our unique crossover theatre suffered its first setback. The second came from an unexpected quarter and lay in the proposed 'transformation' of the funding of the performance arts in the new South Africa. Van Graan summarized this as the “shift from struggle theatre to the struggle to make and disseminate theatre with the latter being waged with policy, funding and government institutions that – ironically – were intended to advance theatre” (Van Graan 2004 as quoted in Van Heerden 2008:51).

That cultural service is making way for the entertainment industry is illustrated all too clearly by the transition of the Civic Theatre in Johannesburg. In the early post-Apartheid years the Civic continued as city theatre subsidized by the council and running at a loss. Then in 2000 the Theatre became a (Pty) Ltd with Bernard Jay as the CEO and the emphasis shifted from the “encouragement of indigenous theatre and development of black theatre makers to a business orientated commercial theatre facility” (Van Heerden 2008:89). In 2005 The Performing Arts Network of South Africa (PANSA) reported that the box-office sales of the Civic exceeded the combined total of the four previous PACs (ibid).

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<sup>62</sup> Premiered at Grahamstown Festival, then the State Theatre, Produced by Mannie Manim written by Mandla Langa, directed by Jerry Mofekeng and starring Sibongile Khumalo and Gloria Bosman

With the protest theatre of the 1980's (including those musicals with strong political messages as mentioned above) all but diminishing<sup>63</sup> and those productions lauding our rainbow nation now appearing somewhat premature as well as the over-riding emphasis on entertainment in the arts has meant that music theatre productions staged in South Africa are reflective of the culturally differentiated population and as such appeal only to small and selected segments of society.

The latest Afrikaner musicals *Ons vir Jou* (2008)<sup>64</sup> and *Tree Aan* (2011)<sup>65</sup> both produced by Deon Opperman's Packed House Productions being cases in point which have seemed to revive the Afrikaner nationalism that characterized 'white' South African theatre in its early days and this Afrikaner audience is also the target for the religious musicals such as *Dawid* (2010), *Ester* (2011), *Jesus* (2013) and *Droomkind* (2014).

Musical theatre following the 'Eurocentric' tradition seems to be alive and well in South Africa as the recent sell-out tour of the 'mediocre' *Dirty Dancing* (Kennedy, C. 2012:[sp]) indicates with traditional middle class audiences content to see revivals of international musicals such as Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express* (2013) at the Joburg theatre or *Jersey Boys* (2013) and *The Sound of Music* (2014) in Cape Town and at Pieter Toerien's Teatro at Montecasino.

In a bold move to try and entice the new black middle class into this theatre Hazel Feldman gambled on *Dreamgirls* (2011) the musical version of the successful movie of the same name featuring an all-star African-American cast including Jamie Foxx,

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<sup>63</sup> *Marikana – the Musical* (2014) which played to audiences at this year's Grahamstown festival (there is also a run scheduled at the State Theatre a month after this dissertation's due date) could be considered protest theatre due to the subject matter exploring the deaths of 44 people, mostly miners in what was the single most lethal use of force by South African security forces since 1960 and the end of Apartheid. However, by all accounts the musical didn't quite fit into the category of protest theatre not taking a strong enough political stance (CueTube [sa]:[sp]) and that in this uneasy compromise, the form of theatre was not conducive to the seriousness of the content (Mabandu 2014:[sp]).

<sup>64</sup> "Not one black person attended the opening night of Deon Opperman's South African Anglo-Boer War musical, *Ons vir Jou*, at the Pretoria State Theatre" Adriaan Basson, in his review *Unspectacular Spectacle* for the Mail & Guardian Online, 25/9/2008. <http://mg.co.za/article/2008-09-25-unspectacular-spectacle>, accessed 2012/03/11.

In private communication with cast member Adrian Poulsen, he revealed that this accurately summed up the rest of the otherwise well attended run.

<sup>65</sup> On 9 July 2011 I attended the sold out, last Matinee performance of *Tree Aan* in the Drama auditorium at the State Theatre and in the entire audience there was only one person of colour. In private communications with cast members Adam Pelkowitz (David Lipschitz), Brendan van Rhyn (Neil Andrews) and Christopher Dudgeon (Ensemble) they all remarked that this was the case in nearly every performance.



Beyoncé Knowles, Eddie Murphy, Jennifer Hudson and Danny Glover. Billed by its own marketing as “featuring an entirely South African cast to play its all African American characters”<sup>66</sup> *Dreamgirls* was arguably a musical theatre production of exceptional quality.<sup>67</sup> Yet ticket sales were abysmal and the tour was abruptly cancelled (Dreamgirls stars find new work 2011:[sp]), the production was ignored by the historical middle class which forms the majority of musical theatre-going audiences and the rising, previously disadvantaged, middle class at which it was aimed.<sup>68</sup>

While the township musical proved that the form and traditional American structure of the musical does not prohibit the telling of South African stories it seems musical theatre in this country does not appeal to an inclusive South African audience and continues to preserve separate cultural identities as entrenched by the previous hegemony. This study aims to investigate the translation of an American musical into the South African context and in so doing explore ways in which this particular form of theatre can purposely resonate within the broader South African, multicultural and multilingual context.

As can be seen within the context of the development of musical theatre as described above, the musical to be translated, *Bat Boy* is a contemporary American rock musical which has a traditional narrative book structure. The book format is clearly evidenced as there are distinct dialogue scenes which lead into the musical numbers – even though a large majority of the dialogue is underscored. However, the primacy of the themes of the piece and the methods employed by which the outlandish story is told, those methods questioning – and parodying – the very form of the Broadway musical, could lead to the classification of the show as concept musical. The importance of form over content or concept over plot may well be a supporting factor which will make the crossing of social contexts, languages and cultures easier to negotiate as the show is transferred to the current South African context also bearing in mind the local, theatrical conventions and traditions as referred to above.

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<sup>66</sup> Montecasino Press Office, Press Release Archive, *Dreamgirls* the Musical: 2010.02.02 Johannesburg, South Africa. [www.montecasino.co.za](http://www.montecasino.co.za) accessed 2012/03/11

<sup>67</sup> Critical reviews and comments from theatre practitioners, producers and television personalities all laud *Dreamgirls* as an outstanding production. Links and quotations at [www.dreamgirls.co.za](http://www.dreamgirls.co.za) accessed 2012.03.11.

<sup>68</sup> “Despite being hailed unanimously by leading local critics and celebrities as ‘the finest’ musical ever staged in South Africa, poor public support resulted in this very hard decision” 2011.04.22 [www.dreamgirls.co.za](http://www.dreamgirls.co.za) accessed 2012.08.28

Just how translation will be constructed will be addressed in the following chapter which will discuss the various theoretical concepts that are pivotal to the theatrical translation process. The chapter will also attempt to establish a model of analysis that will be employed as a tool for the practice-led study.

## CHAPTER 3

### **CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

This chapter is devoted to discussions of the three main concepts of the theoretical framework within which the study articulates. The first includes an analysis of the concept of translation for the theatre, which will substantiate the choice of the term translation in the title of the study. The second speaks to an investigation of how the intended translation articulates within the cross-cultural/intercultural theatrical framework (to be discussed later in the chapter) and the third is a brief overview of the study of semiotics for the theatre, an understanding of which can assist in facilitating the process of theatrical translation. The examination of these three concepts is undertaken with a view to establishing a model to be used as a tool in the analysis of the playtext of the musical *Bat Boy* (Chapter 4) and the practical processes which followed (Chapters 5 and 6).

#### **3.1. The Translation/adaptation/variation debate**

Whilst an in depth investigation of translation studies and its history is beyond the scope of this study, the focus shall lie on exploring the theatrical premises of theatrical translation and other related concepts such as adaptation and variation. This is undertaken with a view to not only validating the choice of this term when describing the process of revising the playtext of *Bat Boy* to resonate within the South African situation, but also in order to generate an articulated approach to the theatrical translation of the playtext.

Translation in general can be defined as the “process of changing something that is written or spoken into another language” (Wehmeier, McIntosh, Turnbull & Ashby 2005:1632) or put in another way, translation is the linguistic transfer from one language – hereafter referred to as the source language (SL), to another – the target language (TL). The term translation can also refer to a “text or work that has been changed from one language into another” or the “process of changing something into a different form” (ibid). The focus of this study will fall mainly on this latter interpretation of translation but it is however necessary to explore the former to frame the second interpretation effectively.

Although translation studies is a relatively new discipline; at various stages in history different theories regarding translation have held sway. Bassnett posits that the theory of ‘word for word’, literal translation or the “Jerome model”<sup>69</sup> which demanded faithfulness to the original text has, especially in the West, given way to the “Horace model”<sup>70</sup> (1998:3). Within this second model, translators are given more freedom to interpret ‘sense for sense’ with more emphasis on the “aesthetic criteria of the TL product rather than on more rigid notions of ‘fidelity’” (Bassnett 1980:44). While originally the emphasis in translation lay on the struggle to achieve equivalence Suh (2002: 51) points out that the focus has shifted from the traditional practice of comparative textual analysis towards the “acceptance of target text as a product in its own right”. He asserts that:

“[a]ttempts are therefore made to set translations and their reception within the context of the receiving culture and enquiries are made into the status of the translations in that culture. The focus is no longer on mere textual transfer, but on cultural mediation and interchange” (ibid).

Most importantly here is Suh’s mention of the academic shift away from purely literal translation to translation in terms of the theory of reception. Within theatrical translation studies this theory has gained prominence and Mateo (1995:101) explains that since a drama performance cannot exist without an audience, a translation is dependent on its receiving system not only for its success but for its very existence as a translation. Thus, cultural interests and concerns need to be addressed within the translation and hence the translation acts as a form of intercultural communication.

However, before any discussion on the subject of translation for the theatre can be embarked on, a distinction must be drawn between drama translation which refers to the translation of a literary text and the translation of theatre texts intended for use in a production. Theatre and drama are not always synonymous and although the two are “interrelated concepts they do not refer to the same phenomenon” (Aaltonen 2000:4). Mark Fortier (2002:4) succinctly explains the difference: drama is a written form and is understandable in the same terms as fiction or poetry and easily appropriated by literary

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<sup>69</sup> Named after Saint Jerome (331 – 420AD), this theory advocated equivalence above all else.

<sup>70</sup> Named after the Roman Poet, Horace (65BC – 8BC).

theory whereas theatre is not defined as words on a page. Although theatre may be the performance of a drama text it comprises not only words but “space, actors, props, audience and the complex relations among these elements” (ibid).

Theatre, Fortier suggests, would not be fully understandable if dominated by a linguistic model. For the purposes of this study a distinction will be drawn not only between the pure linguistic model of translation and the dramatic discourse but also between the dramatic and theatrical discourses, the former relating to the study of the words as written on the page and the latter considering how the words are presented in performance in time and space.

As for the actual translation of theatre texts, this practice has existed almost as long as theatre itself. In ancient Rome much attention was paid to the translation of the Greek plays<sup>71</sup> and Cicero and Horace both aired views and focussed attention on the role of the translator and the approaches to and significance of translation itself (Bassnett 1980:42/43). By the early 1980’s, it had become apparent that there was a need for in depth research into theatrical translation with a view to formulating a theory (Bassnett 1980:134). Up until that point this field had been largely ignored by translation theorists and it had become common practice to “translate dramatic<sup>72</sup> texts in the same way as prose texts” (Nikolarea 2002:[sp]). In fact, Bassnett went as far as to compare translation within the theatrical domain to a labyrinth (1985:87 & 1998:90), the main reason for this being the discrepancies between the literary text and the performance of that text. While the literary text can be translated merely through linguistic transfer the performance of that text, according to Schechner (1998:85), includes not only the gestures performed by the performers but the performance as a complete event including audience response and technical elements. The complexity of the theatrical medium thus problematizes theatrical translation.

Phyllis Zatlin (2005:4) expresses the convolution of the theatrical situation by stating that as *any* play, not only those in the process of linguistic translation, progresses from text

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<sup>71</sup> Cicero claimed that Roman dramatists copied their Greek originals ‘word for word’ as literary translations but he also stated that they did more than just translate from the Greek and recent studies indicate that in the context of performance the Romans not only adapted the language but also Greek theatrical traditions in light of the theory of dramatic reception and audience participation (Erasmus 2004:viii-ix).

<sup>72</sup> Nikolarea has used the term ‘dramatic’ (in the sense that this author would use the term ‘theatrical’) to mean ‘as opposed to literary’.

to performance, translation occurs on many levels from producer to director to designer to actor/tress regardless. It seems however, that the main concern in theatre translation is that the playtext is seen as an unfinished or incomplete article and that as the work of theatre semiotics<sup>73</sup> has postulated “the linguistic system is only one optional component in a set of interrelated systems that comprise the spectacle” (Bassnett 1980:120). The work of recent theatre semioticians has impacted quite heavily on theories regarding the translation of theatre. Anne Ubersfeld for example, neatly sums up the incompleteness of the written playtext and makes a distinction between the written text (T) and the performance (P) and a text that reconciles the two but is a necessary component of the final product (T1). She sets out the equation:  $T + T1 = P$ , where T is the author’s text and T1 is the text that pertains to mounting or staging the play. Both T and T1 are distinct from P – the performance (Ubersfeld 1999:10). “Hence, Ubersfeld poses the question of the boundaries of the written text and the possible existence of an inner text to be read between the lines” (Nikolarea 2002:[sp]). This line of thinking is important in terms of this study as the translation of *Bat Boy* will take place on two levels and the final performance will be a result of the translation.

Following Ubersfeld's argument against the supremacy of the literary text, Bassnett originally asserted that it is impossible to separate playtext from performance and when a literary text acquires a higher status than its performance counterpart the outcome is to believe that there is only one ‘right’ way of reading, and therefore performing the text and, if this were so, then the translator would be bound to an inflexible, unyielding model of translation (Nikolarea 2002:[sp]). However, in her later work Bassnett refutes the notion of the concealed gestic text.<sup>74</sup> This she insists would make the translator’s job “super-human” (1991: 100) as he or she would have to translate a source text that is incomplete and contains a hidden text into a target language that must also contain a hidden text (ibid). Here I should like to add an observation regarding the genre of musical theatre. To return to the definition of musical theatre<sup>75</sup> this form of theatre consists of acting, singing and dancing and while the playtext of a musical generally sets out the dialogue (in the script) and the singing (in the score) the dancing has historically been

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<sup>73</sup> Semiotics in theatre will be discussed in the following section of this study.

<sup>74</sup> This would be a code which would reveal an acting subtext to be interpreted or decoded by the director or actor. However Bassnett has now disregarded the problem of the inner text/subtext/gestic text as despite the author’s best intentions there can be no definitive reading of such a subtext and every performer or director will inevitably interpret this in a different way (1998:90).

<sup>75</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, section 2.1.

left to the appointed choreographer to interpret – from the music, singing and scenic action – suggesting that there is in fact an encoded gestic text that can be implied from the other elements but one which allows for different interpretations subject to each individual choreographer’s frame of reference.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to Bassnett’s later theories and more in line with the approach this study will take, Patrice Pavis – theatre semiotician – in his article *Problems of translation for the stage: interculturalism and post-modern theatre* (1989) argues that real theatrical translation must take place on the level of the *mise-en-scène* as the text is presented by an actor to an audience in a specific time and place. He argues that the contributions of the literary translator, the director and the actors must all be integrated so that the act of translation is broadened to incorporate the dramatic text and the *mise-en-scène* (Pavis 1989:25).

Pavis insists that the interpretive act should pull the source text towards the target culture and language and that translation “does not entail the search for equivalence of two texts, but rather the appropriation of a source by a target text” in light of those who will be receiving the text – the audience (ibid). However, it should be noted that Pavis assumes homogeneity in terms of the target culture, which is unfortunately not feasible in terms of the South African multicultural and multilingual context and which will be addressed in the proposed translation.

So how does one approach the task of translation within the theatrical context? In his work: *Literary Translation A Practical Guide* Landers (2001:104) proposes that ‘speakability’<sup>77</sup> is the main pre-requisite for theatrical translations but goes no further in explaining the concept while Bassnett in her article *Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability* asserts that “[a]ttempts to define the ‘performability’ inherent in a text never go further than generalized discussion about the need for fluent speech rhythms in the target text” (1991:102). Bassnett also suggests that “[i]f a set of criteria ever could be established to determine the ‘performability’ of a theatre text, then those criteria would constantly vary, from culture to culture, from period to period and from text type to text type” (ibid). Nikolarea (2002:[sp]) clarifies that Bassnett, in her later research,

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<sup>76</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4, 6 and 7.

<sup>77</sup> The terms ‘speakability’, ‘playability’ or ‘performability’ are used as justifications of translations in theatre but Aaltonen (2000:7) argues that none of these terms have been sufficiently defined.



adopted the theatre anthropology position that each culture is unique, each supporting different performance conventions and the particularity of the gestures contained therein and therefore advocated a return to the function of 'readability' in translation theory.

In grappling with the anomalies of translation in the theatrical context, theorists have tried to identify and classify the varying facets within this field. In his discussion, Eric Bentley states that there are at least four types of different phenomena which can be classified as theatrical translation (1987:256). The first is a translation which is so completely literal in style and vocabulary so as to hinder its performability, the second a rendering which sticks as closely as possible to the original but is cogent and fluid in the target language. The third grouping he terms 'adaptation' which has the previous classification as its basis but can incorporate changes in tone or style as well as cuts or additions and the fourth he names a 'variation' which verges on an original play merely based on a foreign one. He points out that while science can be accurately translated there can be no perfect translation of a work of art and that the translator's role is to create the quality that has the desired effect (1987:255).

More recently Aaltonen (2000:4) too, recognises that theatre translations do not follow the same rules as the translations of literary texts. She maintains that while in translation some texts follow their sources carefully, others add to or omit from the original and still other translations are mere imitations – where a new work is created around an idea or concept from the foreign work. She argues that some scholars may wish to exclude the latter two types of translation and confine the study of such works to theatre praxis but that this would leave a large part of theatre translation outside of her analysis. Whilst she suggests that more ambiguity is brought about by labels such as 'adaptations' (2000:7) she had, in a previous work, used the terms 'borrowing', 'transformation' and 'intersection' to describe how a source text can be manipulated by the translation (1995:89). As Suh (2002:53) asserts, the terminology resulting from the performance and reception orientated trend in theatre translations have included " 'adaptation', 'rewriting', 'transplantation', 'version', 'naturalising', 'neutralising', 'integrating foreign works', 'large scale amendments', 'recreation', 'transposition', 'reappropriate' ". He posits that there would be a substantial improvement in the research relating to theatrical translation if researchers had prior knowledge of the work of others. In this way the coining of new



terms might not occur so readily or be used to describe translation phenomena common to others (ibid).

Even if the theorists offer disparate views of the nature and role of culture with regards to translation, in practice directors commonly adapt text and plot from one cultural paradigm to another. Nikolarea (2002:[sp]) suggests that the polarization of the views suggesting either a performance-oriented translation (performability) or, as in Bassnett's later views, a reader-oriented translation (readability) is a reductionist illusion. She contends that in practice, there are no clear-cut divisions. Since intercultural communication is dependent on many varied and complex processes which influence not only the production of a theatre translation but also its reception by a multidimensional target public the lines between the concepts of performability and readability can become substantially blurred, not to mention the subjectivity associated with these notions.

Whilst studies on theatrical translation abound, this study is only concerned with such translation as it pertains to the localising of *Bat Boy*. Although it has been stated that in the West 'word for word' translation (or literal translation) has been superseded by an emphasis on interpretation 'sense for sense', it could be argued by purists that the production of *Bat Boy* articulated in this study should be labelled an adaptation. This, in light of the narrow definition and many rules of linguistic translation proper which prevent the original text and the intent thereof from being misread (Whittlesey 2012:[sp]). Rules in the professional, linguistic, translation sphere govern the inclusion of every word and sentence and prohibit the addition or omission of other elements (ibid). However, Mark Fortier (1996:[sp]) re-iterates that standards change when the *medium* of interpretation is altered so that less stringent rules are applied to theatrical interpretations than literary translations but he goes as far as to say that in light of the radical rewriting and restaging of existing works that "questions about the accuracy of the adaptation have little practical meaning". Laura Eason (2009:143) in her discussion of theatrical adaptations points out that although a theatrical adaptation is clearly connected to its source text, it is able to stand alone from the original text. It seems that this divergent form of adaptation is comparable to and probably more aptly named (as Bentley did) a 'variation'.

Whilst Bentley's description of 'adaptation' (1987:256) could possibly be applied to *Bat Boy*, an adaptation as described by Eason (2009:143) and Fortier (1996:[sp]), is definitely

not the intention of this case study. The intention is not to create a stand-alone production but to remain faithful to the original while translating the content from one cultural paradigm to another, in other words, to reproduce the story and plot of *Bat Boy* as written in the original with the same emphasis on the themes of the piece but as if the work was created in the current South African context. Muneroni (2012:296) suggests that, when negotiating cultural traits to amplify the global appeal of a story, both the translation and performance professions have to come to terms with the specificities of the theatrical medium and that an intercultural and interdisciplinary approach may suggest critical new translational paradigms.

Whittlesey (2012: [sp]) concurs, positing that the term translation is applied very loosely to describe a variety of different derivative works and proposes that a typology of these derivatives would be useful for those involved in the translation process: authors and clients as well as receiving audiences. Whilst acknowledging that translation proper has little room for licence and that adaptation can depart wholly from the original, he offers a third alternative within the translation spectrum:

“In **transposition** there is an attempt to produce the original as the author might have done if he or she appeared in the given socio-historical time and place of the transposition and retained the consciousness that created each sentence of the original” (ibid emphasis added).

He maintains that such a shift would resemble translation in the grammatical<sup>78</sup> aspect and adaptation in the possible alteration of content or form.

As has been re-iterated *Bat Boy* is a theatrical work and thus pure linguistic or verbal translation is at once, both too limiting (as evidenced above), and also not sufficient for the polysemic<sup>79</sup> theatrical experience. Since the linguistic system is only one of the sign systems which need to be considered, elements of translation as well as the derivative, transposition (as defined by Whittlesey), will be used to effect the transfer of the playtext

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<sup>78</sup> One must also consider that as a musical, the musical director is tied to the metre and rhythm of the music – or could we say ‘grammatical’ structure of the music? This too would regulate the shift and ensure that the translated work directly echoes the original.

<sup>79</sup> Roland Barthes first identified the polysemic nature of theatre referring to its ability “to draw on a number of sign-systems, which do not operate in a linear manner but in a complex and simultaneously operating network unfolding in time and space” (cited in Aston & Savona 2005:99). These concepts will be covered in more detail in section 4.3 of this study.

of *Bat Boy*. In terms of the translation, attention will be paid to the three types of translation as identified by Roman Jakobson (1959:233):<sup>80</sup>

1. intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of the verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language
2. interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language
3. intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is the interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems

The translation of *Bat Boy* will be based on all three of Jakobsen's above mentioned levels. Intralingual translation will occur as certain words, phrases or figures of speech will need to be reworded so as to transfer into the target culture and the actors will aid this translation by using their own South African equivalents. Interlingual translation will also occur as certain expressions will be relocated into the mother tongue of the respective actors and thirdly, transmutation will take place as the verbal signs of the source text are altered or replaced with customary non-verbal signs known in the target culture. I would like to posit that, as I will be working within the polysemic theatrical experience described above, translation will also occur on a fourth level. Non-verbal, semiotic signs contained in the source playtext will be translated using non-verbal signs known to the target culture. These non-verbal signs include not only the sign systems which are functions of the two separate cultures but also the theatrical sign systems (to be discussed in more detail in the semiotics section) operating within the source and the target culture and will thus enhance the performability of the translation.

When attempting theatrical translation, Aaltonen posits that this is a purposeful act which requires planning (1995:89) and states that functionality is key (Aaltonen 1995:90). In this case, the function of the translation is to allow the text, characters and plot to resonate more fully with South African audiences. Aaltonen theorizes that in order for foreign texts to be made compatible with the reality of the target system "translation can make use of either acculturation or naturalization" (2000:55). Acculturation occurs by making the foreign more familiar by toning down the foreign-ness and blurring the lines between the strange and the familiar. Naturalization rewrites the foreign elements and

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<sup>80</sup> Roman Jakobson was a pioneer of the structural analysis of language. Influenced greatly by the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, he became one of the most influential linguists of the century linking the study of semiotics with translation studies (Munday 2012:[sp]). Jakobson is cited as a seminal source in the study of translation theories (ibid).

reduces everything to the perspective of the target culture. The proposed translation of *Bat Boy* will use both of these techniques.

The proposed translation will be attempted on two tiers, the first occurring in the pre-production phase where the director will ascertain which parts of the source text and characters need to be translated. At this tier possible shifts of the characters and dialogue (lyrics included) via acculturation or naturalization will be identified. The second tier will occur on the level of the *mise-en-scène* and will incorporate the cultural settings and beliefs of the individual performers. At this tier the translation will occur mainly through naturalization as the performers use their individual perspectives to transform the playtext so that it becomes more indicative of their own cultural paradigm and therefore more resonant within the contemporary South African multiculturalism as a whole.

What is quite apparent is that when attempting translation within the theatrical framework a linguistics-only approach is insufficient and since theatre texts are so closely linked with their historical, social and cultural contexts a more aesthetics-based orientation which emphasises the cultural and political values should inform the translation process (Aaltonen 2000:3). Bassnett agrees stating that different texts require different translation strategies which have to take into account those who initiate the translation, “the culture to which a text belongs, the culture the translation is aimed at and the function the text is supposed to fulfil in the culture the translation is aimed at” (1998:4).

At this juncture, the role culture plays in theatrical translation must be considered as all of the abovementioned scholars have, in some way, considered the bearing of different cultures on translation and have used the word intercultural in the context of such translation. Aaltonen posits that the study of theatre translation is an integral part of the study of theatre and that the term intercultural theatre is used to describe the movement of theatrical texts between cultures (2000:4). She continues by asserting that theatre texts, more than any other form of translated text, are adjusted to their reception and that the adjustment is always socially and culturally conditioned (2004:53). So it would seem that, in light of the theory of reception and the cultural interests of the target or receiving system, *translation studies and theatre studies intersect at the point of intercultural theatre* which will be addressed in the following section.

### **3.2 Cross-cultural, multicultural and intercultural theatre**

In contemporary society and due to many factors including the transnational flow of population and the impact of mediated communication such as the internet (Durant & Shepard 2009:147), the crossing of cultures<sup>81</sup> or the collusion of ideas and values and linguistic terminology (Kumar 2000: 84-85) is apparent in all facets of life. This movement across cultures leads to cross-culturalism (ibid 85) and the theatrical experience is no exception. Theatrical works that engage processes of theatrical translation are loosely termed 'cross-cultural theatre' and indigenous South African musical theatre boasts a highly successful form of cross-cultural theatre: that of the 'township musical'. Lo and Gilbert (2002:31) define cross-cultural theatre as encompassing "public performance practices characterized by the conjunction of specific cultural resources at the level of narrative content, performance aesthetics, production processes and/or reception by an interpretive community". They use this expression as an umbrella term for a framework which comprises a cluster of related theatrical practices being 1) multicultural, 2) postcolonial and 3) intercultural theatre. These practices will now be discussed briefly so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the cross-cultural theatrical experience.

In the first instance, before the label of 'multicultural' theatre can be investigated it must be noted that multiculturalism as a concept is polysemic and there are a variety of ways to interpret the term, for example as Meer and Modood (2012:179) suggest: "[m]ulticulturalism can describe pluralism or diversity in any given society, *and* a moral stance that cultural diversity is a desirable feature of a given society". Added to that, multiculturalism is site-specific and can mean different things in different places (Lo & Gilbert 2002:33). In countries such as Australia and Canada,<sup>82</sup> where multiculturalism developed as official policy in the 1960's and 70's and which emphasises equal citizenship, cultural diversity is managed as a political strategy from the top down

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<sup>81</sup> Kumar (2000: 83) defines culture as "the capacity of members in a society to take a position enabling them to communicate and function in accordance with the principles and constructs put in place for that purpose." She maintains that in line with the postcolonial exploration of the term, culture is not identified in terms of race or class. In line with cultural anthropology, Pavis (1992:8) defines a culture as a signifying system in which a group or community understands itself and its relationship with the world. In this light culture can have positive and negative connotations, the positive inscribed by a sense of belonging (although this may foster an 'us' and 'them' outlook as commented on by this playtext) and negative whereby culture is used as a hegemonic force and mechanism of social control.

<sup>82</sup> Canadian and Australian multicultural policies differ in that the indigenous cultures feature prominently in the Canadian model whereas the Australian model is mainly concerned with the discourse of immigration and the indigenous cultures are positioned outside of the multicultural paradigm (Lo & Gilbert 2002:33).

whereas in Britain and the United States multiculturalism has been generated from the consciousness of the communities themselves and which has come to influence state management (ibid).

In terms of multicultural theatre, Lo and Gilbert (ibid) draw a distinction between small 'm' multicultural and big 'M' Multicultural theatre. The former is used to describe works featuring culturally diverse casts. However this practice is criticised as it only gives the appearance of diversity but does not necessarily challenge the tenets of the dominant culture (ibid). The latter is “generally a counter discursive practice that aims to promote cultural diversity, access to cultural expression, and participation in the symbolic space of the national narrative” (ibid). Lo and Gilbert (ibid 34) list several types of theatre practice under this category including ghetto theatre, migrant theatre and community theatre.

In the second instance Lo and Gilbert (2002:35) cite postcolonial theatre as falling within the realm of cross-cultural theatre as, although not all postcolonial theatre is necessarily cross-cultural, it does acknowledge the encounters between cultural groups. Whilst they concede that the term 'post-colonial theatre' has become synonymous with any performance work espousing resistance politics they suggest that it should have a more distinct definition and be related to a “geopolitical category designating both a historical and discursive relation to imperialism, whether that phenomenon is treated critically or ambivalently” (ibid). They continue and group postcolonial theatre into two categories, the first being syncretic theatre – which features the integration of the performance elements of different cultures – and non-syncretic theatre – which uses *either* the imperial aesthetics/genres *or* the indigenous to voice postcolonial concerns (Lo & Gilbert 2002:36).

Lo and Gilbert suggest that the former category of postcolonial theatre, syncretic theatre: “generally involves the incorporation of indigenous material into a Western dramaturgical framework, which is itself modified in the process” (ibid). Thus, it could be argued that the theatrical translation of *Bat Boy* could fall into this category of syncretic theatre, the reasons for this being threefold. Firstly, the theatrical translation of *Bat Boy* will be attempted in a geographical area previously colonised by European culture and will integrate the performance elements of different cultures. Secondly not only does the



presentation of the show – as written, interrogate the format of the musical (a form of theatre traditionally embraced by imperialist cultures) but thirdly, the content of the show and plot itself continually query principles traditionally associated with imperialist hegemony such as the binary notions of ‘us and them’ (Gilbert & Tompkins 1996:3) or ‘one and the other’ where the ‘other’ is a subordinate adjunct of the ‘one’ (Kumar 2000:85).<sup>83</sup> Whilst these seem like convincing arguments for the inclusion of the theatrical translation of *Bat Boy* into this category of syncretic theatre, Lo and Gilbert (2002:35) posit that although some settler theatre is incorporated into the arena of postcolonial theatre this is not without controversy and contention. Gilbert and Tompkins (1996:3) also explain the essentialist view that the criteria for those who may or may not participate in postcolonial theatre is based on who can claim the highest level of marginalisation or ‘victim status’ and it is irrefutable that this director cannot claim to have been previously disadvantaged by imperialist domination. Also, whilst a political critique of the past hegemony happens intrinsically due to the form and content of the production as explained above, this is not a primary goal of the translation which will be more focussed on dialogue and interaction between those of diverse cultural backgrounds with a view towards generating social cohesion. It is therefore my contention that this translation will rest easier within the sphere of intercultural theatre as will be evidenced below.

The third practice outlined by Lo and Gilbert (2002:36) as falling under the cross-cultural theatre umbrella is that of intercultural theatre which they define as a “hybrid derived from an intentional encounter between cultures and performing traditions”. As opposed to multicultural theatre which functions within a specific territory or nation, intercultural theatre tends to explore culture, citizenship and identity “across and beyond national boundaries” (ibid). Tian asserts that “[i]ntercultural theatre is one of the most prominent phenomena of twentieth-century international theatre” (2008:1) and he cites the forerunners of this form of theatre to be Antonin Artaud and Berthold Brecht whilst he includes Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook and Eugenio Barba<sup>84</sup> amongst the more recent practitioners of intercultural theatre (ibid). Pavis (1996:2), however, suggests that the very term ‘intercultural’ is problematic, stemming from our vague notions and imprecise definitions of the term ‘culture’ itself as well as the term being associated with a multitude

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<sup>83</sup> This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>84</sup> Eugenio Barba (1936 -) is an Italian author and director (Turner 2004:1).

of theatrical phenomena and lacking precise definition (ibid:3-7). Although Lo and Gilbert (2002: 37-38) acknowledge the vast range of approaches encompassed by the term 'interculturalism', they define three loose subcategories of intercultural theatre:

1. *Transcultural* theatre which aims to identify similarities between cultures and transcend cultural differences;
2. *Intracultural* encounters which occur between and across culturally diverse communities *within* a nation state - as opposed to intercultural which functions across national borders. This sense of intracultural thus has similarities to multicultural theatre but 'intra' prioritizes and upholds the diversity of the separate cultures while 'multi' tries to sustain cohesiveness (Lo and Gilbert 2002:38).<sup>85</sup>
3. *Extracultural* theatre which refers to exchanges that occur along a West-East or North-South axis. This type of theatre can encompass some forms of transcultural theatre but also includes intercultural experiments to celebrate cultural diversity and difference as a source of cultural empowerment.

Whilst Lo and Gilbert (2002:37) recognise that intercultural theatre practices generally privilege the West, proponents of such intercultural exchanges believe they can increase understanding between cultures. Hanna Scolnicov, in her introduction to the collection of articles contained in *The Play out of Context: Transferring plays from culture to culture*, argues that the theatre presents a "unique machinery for overcoming these differences and reaching out towards other cultures, other peoples and even other people" (1989:1). This desire for the supposed universal, or as Fischer-Lichte (one of the key theorists who attempts to assess contemporary intercultural theatre) describes: "a human homogeneity beyond the differences determined by one's own culture" (Fischer-Lichte 1990:280) is controversial. With Pavis and Fischer-Lichte, Tian emphasises that such practice could re-open the door to cultural imperialism and exploitation (2008:2). For it seems that (without attempting to explore the colonial and post-colonial discourses in this very brief overview) the opponents of intercultural theatre often come from cultures which have suffered from contact with other dominant cultures (Aaltonen 2000:5) resulting in the vociferous critique of intercultural theatre by theorists such as Daryl Chin, Una Chaudhuri and Rustom Bharucha (Hauptfleisch [sa]:[sp]).

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<sup>85</sup> This definition of intra and multicultural theatre is drawn from the writings of Rustom Bharucha in *The Politics of Cultural Practice: Thinking through Theatre in an Age of Globalisation* (2009) but it seems that this definition of multiculturalism is quite different to the definition assumed by Meer and Modood (2012) which will be discussed on the next page of the study. I would suggest that Bharucha's 'intra' equates more to big 'M' multicultural theatre and his 'multi' to small 'm' multicultural theatre.



And how does the theatre of South Africa fit into the cross-cultural picture? Even whilst it was government policy during Apartheid to keep people separated, physically and culturally, both inter and intracultural exchanges were occurring (Hauptfleisch (ESAT [sa]:[sp])). In South Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the blending of a variety of forms, influences and styles in the creation of theatrical works became standard practice. One only has to consider the development of township musical to identify a very successful form of intercultural theatre in this country. This type of syncretism, or hybridization as it is now more commonly known, came to the fore in the political protest theatre of the 1970's (ibid) and hybridization has become such a prominent feature of South African theatre that Hauptfleisch coined the term 'crossover theatre' for works deriving from this process.

However in the post-Apartheid context, Claire Craighead (2011: 260) asserts that:

“[W]ith the abolition of the Apartheid governance in South Africa and the adoption of democratic policies, multiculturalism has been constructed as the social ideal. In this light multiculturalism and multicultural politics tend to infuse all aspects of social life, including spheres of art and performance”.

However she cautions that this multiculturalism can almost be equated to the 'separate but equal' Apartheid development policies as it promotes separate pockets of cultural practice. Indeed, Katy Khan asserts that “[n]otions of multiculturalism and cultural diversity are being used in cultural studies as substitutes for cultural exchange between people of different places” whereas intercultural communication promotes the “desire to know and experience the values from other cultures” (ibid). This criticism of multiculturalism is echoed by Meer and Modood (2012) in their article *How does Interculturalism contrast with Multiculturalism?* Whilst they conclude that, until interculturalism can better speak to a variety of concerns and matters of equality and diversity, it cannot eclipse multiculturalism (2012:192) they positively contrast interculturalism with multiculturalism in the following four ways (2012: 177 & 182-190):

1. Interculturalism is more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism as the latter gives rise to closed communities or groups;
2. Interculturalism is more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism and facilitates exchange between cultures;

3. Interculturalism is more committed to social cohesion and national citizenship as multiculturalism is too focused upon difference and diversity and often ignores the needs of majorities and
4. Interculturalism is more likely to lead to a criticism of illiberal cultural practices (such as issues resulting from gender inequalities or sexual orientation) and is more likely to promote the protection of individual rights as part of the intercultural dialogue.

However as Lo and Gilbert (2002:32) point out, any research into intercultural, transcultural or multicultural theatre is site specific and that the “many terms take on different nuances in different sites” (ibid). With regards to the translation of *Bat Boy* I choose not to refer to the form of intercultural theatre which entrenches the ‘west and the rest’ binary (Knowles 2010: 21-30) and which is criticised by, amongst others, Chaudhari (Hauptfleisch ESAT [sa]:[sp]) and Lo and Gilbert (2002:37). This definition would more likely suffice for the process which was historically responsible for introducing music theatre and its forms and conventions to South Africa, such structures being colonialist in origin (Knowles 2010:70). However the South African hybrid created through the township musical and culminating in protest and crossover theatre is more reminiscent of Bharucha’s (2000:6) ‘intracultural’ theatre which facilitates exchange and dialogue between cultures within a nation state. South African crossover theatre represents as Knowles (2010:59) suggests: a ‘new’ interculturalism which involves “collaborations and solidarities across real and respected material differences within local, urban, national and global intercultural performance ecologies” (ibid).

Whilst I am not unaware of the criticisms of intercultural theatre and the connection to both multicultural and postcolonial theatre contained within the project notwithstanding, it is my contention that in light of the above the proposed translation of *Bat Boy* falls into the category of intercultural theatre as:

- translation is necessary from foreign source text into the contemporary cultural context and this occurs across national boundaries;
- the marrying of performance traditions and the form of the production is required (American musical and South African crossover theatre);

- this production, while representational of the larger South African multiculturalism would be more open to interaction and dialogue between members of disparate cultures;
- the translation would be yielding of synthesis and facilitate exchange between groups taking into account that culture is not static and is continually evolving (Kumar 2000:84) and that
- while celebrating the cultural diversity within the South African multiculturalism as espoused by intracultural theatre (a facet of intercultural theatre), the theatrical translation would have as a goal the commitment to social cohesion as revealed by Meer and Modood above.

In cautioning against site-specific or content specific study of intercultural theatre – as put forward by Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins (2000), Lo and Gilbert (2002:37) posit that this can result in “relegating issues of ethics to the particular and the ‘one-off’ rather than relating these to larger issues of knowledge formation within institutional, national and global contexts”. However, it is apparent that translation in the theatre is always conceived for a particular reason in a particular context. Translation is “inherently ethnocentric and discriminating in the ways in which it constructs the realities of foreign theatre texts” (Aaltonen 2000:6) and this is exactly the point. In order to draw the source text towards the target culture the playtext will be translated by drawing on the cultural heritage, identity, paradigms and experience of the individual cast members and their shared experience of the South African community.

In terms of the praxis within this ‘genre’ of intercultural theatre and when considering the translation of theatre from one culture to another, not only should linguistic transfer be considered but also the appropriate cultural and gestural parallels (Pavis 1996:1). Aaltonen posits that “[f]oreign sourced texts express a variety of codes – the linguistic and the socio-historical; as well as the cultural and theatrical – that govern their discourse and give it specificity” (2002:2). In order to translate these codes which govern the formation of signs and sign systems – not only in the relevant cultures but also within the theatrical frameworks operating within the source and target culture – an understanding of the study of semiotics is required and these principles will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.3 Semiotics in theatre**

Although this is not a study on semiotics nor does it claim to be a semiotic analysis of *Bat Boy – the Musical*, certain relevant semiotic strategies, concepts, terms and procedures will be accessed to trace the translation process from the source text to the production. Though semiotics – the study of signs and sign systems – extends to far more than just providing a method of textual analysis, it can be a very useful tool in such an analysis where a text can be defined as “an assemblage of signs (such as words, images, sounds and/or gestures) constructed (and interpreted) with reference to the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication” (Chandler 2002:3 brackets in original). Different media provide differing frameworks within which meaning is produced and this study will be examining semiotic approaches corresponding to the medium of theatre and will use the relevant processes to do a performance orientated analysis of the playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical*. The use of semiotic processes will facilitate the translation of the production for as Aston and Savona (2005:100) posit, plays in translation provide fitting examples of whether the sign systems have been deliberated upon wisely. This clarity of meaning is necessary for plays in translation as the sign systems of two languages or cultures and theatrical traditions need to be navigated and crossed (ibid).

In order to facilitate the translation as revealed by Aston and Savona above, the use of semiotics and the investigation into the relevant sign systems must be applied to the playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical* (lyrics and stage direction included)<sup>86</sup> as well as within the directorial concept and approach in order to realize the playtext in performance<sup>87</sup> which will be referred to as the production. As mentioned before, theatre is polysemic thus there are multiple sign systems operating simultaneously. Unlike film where the camera selects signs to be presented to the viewer there is no such filter in theatre, the entire scene is presented. Therefore, within the theatrical framework, signs need to be prioritized or hierarchized in order to create clarity of meaning (Aston & Savona 2005:101). By necessity, the prioritizing of sign systems is contained within the directorial process. In facilitating the realization of the directorial concept, the director must ensure that the sign systems work in isolation as well create the desired effect when merged with signs of other sign systems (ibid 100). Over time, through history and depending on

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<sup>86</sup> This will constitute the first tier of translation which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>87</sup> This will constitute the second tier of translation and will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

the type of theatre the hierarchy of the elements of theatrical language (or staging) used to create significance or difference has changed constantly. It should also be noted that “[w]hilst theatre operates as a sign system through its changing use of theatrical components, the actor has generally remained dominant in the shifting hierarchy” (ibid 2005:102). The choice of actors for the production of *Bat Boy – the Musical*, as well as the cultural identity and codes<sup>88</sup> associated with those particular actors will be one of the relevant sign systems, among others, as considered by this study.

Although it was only in the early part of the twentieth century that semiotics in theatre began to receive attention, the study of semiotics<sup>89</sup> was being pursued by theorists in the late nineteenth century with pioneering work by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). While both Saussure (accepted abbreviation) and Peirce were concerned with the fundamental definition of a sign their work spawned two distinct traditions. Saussure postulated a dyadic or binary model and defined a sign “as being composed of: a 'signifier' (signifiant) - the form which the sign takes; and the 'signified' (signifié) - the concept it represents; the sign being the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified” (Chandler 2002:18 brackets in original). On the other hand Peirce held there are three basic elements (together forming a triad<sup>90</sup>) involved in the process of, what he termed, ‘semiosis’:<sup>91</sup>

1. The *representamen* or sign which stands for or represents something else.
2. The *object* (which can be an object, act or event) to which the sign refers, and
3. The *interpretant* which is a sign's meaning or the sense made of the sign.

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<sup>88</sup> Keir Elam (1980:50) defines a code as a set of correlational rules which govern the formation of sign relationships and elaborates that theatrical performance will engage many sets of these codes and that most codes operational in society will apply to the theatre. “Certain of these codes (e.g. kinesic, scenic or linguistic) will be specific to particular systems while others (theatrical and dramatic conventions and more general cultural codes) will apply to theatrical discourse at large” (ibid brackets in original). Codes will be discussed in more detail further on in the study.

<sup>89</sup> *Semiology*, a term derived from Saussure, is most often used to describe work following the Saussurean tradition while the term *semiotics* is used for that following the Peircean tradition although it has become a more global, umbrella term encompassing the whole field of study. Apart from the more inclusive nature of the latter term, this study, as will be evidenced, aligns itself more with Peircean theory and thus the term *semiotics* has been chosen.

<sup>90</sup> Peirce argued that the representamen, its object and its interpretant are engaged in an irreducible triadic relationship or triad and that any description of semiosis involves a “relation constituted by three irreducible terms” (Queiroz & Merrell 2006:40).

<sup>91</sup> Peirce referred to the interaction of the representamen, the object and the interpretant as ‘semeiosis’ (Chandler 2002:30), now generally spelled ‘semiosis’.

It can be understood that Peirce's *representamen* is similar in meaning to Saussure's *signifier* whilst Peirce's *interpretant* is similar in meaning to the *signified* but the *interpretant* differs from Saussure's *signified* in that it is in itself a sign in the mind of the interpreter. Since an interpretant is the third term of a triadic relation but can also be a sign (or the first term) in the mind of the interpreter this can therefore give rise to a subsequent triadic relation (Queiroz & Merrell 2006:41) which underlies one of the important conclusions that can be drawn from Peirce's work. He believed the process of semiosis to have an on-going, dynamical nature in which triads are systematically linked to one another and develop continuously and that meaning is produced as a consequence of semiosis.

Peirce also identified three types of signs:

- Iconic signs which resemble the referent.<sup>92</sup>
- Indexical signs which point to or are connected to their objects/referent; and
- Symbolic signs which have no direct link to the referent but are known to be signs thereof through convention.<sup>93</sup>

Especially with regards to the third type of sign or symbolic signs, Peirce espoused the notion of 'habit'<sup>94</sup> where the interpreter would necessarily employ his or her own cultural filters when reading the signs. Queiroz and Merrell (2006:55-56) expand upon this view by stating that any given interpreter has developed patterns of thinking, feeling and sensing shaped by the social context or community to which he or she belongs and that the interpretation of meaning is tempered through the habituation of learnt social conventions or practices.

This way in which interpreters read signs and the notion of habit cited by Queiroz and Merrell above has specific reference for this study as its focus is primarily the transcription of the signs from one social context to another so that the interpreters in the

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<sup>92</sup> Theorists following in the Peircean tradition often presented his triadic approach as 'the Semiotic triangle' merely changing the terms so the representamen became the 'Sign vehicle'; the interpretant became the 'Sense' made of the sign and the object became the 'Referent' i.e.: what the sign 'stands for' (Chandler 2002:31).

<sup>93</sup> If convention governs how signs are interpreted then it stands to reason that social and cultural context must play a part in the understanding of signs since it is that which affects accepted conventions at a particular time in a particular community. See below for a discussion of how aesthetic or ideological codes influence individual interpreters and also Peirce's associated notion of habit.

<sup>94</sup> When discussing the third type of sign, symbolic signs, Peirce suggests that it is the connection of general ideas which function to allow the symbol to be interpreted as referring to a particular object (Chandler 2002:39) and that the interpretation of signs occurs according to a rule or habitual association.



target context can more easily relate to and ‘read’<sup>95</sup> the production. The social context of the performers will inform the choice of signs made to align the characters, dialogue and staging of the piece within the South African cultural context which in turn will make for easier reading of the piece by a broader South African audience. All of Peirce’s work as summarized above was much referenced by Patrice Pavis who, apart from being instrumental in the development of the semiotics of the theatre, also delved into the connection between social context and sign systems as evidenced below.

In terms of the development of theatre semiotics the “first wave” (Alter 1991:238) originated in the Prague Circle during the 1930’s. This group of mainly Czech practitioners and theoreticians of theatre realised that theatrical productions communicated directly by using signs, and since everything on the stage by its nature signifies something else, everything on the stage becomes semiotized by theatrical convention, and that semiotics or the study of signs “offers the most effective methodological tool for the investigation of the entire theatrical process, from the text to the performance” (ibid).

According to semiotician Jean Alter (1991:238) theorists such as Zich, Mukařovský, Bogatyrev, Honzl and Veltruský used Saussure’s binary model and defined various systems of signs for theatre as well as articulating their interaction within the theatrical medium. None of these systems, however, allowed for interaction between the sign and the social context to which they were relevant and, even had this work not been interrupted by the Second World War, it is highly unlikely that agreement would have been reached as to basic propositions for their individual models. Over three decades later theorists such as Patrice Pavis, Keir Elam, Anne Ubersfeld, Aloysius van Kesteren and Steen Jansen (Alter 1991:239) came to the fore and began building upon the previous body of work. This “second wave” (ibid) also included theatre practitioners who were frustrated by the divide between studies of dramatic text and performance studies. While this study differentiates between dramatic playtext and theatrical production neither is viewed as more significant than the other and it is the combination of the two and the concurrency of signs and sign systems in both models which equates to the end result and the culmination of the directorial concept in the production.

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<sup>95</sup> The term ‘read’ refers to the audience’s ability to absorb, interpret and understand the signs at play in the piece which will occur on a visual and aural level rather than on literary level.



During this second wave, a shift in the study of semiotics – a move away from the structuralist classification of sign systems and their units – occurred. The rigidity of the structuralist model had previously been critiqued especially by the Marxist theorists such as Valentin Volosinov and Mikhail Bakhtin (Chandler 2002:13). Saussure’s focus on the internal relations of the sign system and his disregard for history and social context was criticized and as Chandler succinctly points out “[t]he prioritization of structure over usage fails to account for changes in structure” (ibid). Where the structuralist semiotician had been more concerned with how the elements within the system relate to each other, the more contemporary, social semiotician became concerned with how the interpreter/reader would interpret or attach significance to the signs within the text and re-prioritized historicity and social context (ibid). Later theorists such as Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress went so far as to assert that the social context within which semiotic systems functioned were so intrinsic to their nature that the systems could not be studied in isolation (ibid 14). This point will be elaborated on below.<sup>96</sup>

When adopting any semiotic approach to theatre the researcher is faced with numerous theoretical challenges not the least of which is the need to reconcile the dramatic text with what occurs in performance (Issacharoff 1981:255). Tadeusz Kowzan, a leading semiotician (Eco 1995:108) had considered this dichotomy but unlike other authors who considered the written text as the ‘deep structure’ of the performance where all the seminal elements are contained within the text, found that the object of theatrical semiosis is the performance or *mise-en-scène* (ibid). Pavis<sup>97</sup> too proposed a model in which “the text is not an ‘invariable element’ but as much ‘to be created’ as the production (*mise-en-scène*)” and what semiology has to explain is “the interaction of the two systems, the construction they impose on each other; that which can be made of a text, and what the stage situation can say to it” (Pavis 1978:5 brackets in original). While originally semioticians awarded priority to the written text over the performance of the text, Aston and Savona (2005:2) illustrate that the literary text is merely a ‘blueprint’ for the theatrical production in which the performers, directors and technical staff (among

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<sup>96</sup> See next page of dissertation.

<sup>97</sup> In his original work Pavis, like Peirce, adopted a triadic approach (1978:4), but integrated this with some of Saussure’s theory. Pavis suggested “a perceptible material shape (like the signifier) and an associated general concept (like the signified), but also a third notion of the specific object to which the reference is actually made” (Alter 1991:241 brackets in original). He also espoused Peirce’s notion of the three types of signs.

others) collaborate to create the theatrical event, an event which is brought forth in two planes – time and space.

A further challenge is that since “everyone and everything placed within the theatrical frame has an artificial and pre-determined meaning” (Aston & Savona 2005:99) so everything can be seen as a sign signifying something else.<sup>98</sup> Even for a lone researcher illustrating all the signs in a theatrical work can be a daunting task while the reaching of consensus on the identification of theatrical sign systems and their component units by theorists spanning, not only many decades, but also the globe has proved near impossible.

This is compounded by the fact that an actual performance itself is not concrete or lasting. Even though we are now fortunate in being able to preserve digital copies of performance, Pavis cautions that any such transcoding or transcription only provides a description of the sign and not necessarily the productivity of the signs and how they were received by the spectator. Pavis (1978:6) suggests that “[r]ather than try to identify the signs of a system exhaustively, we must stress the important moments in the signifying sequence and clarify the various stages of the process of semiosis” and that in order to go beyond the simple description of the performance and to clarify the production of meaning for the audience’s understanding “we have to choose a hierarchy of codes and sub-codes, keeping well in mind that the choice of hierarchy itself is made according to an aesthetic or ideological code” (1978:5). But what is a code? Elam (1980:50) defines a code as “an ensemble of correlational rules governing the formation of sign relationships” and then differentiates between dramatic codes which apply to the conventions of drama and theatrical codes which relate to a particular performance. He also stresses that these are sub-codes since they are subject to “the whole framework of more general, cultural, ideological, ethical and epistemological principles” (1980:52) which operate in a particular society. So while it seems that the more general cultural or ideological codes inform the hierarchy of the theatrical codes which are used to communicate meaning, the corollary is also true; meaning is constructed by the

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<sup>98</sup> “Roland Barthes suggested provocatively in 1964 that the theatre marked by a ‘real informational polyphony’ and a ‘density of signs’, constituted a privileged form of semiotic investigation: ‘the nature of the theatrical sign whether analogical, symbolic or conventional, the denotation and connotation of the message – all these fundamental problems of semiology are present in the theatre’ (1964: 262)” as quoted by Keir Elam (1980:20).

interpreter who is acted upon by the ideologico-aesthetic codes<sup>99</sup> and as Queiroz and Merrell (2006:50) point out “[t]he whole of our contextualized understanding comes to bear on the meaning we arrive at with respect to each and every sign”.

With this in mind the aim of this study is two-fold: firstly, to survey the codes and signs at work in *Bat Boy – the Musical* by taking cognisance of the ideological and aesthetic codes within which the piece operated originally and more importantly identify which signs need to be altered and secondly, to align the work within the new socio-cultural domain to which it will be translated.

However the relevant semiotic codes to be used in this study need to be defined further. Fernando De Toro (2007:112) argues in his article *The End of Theatre Semiotics?*, that if a review of the work completed by theatre semioticians is executed – specifically with regards to the central areas of study (theatre discourse, the dramatic/performance text, theatre reception, theatre semiosis, and theatre history) it could be concluded that the final results with respect to the theatre object, or performance, very little has been achieved. De Toro (ibid) adds that the divergence between theory and practice was the very problem that semiotics and structuralism faced in all areas of study. He compares cultural and literary perspectives which are heterogeneous and change rapidly to scientific theories which, although open to new modifications, can be accurately and precisely described and compares the scientific pretension in the field of theatre semiotics “to a conceptual tower of Babel where there were as many theoretical concepts as were theoreticians, coupled with a wilful hermeticism which more often than not, hid serious theoretical deficiencies” (ibid 113). De Toro’s words or warning foreground therefore that this study’s use of semiotics is principally to employ the semiotic terms and strategies as an *approach* to explain the process undertaken in the study and not to arrive at final meaning. Thus, what approach can be applied to describe the formation of meaning within the ‘theatre object’ or performance as De Toro labels it? Elam asserts that “[t]he production of meaning on stage is too rich and fluid to be accounted for in terms of discrete objects and their representational roles” (1980:32) but many theorists have tried to identify theatrical sign systems to “to explain the internal (syntactic) relations and the inter-relations between systems and to make explicit the kind of rules which allow

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<sup>99</sup> Where ‘ideologico’ refers to the political and social codes active in a particular society at a particular time and ‘aesthetic’ refers to codes guiding judgements regarding the critical reflection on art, culture and nature.

meaning to be communicated and received in the performer-spectator dialectic” (ibid brackets in original).

As early as 1968 Kowzan identified thirteen sign systems for the theatre including language, tone, facial mime, gesture, movement, make-up, hairstyle, costume, props, décor, lighting, music and sound effects (Elam 1980:51) only the first of these being placed within the dramatic discourse. Kowzan’s sign systems identified two main categories of signs which fall within the theatrical discourse namely the auditive and the visual signs. These signs can be located either inside or outside the actor, and exist in time and/or place (Nikolorea 2002:1). However, “neither Kowzan nor later commentators have attempted to define the signifying units of each system or explicate its syntactic or code rules” (Elam 1980:51). It appears that some of Kowzan’s systems are open-ended and more problematic than others and certain aspects, now synonymous with theatre, such as the technical sphere have been overlooked. Whilst Elam’s book *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* is an in depth study of the semiotic elements of theatrical communication and the construction of the theatrical world, it faces criticism by later theorists in that the theory does not provide workable methods to be used in practise and that tools such as Elam’s dramatological scores are unwieldy and time-consuming (De Toro 2007:112).

In contrast Aston and Savona (2005:10) set out to clarify semiotic approaches to theatre and by their own admission:

“We have proceeded from the view that semiotics has clear implications for the study of both dramatic and theatrical discourses. In the case of the former it permits structural investigations of the dramatic text. With regard to the latter, it furnishes a metalanguage<sup>100</sup> with which to analyse the pictorial, physical and aural ‘languages’ of theatre” (ibid).

In terms of dramatic texts they cite dramatic shape, character, dialogue and stage directions as points of investigative departure. As necessitated by the structure of dramatic works any investigation must take into account the main body of the text

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<sup>100</sup> A metalanguage is a language used to describe another language. In this case, semiotics supplies a vocabulary with which to evaluate the elements of theatrical communication or staging.

(primary or *haupttext*) and the written stage directions (ancillary or *nebentext*)<sup>101</sup> although Aston and Savona suggest that it is most useful to consider the two as “complementary and interdependent sign systems” (ibid:72). Moreover it needs to be noted that stage directions can also occur on an ‘intra-dialogic’ level and are extrapolated from the dialogue itself.

With regards to the production of meaning in performance, Aston and Savona (2005:100) point out that, within the twentieth-century traditions of Western theatre, the theatrical sign-systems are the responsibility of the director. Although the dramatist originates the linguistic (or dramatic) sign-system the director must co-ordinate and compose the other signifying systems to achieve the production of the text.

The aforementioned also cite the following as signifying systems which are available to the director in the theatrical sphere: the actor as sign, spatial codes – where “not only do spatial codes set out to define, shape and construct the meaning of the spectating and playing spaces they also govern relations between performers on the stage and performer-spectator relations” (ibid 115), kinesics (movement, acting and gesture) and also the role of the spectator as well as a discussion of stage directions with regard to the actor, dialogue and the design and technical elements. Although it must be noted again that while these systems can be viewed in isolation they are mutually interdependent and that an essential role of the director is to decide on the selection and combination of the relative sign systems, their opposing or complementary use, as well as the level of emphasis applied to each at specific points in the production (ibid 136).

On a last note, it is concerning however, that when discussing theatre as sign system and therefore the given premise that the receiver of the signs (the spectator) also warrants discussion within the theatrical framework, Aston and Savona identify a trend in mainstream theatre which does not require an active role on the part of the spectator who is consequently reduced to a passive receiver of signs. They state that:

“West End or Broadway theatre thrives on *such* entertainment requiring the spectator to consume rather than think. The consequence of this reduction is

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<sup>101</sup> This distinction was proposed by Roman Ingarden in 1973 and suggests parallel signifying systems as quoted by Aston and Savona (2005: 51, 72).

an unproductive erosion of the traditional communicative function of theatre”  
(2005: 120 emphasis added).

So too does Elam dismissively compare musical theatre and some of its success to the “weakest forms of bourgeois spectacle where a passive audience may indeed obediently provide predetermined and automatic responses to a predictable set of signals” (1980: 34). It is my contention that, while this may have been true of traditional musical comedies and even those written more recently in the same vein, since the advent of the concept musical – heralded by *West Side Story* (a musical tragedy),<sup>102</sup> those statements constitute an affront to the creators of such shows as *Cabaret*,<sup>103</sup> *Company*<sup>104</sup> and more recently *Ragtime*,<sup>105</sup> *Parade*,<sup>106</sup> and *Urinetown*<sup>107</sup> whose purpose is not solely to entertain but also to confront serious and contentious social and political issues, provoking serious thought and debate within an actively involved and energised audience. Perhaps, leading from the incorporation of certain elements of semiotic theory and the analysis of the relevant sign-systems contained within the medium of musical theatre this study hopes to ascertain not only whether the traditional form of the musical negates the value of the content changes but also to begin to discern the contribution of this art form within the cultural discourse specifically within South Africa.

It is with this in mind that the ensuing chapters will begin the analysis of the original playtext of *Bat Boy*. The following table illustrates how this analysis, and the process of the theatrical translation, is informed by the three main concepts of the theoretical framework as discussed above.

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<sup>102</sup> *West Side Story* premiered in 1957 with a book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and conception and choreography by Jerome Robbins, produced by Harold Prince.

<sup>103</sup> *Cabaret* is based on a book written by Christopher Isherwood, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb. (1966)

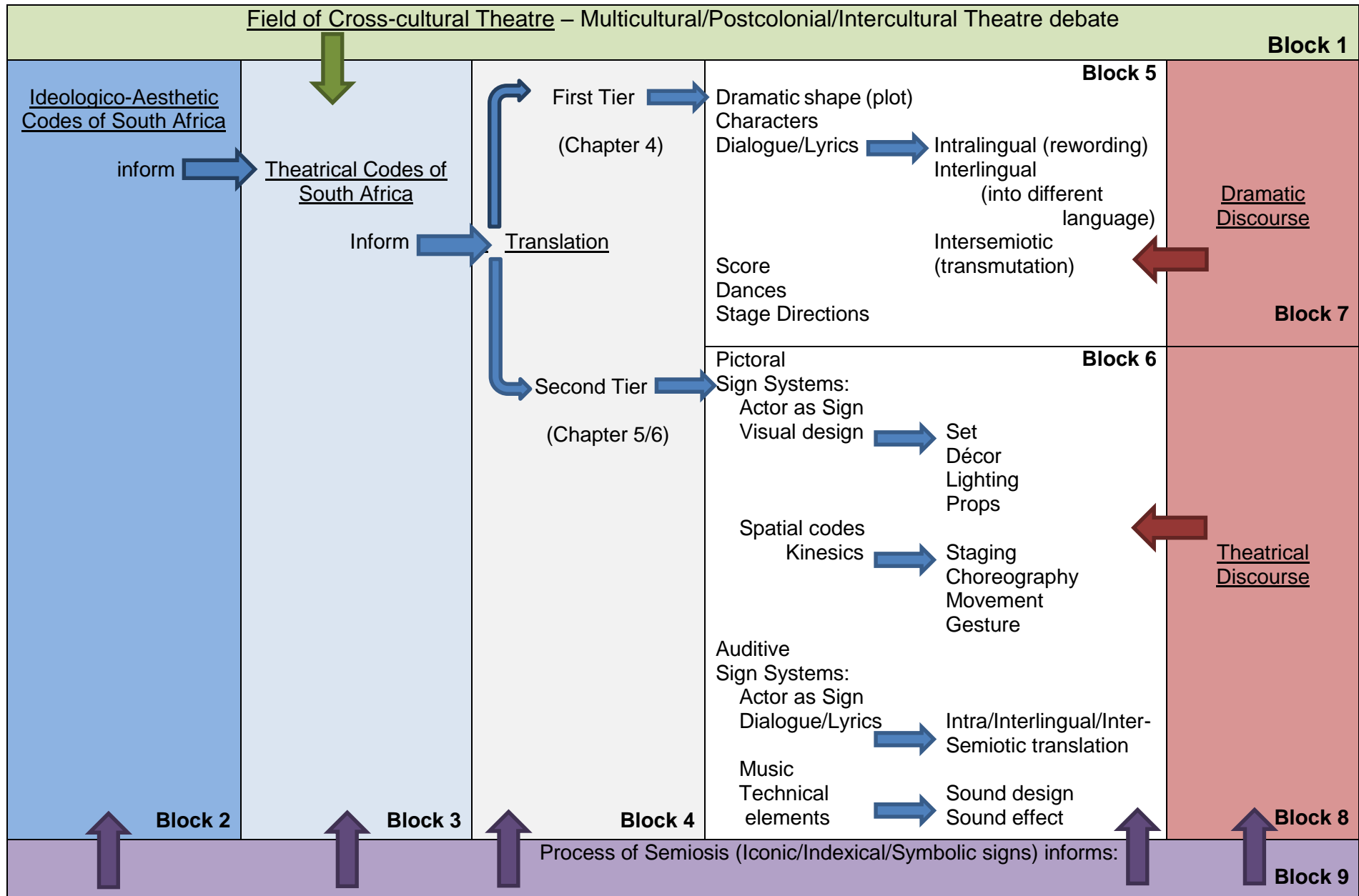
<sup>104</sup> *Company* is based on a book by George Furth with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. The original production was nominated for a record-setting fourteen Tony Awards and won six. (1970)

<sup>105</sup> *Ragtime*, book by Terrence McNally, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, and music by Stephen Flaherty opened on Broadway in 1998.

<sup>106</sup> *Parade*, book by Alfred Uhry and music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown, premiered on Broadway at the Vivian Beaumont Theatre on December 17, 1998 and was directed by Harold Prince.

<sup>107</sup> *Urinetown*, a satirical comedy musical, with music by Mark Hollmann, lyrics by Hollmann and Greg Kotis, and book by Kotis opened on Broadway in 2001.

3.4 Table 1: Tabulation of the Theoretical Framework





In summary, the first tier of translation will be attempted in Chapter 4 which falls within the dramatic discourse:

- Firstly, a critical analysis of the original playtext will be undertaken with reference to Aston and Savona's (2013:10) points of departure in the structural investigation of the dramatic text: dramatic shape, character, dialogue and stage directions. These points of departure tally with the components of Novak's (1988:15-25) first element of a musical - she denotes that this first element of is the book, which is comprised of the plot (dramatic shape), characters, dialogue and stage directions.
- The playtext will also be analysed within the dramatic discourse as far as is possible with regard to:
  - Novak's further elements of a musical: the lyrics, the score and dances.
  - an examination of spatial codes and kinesics.
- Then, the analysis will be examined referencing the general ideologico-aesthetic codes of the South African situation as well as the codes governing the South African theatrical framework so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the South African context.
- The relevant dynamics within the theatrical semiotic framework will inform and aid the translation process so as to:
  - describe the factors within the playtext that are known to the target audience and lend themselves to the translation
  - identify the signifiers which are familiar to the target culture and suggest the necessary translation via acculturation<sup>108</sup> and also
  - Identify the signifiers of the American culture embedded in the text – and present in the various characters – and suggest ways in which these can be translated by naturalisation.<sup>109</sup>
- Since an integral aspect of any musical is movement and due to the fact that I believe staging and choreography can be used to inform a large part of the cultural shift this section, where relevant to the dramatic analysis, will also

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<sup>108</sup>Acculturation occurs by making the foreign more familiar by toning down the foreign-ness and blurring the lines between the strange and the familiar (Aaltonen 2000:55).

<sup>109</sup>Naturalization rewrites the foreign elements and reduces everything to the perspective of the target culture (ibid).

suggest possible South African modifications within the realm of movement, choreography and gesture referencing the theatrical codes of the South African context.

It must however be noted that this is a theatrical production and as Pavis (1989:25) concluded translation must necessarily occur on the level of the *mise-en-scène* so therefore separate chapters are necessary to capture the practice-led part of the research. The second tier of translation, the move from page to stage which includes the rehearsal process and also the resultant performance will be described in Chapters 5 and 6, which fall into the theatrical discourse. Chapter 5 is a treatise on how the performers were able to inform the translation process by using their own cultural and lingual backgrounds and Chapter 6 describes the resulting translation in terms of the pictorial and auditory sign systems as indicated by the table above.

It must also be noted that at no point does this translation of *Bat Boy – the Musical* attempt to delineate the South African multicultural (as that is far beyond the extent of this study) or give demographic breakdowns of the social groupings or make value judgements as to any of the sub-cultures within our heterogeneous society. The aim of the translation is for the individual cast members to bring their specific and unique cultural backgrounds to showcase in the production facilitating interaction and dialogue between cultures, as espoused in Meer and Modood's (2012:180-192) representation of intercultural exchange.

The efficacy of semiotic processes, as espoused in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, used in the theatrical translation of *Bat Boy* within the intercultural theatre arena will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### **FIRST TRANSLATION TIER**

#### **Analysis of the text**

The purpose of this chapter is to track pre-production directorial engagement which begins with the analysis of the dramatic playtext of *Bat Boy* using the relevant dynamics within the theatrical semiotic framework<sup>110</sup> to aid and inform the translation as presented in Block 5 of *Table 1* at the end of the preceding chapter. As discussed in Chapter 3, semiotics is a theoretical approach to systems of communication and signification and any discussion of such a system is described with reference to its categories or structural properties (Eco 1995:108). However, Ruth Amossy (1981:5) points out that theatre is viewed “as a global system integrating in its own ways a series of semiotic subsystems” and that analysis of the complex interdependence of these elements is even more complex as the elements themselves have not been satisfactorily described within the semiotic framework (ibid).

Bearing in mind that research into the pluricodified, multileveled, theatrical (poly)system (ibid) and the interrelation of the heterogeneous components thereof is most complicated, this analysis is not an exhaustive semiotic examination of the playtext as that is far beyond the scope of this study. This analysis is undertaken with a view to citing examples of the signs and sign systems at work in the playtext so as to facilitate the process of translation as described in *Table 1* in the preceding chapter. In so doing, this investigation of the playtext identifies certain signs and codes that are familiar to the target culture and lend themselves to the translation, as well as elements which are foreign to the target culture. Examples of these sign and codes will be provided.

Following the first part of the critical analysis, the translation of the written (or dramatic) playtext is explored. As evidenced in Chapter 3 semiotic systems cannot be studied in isolation as the social context within which they function are intrinsic to

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<sup>110</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3.3 of this dissertation. It is important to remember that this study does not comprise a semiotic analysis of *Bat Boy*. Rather, the elements of semiotic analysis are used as a platform in order to facilitate the translation of the playtext.

their nature so this second part of the analysis gives examples of the general ideologico-aesthetic codes of the South African situation which are relevant to the playtext so as to suggest possible adjustments to the foreign elements. The pertinent codes governing a South African theatrical framework are also taken into consideration so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the South African context.

These two sections combined form the theoretical examination of the dramatic playtext which facilitates the first tier of translation (as indicated in Table 1).

#### **4.1 Aims of this chapter**

- Firstly, a critical analysis of the written playtext will be undertaken with reference to the aspects Aston and Savona (2013:10) name as points of departure in the structural investigation of the dramatic text: dramatic shape, character, dialogue and stage directions. These points of departure are equivalent to the components of Novak's (1988:15-25) first element of a musical or the 'book' which is comprised of the plot (dramatic shape), characters, dialogue and stage directions as discussed in Chapter 2.6.<sup>111</sup>
- The playtext will also be analysed within the dramatic discourse, as far as is applicable to the study, with regard to Novak's (ibid) further elements of a musical which include the lyrics, score and dances as indicated in Chapter 2.6.
- Then, the translation of the playtext will be explored, also with reference to the points above.
- For the purposes of the translation, the final section – which considers the element of dance – will be expanded to include an examination of spatial codes and kinesics. Specific attention will be paid to the discussion of possible South African modifications within the realm of movement, choreography and gesture which from my perspective as director will inform a large part of the cultural shift.

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<sup>111</sup> Novak (1988:15-25) also cites the placement of songs and dances within the structure of the book as an element of the book but as this component added little depth to the analysis of the text in this context it will not be dealt with here. The only change effected within this area of the translation is discussed in section 6.1.1.2 (page 203).

- In the exploration of the proposed translation, each of the abovementioned sections will be examined with reference to the relevant dynamics within the theatrical semiotic framework as discussed in the previous chapter. Within each section this analysis will
  - describe certain factors within the playtext that are known in the South African situation and lend themselves to the translation
  - identify relevant signifiers which are familiar to the South African context and suggest the necessary translation via acculturation.<sup>112</sup>
  - identify applicable signifiers embedded in the text and present in the various characters which are foreign to the South African situation and suggest ways in which these can be translated by naturalisation.<sup>113</sup>

Since this production falls into the polysemic theatrical sign-system (Aston & Savona 2005:99), the second tier of translation occurs on the level of the *mise-en-scène*. This second tier of translation as represented in Block 6 in *Table 1* will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 which refers to the practice-led rehearsal and performance processes, respectively.

However, for the purposes of Chapter 4, it must be noted that without prior knowledge of the performers cast in the production, the potential shifts of the elements in this first tier of translation were only provided as options to be considered by the ensemble in the rehearsal process. The director identified in the playtext, those practices and characters (their characteristics and dialogue) and the signifiers thereof which are set within the foreign paradigm and offered possible shifts of these elements into the South African environment. The potential shifts proposed may well be coloured by the director's own cultural experience and possibly included typical, or perhaps stereotypical, South African characters, expressions and practices.<sup>114</sup> It was hoped however that once the cast had been assembled, any inherent cultural bias on the part of the director would be effectively countered as varying alternatives

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<sup>112</sup> Acculturation occurs by making the foreign more familiar by toning down the foreign-ness and blurring the lines between the strange and the familiar (Aaltonen 2000:55).

<sup>113</sup> Naturalization rewrites the foreign elements and reduces everything to the perspective of the target culture (ibid).

<sup>114</sup> It should be noted however, that the use of stereotypes has a very specific function within the original playtext. This will be elaborated upon in the relevant section in the discussion of the characters and the transposition of this function within the translation will also be addressed.

for any suggested shifts would be offered by the multicultural and multilingual cast sourcing their diverse, individual cultural backgrounds. It is in this second tier of translation – to be discussed in the following chapters – and through the rehearsal process the cast members were expected to develop shifts of their characters and dialogue (lyrics included) to be more indicative of contemporary South African culture. The main aim of this chapter however, is to analyse the written playtext identifying those elements which need translation and to conclude with potential shifts for the translation and also basic possible outlines for characters.

#### **4.2 Textual analysis of the original playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical***

According to Chandler (1994:[sp]) “[e]very text is a system of signs organised according to codes and subcodes which reflect certain values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and practices” and he suggests that one of the most fundamental textual codes is that of genre although he does concede that the notion of genre is problematic due to overlapping and continual shifts over time. However, for the purposes of this study it will be assumed that the playtext of *Bat Boy* is governed by the textual codes associated with the genre of musical theatre as discussed in Chapter 2. Aston and Savona (2005:2) posit that the literary text is a ‘blueprint’ for the theatrical production but before the blueprint of *Bat Boy* can be scrutinized, a brief introduction to the history of the production and how it articulates within this genre is necessary.

With book by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming and music and lyrics by Laurence O’Keefe who is now famous for *Legally Blonde – the Musical*, *Bat Boy – the Musical* premiered at the Los Angeles Actors’ Gang Theatre in 1997. Although the musical opened Off-Broadway in 2001 this run was cut short by the 9/11 tragedies.<sup>115</sup> The show then opened in the West End in 2004 and *Bat Boy* has also been performed in Canada, Korea, Japan, Germany, Australia and at the Edinburgh festival (2006) as well as continuing to be performed around the USA.<sup>116</sup> The performance method of the Actors’ Gang Theatre, known as ‘The Style’<sup>117</sup> was instrumental in the creation

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<sup>115</sup> See Appendix 2 for an account of the show and performances following 11/9/2001.

<sup>116</sup> Tour dates as per website [www.batboymusical.com](http://www.batboymusical.com) retrieved 27/03/2012

<sup>117</sup> The Actors’ Gang is a repertory theatre company known for creating original works and reinterpreting classics through the prism of ‘The Style’ (Miller 2011:179) ‘The Style’, which is

and subsequent success of this production (Miller 2011:179). Miller (ibid) asserts that this approach and the use of truthfulness in 'The Style' combined with Keythe Farley's direction had as its goal to be as serious as possible within the context of an utterly silly universe. Whilst the premise of the show is completely bizarre, the use of the techniques of 'The Style' allows the journeys of the characters, caught up in the surreal situation, to be completely real, sincere and touching. This element will be examined in more depth in the following chapters as the performance of the playtext falls within the theatrical discourse which is the focus of Chapters 5 and 6 whereas the focus of this chapter is on the dramatic translation and this section in particular on the analysis of the dramatic playtext.

On first glance the playtext of *Bat Boy* can be considered as a contemporary American rock musical which has a traditional narrative book format. The playtext employs the theatrical codes associated with the traditional musical theatre format of a book musical<sup>118</sup> where the songs develop out of the dialogue scenes in order to further the plot. However, it is my contention that *Bat Boy* can also be considered a concept musical and the reasons for this are two-fold. Firstly, there is the primacy of the central concept of the show, which could quite easily be equated to Robbins' summary of the leading principle of one of the first concept musicals, *West Side Story*,<sup>119</sup> the "futility of intolerance" (Lawrence 2001:243). The exploration of the binary of prejudice and tolerance in *Bat Boy* is the driving force behind the playtext without which it would have no purpose. Secondly, as with *West Side Story* (in which the story was told through the medium of dance) the structure of the playtext indicates how *Bat Boy* articulates within the constructions of the concept musical.

Miller (2011:176) points out that this show along with other postmodern musicals such as *Urinetown* (2001), *Avenue Q* (2003) and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005), do not merely acknowledge the artifice of musical theatre – as the concept musicals of the 70s did – they actively and aggressively interrogate this theatrical conundrum. Unlike other book musicals that follow the formula established

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artificial and presentational, but paradoxically insists on deep truthfulness, was instrumental in both the writing and the execution of *Bat Boy* (ibid) and will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

<sup>118</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2.7.

<sup>119</sup> Please see Chapter 2 for a discussion of how *West Side Story* is a concept musical in terms of form and content.



by Rodgers and Hammerstein II<sup>120</sup> in which all the aspects of the theatrical medium fuse to create a world in which the audience is expected to believe, there is no illusion of reality in *Bat Boy*. The playtext continually suggests that the audience be made aware that *Bat Boy* is a theatrical production through the employment of the various theatrical sign systems such as the narrative structure, character construction and use of music.

The artificiality of the narrative structure is made quite clear in the first scene as the performers jump between narrating the story as if the end is a foregone conclusion and playing the vignette scenes, which establish the story. So too, throughout the playtext is there no attempt to hide the theatricality of ‘actors’ playing ‘roles’. This is achieved not only by the doubling up of characters (meaning that one actor plays ecomore than one part) but that this transition between characters, with costume change, often happens in direct view of the audience. This device is also emphasized by cross-gender role-playing, with men playing female roles and vice versa, which in the absence of elaborate costume/make-up changes is completely apparent to the audience. The score<sup>121</sup> of the piece as will be discussed in section 4.2.3 also continually signals that the playtext does not pretend to reality. Some of the songs are completely presentational such as “Show them a thing or two”, which mimics the scenes from *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* and in doing so comments on musical theatre conventions as does “Inside your heart” which takes the place of the conventional ‘eleven o’clock’ torch song (Musto 2011:[sp]).<sup>122</sup> Also, much of the underscoring of certain scenes (reminiscent of horror movie underscoring), not only adds to the atmosphere of the various scenes but is actually commenting on the structure of the show. This commentary is meant to be consciously acknowledged by the audience rather than just assimilated subconsciously. Most importantly, in the Revelations scene (Act II, sc 7, p 82-85) the characters of Meredith and Dr Parker talk directly to the audience with the rest of the actors being at once listeners (as townspeople) and active participants in acting out the flashback scenes. With the

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<sup>120</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2.4 of this dissertation.

<sup>121</sup> The written music of the show as defined in Chapter 2.6.

<sup>122</sup> The ‘eleven o’ clock number’ is usually a song that comes toward the end of a Broadway musical. This showstopper, in which a leading character has a fit of emotion and pours it out in music, is generally designed to give the audience something to hum as they leave (Musto 2011:[sp]).

theatrical convention of the fourth wall broken, this scene is at no point committed to naturalism or realism.<sup>123</sup>

Miller (2011:176) asserts that without the burden of naturalism which musical theatre in general has never quite conquered and with the ‘suspension of disbelief’ lifted new possibilities within the genre can be explored (ibid). It is interesting that even though all the techniques referred to above could be equated to elements of Brecht’s methods of alienation (Brockett 1992:220) yet it appears that, in this production, the opposite of alienation occurs with the audiences being inexorably drawn into the story. Whilst rejecting the high-tech, big budget conventions of many other contemporary musicals which are seemingly committed to naturalism and by insisting on a theatre of imagination (using techniques from the world of improvisational and experimental theatre), *Bat Boy* does not only comment on other musicals but as Miller (ibid 177) argues, with no helicopters or chandeliers<sup>124</sup> it becomes:

“more fun, more transporting, more magical, more emotional, because it goes back to the roots of storytelling and relies on its audience to participate in the magic. Edgar, the Bat Boy, tries to teach the people of his town about tolerance and acceptance, while *Bat Boy* the musical tries to teach us, the audience, about what really matters in the theatre – people, emotion, relationships”.

The subject matter and the way it is communicated, even whilst conforming to the presentational codes of musical theatre, neither pretends to realism nor petitions to

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<sup>123</sup> Taylor (2012:112) posits that ‘realism’ was a less extreme form of ‘naturalism’ where theatricality of performance in the nineteenth century was rejected in favour of the ‘portrayal of life with fidelity’. Whilst this practice was soon superseded in some forms of theatre by symbolist, surrealist and modernist approaches, realism became an important basis for the representation of characters in book musicals. Whilst the stage directions of *Bat Boy* suggest using shadow play to simulate the bats attacking the young Meredith the approach suggested is tongue-in-cheek. In keeping with the off-beat humour and lack of realism in some productions the participants, in no way pretending to simulate real bats, have pelted the actress playing the young Meredith with plastic bats.

<sup>124</sup> These are two famous high-tech, high cost examples of naturalism in musical theatre. In the productions of *Miss Saigon* a very real, operational, army helicopter is used in the scene of the evacuation from Saigon and in the productions of *Phantom of the Opera* a very large, ornate Chandelier is suspended above the audience, which comes crashing down at the appropriate moment in the story.

be believed, but the playtext is used as a vehicle to comment on American society. However, even as this satire comments on the very form the show takes, Miller (2007:205) points out that the authors did not set out to write a show making fun of Broadway musicals but that in writing a show about the search for love and acceptance in which a young boy tries to find his way in the world, they also managed to create a work which not only points to, but also makes light of, the conventions which govern the genre.

Whilst this satire forces the audience to confront their beliefs about life in general, it does so by involving them in Edgar's tragic journey prompting Miller (ibid) to define *Bat Boy* as "something new, something very special, and strangely enough considering the subject matter, something deeply moving".

How is this sense of emotional connection forged? I maintain that it is not only the familiarity of Edgar's story which can resonate with the audience but also the use of the signifying systems of other genres which augments the impression of familiarity. This 'intertextuality' offers the audience the pleasure of recognition (Chandler 2007:202) and the sense of security, which this recognition engenders. Even though the story is set in the realm of the fantastical, when surveyed, the peculiar story does not seem as unusual to the audience as it originally appears. Quite apart from the obvious reference to the universal tale of the 'star-crossed lovers'<sup>125</sup> the dramatic structure of *Bat Boy*, bears more than a slight resemblance to the morality play genre.<sup>126</sup> In *Bat Boy*, Edgar does represent a section of society (albeit that section seen by the rest of society as 'other') and throughout his entire journey he tries to find salvation through virtue and the grace of God. As the narratives of morality tales have been compared to folkloric stories and fables so too can *Bat Boy – the Musical* be equated to a contemporary fairy tale. As Jack Zipes (2002:212) points out, the radical morality of fairy tale and fantasy literature is reasonably the key to understanding the essence of *all* story-telling. It may also be conceivable that

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<sup>125</sup> This phrase was coined in the prologue of Elizabethan playwright, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. It has come to denote any pair of lovers whose relationship is thwarted by outside forces.

<sup>126</sup> The morality plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth century typically contained a protagonist who represented either humanity as a whole or a smaller social structure. Supporting characters are personifications of good and evil. The alignment of characters provided the play's audience with moral guidance. Morality plays were the result of the dominant belief of the time period, that humans had a certain amount of control over their post-death fate while they were on earth (King 1994:240).

audiences are pre-conditioned to relate to the tragic tale of the Bat Boy not only as a familiar fairy tale but particularly as the style in which the story is told is indicative of a genre which is hailed as the expression of the modern day fairy tale: the horror film.

Most fairy tales depict violence as a fundamental part of life and contain murder, torture, dismemberment and death. Horror films echo very similar moral themes to those found in fairy tales (Carter 2009:59) and violence is seen as the primary punishment for evil (ibid 61). David Carter (2009:59) argues that both fairy tales and horror films reinforce typical Judeo-Christian values and that horror cinema depicts those engaging in various immoral behaviours punished by violence and death. He contends that the ultimate message contained in both fairy tales and horror films is the same; that the individual holds the power to avoid death by choosing how to behave (Carter 2009:68) and that “[e]ach medium reiterates the message that disobedience and immorality invite the monsters lurking in the shadows. In the end, only the obedient and pure live to see their happy ending when the credits roll” (ibid).

Miller (2011:182) asserts that the plot and title character of *Bat Boy* is built primarily on two classic horror models<sup>127</sup> – Count Dracula and Frankenstein’s monster.<sup>128</sup> The classic horror films, exemplified by *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931) and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931) open with the normative order being disrupted by a monster (Pinedo 1996:19). In the end, the rampage of the monster is overcome and normative order is restored. Critics classify such films as morality tales which reinforce established binary oppositions of normal and abnormal, human and alien and that good must necessarily overcome evil (ibid). Another binary highlighted in this genre is that of normal versus abnormal sexuality and the classic horror film often demonstrates the dangers of sexuality outside the heteromonogamous nuclear family (a theme which is repeatedly questioned throughout the playtext of *Bat Boy*). Whilst the dramatic structure as well as the sequence of events in *Bat Boy* directly

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<sup>127</sup> Pinedo (1996:17) distinguishes between films of the classic horror genre or those made prior to 1968 and contemporary or postmodern horror films (those made after) that question the validity of rationality and are often open-ended.

<sup>128</sup> See a more detailed discussion of this aspect and how it pertains to the title character in the treatment of the character of Bat Boy later in this chapter.

references the horror film genre,<sup>129</sup> the musical score also contributes greatly to this aspect.<sup>130</sup>

Why should this particular genre resonate with audiences? As Gregory Waller (1987:12) points out, horror:

“defines and redefines, clarifies and obscures the relationship between the human and the monstrous, the normal and the aberrant, the sane and the mad, the natural and the unnatural, the conscious and the subconscious, the daydream and the nightmare, the civilized and the primitive<sup>131</sup> – slippery categories and tenuous oppositions indeed but the very oppositions and categories that are so essential to our sense of life”.

As the horror film genre defines the juncture between the personal, social and mythic structures it is through the “humanizing of the monster” (Carter 2009:68) that those in the audience relate to an otherwise seemingly bizarre tale. Walter Evans (1973:363) argues that in the most well-loved monster classics the audience clearly relates to the monster, that we all feel sympathetic fascination for the monster who is rejected by society and his own creators, whose fumbling attempts at love are destined to fail and who is tortured with desires he can barely admit, far less satisfy and finally whose only options are to be destroyed or as in Edgar’s case to self-destruct.

However, by being far from being terrifying *Bat Boy* renders the intertextual, horror film, signifying systems referenced by the musical<sup>132</sup>, impotent. Just as the special effects of classic horror films have become somewhat comedic in respect of the

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<sup>129</sup> Both writers of the book of *Bat Boy – the Musical*, Brian Flemming and Keythe Farley had successful careers in film before turning their attention to *Bat Boy*. Quite presumably their background influenced the structure of the musical which represents their only venture into the world of musical theatre.

<sup>130</sup> This will be discussed further in the section regarding the Score.

<sup>131</sup> Whilst I am not unaware that the binary of ‘civilized’ and ‘primitive’ is associated with colonialist thinking and that this binary has become extremely politicised and racialized, I have inserted this quote as the notion of this very binary, amongst the others cited, is interrogated throughout the playtext of *Bat Boy*.

<sup>132</sup> Please see discussions of the book, characters and score below for further examples of how *Bat Boy* references the classic horror film genre.

realistic special effects used in contemporary movies so the lack of realism in the musical and the use of bad B-grade horror effects, along with the witty dialogue and unexpected lyrics make *Bat Boy* a rousing comedy. Miller (2011:197/198) asserts that the “sudden explosion of melodramatic horror-movie chords at just the right moments throughout the show supply both dramatic intensity and inevitable laughs at their aggressive obviousness”. Stephen Hessel (2009:56) posits that both horror and comedy are mechanisms that allow humanity to cope with its most pervasive issues such as the impossibility of certainty and the essence of faith or its absence. And in this bizarre combination of both, the main aim of *Bat Boy* is not to uphold the binaries as established by the classics of the horror film genre but to question them. So whilst Andrew Tudor (1997:448) points out the “attraction of horror derives from its appeal to the 'beast' concealed within the superficially civilized human” in a postmodern twist, as the last lines of the musical indicate, *Bat Boy* advocates the very acceptance of that beast within.

Whilst the preceding has loosely defined the concept, structure and style of *Bat Boy* – *the Musical* and the methods employed to convey the essence of the playtext, exactly how the original playtext is constructed will be examined in the following sections. Thereafter, each element will be explored with regards to the proposed translation.

## 4.2.1 The Book

### 4.2.1.1 Component 1: Dramatic shape/Plot/Themes<sup>133</sup>

*Bat Boy* tells the story of the discovery and subsequent ‘civilizing’ of a malformed boy who is half man, half bat but as discussed, even as the playtext is driven by the story this is essentially subordinate to the central concept, that of questioning the binary of prejudice and acceptance. Miller (2002:[sp]) asserts that in “his parallels to gays, Blacks, and others, Edgar’s story ... raises issues of intolerance in America, of scapegoating”. It is ironic however, that as *Bat Boy* opened Off-Broadway, world events conspired to make this foremost theme and the associated distrust of the outsider more prevalent. After 9/11 and whether warranted or not, Americans became more

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<sup>133</sup> For a synopsis of the plot please see Appendix 3.

suspicious of foreigners – especially those of Arabic or Middle Eastern descent, and it can be speculated that the reason *Bat Boy* closed so very soon (after re-opening when the black-out on Broadway was lifted)<sup>134</sup> was that the production held up the mirror to the American people too closely. At this time the audiences needed to find justification for their prejudice and not a rationale for the tolerance and acceptance of all. It could be said that the essence of the production ran so counter to the ideological codes functioning in America at that time that it could not be successful. It is also interesting to note how closely this pattern emulates the fate of Stephen Sondheim's political satire *Assassins* (1991).<sup>135</sup>

The general distrust of the foreign and the resultant scapegoating or condemnation of those perceived to be 'other' is examined by Erich Neumann – a student and colleague of Carl Jung<sup>136</sup> – in his book *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic* which was referenced by co-author and original director of *Bat Boy*, Keythe Farley (Miller 2011:195). According to Farley:

"Neumann argues that the repression of the shadow in society causes a deep need for that energy to find a target, someone, other than us, to be the shadow that we can't own, someone who we can destroy in the hopes of creating a feeling of stability for ourselves" (ibid).

Neumann identifies three categories of people that society tends to scapegoat: those identified as alien or ethnically different, those who appear ethnically inferior such as criminals and those who are viewed as ethnically

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<sup>134</sup> After the 9/11 tragedy all the theatres in New York were closed as they were regarded as possible targets, Broadway – the Great White Way - was dark. When the theatres reopened, they did so with dimmed marquees.

<sup>135</sup> After opening to 73 sold-out performances – all due to pre-bookings based on Sondheim's reputation within theatre circles (Fox 1991:[sp]), *Assassins* did not transfer to a bigger house. The show closed as it challenged one of the tenets of American life: the American dream. At this time the Americans were in a state of patriotic fervor as the Gulf War<sup>135</sup> had just erupted and so were not open to the message *Assassins* presented (Robinson 2014:47). It was only after the passions of war had cooled that the show garnered critical acclaim and enjoyed further successful runs (ibid).

<sup>136</sup> Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology (Cambray & Carter 2004:1).



superior in intellect, morals or in some other way (Hardt 1976:8-9). Miller (2011:195) argues that “Edgar is all three: a sweet, sensitive freak of nature with a fierce intellect and a nasty bite”.

As Farley’s quote evidences, Neumann suggested that a new ethic is needed to address the problem of evil in the world and that rather than repressing the negative (the ‘shadows’) and striving for perfection, people must become aware of their darker sides, integrate them and move toward wholeness, not necessarily perfection. This introduces another closely related and deeply rooted theme in the playtext of *Bat Boy* which apart from the acceptance of others indicates the acceptance of one-self. The final lyrics of the show urge the audience to “Hold your Bat Boy, Touch your Bat Boy, No more need to hide. Know your Bat Boy, Love your Bat Boy. Don’t deny your beast inside”. The implication of these final lines is that the show tries to preach, as Neumann believed, that the consequences of not integrating our shadows is that we project them on to others which results in devastation both in personal relationships and collective life. The outcome of Edgar’s story serves as tragic example of the failure of the inhabitants of Hope Falls to embrace the darker parts of themselves which lead to their discrimination against the Bat Boy and in turn, the destruction of their society.

This theme of the show is not just illuminated in the final passage but is signified by the very structure of the playtext. The whole tale is told in flashback and the end is foretold from the opening number: “Hold Me Bat Boy”.<sup>137</sup> The audience is made aware from this ‘prologue’ of sorts (Miller 2011:182), that they are there “not to laugh but to learn” and that they should “[h]eard the tale of the filthy freak – who’s just like you! And *you*. And **YOU!**”. Ironically, this opening number is particularly amusing in places, handing out the tongue-in-cheek advice in such a fashion that the audience cannot help but laugh for example, when the cast are telling the audience how Bat Boy was mistreated “They stripped him of his dignity, they beat him like a gong” they then point out in such a twee fashion “And that was wrong, so wrong”.

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<sup>137</sup> See Appendix 4 for a full list of Songs.

“Hold Me Bat Boy” is reprised at the end of the show as an epilogue which echoes the prologue closely. It is introduced by the Sheriff answering the bemused institute man’s question of “[w]hat happened?” with “[i]t’s a long story. I don’t know where to begin”. The audience is well aware of the irony here as it is exactly where the story does start.

The use of the flashback device is important as, as Miller (2011:181) states it follows what he terms the ‘Ten Minute Rule of Musicals’. This unwritten rule, or code governing musical theatre conventions, has as its basis that once the audience understands and accepts the parameters and the boundaries (or lack thereof) of the premise, anything is possible. Deer (2014:32) agrees, stating that in musicals the audience is invited into a theatrical world with rules of its own. These rules do not necessarily have to be aligned with those of the real world outside of the theatre but that unless these are quickly defined and then consistently upheld the audience can be lost and confused (ibid).<sup>138</sup> For example, the premise of *Urinetown* is that due to a terrible drought, all water is under the control of a powerful conglomerate which makes private restrooms illegal and forces the townspeople to pay in order to be able to use the public restrooms. This premise is introduced in the opening number of the show and once the audience accepts this, the action of the show follows.

So too does legendary director-choreographer Jerome Robbins agree that the opening number is crucial in establishing the parameters and rules under which the evening unfolds<sup>139</sup> (Thelen 2000:202) and accordingly in *Bat Boy*, the central concept of the bestial bat boy against an uncivilized ‘civilization’ (Miller 2011:181) is introduced in the very short introductory scene in the cave. The show then moves into its pivotal opening number, “Hold Me, Bat Boy,” during which the pseudo-serious tone of the show is established. Within this number, not only is the town’s community introduced as the show’s antagonist

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<sup>138</sup> These rules can be established through the style of music and the singing, acting and dancing behavior but also through the visual style of the production (Deer 2014:32).

<sup>139</sup> The opening number “Tradition” of *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) which he directed, being a case in point. Robbins had also come in as show doctor on the ailing *Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) and exchanged the opening ballad “Love is in the air” for the now famous and raucously amusing “Comedy Tonight” after which the show thrived (Thelen 2000:207).

through several acting ‘vignettes’ (short dialogue scenes inside the song) but the performance style of the entire piece (ibid) is established. Along with the plot and main textual themes the style of music and the musical themes are also introduced, all keeping within the offbeat sense of humour which is maintained throughout the show.

That the town is doomed is clearly evidenced by its very name, Hope Falls. This clever juxtapositioning encapsulates, linguistically, the fate of the town which is then demonstrated through the storytelling. The first act is alive with hope: Dr Parker hoping to rekindle his dying relationship with his wife, Meredith hopeful of finding, or later providing Edgar with, a home and in so doing hopeful of atoning for her past sin of rejecting her own child, Edgar hopeful of being accepted by the community and able to live and love in peace, Shelley also hoping that the community will accept Edgar and that her love for him can become known and acknowledged, the townspeople hopeful that the revival will be the answer to their prayers and that their financial prospects will improve. The second act also starts brimming with hope evidenced by the opening song at the revival “A Joyful Noise” – a rousing gospel chorus but, as the revival spirit and the community’s acceptance of Edgar are dashed by the news of Ruthie’s death so begins the descent into hopelessness: Mrs Taylor loses her entire family, the townspeople and the Parker family are torn apart, Edgar loses his love and chooses to die (Miller 2011:182). Essentially, hope falls.

Edgar’s search for acceptance is symbolized by his search for a home. This metaphorical construct references a social code to which the audience associates various connotations. The desire for a loving home is one of the driving forces of the show, and is evidenced by Edgar’s search but also reiterated by Parker, Meredith, Shelley and even the antagonist Mrs Taylor. Hence, Miller points out that the melody from “A Home for You” is heard throughout the playtext, musically reinforcing the construct and bringing it to the attention of the audience over and over again. When Meredith first wins Edgar’s trust in the song “A Home for You” she sings: “[h]ome is a word that you should have learned, home is where people accept you” (Act I, sc 3, p24).

At this stage the audience is unaware that she is trying to atone for her sins and that the words are double-edged as that is exactly what she didn't do for her son. Her words are also prophetic as she convinces Edgar that "we're not here to harm you or make you feel ashamed. You can mistakes here and you won't be blamed" (Act 1, sc 3, p 25). Yet conflictingly, throughout the playtext Edgar is continually made to feel ashamed of his heritage that he certainly didn't choose and he is blamed for things far beyond his control.

Once Edgar has been accepted into the family by Meredith and then Shelley (and rather unwillingly by Dr Parker who only acquiesces as he sees Edgar as a means to an end) he asks in the reprise of "A Home for You": "Why can't I make this world my home?" (Act I, sc 9, p 48). His horizons have expanded beyond the nuclear family, he can no longer be contained within the family unit but needs to find acceptance within a broader community. The concept of home is being extrapolated to a larger platform that of community or culture. His plea is quite obvious when in "Comfort and Joy" he begs God to "show me where I belong" (Act I, sc 9, p 51). That Meredith and Shelley support his quest for acceptance is undeniable, they sing in "Three bedroomed house" that "Edgar will soon have a home" (Act II, sc 2, p 67) but it is clear that they cannot realistically picture a place where Edgar would be able to live in peace. Each plan they suggest seems more and more farfetched and every modification they propose is designed to keep Edgar alone and isolated whilst keeping society and the community out. They sing "We'll get a three-bedroom house with a white picket fence and a gun and a lawyer" as well as a "great big pitbull on a chain" (ibid). As the song reaches its conclusion they have decided on "a three bedroomed house in a concrete shelter, ten feet underground" (ibid p 69).

The next suggestion made in the playtext is that Edgar and Shelley live inside each other's hearts. This is not merely a metaphorically suggestion but completely literal as Shelley is offering Edgar her blood so that he can live. This home, in fact, is the one that Edgar chooses above all and when Shelley is later denied to him we hear his final rejection of any human home. In "Apology to a Cow" he mimics the original lines of "A Home for You" when he

sings “No, I’m not here to harm you, I only want to kill” and in his rage he decides that “[r]evenge will be a home for me” (Act II, sc 6, p 81). In this climax, as Edgar rejects all plans to find acceptance or try to fit in with the community, the juxtapositioning of lyrics and melody question the very nature of what the audience perceives as ‘home’. At this point, Edgar completely accepts what he believes to be the animal side of his nature.

This duality of Edgar’s nature, the question of whether he is man or beast and the nature of what those definitions entail is continually questioned throughout the playtext. The playtext continually refers to animals and their lesser state of being, from the dead geese Dr Parker brings back from his hunting expedition, to the rat and the rabbit given to Bat Boy as sustenance. Even Shelley reminds the audience that animals do not have the same rights as humans when she sings in reference to the stray dogs: “No one calls, no one claims. So we put them down and never learn their names” (Act I, sc 3, p 19). It is at this point that Edgar is named and the audience starts to see him as something more than an animal and as Edgar becomes more assimilated into the human world he begins to shun what he perceives to be the animal side.

This is evidenced by Edgar’s distress in “Comfort and Joy” as he doesn’t want to have to feed the bat part of himself (Act 1, sc 9, p). He finally does accept his bestial side in “Apology to a cow” as he sings to the severed head of a cow (Act II, sc 6, p 80-82) and as he dies he even tells Shelley “I’m not a boy, I’m an animal” (Act II, sc 7, p 89). Here, it is interesting to note the contrasting of the honesty of the animals versus the hypocrisy of people. The Bat Boy, like most animals, does not kill, except out of necessity for sustenance. He also does not attack unless threatened or provoked – the reason he attacks Ruthie in the cave, or in defense of those under his protection – as when he attacks Dr Parker who was threatening Meredith (Act I, sc 9 p 48-49) and when he attacks Rick at the revival in defense of Shelley (Act II, sc 1 p 64). The double standard of humans killing for pleasure is indicated by Dr Parker’s description of the “perfect formation of honkers” (Act I, sc 5, p 30) and yet the audience is quite aware that he has destroyed that perfection as he carries with the carcasses of two geese. It also becomes clear as the story

progresses that Dr Parker finds growing enjoyment in killing his innocent victims which culminates in his unwitting soliloquy in which he admits that he will kill again (Act II, sc 4, p 75). So too, are the bloodthirsty townspeople an example of those in favour of gratuitous violence as they bay for the Bat Boy's blood with no justification or real proof that he is actually responsible for what they believe he has done.

If it is accepted that Edgar is neither man nor beast, but an unnatural combination of both, then the playtext also interrogates another controversial social code: that of interspecies sex. From the very beginning when Meredith is teaching Edgar to speak she reads from a children's book:

“This is a cat. That is a goose.  
This is a rat. And that is a moose.  
The cat crept up behind the goose but then away it flew.  
The rat was jealous of the moose who loved a kangaroo.  
The cat and rat made up and found a flat in Timbuktu” (Act I, Sc 7,  
p 37).

In this first encounter with language Meredith is unwittingly supplying the justification for Edgar's love for Shelley and he is learning that his love for Shelley is acceptable. This could then be extrapolated to the condoning of non-conformist sex so that the playtext could be construed to be commenting on the legalization of same-sex marriages or gay sex (Miller 2002: [sp]).

Later in the second act as Edgar and Shelley escape into the woods this theme is even more candidly stated as Pan sings:

“Now let the turtle and the dove, let the lion and the lamb,  
Let the owl and wolf and ram embrace across the countryside,  
Fur and feathers making love, paws and claws and jaws and  
beaks.  
Let the song go on for weeks and weeks” (Act II, sc 3, p 72).

And then later:

The earth's asleep time to wake it,  
If you have clothing, forsake it.  
We want you breathless and naked!  
Choose your mate. And then let's see what we create..." (Act II, sc  
3, p 72).

Surrounded by singing, cavorting animals, Edgar and Shelley consummate their love.

It is in these scenes in the woods that a parallel with the works of Shakespeare can be drawn. Edgar and Shelley, like many of Shakespeare's young lovers, run away into the woods. In the wild the rules of 'civilization' no longer apply, "sexuality is open and unfettered" and "love can find its way without the obstacles of 'polite society'" (Miller 2002:[sp]). Miller also points out that the structure of *Bat Boy* even follows a structure common to Shakespearean works being that Act I is set in Hope Falls and almost all of Act II set out in the woods. He continues that the only major difference is that, as opposed to the Shakespearean works, there is no return to 'civilization' in *Bat Boy*. He suggests that this is because Edgar and Shelley face an obstacle that Shakespeare's lovers never faced, that they aren't exactly of the same species.

The ritualistic ceremony over which Pan presides seems a welcome escape from the madness of the town and symbolizes the physical expression of the spiritual joining of participants who are, at that stage, oblivious to the unhealthy nature of their relationship. As Meredith reveals the truth (Act II, sc 5, p 79) what had seemed so pure becomes tainted as the incestuous nature of Edgar and Shelley's relationship is made known. However, it is quite clear that it is not the interspecies aspect which forms the basis of the Edgar and Shelley's own resistance to their relationship but rather because they are brother and sister, incest being one of the most widely spread taboos across most cultures and societies (Bittles 2012:178).



In Pan's lyrics to the young lovers, as quoted above, there is a definite reference to the biblical verse Isaiah 11:6-7, which says: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid". This is indicative of another important theme which runs through the work, that of religion. In the playtext of *Bat Boy*, Christianity is continually juxtaposed with hypocrisy. However, Miller (2002:[sp]) points out that while *Bat Boy* satirizes religious extremism and also religion as a misused socio-political force, it does not poke fun at Christianity itself or at those who are genuinely faithful.

In "Christian Charity" the characters sing about doing what's right for the Bat Boy as they can't leave him the way they found him but the possibilities put forward include shooting him, controlling him with stun guns and chains or alternatively putting him down like an animal – all of these options, being neither very Christian-like nor charitable. Here, the lyrics and the construction of the characters themselves are used as devices to underline the irony of the song and its title. Later in the reprise the townsfolk contend that they could hang Edgar from a tree if their Christian charity is tested. They continually refer to him as 'less than' but in the same breath ask to be given credit for their generosity of spirit. Out of their 'Christian' charity Edgar's eventual downfall begins. Where he had lived, far away from any notion of religion he had lived an untarnished life; being brought into contact with so-called 'Christian' morals and values begins his descent into desperation and despair.

The discrepancy between how the characters portray themselves and what they actually are, is also illustrated by their prayers to God for what they believe will bring them "Comfort and Joy" (the name of the song) in the finale of Act I. These wishes range from the good health of their cows to the murder of Bat Boy and the townsfolk embrace the un-Christian-like belief that the ends justify the means. Miller asserts that "Comfort and Joy" shows how misguided the people of Hope Falls are. The title of the song and the refrain references 2nd Corinthians 1:23-24 which says, "[o]ur strength and ability are owing to faith; and our comfort and joy must flow from faith." The townsfolk however are asking God to give them comfort and joy outright and believe that this will result from the destruction of an innocent life.

Just as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* fed Victorian anxieties about sex and the freedom of sexual expression especially in the case of women, Edgar interrogates contemporary, small town, repressive, fundamentalist Christian attitudes (Miller 2011:183). Miller (2002:[sp]) contends that both *Bat Boy* and *Dracula* are about a 'moral' society's reaction to 'outsiders' or foreigners moving into London in Stoker's time, non-Christians (particularly Muslims) moving into a 'Christian America' in this day and age. He posits that "Edgar follows in a long line of literary and movie monsters who take the metaphoric place of any new people, cultures, or philosophies that Americans don't understand" (ibid). These monsters are "all stand-ins for the real unknowns which vary from era to era – Jews, Blacks, Gays, Asians" and what he terms "the great new source of fear today – Muslims" (ibid).

This fear of the unknown, the foreign, or someone perceived to be 'other' is not unique to America (and the South African implications will be discussed in more detail further along in this chapter). In complete disregard of the sentiment expressed by Andre Gide<sup>140</sup> that "[t]here are very few monsters who warrant the fear we have of them", the playtext elucidates the universality of the Publilius Syrus' maxim that "[w]hat we fear comes to pass more speedily than what we hope"<sup>141</sup> and this leads to the condemnation of the Bat Boy by the unenlightened, intolerant townspeople of Hope Falls. While it is generally accepted that "[t]reat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be"<sup>142</sup> the corollary is also true. The monstrous Bat Boy the residents of Hope Falls so mistakenly fear is ultimately the vengeful and bloodthirsty Bat Boy that their actions force Edgar to become. Edgar freely admits in "Apology to a cow" that he had been content, alone in his cave and that "I never knew such a word as rage, I learned that from you" (Act II, sc 6, p 80). Through the misguided efforts of his parents and the imprudent townspeople Edgar makes a conscious choice to become the

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<sup>140</sup> French writer and Nobel Prize winner

<sup>141</sup> Publilius Syrus was a Latin writer who flourished in the first century BC. Born a slave, his talent and wit impressed his master who freed and educated him. In 46 BC he won the favour of Caesar himself. All that remains of his work is a collection of sentences or moral maxims.

<sup>142</sup> Stephen R. Covey, American author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

monster they so fear and he sings “You shall have your monster, I shall drink my fill” (Act II, sc 6, p 81).

In choosing not to be human Edgar denies the one aspect of himself that in general Christianity has deemed to set humans apart from animals – an immortal soul (Preece & Fraser 2000:256). In the final scene Edgar baits his mother; he insists that her crime was not in wanting him dead but asks “[w]hy did you give me hope when you knew me to be a beast?” (Act II, sc 7, p 86). At this accusation, Meredith tells him to “[l]ook inside yourself Edgar and you’ll see a soul, does a beast have a soul?” to which he replies “Is that what you call it, that empty pit? That wound where my heart should be? You dug this hole in me bit by bit, nothing is left of me”. He concludes that: “The world is man or beast. But I am both and neither” and with that he chooses death over assimilation.

While it could be argued that in line with the morality of the horror film genre Edgar would have to be destroyed but it is in this, his final choice that Edgar turns the morality tale on its head. In choosing his own death and reversing the fortune of the morality tale’s hero by refusing salvation in this life and by his very rejection of the concept of a soul refusing salvation in the next, redemption for the audience in this lifetime is found. Miller (2011:175) calls *Bat Boy* in essence a “beautiful, hilarious fable”. The townspeople, through Edgar’s tragic journey, have learnt the valuable lessons of “[l]ove your neighbor, forgive, keep your vows” as well as that “revenge is something God forbids, to scapegoat folks is wrong” (Act II sc 7, p90-91), although the offbeat humour runs right until the end of the piece with others chipping in sagely that “a mountain’s no place to raise cows”. The townsfolk ultimately understand that one has to “let go the fears to which you cling” and the audience members, as they identify with Edgar’s journey realize they have gained the opportunity to find and learn to embrace their own Bat Boy.

#### 4.2.1.2 Component 2: Characters<sup>143</sup>

In the structuralist and formalist approach to semiotics (as discussed in Chapter 3.3) characters are “conceived as actants or participants rather than as real beings” (Chatman 1977:57) and their structural and ideological functions are emphasized (Aston & Savona 2013:35). Elam (1980:131) posits that this approach is diametrically opposed to the post-romantic ‘psychologistic’ view of character as a distinct ‘personality’ rather than a function of dramatic structure. For the purposes of this analysis the characters will be investigated with regards to both models for the following reasons. Firstly, as the playtext operates as concept musical the ideological functions of the characters, in underscoring the primary concept, need to be explored. As Elam (1980:129) points out, this system works best for those texts founded on clearly marked and stereotypical formulae and from the above description of the playtext as morality tale it would seem that *Bat Boy* fits undoubtedly into this category. This type of analysis falls in line with theories of narratology whereby those elements which theatre shares with narrative are brought to the fore elucidating sequences of actions linked by causal relationships (Segre & Meddemmen 1980:40). However, since in the second tier of translation, the performers cast in the production will be asked to facilitate the transfer of the characters into the South African context by accessing their own personal experiences I posit that this transfer may be easier if an inquiry into the original characters *per se* exists. Such a ‘psychologistic’ overview of the personalities of the characters (gained from clues in the playtext: action/dialogue/lyrics) will assist the performers in creating the ‘real’ journeys of the characters as demanded by the playtext and will aid them as they apply Stanislavski’s technique of the magic ‘if’ to their character construction as will be discussed in Chapter 5.<sup>144</sup>

When it comes to analyzing the characters of *Bat Boy*, it is clear that for dramatic function the characters are divided into two groups: those within the

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<sup>143</sup> Please see Appendix 5 for a list of all characters in the playtext.

<sup>144</sup> Constantin Stanislavski, a famous director (whose work will be discussed in Chapter 5) advocated that the actor, through self-interrogation, become the character during the performance and this supported the psychoanalytical approach to character construction (Aston & Savona 2013:47).

Parker family and the rest of the town. Here the townspeople are collectively involved in the same function of actantial opposition and in doing so function as semiotic ensemble (Aston and Savona 2013:42). This separation between the Parker family and the rest of the town is distinguished by style and Miller (2002:[sp]) contends that the scenes involving the townspeople are somewhat more caricatured than the more naturalistic family scenes inside the Parker house.

Another way the difference between the family and the townspeople is maintained is evidenced by the fact that the show was originally written for ten performers to play all 22 roles and the theatrical device of doubling was used for the creation of the townspeople. Except for performers playing Bat Boy, Meredith, Dr Parker and Shelley, every cast member plays multiple roles including at least one of the opposite gender. Although obvious humour arises from this cross-gender casting, it also reinforces the stereotypical reactions of the townspeople whilst underscoring the authenticity of the family.

A discussion of the individual lead characters of the two groups and their functions follows:

➤ THE FAMILY

• **Bat Boy/Edgar**

As the title and lead character of the playtext it is Edgar who is the protagonist of the story. The actantian role of this character is that of Propp's 'hero'<sup>145</sup> who initiates the force from which all the dramatic tension follows (Elam 1980:127). It is his search for love and acceptance and his tragic death which illuminates the moral of the story and allows the townspeople the opportunity to learn the necessary lessons.

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<sup>145</sup> In 1928 Vladimir Propp developed a methodology for reviewing dramatic structure and linked spheres of action to character (Aston & Savona 2013:36-37). His seven spheres of action included villain, donor (provider), helper, princess (sought for person) dispatcher, hero and false hero. His taxonomy was developed in relation to Russian fairy tales but as stated in section 4.2 *Bat Boy* follows the format of a fairy tale.

The character of Bat Boy also has a metaphorical function as Edgar represents an ideological construct – that of the ‘other’ – and his journey signifies the damaging result of the scapegoating of the ‘other’ by those in the dominant society. Bat Boy falls into all three of Neumann’s categories of those who are viewed as ‘other’ and this is indicated in the playtext in the following three ways. Firstly, he is identified as alien or ethnically different as his physical appearance with translucent white skin, pointed ears and over developed fangs set him apart from the norm. (It is of course up to the director to determine the level to which Edgar’s physical characteristics will be displayed for example with the use of prosthetics.) It is in being identified as ‘other’ that Bat Boy shares many similarities with Frankenstein’s monster. He too is the result of a scientific experiment gone wrong and is also rejected by his maker and ‘father’ Dr Parker. Edgar is also desperate to find love which is denied him and though he strives to be gentle he is deadly when provoked.

Secondly, he is viewed as ethically inferior; he is not quite human – he is part animal, and that allows the inhabitants to view him as inferior. (This presents quite a challenge for the performer taking this part as at the beginning of the show the physical portrayal of Bat Boy needs to be animalistic).<sup>146</sup> Since Edgar is neither man nor bat but a macabre combination of both – a hybrid, a deeper reading of the text could possibly allow for raising the spectre of human and animal cloning (Miller 2002:[sp]). Christopher Toumay (1992:411) argues that mad scientist horror stories constitute a procedure for censoring scientists and scientific knowledge as these stories warn against the evils of science which can threaten our well-being since those who control the mysteries of modern secular knowledge are unaccountable to conventional standards. Traditionally these stories caution us to “contain secular science within the firm ethical guidelines of traditional Judeo-Christian values” (ibid) and that those who use such science for amoral purposes should be condemned. As Stephen Hessel (2009:55) points out however, the Frankenstein monster has at its core an analysis of the meaning of life.

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<sup>146</sup>Deven May the original creator of the role of Bat Boy said that as bats were literally quite boring, they just eat and sleep, he based his character on various animals including the cat and the dog as well as incorporating characteristics of birds (Interview: Deven May talks Bat Boy).

Despite their other-worldly nature, these monsters do exist in the world and therefore beseech humanity to query the “very nature of this existence” (ibid). In this sense it could be suggested that in the half-human, Bat Boy’s search for a soul, the place of those cloned beings is being questioned.

And thirdly, Edgar is also feared as he falls into the category of those who are viewed as ethically superior; he has an intellect far superior to the townspeople. This is clearly illustrated by how cleverly Edgar uses rhyme.<sup>147</sup> For example as he is learning to speak in “Show them a thing or two” he merely copies Meredith and Shelley’s rhyme”(Act I, sc 5, p 41) but as he presents his paper for his high school equivalency later in the song it is clear that his understanding is far superior to most. He sings:

“I will discuss Copernicus who ruined all our fun  
and showed we’re just a ball of dust that limps around the sun.  
Which brings me then to Darwin, when he bent us out of shape,  
as he began to prove that man is nephew to an ape.  
We were annoyed when Dr. Freud declared it’s not a soul;  
it is your blind subconscious mind that’s always in control.  
But I submit that any twit, if he has eyes to see,  
can seize his fate, self-educate, and turn out just like me!”(Act I, sc  
5, p 41).

He continues to use even more complicated interior rhyme schemes as his perceptions of how the human world works increase as the song comes to a close. It is interesting to note that as Miller (2011:189) points out “Edgar’s essay addresses four issues which swirl around the entire plot of Bat Boy: the nature of God and the natural world, the idea that humans evolved from animals, the concept of the human soul, and the idea that education transforms”.

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<sup>147</sup> Miller (2002:[sp]) points out that it is a convention in musicals that the more intelligent or present of mind a character is, the more he or she will rhyme. This convention was specifically used and advanced by master composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim. The use of such conventions by Laurence O’Keefe and the reasons therefore will be discussed further in the sections on the lyrics and score in this chapter.



There is a further connotative purpose to Edgar's character (Aston & Savona 2013:41). Edgar is denoted as a most moral character, believing in the goodness of humankind and dedicated to upholding the social norms and trying to adhere to all he has been taught. This is alarming for the uneducated inhabitants who are not capable of the same and as they cannot put aside their fears they need to destroy the source of their fears. In this a further connotative level is suggested, likening Bat Boy to the prophet, teacher yet ultimate outsider, Jesus Christ (Miller 2011:185). Edgar's sincere prayer in "Comfort and Joy" (in direct contrast to the supposedly Christian townspeople) is reminiscent of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, begging God to stop the process which he knows will ultimately lead to his death (Act I, sc 9, p 51). Then also, in his plea to the townspeople in the Revival of Act II he directly references Leviticus 26:12 when he asks them to "let me walk among you" (Act II, sc 1, p 60). At this stage his sincerity and genuinely well-spoken and reasoned argument does manage to convince the people to "shake his hand". This acceptance is short-lived due to the deceptions of Dr Parker and the townspeople have yet another reason to despise Bat Boy feeling that they were duped by his loftier intellect. As ultimate punishment for trying to spread a message of love and hope Edgar suffers a public 'crucifixion' of sorts, impaled between the bodies of his parents (a separate comment perhaps on the fact that his parents who should have been his metaphorical support through his life as opposed to mere physical support in his dying moments). Whilst Jesus died so that others could find eternal life, through Edgar's death the townspeople are lead to enlightenment and salvation. Beyond the obvious references however, the character serves as a constant connotative reminder of one of the pervasive themes of the piece: the hypocrisy of religion. In stark contrast to Bat Boy, those in the playtext who proclaim their Christianity profusely do not uphold its basic tenets.

In the playtext Edgar learns everything through imitation, he learns to talk through imitating Meredith, he learns his British accent through imitating his BBC language tapes. He learns to dance by watching Shelley and he learns to have sex by watching the animals in the forest. But mostly importantly

Edgar learns to hate by watching the townspeople of Hope Falls and an important message of the show echoes the sentiment shared by one of the greatest statesman and humanitarians of our time Nelson Mandela (1995:622):

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

It is in this that the character of Edgar functions as a referent (Aston & Savona 2013:39) to the struggle for human rights. Miller (2011:186/187) sums up Edgar’s growth and equates it to other movements who have fought injustice and prejudice stating that in his quest for literacy, self-improvement and self-respect Edgar is likened to every great human rights movement in America and the world. In his rebellion against injustice and battle to be accepted as part of the greater community Edgar learns that the world is inherently unfair. Miller continues to extend the metaphor and compares Edgar’s growing rage throughout the second act to the mounting rage in the Black civil rights movement in America in the 1960’s which gave rise to militant groups like the Black Panthers.<sup>148</sup>

It would appear that the challenge of this character whose role is so layered with meaning is that the actor must be able to forget all subtext and the functions his character maintains within in the playtext and just play the part of a young boy learning about love and life and ultimately being disappointed with what he finds. Unlike the hero of most morality plays who lacks personal motivation or any inward struggle (Craig 1950:64) Edgar’s role is all about personal struggle and whilst he is representative of a section of humanity it is his private journey which will enlighten all those who are touched by it.

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<sup>148</sup> This metaphor would not be out of place in the South African context in relation to *Umkhonto We Sizwe*, the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). This armed wing was established in 1961 after the ANC stated that it was not possible to reach its aims through non-violent protest. The body was subsequently classed as a terrorist organization and outlawed by the South African government (Cherry 2000:14)

- **Shelley**<sup>149</sup>

Aston and Savona (2013:41) reference Ubersfeld's study of character and posit that in order to study one character in a text, account must be made of his or her relations to all of the others, as well as the many functions and modes of signification of that character.

Within this frame the character of Shelley is the romantic heroine of the playtext. Whilst she embodies the sought-after person (or Propp's princess) she also represents the ideal end or the 'good' or 'value' as put forward by Souriau<sup>150</sup> (Elam 1980:129). In simpler terms the character of Shelley is what Bat Boy desires and is the impetus for his quest yet she also represents the ideal he seeks, the ideal of home and acceptance within the community. Shelley's function is also that of helper as she assists the protagonist Bat Boy.

Even though she is the heroine of the playtext, the character of Shelley is continually depicted as childlike or immature. In "Christian Charity" Meredith does not let her daughter get a word in edgeways repeating "Shelley, quiet!" (Act I, sc 2, p 16-18) and after Shelley's altercation with her boyfriend Rick, Meredith even tells her to "get ready for bed. I'll come tuck you in in a minute" (Act 1, Sc 3, p 24) – even as the notion of tucking in a teenager seems a little absurd. As the show continues Shelley remains the rebellious, moody teenager and does not seem to grow in maturity even whilst making more adult decisions such as going against her peers and societal convention and allowing herself to show her love for Edgar. Whether her love would endure without all the restrictions against it is perhaps doubtful. That which is forbidden is far more tempting, especially for adolescents and her love seems to be more the type of teen obsession rather than self-sustaining love. After she and Edgar have consummated their loves she sings to Edgar in their love song: "Once I thought you were weird but soon my doubts disappeared. I think

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<sup>149</sup>One wonders if there is any significance as this character bears the same name as the surname of the original creator of the Frankenstein tale, Mary Shelley.

<sup>150</sup> Etienne Souriau put forward a morphology of six actants. These six functions could be achieved by more than one character concurrently but a single character could also fulfil more than one of the listed roles (Elam 1980:127).

you're normaller than they" (Act II, sc 5, p 77) her lack of grammatical sense being at once comic and endearing but also a sign of her naiveté.

Shelley's lack of artifice, refers intertextually to another genre referenced by the musical. For in keeping with the horror film model, only those that are pure of heart survive. This echoes the fairy tale morality that characters are either good or evil and their actions should be judged accordingly (Carter 2009:67). So, if Shelley had come of age and lost her innocence prior to sleeping with Edgar, this would have been a knowing decision for which she would have to be punished. It is only in the final moments of the show as she watches Edgar die for his beliefs that Shelley comes of age. She is the first one to recover and leads the remaining townsfolk into a new era of enlightenment and understanding singing "[h]e never knew what he was worth, I could not stop his fall but in his precious hours on earth, he taught us all"(Act II, sc 7, p 90).

- **Dr Parker**

Dr Parker is the antihero of the playtext for as strange and as other as Edgar seems, Dr Parker seems as normal and acceptable a part of the community. In the playtext he performs the role of the opponent or antagonist who offers impediments to the fulfillment of the goal of the protagonist (Elam 1980:129) and his trajectory in the playtext is directly oppositional to Bat Boy's. As Edgar is 'civilized' and elevated through education leaving his animal past behind so Parker descends into madness, giving his darker, more dangerous and savage 'bestial' side free rein.

Elam (ibid 132) elaborates on the work of Philippe Hamon<sup>151</sup> who suggested that a character should be seen as an empty sign which can be imbued with characteristics such as properties inherited from other texts. The character of Dr Parker gains much from such intertextual status. This character reinforces a key concept found in fairy stories and horror films alike – the theme of things not being as they seem (Carter 2009:67). Miller (2011:192) posits that Parker

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<sup>151</sup> Phillippe Hamon is a French literary scholar and narratologist whose work focussed on the description and poetics of narrative (Bal 1988:177).

has two literary forefathers: Dr Jekyll and Sweeney Todd – both quintessential characters from the horror genre. As with Dr Jekyll, Dr Parker vacillates between two extremes: the caring, well respected veterinarian and the crazed madman provoked by the voices in his head. These voices are given physical form and portrayed by actors in “Dance with me Darling” and “Parker’s epiphany”. That these voices are very real for Parker is evidenced when in “Comfort and Joy” some rational part of himself tells them to “[s]hut up” as they urge him to “[k]ill the Bat Boy” (Act I, sc 9, p 52). As with Sweeney Todd the source of Parker’s sadness and ultimately his madness can be traced back to one tragic moment – when he spilled the pheromone solution on Meredith which lead to her rape by Parker and also the bats. This moment robs Parker of a happy marriage and family and he is consumed with guilt.

The audience is made aware from Parker’s first entrance that his sorrow has driven him to the bottle and the loveless (sexless) state of their marriage it is also obvious from this first scene together when Parker says “[y]ou haven’t been a wife to me in years” and Meredith promises to remedy that that very evening in order to save Edgar. That Parker and Meredith are undoubtedly aware of exactly who and what Edgar is, i.e.: their son, is made clear as Parker asks “[y]ou know what this is, don’t you?” and Meredith replies “[y]es I do. You could save him if you wanted to, couldn’t you? You could make him well again?”. Thus Parker and Edgar are thrust into an unholy alliance; Parker motivated to repair his ailing marriage by helping Edgar and Edgar completely reliant on the man whose only salvation lies in his destruction. That Parker is driven further and further into the realms of wretchedness and madness is because the object of his desire, his wife, gives all of her affections to Edgar. Every time Parker reaches out to Meredith she sweeps, unseeing, past him and straight towards Edgar. This is specifically obvious in Act I, Sc 9 where Parker’s frustration at the state of affairs leads him to confront Meredith, grabbing her roughly at which Edgar attacks him. Even after the attack Meredith’s concern is for Edgar and not for her injured husband (p 48-49). It is the final straw for Parker and he descends into his rampant bloodlust but as he cannot destroy Edgar outright which would mean losing Meredith forever, he concocts an elaborate plan so that Edgar will be regarded as

deadly and ousted by the community. As he murders Ruthie he disowns his own guilt as he says “It’s not me Ruthie, It’s the Bat Boy who’s doing this to you. He’s a beast. He’s a monster” (Act I, sc 9, p 56). As the bodies mount up, and surrenders to his bestial side, he sings: “More blood will be spilt. Hunger has increased. Nothing left of guilt. Beast has been released. Damn the world of men. Everyone will pay. And I will kill again” (Act II, sc 4, p 75).

Toumey (1992:411) asserts that the mad scientist films of the horror genre are homilies on the evils of science, drawing on antirational fears and shaping these into moral narratives. Since the knowledge, evil or benign is difficult to portray, the evil is often invested in the personality of the scientist (ibid 212) who is then condemned. Toumey asserts that the mad scientist character falls into one or two categories: Those that are corrupted by scientific knowledge and those that use it to corrupt others (ibid 415). Like the young Frankenstein from Mary Shelley’s novel,<sup>152</sup> Parker did not intend the disastrous results of his scientific experiments. This (lack of) intention is one of the factors that Toumay uses to describe the morality of the fictional mad scientists (ibid 419). The second factor is remorse, reflection, and to what extent the scientist takes responsibility for his actions and the third is naiveté versus experience as some of these characters should be old and experienced enough to know better than to unleash evil. Toumay (ibid 419) posits that these features are common moral standards and “because they are so common and so real, fictional mad scientists are more believable when their personalities are constructed from some combination of the three”.

As Parker is imbued with these intertextual qualities he is far from being a one-dimensional character, being at once caring father to Shelley and tortured husband, pillar of the community and guilt-riddled drunk. Whilst Parker feels

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<sup>152</sup> In reworks of the novel for stage and screen Frankenstein’s character was much revised, from misguided medical student to arrogant, ungodly and dangerous doctor in the 1931 classic remake of the movie (Toumay 1992:427). This revision was necessary to uphold the binary between good and evil. Director James Whale also made the decision for Dr Frankenstein not to be responsible for the destruction of the monster so the character was furthered blackened as he was not depicted to feel any remorse or responsibility as had the original character (ibid 428). Also, in keeping with the horror genre where characters are either all good or all bad, in the film Frankenstein’s monster was given the brain of a criminal turning him from the eloquent malcontent of Shelley’s novel to a grunting murderer (Carter 2009:66).

remorse for his folly as a young man he feels his only hope lies in the embittered, bloody path he chooses as a mature man. However single-minded his purpose – to be loved and live a happy life with his family, his emotions are complex. He vacillates between remorse over his rape of Meredith to regret for his weakness in his inability to kill the bat baby when she had asked him to. Perhaps the most poignant moment of the playtext is as he is about to stab the willing Edgar and Meredith stops him, he sings “[y]our eyes, Meredith, he has your eyes”<sup>153</sup> and Miller states (2011:194):

It’s at that moment that we forget the ranting, the drunken rage, the savage side of Parker; at that moment, all we see is his deep, dark, unrequited but unconditional love for Meredith and the uncontrollable tragedy that has forever stained that love. And there, Bat Boy rises confidently to the level of Greek tragedy.”

- **Meredith**

The function of this character according to Propp would be that of ‘helper’ but this role serves a strong actantial purpose in the grammatical structure of the text. Meredith’s choices throughout the playtext propel most of the dramatic action forward. Whilst Meredith is not the object of the protagonist’s romantic love she is still forced to choose between the protagonist and his rival, her son and her husband and as such can be described as the arbiter of the situation (Elam 1980:128). As Meredith embodies the ideal of home, she is portrayed as the quintessential mother figure: kind, caring, doting and loving towards her children and protective of those less fortunate. Thus the level of surprise and shock is heightened as the audience hears she wanted her deformed baby dead. This is revealed by Parker as he cries “I should have done as you told me on the day he was born” (Act II, sc 7, p 82). Her softer side however is revealed early on in the playtext as Shelley explains “that’s my mom, see she cries, every time a stray dog dies” (Act I, sc 3, p 19). As already discussed Meredith knows immediately exactly what the Sheriff has

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<sup>153</sup>This is ironic as when Meredith sings her first lullaby to the Bat Boy she starts by saying “Poor little person with eyes so sad” (Act I, sc 3, p 24).



brought to her door when he calls it a Bat Boy. In this moment she sees the opportunity to make amends for the decision she made at his birth. Although she was so young and vulnerable and had lost her parents so there was no-one to counsel her at the time, she has had years to judge her decision and find it wanting. As “A Home for You” starts she feels that she can possibly make amends by finding Edgar a new family “We’ll find a family who won’t let you down I swear” (Act I, sc 3, p 24) but as soon as Edgar makes that first contact with her by singing along, her refrain changes. It’s as if the initial bonding that should have occurred at birth happens as they harmonize together and she sings “so teach us how to love you and once the night is through, we may have a home for you” (Act I, sc 3, p 25). Whilst she makes the decision to take him in out of guilt, her love for Edgar grows. She proves this love, like a tigress protecting her cub, time and again, not only promising her estranged husband sex for not putting Edgar down but also willing to go against not only her husband but the entire town when she supports Edgar’s desire to go to the revival. She sings “he will show that he’s not what they’re terrified of” and prophetically she adds: “He will show them a love they can never destroy” (Act I, sc 9, p 51). She never gives up on Edgar proclaiming until the end “[s]o you see he’s not a beast, he’s my son. He’s just a poor misunderstood boy. He’s one of us, please” (Act I, sc 7, p 86) and finally giving her life as she tries to save him from being killed.

➤ THE TOWNSPEOPLE

- **Mrs Taylor**

This character functions as a part of the greater whole (the townspeople) and as such has a metonymic function (Aston & Savona 2013:41). Mrs Taylor represents all of the bigoted, closed-minded views of the townspeople. Whilst Mrs Taylor’s defining characteristic is that of mother and her overdeveloped sense of protecting her brood, this role is traditionally played by a man which reinforces the irony of her misguided protectiveness. That she will go to great lengths to do so, including bullying the town residents, is evidenced in the second verse of her lullaby to Ruthie in which she sings “Sleep little Ruthie baby, no-one’s gonna hurt you. Sheriff’s gonna get the little freak destroyed. Or if he’s a coward and won’t protect my children, Mamma’s gonna get the

Sheriff unemployed”. She is completely closed minded and cannot entertain the fact that anyone so different could be benign. The last verse of her lullaby indicates her search for retribution: “Sleep little Ruthie baby, don’t you fear no Bat Boy. Mama’s gonna hunt him down and bring him here. Then you can skin him and wear him as a jacket. And we’ll string a necklace with a dried bat ear”. As with all the characters who choose vengeance as a home, they face death and destruction. In Mrs Taylor’s case this is not her own death but that of her children and the decimation of her family.

- **Rick Taylor**

This character functions as the ‘false hero’ and as he moves into the role of antagonist so this facilitates the growth of Shelley’s character. The character of Rick is also imbued with intertextual properties as the medium of expression chosen for his song is that of a hip-hop rap.<sup>154</sup> This genre is suited to the character as Rick is reinforcing his aggressive, rebel status in the small town. Derek Iwamoto (2003:44/35) in his analysis of Tupak Shakur,<sup>155</sup> a popular hip hop/rap artist argues that American culture lionizes masculinity and that within this definition a ‘real’ man should be tough, aggressive, daring and have physical strength and athletic prowess. There is also an emphasis on sexual prowess, sexual conquest, and sexual aggression (ibid). He argues that given the stereotypical representation of males in the media the youth “exaggerate these hyper-masculine characteristics in their public personae, in order to prove themselves and be respected by their peers”. Whilst Iwamoto’s analysis directly references young men of colour or those in minority groups this is definitely also an accurate appraisal of Rick’s character.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Hip hop and specifically ‘gangsta rap’ music reflects a typically masculine aesthetic (Oware 2011:22) and has been criticized in the press for its association with drugs and violent crime (Iwamoto 2003:44).

<sup>155</sup> Tupac Amaru Shakur (1971 – 1996), also known by his stage names 2Pac and briefly as Makaveli, was an American rapper and actor (Levs 2006:[sp]). Shakur has sold over 75 million records worldwide – 22 million of those posthumously, making him one of the best-selling music artists of all time (Iwamoto 2003:44).

<sup>156</sup> This had a series of interesting repercussions in the South African translation of this character which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

As the quintessential bully, Rick is full of bravado when Bat Boy is restrained (Act I, sc 2) or unarmed (Act 2, sc 1). However his overwhelming fear of the unknown is quite evident from his large (over)reaction when Bat Boy lunges against his cage – in this context the word ‘coward’ appears in the stage directions (Act I, sc 3, p 22). It would seem that Rick is a product of his conservative upbringing and fears anything which he has been taught to consider deviant. While Rick considers himself a rebel, in his attempts at machismo and being a ‘jock’<sup>157</sup> he accedes to those values upheld by the majority of the small town and derides anything could offend or question these ideals. In the first verse of his rap he exclaims that they won’t murder Edgar immediately but: “First, we gonna buy lots of fancy-clothes, and make you clip your toes, and watch you walk around in make-up and panty-hose”. As he reveals how degrading he views cross dressing, his conservative principles are highlighted and he exposes his homo- and transphobia.

However, it can be argued that Rick is just a misguided boy. That he is just an impulsive adolescent is quite obvious when he is subdued by Meredith and made to leave (Act 1, sc 3). Added to this is the fact that his rap is intentionally badly written – there are rhymes which don’t quite work, and the irregular rhythms in some sections emphasizes his immaturity. (This makes the song quite problematic for the performer who needs to be more than proficient in the genre so as to make the execution of the mistakes flawless.) However, Rick’s sister’s death fuels the fire born of his fears and insecurities and he vows to seek vengeance for her. This is apparent by his song in the second act in “All hell breaks loose” (Act II, sc 1, p 64) as he threatens “[a]nd now you’ll pay for what you’ve done tonight”. This act of aggression born of his vengeance leads Edgar to attack him and ultimately to his untimely demise at the hand of Dr Parker.

- **Ron Taylor**

Like the character of Mrs Taylor, Ron also functions as metonym for the townspeople. The views he espouses are not even his own, merely inherited

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<sup>157</sup> ‘Jock’ is an American term for a stereotypical male athlete.

from his mother and his community. Ron is however more sensitive than his brother Rick, evidenced right from the beginning through his fear in the cave. He is the one who tries to convince his siblings to turn back and, once they have discovered the 'cave monster', he is the only one to empathize with the creature's fear (act I, sc 1, p 8). Yet when his sister is compromised his unwavering family loyalty forces him to spring into action to overcome the Bat Boy. The same happens after the death of his older brother and idol, and he swears vengeance. Unfortunately this unthinking and overwhelming desire for revenge also leads to his death.

- **Reverend Billy Hightower**

This character functions as referent to the evangelical ministry and serves once again to question the role of religion in society. Miller (2011:197) asserts that the Reverend's claim to Christianity is legitimate and I concur that the Reverend is a genuine man of faith. This is evidenced by his actions as he does give Edgar the platform to speak for himself and accepts him into the fold. However, his hypocrisy is apparent in the type of healer he purports to be. This conjecture is not underscored by anything in the written text but demonstrating the polysemic nature of musical theatre it is clearly signified in the score which will be discussed in more detail in section 4.2.3. In his 'healing' of Edgar the music repeats itself three times and each time he stops to gather himself. The score unmistakably establishes him as charlatan and also allows for a great comedic moment.

- **Sheriff Reynolds**

This character also functions as a metonym for the townspeople and is symbolic of those in society who are swayed by the decisions of others. The Sheriff although self-important is weak and ineffectual. He never actually makes a decision as regards to the situation preferring instead to pass the buck, at first to Dr Parker (Act I, sc 1, p 11). He is also overly concerned with his own well-being and safeguarding his career. This is mentioned in the first scene when he delivers Bat Boy to the Parker residence as he tells Meredith that he is "comin' up for re-election" (Act I, sc 2, p 16). He also mentions it

again in the “Christian Charity reprise” although in this instance he tries to brush it aside by telling Dr Parker that “it’s not about these dumb elections” (Act I, sc 8, p 48) when it is quite clear that his main aim is to guarantee his re-election. With this in mind he tries to placate all the townsfolk, including Mrs Taylor in the hospital (act I, sc 6, p 31) but doesn’t actually take charge of the situation until it is too late. The Sheriff does organize the search party but this occurs only after the attack on Rick – and his subsequent death, and when the imminent threat of the Bat Boy is no longer present (Act II, sc 1, p 65). Towards the end he merely wants to wash his hands of the problem and turn Edgar over to the Institute man, a compromise that pleases neither the family nor the townspeople.

- **The Rest of the Inhabitants of Hope Falls**

As can be seen from the discussion above, the townspeople have a combined purpose in the dramatic structure. Whilst they can be loosely divided into two groups, those that were coal-miners and have become ranchers and the others, they form a homogenous group with regards to their small town, conservative, repressive outlook on life. As this homogenous group they have a metaphorical function in the playtext representing bigotry and racism. Just how frightened they are of the unknown and anything which represents diversity and how opposed they are to change is evidenced by Bud’s line in the middle of “Another Dead Cow” (Act I, sc 4 p 28) where he says “I wasn’t cut out to be a rancher. What I wouldn’t do to be a coal-miner again”. While this statement seems innocuous enough, the stage directions at this point direct “[a]ll cough. Bud’s handkerchief turns black from the contents of his lungs”. Not only does the style of country music (also to be discussed in section 4.2.3) set the townspeople apart from the family but Miller (2002:[sp]) argues that stereotypes and stereotypical characteristics and styles of speech are used to create these cardboard cut-out, almost cartoon-like characters. This device establishes the townspeople as:

“atmosphere more than active participants, as a dangerous (though comical) nightmare, as a socio-political minefield, all while establishing the Parkers as real people with real emotions” (ibid).

#### 4.2.1.3 Component 3: Dialogue

The study of the role of dialogue in any theatrical production is at once elucidated and problematized by the extensive semiotic study of the functions of language in producing meaning. De Toro (1995:8) asserts that the speaker/listener relationship is central to the production of meaning but that this is more complicated in the theatrical sense because of a doubling of speakers or emitters and receivers as well as of the signs or messages (ibid 9). This relationship is of course complicated in the theatrical discourse for if one considers the scriptor/writer to be the sender of the message this is mediated by the director (amongst others) and also the actor before the message is received by the receptor/interpreter. Added to this are the complex signifying systems of language and Chandler (2007:150) lists phonological, syntactical, prosodic and paralinguistic subcodes of language.

In his discussion of language in the drama, Elam (1980:135-184) discussed deixis<sup>158</sup> and deictic strategies, anaphora,<sup>159</sup> speech act theory and illocutionary acts. He also created a complex dramatological score of symbols to represent all the elements contained in the above and a column system to demonstrate how the anatomy of language interrelates with action, character and the fictional world of the drama. However, an in depth study of his dramatological score or an application thereof to the dialogue in this playtext is far beyond the scope of this dissertation. And I contend that as De Toto points out in the preface of the translated version of his book *Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre* (1995), when referring to semiotics in general:

“I simply suggest that the whole semiotic and structuralist paradigm, which has been with us since the Russian Formalists, came tumbling down strenuously with the emergence of the Post-

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<sup>158</sup> “Deixis is what allows language an ‘active’ and dialogic function rather than a descriptive and choric role” (Elam 1980:139).

<sup>159</sup> “Anaphora differs from deixis in that, instead of pointing to the object directly, it picks up the referent of the antecedent word or expression” (Elam 1980:152) and that “[a]naphoric reference is important to dialogue in that it creates, through co-reference, the appearance of continuity in the universe of discourse” (ibid).

Structuralists and Deconstructionists. It seemed after a while that producing diagrams and arrows had been unnecessarily obstructive and did not get us anywhere” (ibid 1).

Bearing this in mind, the analysis of the dialogue shall follow a process closer to the theories of Félix Martínez-Bonati’s<sup>160</sup> which counter structuralist and post-structuralists’ concerns with language by asserting that these work against the imaginary experience of the piece (Saffar 1983:270). He persistently disengages language from literature insisting that due to the reader’s receptivity, language can be surpassed or transcended (ibid). He argues that by the breaking down of the communicative situation into its constituent elements the meaning is obscured and that it is the grasping of the whole which determines the aesthetic phenomenon (ibid 272). He posits that the aesthetic phenomenon allows the reader not only to recognize the linguistic and stylistic devices within the text but would also be free to acknowledge the “text as symbolic of the world projected by the author” (ibid).

I argue that even though Martínez-Bonati’s work is confined to the field of literature this approach can be applied to the analysis of the dialogue in this playtext. In the first instance this is an enquiry into the written dramatic text and not the theatrical performance thereof. Even so, if this theory is extrapolated to cover the theatrical performance it can bear weight. De Toro points out that “[w]hereas verbal text is monocoded, the performance text is pluricoded not only because it includes various types of codes, but also because it has distinct substances of expression (visual, gesticular, auditive)” (1995:52 emphasis in original). Whilst the audience would recognize the various elements of expression the aesthetic phenomenon would be the transcendence of all these sign systems and allow the audience to experience the fictive discourse created by the authors.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Félix Martínez-Bonati is currently Professor Emeritus at Columbia University in New York and is considered an important theorist of literature. His numerous essays and books highlight the structure of the literary work (Montes 2009:325).

<sup>161</sup> The fictive discourse describes, expresses or represents a world (De Toro 1995:42).



For the purposes of this analysis I shall not be focusing on the individual units of vocabulary but will be concentrating on how the dialogue is constructed within the written playtext and how the playtext signifies meaning through what is said. Deer (2014:5) explains that in a musical theatre production the dialogue portion of the script is much shorter than in a conventional play and that this leads to a “highly efficient distillation of character and circumstance”. As a result of this brevity there can be no superfluous dialogue, each word or line must be carefully considered and only included if it deemed necessary.

Apart from the core function of furthering of the plot (or the charting of the fictive discourse), the dialogue of the playtext serves four pertinent functions: to establish time, location, characters and the relationships between the characters. Firstly, the dialogue of *Bat Boy* is used to set the work in contemporary time. This is apparent from the very first scene before the opening number. Rick, Ron and Ruthie use contemporary colloquial speech for example Rick says “this cave rocks” (Act I, sc 1, p 7).

Secondly, the expressions, patterns of speech, rhythms and implied accent related thereto set the playtext in a very specific context or location. Not only do the expressions such as “critter” and “sweet wounded Jesus” but also the grammatical structure and rhythms of the dialogue of the townsfolk concur with the stereotypical South American drawl for example:

“Well, that’s what the state’s regulations are saying. Me personally I think that, sure, they’re a mite listless, but their spirits are good...”  
(Act I, sc 4, p 26).

Thirdly, the written dialogue also signifies character. For example the Meredith’s dialogue is filled with endearing terms like “honey” and “sweetheart” (Act I, sc 2 p13/14) and so develops her maternal qualities. Characters are also established by the dialogue which takes into account the different patterns of speech and speech rhythms that can be attributed to

various accents.<sup>162</sup> For example, Edgar's British accent can clearly be read into the rather stilted speech patterns in his dialogue:

“Yes. And I noticed that, beginning tomorrow, the Reverend Billy Hightower is holding a weekend revival. And as I have just finished reading the bible again, it would mean so much to me to attend”  
(Act I, sc 9, p 47)

This particular passage defines his attempts at remaining restrained and undemonstrative and sets him apart from the other characters in the playtext most especially the other teenagers including Rick, Ron and Ruthie. Thus, this demonstrates the fourth function of the dialogue; that of establishing the relationships of the characters to one another. The use of colloquial language – as mentioned above – is also used to distinguish between the different generations and define their interactions. In trying to insult Rick, Shelley as one of the younger members of the ensemble calls him “an ugly creep” (Act II, sc 1, p 64). The older members such as Parker and Meredith address each other with more formality.

Due to the brevity of the written dialogue as necessitated by the genre of musical theatre a further convention is introduced. The textual codes of musical theatre allow for the underscoring of dialogue with music and this practice is used to great effect in *Bat Boy* where the majority of the dialogue is underscored. This convention is introduced in the opening number “Hold Me Bat Boy” (Act I, sc 1, p 9-13) in which each acting vignette occurs between parts of the song where the performers comment on the story's foregone conclusion; the music continues to play under the relevant dialogue. The advantage of this convention is that more meaning can be communicated to the audience than just the spoken line can impart. The underscoring can add intent or motivation or create irony if it signals that the character is lying, has

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<sup>162</sup> Paul Meier (2012: 9) asserts that the way characters speak reveals much about them and where they are from. He posits that in the pursuit of truthfulness, an actor should adopt the linguistic peculiarities of the culture of the character. In the case of the translation of *Bat Boy* this convention is reversed as the performers used their own accents and dialects to inform their characters.

hidden intentions or ulterior motives. This is used successfully in the scene where Edgar begs to go to the revival, the “Home for you (reprise) and the lead up to “Parker’s epiphany” (Act I, sc 9, p 47-52). It is also effectively used later as the show comes to a climax in “Revelations” (Act II, sc 7, p 82-89). (This will be discussed later in section 4.1.3 of this chapter).

Not only is the majority of the dialogue underscored but the dialogue is also weaved in and through the songs. The complexity of this in parts, such as “Revelations” and “I imagine you’re upset” (Act II, sc 7, p 83-89) is equal to that of a rock opera.<sup>163</sup> This will be discussed further in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 which relate to the lyrics and score of the musical respectively. These devices all unite to add depth to move the plot forward efficiently, add depth to characters and give the audience greater insight into the characters and their journeys.

#### 4.2.1.4 Component 4: Stage directions

Aston and Savona (2013:123) posit that the stage directions have bearing on the work of the actor, the designer and lighting designer, technicians and the director. They make a distinction between stage directions that can be extrapolated from the written dialogue itself or intra-dialogic directions, and those that are supplied in the ancillary text – extra-dialogic directions. Intra-dialogic directions will be conveyed directly to the spectator in the course of the performance but extra-dialogic directions will only be expressed to the audience only to the extent to which they have been incorporated into the *mise-en-scène* (ibid 124). It is the extra-dialogic directions which are of concern in this section.

Patricia Suchy (1991:71) points out that the stage directions, even though they emanate from the original writer, are more often than not understood to be an option and not a given. She posits however that “stage direction

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<sup>163</sup> As quoted from Dr Harold Mortimer, Fulbright Scholar. Mortimer holds a Weitzenhoffer Endowed Professorship and is a lecturer at the Weitzenhoffer School of Musical Theatre, Oklahoma University where he directed *Bat Boy – the Musical* (2012). He received a Doctorate degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Washington and was also the musical director of *Bat Boy* in South Africa (2013).

occupies a liminal zone between literary text and the *mise-en-scène*” and that even though these stage directions are not uttered aloud they should be performed. She argues that in general, the perceived function of stage direction forms part of the natural discourse or *mise-en-scène*: to facilitate understanding of the text or to create a ‘how-to’ guide for the actors/director (ibid 73) but that it can also be used to create part of the text’s fictive discourse or rather “to communicate the tone of the piece by providing visual and aural metaphors for the play’s expression” (ibid 78).

The extra-dialogic stage directions in *Bat Boy – the musical* appear to be relatively minimal and are used sparingly. Forming the ‘how-to’ manual referred to by Suchy, they are used to serve one of the following functions:

- To set the scene, usually at the beginning of each scene such as the start of scene three:

*Parker home – living room. Meredith and Shelley clean the living room*  
(Act I, sc 2, p 13)

- To clarify and point dialogue for example:

Shelley: *(to Sheriff)* It’s a Bat Boy? *(to Meredith)* Mom, we gotta keep it  
(Act I, sc 2, p 16)

- To cue changes of lighting state:

*Meredith pulls the hood off. Bat Boy screams. All lights black out except for a pin spot on Bat Boy’s head* (Act 1, sc 2, p 18)

- To suggest how staging should be attempted:

(This is used specifically in the “Revelations” scene to explain how the flashback scenes are to be achieved.)

*Shadow play. Young Meredith’s legs up in the air. She is huffing and puffing* (Act II, sc 7, p 85)

- To describe actions and choreography necessary for the plot for example:

*Parker impulsively grabs Meredith and dances with her. Meredith with manufactured smile plays along and gently tries to get the syringe away from him. Parker keeps it out of her reach, still dancing.*

- To impart plot information that is not revealed by the dialogue, lyrics and score and cannot be intuited such as the combined suicide/murder of Parker, Edgar and Meredith which constitutes the longest section of written stage directions:

*Parker: Are you hungry, Edgar? (Parker raises the knife and cuts a gash in his own neck. It bleeds. Bat Boy can't resist the blood. He leaps at Parker and bites his neck. Parker raises the knife, stabs at Bat Boy's back. Bat Boy now bites harder on Parker's neck. Parker raises the knife for another stab. Meredith grabs onto Bat Boy and tries to pull him off. Parker stabs down, now striking Meredith in the back. Hold on this embrace. They stagger. The dying takes some time. Finally, Parker and Meredith fall away from Bat Boy in unison. Bat Boy is left standing, wounded. Shelley runs to him. He falls. She cradles his head in her hands.)*

Shelley: My dear, sweet boy. (Act II, sc 7, p 89):

- To impart character information:

Throughout the playtext the stage directions do not as a general rule convey character information but there are one or two small exceptions such as:

*Revival tent. A cross. Spotlight on Reverend Hightower. He tries heroically to lift the spirits of the demoralized Hope Falls. This is an upward battle (Act II, sc 1, p 58).*

However, since stage directions are governed by the textual codes relating to theatre and these in specific by the codes found in the polysemic musical theatre genre, there are of course stage directions to be found in the score too. And here we find an example of how the stage directions express the fictive discourse of the playtext. In keeping with the off-the-wall sense of

humour found throughout the playtext one of the notes in "Show You a Thing or Two" (p 132)<sup>164</sup> reads:

*NOTE: If the actor portraying Bat Boy is not lazy and can make the quick costume change, you should be able to skip bars 153a-153b. We don't want to drag this number out any more than you do.*

Whilst imparting important information this stage direction nonetheless exemplifies the aim of the playtext to comment on the very form that it takes. Whilst this note would not be incorporated in the same way as a stage direction in the natural discourse would be, it can still be interpreted (Suchy 1991:79) within the concept of the entire production. Just as the performers have continual reminders that they have to function on two levels; as character and as performer commenting on the performance, so the musical director and the band are reminded that notwithstanding all the technical expertise required by the score, the music must also serve the whacky, humorous vision of the writers.

#### 4.2.2 Lyrics

In *Bat Boy – the Musical*, the dialogue and the lyrics are very closely related in style and function and much of this section will correlate largely to section 4.2.1.3. As explained due to the constraints of the codes governing musical theatre, the amount of dialogue is necessarily restricted. However, it can be argued that another element of the musical makes up for this lack of wordiness. Stacy Wolf (2007:53) postulates that lyrics comprise a condensed form of communication and that a three minute song equals 12 minutes of dialogue. She also argues that lyrics not only establish character and allow the audience to witness character growth in 'fast forward' by the end of song but that lyrics can also illustrate the show's setting, situation, mood and tone (ibid). Whilst the lyrics of *Bat Boy* fulfill the same role as the dialogue with regards to time and place it is in latter categories of mood and tone that the lyrics of *Bat Boy* are indispensable to the fictive discourse of this particular work.

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<sup>164</sup>This page number refers to the Piano/Conductor score of *Bat Boy* and not to the script.

When asked in an interview for the formula of a good song Laurence O’Keefe (20 questions with Laurence O’Keefe, 2004:[sp]), lyricist of *Bat Boy – the Musical*, replied that every song should always have a surprise before the end as well as move the plot forward irrevocably. He also likened a good song to good theatre where everything should seem surprising yet inevitable. He reiterated that the element of surprise by suggesting that complex lyrics and clever rhymes are never as useful as unexpected jokes or unanticipated ideas.

Whilst the songs in *Bat Boy* are not short of clever and complex rhymes and lyrics, the audience is constantly being surprised. In a show which due to its subject matter could otherwise become very dark it is the wit of the lyrics which allows the audience to titter, giggle and guffaw through their tears. The lyrics undoubtedly indicate both the mood and the satirical tone of the work.

The element of surprise is very clearly demonstrated in “Mrs Taylor’s Lullaby” (Act I, sc 6, p 34) which starts off as “Sleep little Ruthie baby, don’t you fear no Bat Boy. Dream about the angels floating round your head. Sleep on a pillow made from fluffy clouds and rainbows.” And as the Sheriff enters the room she continues with the lullaby tune but sings “While Mama can’t believe that little freak ain’t dead!” Of course not only is this comedic but it also adds depth to her character. The audience sees the more crass side to her nature as well as the mother tigress bent on vengeance for the injury to her offspring.

There are surprise little tit bits of humour contained within the lyrics, scattered throughout the playtext. For example when Meredith is reading to Bat Boy in “Show You a Thing or Two” she is encouraging and reassuring him by singing “I’ll show you a thing or two, I’ll teach you to name it. Sure, it’s tough but you’ll tame it. And once you’ve beat it...”...she gets interrupted by Edgar grabbing the book and “[o]h wait, don’t eat it”. Sections like these are unexpected but fit so easily within the rhyme and rhythm schemes that they add hilarity. There are also lyrics in the show that due to the subject matter are so absurd that they are funny. For example in “Inside you heart” (Act II, sc 5, p 78) as Shelley is convincing Edgar to suck her blood she sings “[t]his way you’ll be mine at last. And I’ll be fine, I heal real fast”.



As with the dialogue of *Bat Boy*, the lyrics of the songs also aid the creation of character and O'Keefe manages successfully to write personality into the songs. Rick's "Watcha Wanna Do" is full of bravura as evidenced by:

Rick: We'll make sweet love in front of *you* tonight (referring to Bat Boy)  
Shelley: You know my mom is right upstairs tonight?  
Rick: That chick is fully unawares tonight  
Shelley: (*mouths silently in disbelief*) Chick?  
Rick: And if she catches us, who cares tonight?  
Shelley: Me?

Whilst the lyrics and the style of this rap number indicate Rick's machismo, the simple, almost non-existent, rhyme scheme used here by both teenagers also reveals their lack of sophistication. This is in complete contrast to Bat Boy's complicated rhyming patterns in "Show You a Thing or Two" which have already been discussed in section 4.1.1.2.

O'Keefe also incorporates the natural rhythms and expressions of the characters' accents in the construction of the lyrics which not only assists in establishing the characters but also comments on the individuals, their relationships and their behavior as well as the group in general. In this regard "Another Dead Cow" (Act I, sc 4, p 27-30) is a perfect example. The self-confessed Christian (but continually blasphemous) chorus sings:

All: Sweet Jesus now I'm petrified

Ned: They're gonna repossess my double-wide

indicating that they are far more concerned about their material possessions and financial wellbeing in this life-time, than salvation in the next. This song also displays how at the end of each verse something has changed. The townspeople's conclusion at the end of the first verse is that "we're facing poverty". At the end of the second they have decided that it is related to the fate of their cows which "gotta be some contagious disease". By the end of the third verse, panic has set in as they are certain that the "apocalypse draws nigh" and then as they try to reason why

All: Well something's bound to raise a flag,

Lorraine: Like that little Bat Boy they found in the bag?

they find a reason for their plight. The townspeople's reactions to this, seemingly innocuous statement is hilarious. O'Keefe manipulates the structure of the final chorus, repeating the first line in ever decreasing increments. This simple device not only creates humour but also comments on how the townspeople process information:

All: Got another dead cow...

Got another d...

Got ano-...

G....

Proving that they are intellectually not the most adroit, the structure of the song shows how the townspeople process information, like cogs in a machine and when the light bulb finally goes on, they have collectively reached the wrong conclusion.

Taylor (2013:118) posits that the use of word-setting has an effect on the narrative, as can be seen from the example above and that the stress patterns, tempo, pace, rhythm and rhyme scheme of lyrics can all add to the production of meaning. All of these elements however are very closely related to the score of the show. Whilst the humour and sentiment contained in the lyrics is undeniable, it is only when they are considered in conjunction with the written music that the true artistry of this musical can be appreciated. The following section will attempt to summarize the score of *Bat Boy – the Musical*.

#### 4.2.3 Score<sup>165</sup>

The score of a show is the music of the show as is written by a composer (Novak 1988:21). Although the primary function of the score of a musical is to provide melodious accompaniment for the songs, the composer can find a myriad ways of signifying meaning through that accompaniment. Taylor (2003:120) proposes that musical motifs, dynamics, timbres and harmonies are linked through cultural association and can subsequently suggest meaning. She extrapolates this theory by suggesting that composers can not only create historical and geographical location, situation and character type but are also able to “undermine those stereotypes by

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<sup>165</sup> In this section relating to the score, all page references refer to the written Piano/Conductor score of *Bat Boy – the musical* and not the script.

undermining the genre or semiotic expectations” (ibid). Miller, in his book *Sex, Drugs, Rock and Roll and Musicals* (2011) discusses Laurence O’Keefe’s score in depth in his chapter on *Bat Boy* and the following discussion is primarily based on this work. Miller (2011:197) notes that the music succeeds on three levels:

“First, this beautiful, emotional, soaring music delivers an emotional punch only a few musicals can equal. Second, it’s skillfully enough built that it uses music to reinforce drama, to make dramatic connections, to foreshadow events, to define characters and relationships, to give us more information than the dialogue and lyrics alone supply....Third, *Bat Boy* is unashamedly funny”.

Whilst the first and third points could be considered matters of opinion it is in the second area that O’Keefe excels. It is here, where the composer uses the musical score to underline dramatic form and content, to delineate character and their functions within that dramatic structure, and to add depth and layering to shape audience understanding.

As a student at Harvard, O’Keefe was involved in the Hasty Pudding Show,<sup>166</sup> an annual production written and performed by the students (Rosati 2001:[sp]). These shows served as a training ground for O’Keefe for even as they are parodies of musicals they follow the traditional musical theatre format and employ every musical theatre convention such as the big opening number as well as the torch song or ‘eleven o’clock number’ in the second act (ibid). In O’Keefe’s own words he sums up the Hasty Pudding Shows as “an amazing education of the building blocks of musical theater (sic)” (ibid) and all of these techniques are employed in the immensely layered score of *Bat Boy*.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Hasty Pudding Theatricals, known informally simply as The Pudding, is a theatrical student society at Harvard University. It was formed in 1795 and touts itself as America’s oldest continually performing theatrical organisation being well-known for its burlesque, cross-dressing musicals in which all the roles are played by men (Bethell et al 2004:200).

<sup>167</sup> In an interview, O’Keefe (20 questions with Laurence O’Keefe, 2004:[sp]) explains that The Hasty Pudding Show has a large budget and a professional schedule with eight shows a week for a five or six-week run. Since audiences pay for tickets the writers are able to ascertain what works and what doesn’t work in the theatrical context. He continues clarifying that because of the student nature of the show the audiences are forgiving but that the freedom to make that many mistakes early in your writing career saves you many mistakes later on.

On a very basic level the genre codes of musical theatre allow the use of music to signify meaning which would otherwise be absent. Toumay (1992:420) in his discussion of *The Moral Character of Mad Scientists: A cultural critique of Science* contends that the portrayal of moral character and the intangible qualities thereof such as intention, remorse, reflection and maturity are much more easily depicted in literature than film. This is because a film (or, if in this case, the analogy is extended to a dramatic production) is limited to presenting concrete visual scenes within a prescribed time period whereas a book has an unlimited number of words or combinations of words to depict interior feelings (ibid). It is in this regard that O’Keefe uses musical imagery to add depth to characters by making internal motivations obvious to the audience.

In terms of building characters and the relationships between them, the song “A Home for You” (p 62-71) needs to be explored. Although the song is a lullaby it is also a touching ballad between Meredith and Edgar. If one acknowledges that in this scene there is possibly no suspension of disbelief required and that Meredith is not just talking to Bat Boy but is indeed singing a lullaby to comfort him, then it is one of the only scenes in *Bat Boy* which contains music diegetically within the scene (along with “A Joyful Noise” (p 199-207) at the revival). It is here that Edgar in his desperation to communicate imitates Meredith’s vocal line. As Miller (2011:198) states, this one musical moment defines their relationship better than any dialogue could. The connection has been made and they sing “oohs” together to cement the relationship. Then O’Keefe demonstrates the developing emotional relationship musically. As Meredith returns to singing words, Edgar sings a complicated baroque counter-melody evidencing that their relationship is more intricate than it first appeared. Miller (ibid 198/199) posits that in this section the score advances a two-pronged joke. Firstly, it is amusing as this unspeaking, illiterate boy understands classical harmony and can improvise a counter-melody and secondly, that this artful, sophisticated counter melody prophesizes Edgar’s quick-minded genius. Miller (ibid) also points out that a joke such as this could only occur in musical comedy and I argue that in this, the score laughs in yet another direction. Underscoring the fictive discourse, the score uses the very conventions of musical theatre simultaneously to further the plot and comment on the very form the production takes.

Miller (ibid) also points out that Edgar sings with both Meredith and Shelley, but never with Dr. Parker, The harmonies that are created between Edgar and the two women signify the strong connection he has with them as opposed to his 'creator'. Once again, the score adds depth to the defined relationships and then (as the final scene of the show concludes) Parker, as he asks Meredith for forgiveness, mirrors Edgar's musical theme – expressing his desire for redemption from "Let Me Walk Among You" (p 209-220). In these closing moments Parker and Edgar finally do share the strain of a song, linking them together in blood and tragedy.

The song, "A Home for You" also sets up a musical theme which is used throughout the score (Miller 2011:201). This type of theme or recurring musical phrase is referred to as a motif or leitmotif. This musical device was originally borrowed from opera (ibid 200) and Taylor (2012:66) describes the purpose of a leitmotif to guide the listener through the performance "providing atmospheric associations with characters and reminding the audience of earlier moments in the story". In this way O'Keefe uses the music to amplify meaning and this device is employed throughout the playtext. The musical phrase that accompanies the lyric "[t]hen we will find a home for you" at the end of the first verse of "A Home for You" (p 65/66) recurs throughout the score as a love motif. It can be heard in a very distorted, dissonant version in the accompaniment of the song "Dance With Me, Darling" (p 84-102) which Miller (2011:201) proposes is intertextually suggestive of Sweeney Todd. This is directly after right the lyric "I know how you feel" (p 85) which expresses Parker's sadness at the terrible state of his marriage and demonstrates how his love has been horribly distorted. It is also heard as he is about to inject Bat Boy lethally so as to "put one of us out of our misery" (p 85). The motif is used here to give the audience an aural clue of the unnatural lack of love between father and son, taking into account of course that that particular relationship has yet to be revealed. This love motif is heard again in the accompaniment for "Inside Your Heart"<sup>168</sup> (p295-308) as Shelley discovers her love for Edgar. This entire song is based on the melody of "A Home for you" which links the two women who both love Edgar unconditionally.

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<sup>168</sup> It should also be noted that within this song, Shelley's earlier song "Ugly Boy" (p 45-60) is transformed into "Lovely Boy" (p 304/305) as she declares her love for Edgar (Miller 2002:[sp]).

As indicated earlier in section 4.2.1.1 (the analysis of the book), implied in Edgar's search for a home is his search for acceptance. This theme is underlined by the score as certain parts are related melodically to "A Home for You", most obviously in the reprise as he asks "Why can't I make this world my home?" (p 154). Later, in Edgar's testimony at the revival meeting ("Let Me Walk Among You") as he begs to find a home within a broader community, the accompaniments are very closely related (Miller 2011:201). Another phrase from "A Home for You" can be found in "Three Bedroom House" (p 243-262) as Meredith and Shelley envision a home for Edgar.

In my analysis I suggested that the next premise made by the playtext is that Edgar and Shelley find a home inside each other. Miller (2002:[sp]) maintains that there is a motif in the song "Inside Your Heart" that accompanies the lyric, "Let me become part of you" (p 307). Whilst it is used several times in this song it has already been heard in the accompaniment to "A Home for You," after Meredith sings to Edgar, "Home is a where people accept you, people who treat you with love which is awfully rare" (p 66). This motif is also heard in the introduction to Edgar's prayer during "Comfort and Joy" in which Edgar is asking God for love (p 185). Although this motif represents the love Edgar seeks, it is also sung by the 'scary chorus' at the end of "Dance With Me, Darling," (p 100/101) where it accompanies Edgar's first drinking of blood and so foreshadows the scene when Shelley offers Edgar her own blood (Miller 2002:[sp]). Finally, it is sung by the chorus, terrifying and full of anger, at the end of "Apology to a Cow" as Edgar chooses his final home: revenge (p 323).

There are other relevant musical motifs to be found in the score, firstly the melody in the opening number, accompanying the lyric, "Hold me, Bat Boy; touch me, Bat Boy" is heard throughout the playtext but the accompanying "words grow progressively darker and more deadly as the story moves forward" (Miller 2011:201). The motif is heard again at the end of Act I but the lyric has changed to "Stop the Bat Boy" (p 193). This is repeated in Act II in "Stop the Bat Boy" with the lyric "Find the Bat Boy, stop the Bat Boy" (p 240/241). Later, the same melody comes back with the lyrics "Find the Bat Boy! Kill the Bat Boy!"(p 292). Then, as the performers offer the audience an alternative resolution, it is finally heard in the soaring end to the finale

as the audience is urged to “Hold your Bat Boy, touch your Bat Boy” and “Know your Bat Boy, love your Bat Boy” (p 367).

Another important, very short motif of four notes is repeated four times as the introduction to the opening number (p 5). Miller (2011:200) explains that this motif signifies impending danger and that it is can be heard throughout the score, in the accompaniment of “Watcha Wanna Do” (p 51-61) which precedes an attack by Rick against Edgar and also at the end of “Another Dead Cow” (p 83) after the townspeople have decided Edgar is responsible for the deaths of their cows which has dangerous consequences for Edgar. It is also present in “Dance With Me, Darling” as Dr. Parker slits the throats of the geese and feeds Edgar blood for the first time and in the accompaniment of “Mrs. Taylor’s Lullaby” (p 103-107) in which she demands Edgar be destroyed. It can also be heard under the dialogue before “A Home for You (reprise)” (p153-160) as the Parkers tell Edgar he can’t go to the revival meeting as well as in “Comfort and Joy” before the Sheriff sings about the revival meeting (p 178). The motif appears, sung by the chorus, at the end of “Comfort and Joy,” after Dr. Parker murders Ruthie to frame Edgar and also in a musical sequence entitled “All Hell Breaks Loose” (p 231-238) directly after Edgar attacks Rick. So too is the motif heard in the scene change music (“Babe in the Woods” p264) as Shelley goes off into the woods by herself to find Edgar and again right before Mrs. Taylor sets the slaughterhouse on fire (p 289). It also occurs in the accompaniment to Edgar’s “Apology to a Cow” (p 313-325) as Edgar embraces his dark side.<sup>169</sup> Whilst it is unlikely that those in the audience will consciously take note of the motif as a dramatic signpost; on a subconscious level they will associate those four notes with approaching danger (Miller 2011:203).

Another motif which works on the same principle is the opening melody for “Apology to a Cow” (p 313-315) which the audience has already heard several times before this song starts. However, in previous incarnations, it is always sung without words, on open vowels, by the ‘scary chorus’. The negative connotations of this motif are so firmly established that when it appears in “Apology to a Cow” (with words) it

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<sup>169</sup> In the middle of “Apology to a Cow” the accompaniment is reminiscent of Rick’s “Watcha wanna Do” indicating that Edgar is embracing the mean nature evidenced by Rick in his rap song.



delivers an emotional blow, the audience realizing that Edgar is at the point of no return. There's yet another, desolate musical motif in this song. The melody to which Edgar sings "[d]EEP in a cave under miles of stone," (p 316) is heard later when in his rage he denies the existence of his soul by singing "[i]s that what you call it, that empty pit" (p 344) and Miller (2011:201) advances that the great sadness is that the melody was first heard in "A Home for You," as Meredith addresses Edgar as a "[p]oor little person with eyes so sad" (p 63). By the end of the story, that first touch of kindness shown to Edgar been obliterated by violence and heartache and what was promised by the sweet lullaby turns finds its conclusion in a song reminiscent of heavy metal.<sup>170</sup>

Here it should be noted that the score intertextually uses the signifying systems of other forms of music to create meaning within its musical theatre context. Taylor (2003:120) asserts that cultural association applies to certain musical genres and the *Bat Boy* score uses the features of the country music sound to group the townspeople. Composer O'Keefe acknowledges that there are very definitely different song types in the show:

“[t]here's a rock 'n' roll number for an angry moment, a country type sound for the population of West Virginia, and Bat Boy himself runs the gamut from grand opera to heavy metal because of his character development” (20 questions with Laurence O'Keefe, 2004:[sp]).

However, O'Keefe disclaims that *Bat Boy* parodies other musicals (ibid) as its main aim was not to reference other musicals. Whilst he admits that the New York production was full of references to other shows he states that this came about in the production and not the original text, barring perhaps the direct *My Fair Lady* (1956) interpretation in “Show You a Thing or Two”(p 108-141) (Rosati 2001:[sp]).

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<sup>170</sup> Heavy metal is a genre of rock music which is characterized by highly amplified distortion, extended guitar solos, emphatic beats, and overall loudness. Heavy metal lyrics and performance styles are often associated with masculinity, aggression and machismo and generally emphasize dark subject matter.

Miller (2002:[sp]) argues that the score of *Bat Boy* “is one of the most sophisticated, most carefully and artfully built theatre scores” and he goes on to compare it to some of the greatest scores of the American theatre including *Ragtime* (1997), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *West Side Story* (1957), and *Show Boat* (1927). This is achieved not only through the use of motif and intertextuality as described above but various other musical devices too, such as the reprise. John Bush Jones (2003:76) argues that the dramatic and emotional power of the reprise can link two moments in the story and can also be used specifically to create irony. Unlike other composers who use the reprise to fill space or make the audience feel comfortable knowing that they could leave the theatre humming a specific tune, each time O’Keefe uses a reprise in *Bat Boy* it has a very different meaning and contributes to dramatic function (Miller 2002:[sp]).

Miller (2011:199) also points out that yet another interesting element of the *Bat Boy* score is the fact that several songs in the show don’t actually end: “This kind of musical coitus interruptus focuses the dramatic incidents, intensifies the twists and turns the plot takes throughout the story”. As a prologue which comments on the show, the opening number “Hold Me, Bat Boy” ends normally but this merely sets up the audience’s expectations that will be intentionally frustrated later on (ibid). Taylor (2012:61) explains that whether or not one is able to describe the aural event in words, there are definite musical grammatical structures, just as those in language, that infer certain consequences. These could include associated timbres and harmonic frameworks, or the anticipation that certain chords require resolution in a particular way, or repetitive patterning and motifs which create expectations of similarity and difference.

Whilst she points out that audiences don’t fully anticipate the conclusion of a phrase, if the expected pattern is not forthcoming there is an emotional and an intellectual response. Other numbers in *Bat Boy* including “Christian Charity,” “Ugly Boy,” “A Home for You (reprise),” “All Hell Breaks Loose” and “Three Bedroom House” do not finish, all either segue into underscoring or horror-movie chords, or are interrupted as the action of the scene is interrupted. This, apart from musically accentuating the dramatic purpose of the playtext, has an important consequence. For, as a result of the audience members being robbed of the chance to “applaud, to respond, to

release their tension” (Miller 2011:199) they remain emotionally caught up in the story.

Whilst the opening number establishes the use of flashback, the entire scene "Revelations" (p 327-343) happens in flashback and the score itself functions to support this dramatic structure as melodies from throughout the show are heard as the secret truths and ironies are revealed (Miller 2011:202). Some of the music is used to remind the audience of witnessed scenes or perceived events like a bright, fast version of "Dance with me, Darling" which refers not only back to Parker and Meredith's first scene but also to their happier days together (ibid). Some music already known to the audience is used in a different context as new light is shed on certain events. This is evidenced when, as Meredith describes the birth of her children, the melody of "A Home for You" is heard together with the accompaniment from Mrs. Taylor's bizarre lullaby. Here the enormity of the sickening realization is underpinned by the score. As horror overwhelms Meredith's world the horror movie music from the Act I finale is repeated and as the scene draws to its close the audience is informed through a more forlorn quotation of "Dance with Me, Darling," that there will be no happy ending for Parker and Meredith (ibid). This section and the following, "I imagine you're upset" (p344-360), are perhaps the most densely written parts of the score, comparable to a rock opera. The complex harmonies, cues and difficult entrances make this section undeniably hard for band members and performers alike.

Miller (2011:202) poses the question of whether the signification of all the interweaving of themes, the motifs and the layering is necessary but then answers that just "as Shakespeare dealt with recurring images in his words with each of his plays, so too do the best modern musical theatre composers deal with recurring images in their music" (ibid 203). Miller argues that although these devices may not be consciously recognized by the audience they make the score sound "like a unified whole, like it all 'belongs' together, like it's all in the same 'language,' the same musical 'world,' and it allows the audience to stay inside that world (and its emotions) more effectively" (ibid emphasis in original). Whilst the score of *Bat Boy* achieves dramatic purpose and provides informative signposts for the audience it also creates a solid platform from which the performers can build their performance.

What cannot be overlooked however, in the face of all this depth and layering, is that the score of *Bat Boy* is inherently funny. Not only are there the frequent and sudden explosions of horror-movie chords which, as mentioned previously, supply inevitable laughs (Miller 2011:198) but other musical techniques are also used to create humour and underscore the irony and satire of the piece. This is evidenced for example through the ending of “Inside your heart” (p 308). In the score a ‘rest’ is intentionally written in in the middle of the final note so that the performers take a breath in the middle of singing ‘heart’. Whilst being proof of the naiveté of the young lovers, this also immediately comments on the practices of musical theatre performers, who in their bid to demonstrate their singing prowess, are tempted to hold finishing notes for much longer than is suggested in the score. In this particular instance the score not only provides humour but also comments on the conventions of its own genre, setting itself apart from its primary function of providing a melody for the lyrics.

So too in “Come on Down” (p 208) is the humour found in score as opposed to the script or lyrics. As the Reverend Hightower attempts the healing, the band vamps.<sup>171</sup> Each time the healing fails, the band takes its signal from the performer playing Hightower to stop playing. This is amusing as each time the vamp section gets louder and more exciting pre-empting the healing which never happens. In fact, written in the score (which the audience will never see) is, after the first vamp: “healing fails”, after the second vamp: “healing fails”, and after the third vamp “nope, nothin’”. This is exactly the humour that is expressed through the music! (And is present in the fictive discourse!) This particular section not only develops the character of the Reverend exposing him as a charlatan as well as commenting on other charismatic characters of this type, but also propels the plot forward as Edgar then has to seize the moment to beg for acceptance in “Let me walk among you”.

In his discussion of *Bat Boy*, Miller (2011: 175-203) continually compares it to Stephen Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979) in

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<sup>171</sup> Vamp is a jazz, fusion, and musical theatre term which instructs rhythm section members to repeat and vary a short passage, riff, or ‘groove’ until the band leader or conductor instructs them to move onto the next section.

terms of the melodramatic structure and themes of lost love and revenge but also with regards to the layering of the score. This comparison can also be extended to the degree to which the composers use disjunctive techniques in the score to explore alienation. Taylor (2012:64) posits that “use of underscore, use of leitmotif, the use of genre pastiche, mickey-mousing and sound painting” can all be regarded as tools of integration but in some instances all can be argued to create distance. She contends that it is the combination of and movement between distance and empathy that contributes to *Sweeney Todd's* success (ibid 71). It is my contention that as has been evidenced above, O’Keefe’s score for *Bat Boy* succeeds for the same reasons.

#### 4.2.4 Dances

The role of dance and movement in a musical is traditionally the domain of the choreographer, who creates meaning through these semiotic systems known as kinesics (Eco 1977:117). Robert Berksen in his book *Musical Theatre Choreography* (1990:1) contends whilst the director works from the script (or book) of the musical and the musical director from the score, the choreographer has to devise a process whereby he *creates* his material by structuring the movement to complement the dramatic action and developing the steps to be taught to the performers.

Deer (2013:59) concurs stating that since there is generally no written guide to the dance sequences suggested in the script, the choreographer needs to create an entirely new dance text. The choreographer uses the kinesic systems (steps, gesture, movement vocabulary) available to him or her and must reconcile these with the director’s interpretation of the written texts – music, lyrics, script (ibid). Deer goes so far as to say that along with the director, the choreographer is the co-author or co-director of the piece (ibid). Hence it follows that the roles of those directors who have also been able to choreograph their shows have made a large impact on musical theatre history. Lawrence Thelen (2000:196) argues that the example and success of director-choreographer Jerome Robbins “would usher in the age of the director-choreographer as a major creative force in the twentieth century musical theatre, paving the way for other renowned greats such as Michael Kidd, Bob Fosse, Gower Champion and Michael Bennett”.

And how does dance or movement signify meaning in a musical? Deer (2014:60) suggests that musical theatre dance unlike concert dance – which is filled with spectacle, or abstract dance, should express what the characters experience. He argues that some dance sequences carry essential plot information while others “ornament the plot in deeply satisfying ways” (ibid 61). An example of the former is Collins’ mugging in the opening sequence of *Rent* (1999). Without the physical staging of the mugging including the choreographed punches to the drum beats, essential plot information would be lost. There is no written or vocal reference to the attack (except for Collins alluding to the fact that he may be delayed as he spots his attackers) and this incident is essential to establish Angel’s character as rescuer and caregiver and to introduce and cement the relationship between Angel and Collins. A further example would be as Victoria, the white kitten extends her paw into the outstretched, cupped paw of Grizabella in *CATS* (1981). Without this demonstrated acceptance of Grizabella the show would have no resolution and that one, intimate, physical moment speaks volumes more than any scripted dialogue or lyric could. In “Dance with me Darling” Parker’s realization of what Edgar needs and how he can use this to his advantage can be told not only through music, but also movement. Imitating the carefree style of music as the character scats,<sup>172</sup> Parker’s cheery attitude – as he realizes his relationship with Meredith may be salvaged – can be embodied as he waltzes with the dead geese and produces the knife. However, this jaunty waltz is juxtapositioned against the sinister undertone of the music as well as the presence of the observers onstage – symbolic of the start of Parker’s loss of rationality. The choreographer’s interpretation of the next musical interlude, after the thunder and lightning and he has fed the blood to the Bat Boy, can clearly define the relationship of power between Parker and Edgar.

An example of the latter form of dance described by Deer would be the Emcee’s number “If you could see her” in *Cabaret* (1966). This number,<sup>173</sup> in which he dances

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<sup>172</sup> Scat singing is defined as a jazz technique in which the artist improvises vocally with nonsense syllables (Edwards 2002:622) for example la, la, la or shoo-be-doo. In this instance the scat is written in the score but the actor performs it as if the character is humming and singing to himself, lost in his reverie.

<sup>173</sup> “If you could see her” is performed by the Emcee, with the Kit Kat Klub members serving as audience. As part of the “show within a show” (Taylor 2013:115) the music would supposedly have been played by the band of the Klub, and the song which is not an extension of a dialogue scene, becomes a diegetic number within the musical.

with a partner in a gorilla suit, is not at all necessary to the development of the plot of the show but quite apart from being entertaining at face value it not only heightens the emotional tension necessary as the show reaches its climax but also makes a scathing social comment.

While Deer (2013:61) suggests there is generally less sense of forward plot momentum in dance numbers, Taylor points out that musical numbers can either expand or compress time (2012:113). This is clearly demonstrated in the number “Show You a Thing or Two” in *Bat Boy* which compresses time in order to move a scene forward more quickly than dialogue could (Taylor 2012:58). As the number progresses, so does Edgar – from inarticulate, guileless, ignoramus to erudite and astute academic. The progression of time (which is weeks, possibly even months between each segment of the song) is implied by Edgar’s advancement from crude, bat-like creature to smart young man in suit and tie and this must necessarily be mirrored by his physical development. If the advancement of his physicality is effectively portrayed than the purpose of the song within the playtext is made much clearer for the audience.

Deer (2014:60) also suggests that the goal of the choreographer should be to integrate dance into the whole so that it feels completely logical, practically inevitable within the world of the musical that has been created.<sup>174</sup> Whilst Novak’s original classification (1988:15-25) of the elements of the musical included the book, lyrics music and *dances* it is my contention that this latter term is at once misleading and also insufficient to describe the role kinesics have come to play in the postmodern musical. The term ‘dances’ suggests to my mind concert or abstract dance as defined by Deer (2012:60) where steps are conjoined for the purpose of spectacle and entertainment. In terms of musical theatre this harks back to the original days of contrived musical comedy shows when the dancing girls were brought on purely for entertainment’s sake. These numbers did not contribute to the overall meaning of

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<sup>174</sup> In this sense the goal would be to create an integrated whole as defined by Kislán (1980:143) where all the elements work together to push the story forward but more than just synthesis occurs as the whole is greater than the sum of the parts (see section 2.4 of Chapter 2). However, this type of integration and forward propulsion of the playtext can also be achieved when the individual elements of song and dance are also disjunctive. As Taylor (2012: 59) posits musical theatre can signify as much through disjunction and juxtapositioning as through continuity and over-coding.



the production; they signified nothing and added no intrinsic value to the plot or concept. In the postmodern musical, the role of kinesics has become so much more: dance/movement/choreography/staging can further the plot (even to the point of being the primary method of telling the story) as well as help to delineate and develop character (Thelen 1990:197) but can also express the style of the piece as well as comment on the action and is not necessarily confined to distinct, isolated sections comprised of dance steps within the piece. This is not to say however, that significant dance or movement in musical theatre cannot be entertaining!

Berkson (1990:62) proposes that “musical staging involves not only creating dance numbers, but also arranging those gestures or movements performed in a song” and I would like to suggest that this should be extended to those gestures and movements performed within the rest of the scenes especially in musicals such as *Bat Boy* in which most of the dialogue scenes are almost completely ‘underscored’, that is set to music. Another argument in favour of this extension with particular reference to *Bat Boy* is that the title character neither speaks nor sings until the fifth scene of the show even while he is on stage for the majority of that time. His only method of communication with others on stage and the audience is through his physicality.

Whilst the inclusion of such staging in this category could be argued against as this could infringe on the domain of the director, it is here where the director-choreographer has the advantage as transitions between scene, song and dance are seamless and there are no jarring effects of a possible difference in style of movement. It is with this in mind, that I would argue that the term ‘movement’ or ‘movement vocabulary’ or ‘physicality’ would be more suited to the more fully inclusive, kinesic aspect of a musical than just ‘dances’. This term could then also be applied to and be inclusive of the many musicals which contain little to no traditional dance steps but in which staging and the physical style of movement is still an important facet.

And how does the choreographer decide on the movement style and generate the movement? Jerome Robbins himself argues that this comes “from the story itself and that each show will dictate its own movement” (Thelen 1992:197). Each musical

with its own discrete plotline, setting and style will commission its own, unique form of physical expression. Although a large amount of the choreography is left open to the discretion of the choreographer there are typically some clues in the other written texts, the script, the lyrics or the score which will inform the choices made by the choreographer. Berksen (1990:20) points out that the script usually summarizes actions to be included in the dance by means of stage directions, for example in the above-mentioned number “Show You a Thing or Two” the choreographer is aided by the description of the situation provided by the lyrics (Bat Boy has finally “got it” and has got all the answers right) and the stage directions which describe a “dance break with whooping”. What ‘steps’ exactly the choreographer demands of the performer depends on his personal preferences and frame of reference (aesthetic codes) when it comes to expressing physical joy, the physical prowess of the performer playing Bat Boy as well as the extent to which the character of Bat Boy has evolved in the particular production. (By this stage he may be walking completely upright as a normal human would or he may still have some winged Bat traits within his movements.)

Other clues to movement can be found in lyrics for example in the “Lovely Boy” section of “Inside your Heart” Shelley keeps asking Edgar to “Look at me” (Act I, sc 5, p 78). From this it can be inferred that he is not facing her in his shame and horror at his bloodlust. As they then launch into the climax and final chorus of the song together it would seem natural to deduce that he would face her and that they would move together as they sing “I will shield you from harm, come spend your life on my arm. I see no better way to start. Let me prove I love you: let me become part of you. And now we’ll never be apart”.

Another important source of information for the choreographer is the score itself. Berksen (1990:28) describes five different types of music found within the score: introductory/transitional music which initiates a piece or forms a bridge from one section to the next, underscoring which adds dramatic background to scenic dialogue or action, songs, dance music and overtures which serve “as an initiation to the presentation” (ibid) and may or may not need to be choreographed. Keeping in mind what needs to be communicated in each particular section the choreographer pays attention to number of beats in a bar (or timing and time-signatures) as well as the

phrasing of the music – the delineation of each section (Berkson 1990: 42). He or she would also observe the rhythm and tempo of the piece as well as heeding specific accents in the music or silences or other special sounds/inconsistencies which may be used for dramatic effect.

Of course, the particular style of the piece of music will give rise to a particular style of movement. For example as “Show You a Thing or Two” draws to its conclusion (Act I, sc 7, p 41) there is no indication in the script as to the type of movement demanded and the score itself just says “Strut” (p 134). However, in listening to the music the piece can be identified as a traditional Broadway kickline with a true cakewalk (hat and cane number) feel. To try to interpret this in any other way would most certainly be counter-productive. The use of the kickline here not only demonstrates the complete if unwarranted ‘civilization’ of Bat Boy but also comments once again on the form the show takes. Whilst it also communicates exactly what the character is experiencing – his euphoria in mastering what had been so foreign to him, the style is so far removed from the realm of the realistic that it is at once comedic and heart-wrenching. Here, the kinesic sign system of musical theatre is used to express the fictive discourse of the piece and to comment directly on the genre itself.

From all of the above the choreographer intuits the style and intention of the movement, or more simply, what the movement needs to signify. Then he or she uses the clues as mentioned above – dramatic action, score, lyrics – to inform the choice of ‘steps’, how they are to be put together and by whom they need to be performed in order to signify the necessary meaning. Whilst a description of how this is to be achieved in the translation will be elaborated on in section 4.3.4 one final implication of the use of dance within the original playtext needs clarification.

Mary Jo Lodge (2014:84) posits that where dance is not established as the main mode of communication from the start of the musical (as in *West Side Story* for example), the shift away from the dominant mode of communication (singing or scenic action) to dance can prove challenging for the choreographer. She suggests that there are three approaches to integrating the dance in such musicals. Firstly, incorporating the dance in a diegetic fashion such as in an “in-show performance”,

secondly by using dance in an obviously non-realistic fashion such as a dream ballet or thirdly, by embracing a pre-integration aesthetic where the show functions for the most part as a revue.

My contention is that as although movement and gesture are important in the playtext of *Bat Boy* (and gain even more significance in the translated playtext) dance is not the primary mode of communication of the musical. In this regard when the dance breaks in *Bat Boy* occur (as in the kickline in “Show You a Thing or Two” or the animal dance break in “Children Children”) I contend that the use of dance is employed in a completely non-realistic fashion. Whilst the positioning and style of the number “Children, Children” is reminiscent of the dream ballets used in musicals following the Rodgers and Hammerstein II format (as discussed in Chapter 2.4) purpose of this number is not, however, to create a fantasy dream sequence but to draw attention to this particular convention of more traditional musical theatre. In this manner dance as a signifying system is turned on itself and the use of dance comments not only on the themes of the work but also the very form of the show. How this element of dance as well as the other constructions within the playtext will be translated into the South African context will be addressed in the following section.

#### **4.3 Placing the playtext within the South African situation**

Taking into account each of the sections above (as the points of departure in the structural investigation of the dramatic text), this section shall focus on the first part of the process of translating the satire into South African situation.<sup>175</sup> Here, factors which resonate within the South African context will be identified as will those that are foreign and possible shifts will be proposed for the latter.<sup>176</sup> Chandler (2007:148) posits that in the studying of cultural practices “semioticians treat as signs any

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<sup>175</sup> Permission for the translation was granted by DALRO (Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation of South Africa) who are the South African Agents of The Dramatists Play Service who hold the rights to *Bat Boy – the Musical*.

<sup>176</sup> It can be inferred that the show underwent a similar process when it transferred to the West End by Laurence O’Keefe’s statement that “[w]hen we brought *Bat Boy* over, we wanted to remove any jokes that were too US-centric. For example, a line about a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) filing your taxes. I changed that” (20 questions with Laurence O’Keefe 2004:[sp]). That the original creators of the piece are not adverse to such amendments and even encourage the modification of the work for different audiences was also supported by personal email correspondence (2013.02.19) with Kaitlin Hopkins – the original Meredith in the original Actors’ Gang Theatre and Off-Broadway productions of *Bat Boy – the Musical*, in which she asserted that such translation was in line with their vision of the production reaching as many people as possible.

objects or actions which have meaning to members of the cultural group, seeking to identify the rules or conventions of the codes which underlie the production of meanings within that culture”. He continues to classify the codes most often used in the context of media, communication and cultural studies into three groups (ibid 150):<sup>177</sup>

- Interpretive codes which includes ideological codes.
- Textual (or representational) codes which include aesthetic codes within the expressive arts as well as genre and stylistic codes and
- Social codes which include language and behavioural codes:

Whilst Chandler acknowledges that there is less theoretical agreement about the first category and that essentially ALL codes can be seen as ideological codes he posits that ideological codes shape the encoding and decoding of texts which is in essence the subject of this dissertation. Such codes include what he terms the “isms’ such as individualism, liberalism, feminism, racism, materialism, capitalism, progressivism, conservatism, socialism, consumerism and populism” (ibid emphasis in original). The playtext will be investigated with regards to these three groups of codes and examples will be provided of how they inform the transference of *Bat Boy – the Musical* into the South African context.

If one understands that a code is a set of practices familiar to the users within a broad cultural framework and that as cultural semioticians agree: “a sign is only meaningful within a cultural system” (Orr 1986:812), it would follow that in order to transfer the playtext to the South African context it should be identified which signs and codes in the playtext are familiar to the target audience and which need to be translated. At this juncture it is necessary to examine a phenomenon which makes the transference of the subject matter into the South African context less demanding but at the same time problematizes the issue. This process can be termed the Americanization of South Africa and the following is based on James Campbell’s (1998:1-30) paper of the same name.

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<sup>177</sup> It is presented that although Chandler’s field of interest includes mass media codes or television/filmic/radio/newspaper and magazine codes, since the genre or stylistic codes found within this field – narrative, plot, character etc can also be applied to theatrical codes, this classification is also relevant to the analysis of the playtext of *Bat Boy*.

### The Americanization of South Africa

It can be argued that due to the massive economic, political and cultural power of the United States of America (USA) most countries have been 'Americanized' (Campbell 1998:1) but Campbell asserts that nowhere has this transformation been registered as dramatically as in South Africa. Even whilst South Africa was subjected to British colonialist rule ending only in 1948, it has become apparent that over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century "the United States has replaced Great Britain as South Africa's political, economic and cultural metropole" (ibid). While a full account of this phenomenon is far beyond the scope of this study a few main points, in chronological order, will be illuminated here.

- The American infiltration of South Africa can be traced all the way back to direct links with North American colonies in 1698.
- By the end of the 1800s all of South Africa's typewriters, bicycles, cash registers, canned meats and sewing machines were supplied by America which also dominated in the supply of fuel oils.
- The discovery of gold and the mineral wealth of South Africa drew many American mining engineers into the country and their expertise "built the gold industry" (ibid 6). They were followed by journalists, entrepreneurs, adventurers and gangsters eager to prosper in the Johannesburg boom town.
- There was an influx of American missionaries including African American missionaries of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which entered South Africa in 1895 and attracted thousands of converts (ibid 8).
- By this time both black and white South Africans had come to enjoy the vibrancy of American performance forms. The minstrel show found popularity among the Coloured community of the Western Cape. This tradition survives today in the annual Cape Town Minstrel Carnival or Kaapse Klopse.<sup>178</sup> White audiences flocked to vaudeville shows whilst new musical forms such as spirituals, ragtime and Tin Pan Alley inspired

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<sup>178</sup> 'Kaaap' refers to the geographical region of the Cape and the minstrels who take part in the carnival are organized into clubs or 'klopse'. The carnival was renamed as the original name, The Coon Carnival, was considered racist by Cape Town authorities.

black African imitations such as iRagtime and ikhunzi which stayed close to their American roots even whist translated into vernacular languages and others such as 'Marabi', a syncretic blend of many influences (ibid 10).

- Whilst American popular music appealed to all South Africans, it found a special resonance with the urban black people who supported, in particular, the African-American artists. A combination of Marabi and American swing formed the basis of 'Mbaquanga' which gained prominence from the 1930's onwards. Proponents of this African jazz identified not only with the music but with the names, style of dress and swagger of their American counterparts (ibid 17).
- In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as the consumer culture burgeoned, American capital entered South Africa at a rapid rate with big companies including Ford, General Motors, Colgate-Palmolive and Johnson and Johnson launching local subsidiaries.
- The development of an American inflected consumer culture was without doubt inextricably related to the rise of mass media: advertising,<sup>179</sup> magazines, gramophone records, radio and the movies.
- Even though the Nationalists were wary of the 'Bioscope' the impact of Hollywood from the 1920's onwards – transmitting American ideals, values and way of life in cinemas across the country, cannot be underestimated. Until the import of television in the 1970's South Africa had the eighth highest movie going population in the world (ibid 19).
- After 1948, trying to escape from British imperialism, seeking to expand white employment and develop other manufacturing areas to prevent over-reliance on the mining industry, the Nationalist government encouraged American investment along with the import of their technological innovation and management skills.

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<sup>179</sup> In the quest for new customers and in line with trends in America, local advertising agencies emerged, all faithfully following American trends endowing particular commodities with certain appealing characteristics leading to an establishment – in the 1920's and 30's – of 'an enduring association of Americanness with certain forms of personal consumption and display' (Campbell 1998:14). Whilst most advertising catered mainly for the white English-speaking population American standards insidiously infiltrated publications for other cultural groups such as 'Die Huisgenoot' and 'Umteteli wa Bantu' (ibid 15).



- The rise of the Cold War<sup>180</sup> cemented American interest in South Africa as a valuable ally the reasons being twofold: 1) access to the Cape sea routes and 2) the vast South African supplies of uranium and other minerals necessary for American military and nuclear production. Some of these were not available anywhere else outside of the Soviet bloc making the USA wholly dependent on South African co-operation. Ironically by this time, America was outwardly committed to non-racial citizenship and desegregation but American capital underwrote the economic growth of Apartheid South Africa (ibid 26).
- Although the Nationalist government had sought to limit American influence by resisting the import of television, after its introduction in the 1970's this influence was practically uninterrupted and undiluted as there was a lack of any other programming.<sup>181</sup>
- Importantly, apart from economic, trade and manufacturing ties, both countries share a history of white supremacy. In the past Nationalist law-makers studied American policy as precedent for amongst others the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act<sup>182</sup> and today political issues under scrutiny in South Africa, including for example affirmative action, revolve around concepts appropriated from ensuing American political discourse.
- Although white and black South Africans have different understandings of American culture and have embraced very different aspects of that culture it cannot be denied that they have all been amenable to the process of Americanization resulting in the youth of today appropriating American music, habits, fashion and slang language (ibid 2).

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<sup>180</sup>The Cold War was a sustained state of political and military tension between powers in the Western and Eastern blocs. There was no actual direct military confrontation between the leaders of these blocs, the USA and the USSR respectively, as each side possessed enough nuclear arms to act as deterrent as any attacker would be annihilated. This was termed the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD). This 'war' was fought through espionage, propaganda, psychological warfare and technical advancements such as the Space Race (Gaddis 1997:217).

<sup>181</sup> High local costs were prohibitive of producing any large amount of local content and cultural embargos banned the import of content from most other programme producing countries such as Great Britain.

<sup>182</sup> The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act no 55 of 1949 was a legal statute which outlawed the marriage of persons from different race groups and also criminalized any extramarital sexual relations between people of different races.

In light of the above it can be seen the extent to which the South African society, within which the translation is to be placed, has been Americanized. Whilst the shared history of white supremacy makes the transfer of the ideological content of the show into the South African context almost seamless there are other constructions within the plot which are familiar to the South African situation and which inform the translation as well as other social codes which are foreign to the target audience and need to be transferred into the South African context. Examples of such codes and how the playtext articulates therein will be given below.

### 4.3.1 The Book

#### 4.3.1.1 Component 1: Dramatic shape/Plot/Themes

Before a discussion of how the ideological, textual and social codes relevant to the South African context takes place there is a certain concrete construction within the dramatic shape of *Bat Boy* that warrants consideration. The geographical setting of the show, which is pivotal to the plot bears startling similarities to the South African situation. The story is set in a small (fictitious) coal-mining town, Hope Falls in West Virginia, where the natural mineral reserves have run dry and the inhabitants are forced to raise cattle in order to survive. Although the United States of America is one of the world's largest producers of coal, South Africa is currently the fifth largest coal producing country in the world and the third largest coal exporting country.<sup>183</sup> In 2004, the South African coal and lignite mining industry generated a gross income of R39 billion and directly employed 50,000 people<sup>184</sup> but the five largest companies account for 85 percent of all production. Recently the Geosciences Council, an advisory body to the Department of Minerals and Energy was putting together a list of six thousand abandoned, ownerless mines. The reason for this list being the continued environmental damage being caused by these mines and the planned cleanup for the largest of these, the Transvaal and Delegoa Bay

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<sup>183</sup> Figures obtained from MBendi Information Services, [www.mbendi.com](http://www.mbendi.com), retrieved 25/07/2012.

<sup>184</sup> *Mining Industry 2004*. Statistics South Africa.

[www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P2001/P20012004.pdf](http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P2001/P20012004.pdf) retrieved 26/07/2012.

Mine (abandoned 1953) in the Emalahleni area, is estimated to reach the 100 million rand mark.<sup>185</sup>

With only 3 percent of South African soil considered truly fertile, South Africa is also well known as a cattle farming country as 69 percent of the land is suitable for grazing and livestock farming is the largest agricultural sector in the country.<sup>186</sup> Farmers however are under daily pressure due to, amongst others: rising input costs and external factors such as the oil price and the exchange rate, finite natural reserves, little to no market predictability as well as the unpredictability of the weather and negative long-term changes in climate, making farming one of the “toughest jobs around”.<sup>187</sup> It is interesting to note that Vryheid in the northern part of Kwa-Zulu Natal is well known for both its coal mining and cattle farming trades albeit enjoying much more success than the citizens of Hope Falls seem to manage.

Revealing yet another geographical similarity is that, in the opening scene of the musical, the Bat Boy is discovered by three teenagers spelunking in the caves near Hope Falls. In South Africa spelunking, or caving as it is more commonly known here, is a popular past time and there are many caving sites throughout the country.<sup>188</sup> From the above it can be seen that there is absolutely no shift required in this geographical respect for the playtext to resonate within the South African context.

Following on from this, the geographical conditions form the catalyst from which the action of the show springs. The poor financial situation of the inhabitants of Hope Falls (related to the impossibility of their geographical location) leads to their high levels of uncertainty and fear which in turn elevates their need to find a scapegoat for their troubles. There is little shift needed when considering how

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<sup>185</sup> *The True Cost of Coal*. Greenpeace Article p 52, 53

[http://files.meetup.com/213689/The\\_true\\_cost\\_of\\_coal\\_.pdf](http://files.meetup.com/213689/The_true_cost_of_coal_.pdf) retrieved 25/07/2012.

<sup>186</sup> *Agriculture: Facts and Trends South Africa*. World Wildlife Fund. p 4 <http://awsassets.wwf.org.za> retrieved 25/07/2012

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid* p 7

<sup>188</sup> See Appendix 6 for a list of South African caves.

these socio-economic circumstances and the theme of the scapegoating of the other are transcribed in the South African situation.

Presently South Africa is faced with rampant inflation, low growth levels and low employment levels all of which could force the country back into recession (Wynn 2014:[sp]). Quite apart from unemployment resulting from disused mines and that from disenchanting rural farmers migrating into urban areas, South Africans are no strangers to unemployment generally; the unemployment rate in South Africa was last reported as 25.2 percent in the first quarter of 2012<sup>189</sup> but unofficial reports put the figure as high as 40 percent.<sup>190</sup> In light of the current economic climate the plight of the inhabitants of Hope Falls is not far removed from many South Africans today who are struggling for survival and looking for any scapegoat upon which to blame their difficulties as the ongoing brutal xenophobic attacks on foreigners have evidenced.<sup>191</sup>

Whilst South Africa has been hailed as the “rainbow nation” (Craighead 2011:260) and the cultural ideal of multiculturalism has been adopted it seems that this “side-by-side” policy (Loots 2006:93) does not in fact engender cultural harmony or the acceptance of those perceived to be other. Katy Khan (2010:149) asserts that critics have had to re-examine the notions of multiculturalism and the associated concept of cultural diversity as “each of them constructs binaries of culture”. She argues that this model groups cultures according to race or ethnicity and that in this process each group is given distinct characteristics which are then seen as lacking in other groups. Khan (ibid 148) goes as far as to say that this cultural intolerance or as Claire

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<sup>189</sup> From Trading Economics [www.tradingeconomics/south-africa/unemployment-rate](http://www.tradingeconomics/south-africa/unemployment-rate) retrieved 25/07/2012

<sup>190</sup> *Successes and Challenges in South Africa* <http://south-africa.german-development-cooperation.org/successes-and-challenges> retrieved 25/07/2012

<sup>191</sup> After democracy in 1994 the ANC launched an extensive nation building program, one unforeseen consequence of this was a rise in xenophobic attacks (Crush & Pendleton 2004:4). These attacks continue to be perpetuated against foreigners who are perceived as the cause of rising unemployment, escalating crime levels and even the spread of disease. In May 2008 xenophobic riots erupted taking the lives of 62 people, injuring hundreds and displacing thousands of others (Toll from Xenophobic Attacks Rises 2008:[sp]). For the first time since the end of Apartheid the South African government deployed the armed forces to quell the unrest (BBC news 2008:[sp]). Refugee camps were erected for those foreigners – estimated to number over 30 000 (ibid) – displaced in the violence. Xenophobic attacks are ongoing, targeting Mozambicans, Zimbabweans, Somali and Pakistani individuals and foreign-owned businesses (Patel 2013:[sp]).

Craighead asserts (2011:260) “the politics of difference” resulted in the severe xenophobic attacks carried out in South Africa in 2008. It seems that South Africans have yet to move “beyond the rainbow” (Craighead 2011:261) and within this context the playtext can be positioned to question the now dominant ideological ideal of multiculturalism. It is my contention that the translation of the playtext can, as Craighead (ibid) suggests, form an intercultural pathway where cultures can meet and engage in dialogue which is articulated through meaningful connections with their historical contexts.

In light of the above and in terms of the content of the piece, it appears that much of the subject matter raised in *Bat Boy* transposes very easily to the South African arena. The leading themes of the work: prejudice and tolerance, scapegoating as well as the overcoming of stereotypes are all relevant to our South African society which, in its twentieth year of democracy is still struggling to come to terms with the prejudices and injustices of the past. Whilst the translation of the playtext interrogates these leading socio-political themes, it also questions another ideological principle relevant in the South African context, the hypocrisy of religion.

The original playtext uses Christianity to contextualize this theme but this is also entirely relevant in the South African situation and for more than one reason. In South Africa today about 80 percent of the total population belongs to the Christian faith.<sup>192</sup> But, although Christianity is the leading faith in all the population groups in South Africa – with the exception of the Indian/Asian group where Islam is the dominating religion, its history with regards to the indigenous peoples of Africa is somewhat dubious. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu succinctly points out:

“When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘Let us pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land”.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Source: Statistics South Africa, Population Census 2001. [www.statssa.gov.za](http://www.statssa.gov.za) retrieved 29/07/2012. Interesting to note that the results from the Population Census 2011 were not available.

<sup>193</sup>As quoted in *Desmond Tutu: A Biography* (2004) by Steven Gish, p. 101

Susan Ritner (1967:17) in her article *The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid* underscores this argument in relation to the dominant church of the Afrikaners (who are traditionally considered a devout people). She posits that one of the saddest ironies of South African life is that the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (or Dutch Reformed Church), instead of tempering the harsh racial attitudes of the country with Christian messages of love and brotherhood in fact found ways of insisting on progressively sterner definitions of 'separateness'. That the majority of South Africans are no strangers to the concept of religion and hypocrisy is proved by the very fact that the Dutch Reformed Church and other faith ministries were called to account for their roles during the Apartheid years before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1997 (Meiring 2003:250).

Along with Christianity, religion and hypocrisy, revival as described in the original playtext is also not a foreign concept to South Africa. The 1857/8 Revival which started in New York was one of the biggest revivals in the history of the United States with an estimated one million people being converted but almost concurrently a revival was beginning in South Africa.<sup>194</sup> In 1858 American-born evangelist William Taylor led a revival converting hundreds of Xhosas and many 'hottentots' (Duwel 1995:176/7). A short while after that, a revival began in Worcester led by Dutch Reformed Minister Andrew Murray. Murray's early life had spanned two continents as he traveled from South Africa to study theology in Holland and at his death his prolific writings comprised more than 250 books and tracts while his teaching and preaching had fueled spiritual awakening and revival with world-wide influence.<sup>195</sup> This revival of 1860 rapidly spread across the Cape and to other parts and congregations of South Africa influenced also by Nicolaas Hofmeyr and Gottlieb van der Lingen (Nel 2008:xxi). Duwel also records mighty revivals in the Boer prisoner-of-war camps in 1902/3 (1995:205) along with the work done by Rees Howells and his wife from 1915 to 1920.

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<sup>194</sup> Mostert, B. *The 1857-1862 Revival*. [www.jwipn.com/pdf](http://www.jwipn.com/pdf) retrieved 29/07/2012. p 5.

<sup>195</sup> Preface to Hendrickson Christian Classics edition of *With Christ in the School of Prayer*.

Whilst it can be concluded that revival has a strong history in South Africa perhaps the most compelling evidence that spiritual awakening (and revival of sorts – although he does not use that term) is alive and well in South Africa, is the current phenomenon known as Angus Buchan. By 2006 this farmer turned evangelist had sold more than 25 000 copies of his book *Faith like Potatoes*<sup>196</sup> which was then made into a major motion picture. He drew a crowd in excess of 35 000 people into a stadium in Durban to join in prayer for rain and almost 50 000 Christians packed the Cape Town Stadium ahead of the World Cup in 2010 to listen to him speak and pray for the stadium's readiness (Van der Westhuizen & Breytenbach 2010:[sp]). In 2010 his Mighty Men Conference, the last one to be held on his farm outside Greytown – which is home to his Shalom Ministries – drew over 300 000 men. From 2011 the Mighty Men events have been held in cities across the country and have been exported to other countries. The 2012 semi-biographical film *Ordinary People* chronicles true stories of the Mighty Men conferences. In South Africa his religious show appears on national television six times a week and is put onto 45 radio stations throughout Africa and he is constantly touring the world to speak at conferences in places such as Israel, England the USA and Canada (Gateway News [sa]:[sp]). There is no doubt that South Africans would not understand a revival of the sort that the Reverend Billy Hightower delivers at the start of Act II in *Bat Boy – The Musical*.

As Aaltonen (2000:7) points out “[f]oreign theatre texts are chosen on the basis of their compatibility with the discourses or discursive structures which either are in line with those in the target society or can be made compatible with them” and as is evidenced above the compatibility of *Bat Boy*, within the ideological codes of South Africa, was one of the main reasons for the choice of this playtext for the translation process. However, Aaltonen continues that: “one of the conditions of the acceptance of a foreign text for translation is that it must be possible to bring its discourse in line with that of the receiving *theatrical* system and society at large” (ibid 47/48 emphasis added).

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<sup>196</sup> Angus Buchan – *Faith like Potatoes*. Review. [www.joymag.co.za/mag/3-2006/3-2006-angus.php](http://www.joymag.co.za/mag/3-2006/3-2006-angus.php) retrieved 29/07/2012.



And what of the textual and aesthetic codes governing South African theatre and in specific musical theatre? It would seem that by examining the themes of discrimination and acceptance as set out within the playtext and also the principles traditionally associated with imperialist hegemony [such as the binary notions of ‘us and them’ (Gilbert & Tompkins 1996:3) or ‘one and the other’ where the ‘other’ is a subordinate adjunct of the ‘one’ (Kumar 2000:85)] the playtext engages with postcolonial discourse. However as discussed in the previous chapter the director makes no argument for the inclusion of the theatrical translation of *Bat Boy* within postcolonial theatrical discourse. As Lo and Gilbert (2002:35) posit, some settler theatre is incorporated into the arena of postcolonial theatre but this is not without controversy and contention. Gilbert and Tompkins (1996:3) explain the essentialist view that the criteria for those who may or may not participate in postcolonial theatre is based on who can claim the highest level of marginalization or ‘victim status’ and it is irrefutable that this director cannot claim to have been previously disadvantaged by imperialist domination. Also, whilst a political critique of the past hegemony happens intrinsically due to the form and content of the production, this is not a primary goal of the translation which will be more focused on dialogue and interaction between those of diverse cultural backgrounds with a view towards generating social cohesion. Therefore as concluded in the previous chapter it is therefore my contention that this translation will rest easier within the sphere of intercultural theatre.

As pointed out in section 2.7.2 South Africa boasts its own successful form of intercultural theatre. This form of theatre also happens to fall in the realm of musical theatre - the township musical and thus I believe the form this playtext takes, resonates well within the textual codes of the receiving theatrical system. Further, whilst engaging ideologically with the post-colonial discourse the production paradoxically uses a form of theatre traditionally associated with imperialist cultures – the musical. Even as this work follows the traditional, American format of a musical, the production itself queries the very conventions of that form of theatre. In terms of the South African situation the format of the show and its melodramatic and overly sentimental subject matter relating to family conflict is highly suggestive of the township musical (as discussed in

Chapter 2) and yet at the same time these conventions, the validity of which have been strongly questioned in the South African theatrical context, can be highlighted and examined.

As has been discussed in section 4.2 the playtext of *Bat Boy* not only resides within the musical theatre genre but also references textual codes of other genres including the classic horror movie, a stalwart export of Hollywood and the American film industry. As has been shown, American culture, whether desirable or not, has permeated every crevice of the South African culture a fact lamented by Fatima Dike (Solberg 2003:83).<sup>197</sup> She even argues that so much of the 'Coca-Cola culture' has been absorbed into South Africa's mainstream culture it may as well be a colony of the United States. A prime example of this, is the infiltration of South African popular culture by yet another American craze – the latest version of the updating of the Dracula legend which has currently swept across the globe. Heralded by the *Twilight* book and movie saga, the fad has been termed the biggest media phenomenon this decade.<sup>198</sup> Stephanie Meyer's series has more the 17 million books in print; the first movie grossed \$382 million dollars worldwide and the second two \$296 and \$308 million respectively. This has also resulted in the popularity of such television shows as *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood* quite apart from the tweenie Monster High toys and accessories craze in which the vampire doll 'Draculaura'<sup>199</sup> is a firm favourite as well as the success of the recent animated movie *Hotel Transylvania* (2012).<sup>200</sup> While the *Bat Boy* is not portrayed as a vampire per se, the immediacy of the vampire concept in the contemporary cultural consciousness bears constant reminder to the original textual codes of

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<sup>197</sup> Fatima Dike is a notable South African playwright who also became a spokesperson for black and women's rights (Gray 1984:55).

<sup>198</sup> Goodwyn, H (CBN.com Senior producer). A Christian Response to Vampire Obsession. [www.cbn.com/entertainment/screen/goodwyn-vampires-twilight-obsession.aspx](http://www.cbn.com/entertainment/screen/goodwyn-vampires-twilight-obsession.aspx) retrieved 27/07/2012.

<sup>199</sup> Informal survey of Christmas wishlists of tweenie girls confirming Mattel CEO Bob Eckert's hopes for Monster High to pump up flagging sales figures due to the recession, the impact of digital devices and also as Barbie starts to lose her popularity. [www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2010-11-24-mattelceo24\\_CV\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2010-11-24-mattelceo24_CV_N.htm) retrieved 27/07/2012.

<sup>200</sup> *Hotel Transylvania* was released by Sony and grossed \$1,625,315 in South Africa which equates to 19% of the foreign total. The Domestic Total Gross in the USA was \$148,313,048. Those are the box-office totals before DVD sales.

the horror movie. Thus, the aesthetic codes which influence how the story of the Bat Boy is told need no shift to resonate within the South African context.

Whilst the ideological content of the playtext fits well within the South African situation and the textual codes of the piece need little shift as explained above, certain social codes however do need to be considered for translation in order to place the work in a South African context.

Whilst various categories fall under the broad umbrella term of 'social codes' – indeed Chandler (2007:150) asserts that in a broad sense all semiotic codes are in fact social codes – a few examples will be mentioned below. Whilst verbal language is considered a social code, this will be dealt with in more depth under the headings of dialogue (section 4.3.1.3) and lyrics (section 4.3.2). However, a prime example would be the transference of one particular phrase in the playtext. Even as the townspeople of Hope Falls continually allude to their Christian-ness the most common expletive found through-out the playtext is “Sweet Jesus!” or variations thereof such as “Sweet wounded Jesus!” and this blasphemy is indicative of their hypocrisy and ‘un-Christian-like’ behaviour. There is a most obvious South African translation for this exclamation and that is the word ‘Yissus!’ which derives from the Afrikaans pronunciation of ‘Jesus’. Whilst the younger Afrikaans generation may have collectively forgotten the origin of this word and it seems to have been carried innocuously into colloquial speech also being adopted by other language groups, to many of more devout, older Afrikaans generation this expletive, which communicates surprise or frustration, is still considered blasphemous.

The transfer of bodily codes which include gesture and posture will be examined under section 4.3.4 in which kinesics are addressed. Commodity codes which include fashion and dress have great bearing on the visual and costume design for the show and the resultant shifts with regards to this code will be discussed in Chapter 6. However certain changes must be effected to make the social traditions and customs used within the plot more familiar within the South African context. These are behavioural codes which include protocols and rituals. Some traditional occasions are easy to transfer into the

South African context for example, there is a direct replacement for the social occasion of a “barbeque”<sup>201</sup> which is a ‘braai’.<sup>202</sup> Some other differences need a little more thought, for example: we have no equivalent for the position of Sheriff and in our policing system officials are not voted into superior positions. However, as one examines the character of the Sheriff in the original playtext (which will be addressed in more detail in the following section) one can certainly imagine a lieutenant or ‘kaptein’<sup>203</sup> in our South African Police Service (SAPS) who feels out of his depth as a consequence of the bizarre arrival of the Bat Boy. His concern would not be for re-election but for promotion or, at the very least, not warranting the unwanted attention of his superiors. Both these instances of the shift of a social code could be described as examples of the process of naturalization as advocated by Aaltonen (2000:55) whereby the foreign elements are rewritten and reduced to the perspective of the target culture.

Before I move on to a discussion of the potential shifts of the characters to facilitate the translation, the transfer of one more ritual or behavioural code must be mentioned. However, this particular ritual clearly demonstrates the inter-relatedness of the semiotic codes in this process of translation as it appears to cross-cut all three typologies of codes: ideological, textual and social.

This ritual would be the ceremony in the woods where, in the original playtext Pan, accompanied by various animals, presides over the union of Edgar (the Bat Boy) and Shelley. Herbert Schroeder (1992:25) posits that while spiritual experiences<sup>204</sup> can occur in many settings, many people find that natural

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<sup>201</sup> *Bat Boy – The Musical*, script p 62

<sup>202</sup> ‘Braai’ is an Afrikaans word which refers to a method of cooking but the word has become synonymous with a social occasion or get together where meat is cooked over an open coal or charcoal fire.

<sup>203</sup> Afrikaans translation of ‘Captain’.

<sup>204</sup> Schroeder (1992: 25) defines a spiritual experience as an encounter with something larger or greater than one’s individual self where the ‘other’ that is encountered could be a supernatural deity or god, an existing process such as that of evolution or an inner phenomenon such as creative inspiration. This ‘other’ may be a product of human culture or exist independently of humans but this encounter is felt at a level deeper than just that of the intellect and that the experience gives meaning to one’s life.

environments or surroundings can be the principle stimulus for such an experience. Historically the connection between spirituality, ritual and nature has long been recognized in South Africa. Before the arrival of Christianity, religious ritual dated back to the Khoisan people and included healing dances to eradicate evil or heal the sick and such healing dances are used in some African Independent churches today.<sup>205</sup> The later tribes including the Zulu and the Xhosa used ritual to mark major life changes such as birth, marriage and death as well as for rainmaking, fertility and enhancing military might.<sup>206</sup> Currently in South African culture scores of young men participate in initiation rituals across the country every year, exposed to the harshest elements of nature. On the opposite end of the spectrum it is common for privileged citizens to go into the 'veld'<sup>207</sup> to escape from the rat race. Whether it be five star game resorts or not, this getting back to nature is seen as a way to recharge and be revitalized, in line with the Jungian psychological approach whereby nature is associated with perfect balance, beauty, symmetry and wholeness.<sup>208</sup>

Whilst ideologically and socially the concept of rituals in the veld are not foreign to the South African context I contend that character of Pan would have to shift to resonate more fully in this context.<sup>209</sup> Also, the animals portrayed would of course shift to be representative of those indigenous to the area. Such shifts however could be considered examples of acculturation whereby the foreign is made more familiar by toning down the foreign-ness and blurring the lines between the strange and the familiar (Aaltonen 2000:55).

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<sup>205</sup> *South Africa – Historical Background: African Religions.* [www.momgabay.com](http://www.momgabay.com) retrieved 30/07/2012

<sup>206</sup> Ibid

<sup>207</sup> 'Veld' refers to the open grassy plateaus of South Africa usually with scattered shrubs or trees, sometimes home to varying wildlife.

<sup>208</sup> Jung described various archetypes which he developed out of the psychoanalysis of his patients, all of which are crucial to the process of personal growth and development. This process he termed individuation. The ultimate aim of this process is to attain the archetype of 'the Self' which is associated with balance and wholeness and represents the balancing of all the sides of the psyche into an integrated whole. This archetype when projected onto the wilderness leads to a perception of nature as "the embodiment of perfect balance, beauty, symmetry and wholeness" (Schroeder 1974:26).

<sup>209</sup> Please see Chapter 6 and section 6.1.1.2 in particular for a full explanation of how the transference of this character was achieved.

This particular number also gives rise to questions regarding textual codes. Whilst O’Keefe insists that his writing of this particular number, “Children Children” (p 265-284) predates his viewing of Disney’s musical *The Lion King* (Rosati 2001:[sp]) and that its purpose was less to caricature this specific show but to “be more universal. Instead of deliberately trying to do a parody of *The Lion King*, we were trying to do parody of several different types of Utopian pastoral numbers” (ibid). However, it is particularly hard not to infer the evocation of *The Lion King* in this number and in so doing the playtext augments the critique it offers on the very genre within which it is placed! I contend that, besides South African theatregoers having been privy to seeing *The Lion King* in 2007 they are no stranger to other such utopian numbers. For example, at the end of the first act of the pantomime,<sup>210</sup> \*Cinders and her Fella (1999) – which was repeated as Cinderella in 2004 and 2011<sup>211</sup> – the carriage taking Cinderella off to the ball is waved on by the ensemble singing and cavorting as large furry animals and winged insects. Thus, in being familiar with the necessary textual codes of musical theatre and satire, I believe that South African audiences will be able to interpret the humour of this number as well as infer the critique it offers.

In light of all of the above it can be concluded that while the core ideological themes transpose directly into the translation and that the fundamental plot and plot structure or the dramatic shape of *Bat Boy* will remain unchanged, some shifts of social codes will be necessary. Even as the essential story of the Bat Boy being found in a cave, his consequent ‘civilization’ as well as the love story between him and Shelley and its calamitous end will all remain the same, certain social codes as described above will inform the transition of the individual characters within the playtext which will be discussed below.

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<sup>210</sup> Pantomime is a form of musical theatre which has its roots in Italian commedia dell’arte, melodrama, fairytales and children’s theatre (Bezuidenhout 2009:3) which was brought to South Africa in the late nineteenth century as a vehicle, alongside other forms of imperialist theatre, through which to assert British cultural expansionism (Gilbert & Tompkins 1996:7).

<sup>211</sup> The pantomime at the Joburg theatre is a yearly institution (Joburg.co.za 2010:[sp]). Janice Honeyman has just celebrated her 25<sup>th</sup> festive season as director of the pantomimes (Artslink 2013:[sp]) which are repeated at regular intervals, including *Robin’s A Cruise-Ou* (1997) repeated as *Robinson Crusoe and the Caribbean Pirates* (2010). *Sno’ White and the Seven Dofs* (1998) repeated as *Snow White* (2001), *A lad ‘n a lamp* (2000) repeated as *Aladdin* (2006 & 2013) and *Jack and the Beanstalk* (2003 & 2012).

#### 4.3.1.2 Component 2: Characters

The analysis of the characters in section 4.2.1.2 took into account the structuralist approach which emphasizes the functions of the characters within the playtext, as well as the post-romantic approach which incorporates the psychoanalytical characteristics of the character and the identification of the actor thereto (Aston & Savona 2013:46). Aston and Savona (ibid) posit that the actor is the primary channel whereby character is communicated to the audience. Without prior knowledge of the actors cast in the specific roles who did – as per the second tier of translation – bring their own multicultural backgrounds, experiences and social codes to shape their characters this section will focus on the translation of the functions (actantial roles) of the characters as per the structuralist approach and give examples of possible shifts of the characters into the South African context to be considered and evaluated by the ensemble in the rehearsal process.

##### ➤ THE FAMILY

- **Bat Boy**

Edgar remains the protagonist of the story and also remains the metaphorical construct of the 'other'. However, in the translation, this story of intolerance is of localized importance. Edgar's journey in the original playtext served as referent to the more global struggle for human rights but in the translation can directly represent the struggle against Apartheid. Miller (2011:187) suggested that Edgar's growing rage in the second act could be equated to militant groups such as the Black Panthers and this reference shifts easily, in the translation, to Umkhontu We Sizwe which before democracy and its inclusion into the South African Defense force, was the military wing of the African National Congress. Whilst Edgar's quest in the playtext does not have the happiest of endings he does lead the townsfolk into a new era, just as South Africa has entered the age of democracy. However his death serves as warning that the freedoms we now take for granted under our new constitution are perilously exposed, that intolerance and discrimination lurk and that each one of us has to make the choice to commit to tolerance and acceptance.



- **Shelley**

I would suggest that while the actantial role of this character does not change, the placement of this character in the South African translation and the symbolism thereof depends entirely on the ethnicity of the actress cast in this role. If she was black or coloured the character would be representative of the 'sought after' ideal. She could signify home and the ability to enjoy the benefits of acceptance within the society. If on the other hand the actress cast was white I would suggest that the character function more as 'helper' and in this case be representative of the left wing in the old regime, liberal yet naive and somewhat ineffectual.

- **Dr Parker**

As the antihero or antagonist of the playtext the character of Dr Parker can be used to signify the old order. In his conservatism and unwillingness to change, his trajectory remains oppositional to Edgar's, the protagonist whose existence questions the old order. Even though he grudgingly accepts Edgar by the end of the first act, he is unable to wholly rid himself of his old beliefs and so he must die with the end of the old era.

Dr Parker's intertextual status as derived from the horror film genre would also transpose easily across into the South African context as discussed above in section 4.3.1.1, but an added connotative feature could possibly be attributed to the character: the mad scientist could be presented as our own 'Dr Death', Wouter Basson.<sup>212</sup>

- **Meredith**

Again, the actantial purpose of the character remains the same. As quintessential mother figure however, I contend that this character gains extra status within the translated playtext. Colin Murray in his article *Migrant Labour and Changing Family Structure in the Rural Periphery of Southern Africa* (1980) argues that the oscillating migration of workers had destructive

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<sup>212</sup> Wouter Basson was a former head of South Africa's chemical and biological warfare project. He was nicknamed Dr Death by the press as he was alleged to have murdered over 200 prisoners who were identified as enemies of the state (BBC News 2002:[sp]).

consequences on family structure. Along with the prolonged absences of husbands and fathers (Murray 1980:140) there was also a substantial increase in the number of unmarried women and the number of children born to these women between the years 1934 and 1974 (ibid 146) leaving the care of a large number of children primarily in the hands of the mothers. Whilst it could be argued that this was just the case in the rural areas, Elena Moore (2013:156) in her research posits that while there is insufficient research as to the negotiation of the urban-rural nexus there has been a rise in female-headed households and that “African women have uncoupled maternity from ‘formalized relationships’” (ibid emphasis in original). In the context of the translated playtext the character Meredith can metaphorically pay tribute to the generations of single mothers who had little help from absent or distant fathers and also those whom, in light of the growing unemployment for men (ibid 154) have not only been primary nurturers but also core income providers. In the playtext, stereotypically, Meredith makes the ultimate sacrifice of motherhood, dying in an attempt to protect her son.

#### ➤ THE TOWNSPEOPLE

As pointed out in section 4.2.1.2, within the dramatic structure of *Bat Boy* there is a clear distinction between the family and the townspeople. This will be no different in the translation whereby the family will also be seen as more ‘real’ than the townspeople. The characters of the townspeople are still collectively involved in the function of actantial opposition to the protagonist and as such will also metaphorically represent the forces of racism and bigotry. It is in the representation of these forces that this story, and its warning of the dire consequences of discrimination and the failure to seek out the truth, has significance for the vast majority of the South African population.

When several characters assume the same actantial function, in this case that of opposition, characteristics common to all are established (Aston and Savona 2013:42). This is evidenced by the caricatured manner common to all the characters of the townspeople. At the same time, the specifics of each townspeople will be designed by the relative performer. This individualization

(ibid) of these characters will be drawn from the rich base of cultural stereotypes which abound in our society.<sup>213</sup>

It is possible that one of the characters within the townspeople, the Sheriff will gain a new individual and metaphorical function within the translation. The political structures which govern policing in South Africa are different to that of the USA and there is no position of Sheriff so the character would have to be that of Constable, Sergeant, Warrant Officer, Lieutenant, or Captain.<sup>214</sup> Depending on the cultural background of the performer playing the role the title could be changed to the Afrikaans counterpart. Metaphorically however the character would gain new prominence in the translation. According to Van Graan (2006:284) crime statistics in South Africa suggest that 53 people get murdered and 144 women get raped every day – and that's only reported rapes. In the face of these statistics and the experiences of many South Africans there is a resultant lack of confidence in the police system which would be signified by the bumbling, ineffectual methods employed by the police representative in the playtext.

As can be seen above within the dramatic structure, the actantial roles of the characters remain the same but the characters themselves will be individualized within the South African context. This individualization will depend greatly on the ethnicity and cultural background of the performer chosen to portray each particular character. Once the cast has been assembled, the repositioning of the characters will be undertaken by allowing the performers to utilize their own social codes, aided by the use of Stanislavski's technique of the magic 'if' which will be discussed in Chapter 5. The translation of each character into the South African context will be supported by certain visual and auditory sign-systems, prioritised by the director and available to the performers (as discussed in Chapter 6). These

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<sup>213</sup> These stereotypes could include the conservative boer', the materialistic 'kugel', the 'previously disadvantaged BEE candidate' dependent on the actors playing the roles (to be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6).

<sup>214</sup> These are the first five ranks in the functional rank structure in the South African Police Service (SAPS) as from 1 April 2010. Higher ranking officials would not be applicable in this situation as it appears in the playtext that the police officer concerned has little clout.

include the visual sign-systems of costume, hairstyle and make-up, all theatrical sign systems originally identified by Kowzan (Elam 1980:50). The use of props – similarly suggested by Kowzan (ibid) may also be employed as these can be highly effective in signifying background or providing information with regards to a character as discussed in Chapter 3. An example of such is the sjambok<sup>215</sup> which is familiar with farmers across South Africa but which has very definite political and social connotations depending on whose hand it is in. The second category of sign systems denoted by Kowzan (Nikolorea 2002:1), namely the auditive sign systems will also be employed as the use of language, tone and accent is imperative when creating a character (Meier 2012:9). The southern accents of the original characters implied in the original playtext original characters will also be transferred and the performers will use their natural South African accents or apply a South African accent with which they are familiar. Not only will their vocality reflect the change in context but their bodies and the movements and gestures of the performers must resonate within South African context – this however will be addressed in the section relating to dance and movement.

#### 4.3.1.3 Component 3: Dialogue

As discussed in section 4.2.1.3 the dialogue (apart from furthering the plot) functions to establish time, location, characters and their relationships to each other. In the translation of the playtext, all the dialogue that references objects or social traditions or customs which are foreign to the South African context need to be altered through interlingual (translation proper into a different language) or intralingual (rewording in the same language) translation (Jakobson 1959:233).

Firstly, all dialogue should be representative of current colloquial speech in South Africa so as to place the translation in the ‘now’. Then secondly, in order to place the dialogue in the South African situation all references to social codes which are not familiar to the target audience will need to be changed. Note should be made of the fact that cattle farming in the USA is referred to as ranching whereas this is called

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<sup>215</sup> The sjambok is a heavy leather whip originally used by the Voortrekkers for driving cattle. After plastic sjamboks were used by the South African Police Force, officially to control crowds as part of riot control, they became a symbol of and synonymous with Apartheid.

farming in South Africa therefore in this translation the ranchers will all be referred to as farmers. Depending on the choice of performers portraying the various roles, some names of the characters may need to be changed (more generally surnames) to be more indicative of the South African populace.<sup>216</sup> Since this playtext is originally set in the Southern United States and the expressions, rhythms and patterns of speech of specific characters such as Sheriff Reynolds, Mrs Taylor, her children and the Reverend Billy Hightower are distinctly Southern this needs to be altered to be more indicative of the 'here'. They also use words like "critter" (Act I, sc 1, p 7) expressions like "sweet wounded Jesus!!" (Act I, sc 1, p 11) and make references to typically American traditions like 'senior prom' (Act I, sc 3, p 27) and 'barbeque' (Act II, sc 1, p 62). In the second tier of translation the performers chosen to portray these characters, under the director's supervision, will reference their own social codes, choose from the available alternatives and transfer such words, expressions and figures of speech into their own cultural paradigm (intralingual translation). Using the accent of their home language as well as their own vernacular expressions (interlingual translation) or at least an accent and expressions with which they are familiar, the performers will facilitate the translation of the dialogue so that it functions to represent the locality of the playtext.

Thirdly, dialogue functions to establish character and in the translation, the use of South African colloquial speech and accent will aid the development of characters familiar to the South African audience. Since the actantial functions of the characters and their spheres of action (Aston & Savona 2013:36) remain the same, the relationships between the characters also remains constant so dialogue would not be needed to indicate any changes in the relationships other than as conveyed in the original playtext. Dialogue can be used however to cement these relationships in the South African context for example the use of South African greetings and terms of endearment.

However, I believe that there are certain 'Americanisms' espoused within the dialogue that can be left untouched as they have as much reference here as

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<sup>216</sup> Please see section 6.1 1.1 which discusses the actor as sign and therefore the corresponding character name changes as well as appendix 12 for a list of the renamed characters and further explanations thereof.

evidenced by South Africa's adherence to the Coca-Cola culture (as discussed in Chapter 4). For example, in the playtext, one of the cows is compared to a "quarter-pounder" (Act I, sc 4, p 27), and since McDonalds'<sup>217</sup> reach has extended into South Africa and become quite entrenched here I maintain that this phrase does not need to be changed.<sup>218</sup> Another reason for leaving this particular phrase unchanged and also a reason which needs to be considered when restructuring the dialogue is the inherent humour contained in the piece. The changes should not distract from the humour as this is one of the redeeming features of an otherwise dark and disconsolate show. Without the humour, the production would not remain true to the fictive discourse and so I posit that if the joke cannot be accurately translated the feel and intent as initiated by the original authors should be preserved as much as possible. In the words of Eric Bentley (1987:255):

"What shall the poor translator do when he finds his accurate rendering isn't funny? Give a little lecture on the obligation of accuracy?.....What you have to come up with is the quality that has the desired effect. Make the audience laugh. Make them cry. Make them see a point clearly. Make them see stars. Make them feel good. Make them feel sick. But make them".

#### 4.3.1.4 Stage Directions

As discussed in section 4.2.1.4 the stage directions function within the textual codes (Suchy 1999:73) governing the genre of musical theatre. As the form of theatre resonates well within the South African context (as discussed above) the functions of the stage directions as found within the natural discourse do not need to be translated. And, as it is the director's intention to interpret the playtext as closely to the authors' original intentions as possible, it can be stated that those absurd stage directions found in the fictive discourse are also in no need of translation.

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<sup>217</sup> The McDonald's Corporation is the world's largest fast food chain store. Founded in 1940 by the McDonald brothers the corporation operates in 119 countries worldwide (aboutmcdonalds.com [sa]:McDonald's History).

<sup>218</sup> Please see Chapter 6 (specifically section 6.1.1.3) for a discussion of how this particular moment was intersemiotically translated in terms of the process of acculturation.

### 4.3.2 Lyrics

Again, much that was discussed under the heading of dialogue above (section 4.3.1.3) applies here. However, the process of the translation of lyrics is slightly more complicated than that of changing dialogue. As with the translation of the dialogue, interlingual and intralingual translation will be used to transpose the lyrics into the South African context. Once again, expressions and patterns of speech familiar to the South African audiences will be used as substitutes for those in the playtext which are foreign. This will signify the change in location and establish characters within the South African situation. However, careful attention must be paid, specifically when altering lyrics, to the musicality of the alternatives. In this regard stress patterns, tempo, pace, rhythm and the rhyming structure of the alternative lyrics must be carefully weighed before the substitution is made. The translation of the lyrics has to make sense contextually but also musically!

### 4.3.3 Score

Influenced by the forces of globalization and interculturalism as put forward in section 3.3 and the Americanization of South Africa as discussed above, Khan (2012:150) asserts that there are a variety of musical traditions in South Africa. The music of *Bat Boy* (refer please to section 4.2.3) covers many styles from rock to rap, horror-movie film score to opera, pop and gospel all of which are not unfamiliar to the South African audience.

Whilst it would not be impossible, with only a little modification to the actual score, to give the music in parts a more local South African ‘flavor’: for example infusing Kwaito<sup>219</sup> influences into “Whacha Wanna Do”, African rhythms and drumming into the ritualistic “Children, Children”. Even allowing the country and western feel of “Another Dead Cow” to morph into the somewhat similar Boeremusiek<sup>220</sup> would be possible. However, this is not an express aim of the translation as this type of translation lies outside the scope of this paper and the skills of the director. Also,

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<sup>219</sup> Kwaito is a form of South African popular music. Seen as the “first cultural expression of the post-Apartheid generation, it is a mixture of African rhythms, house music and American hop” (Khan 2010:151).

<sup>220</sup> Boeremusiek is a form of South African country music in which the musical instruments mainly comprise the accordion, the concertina and guitar (Froneman 2012:53).



since there were time and budget constraints which extended to both the musical director and band such changes were beyond the reach of this translation.

Therefore, the meaning created by the use of the motifs and the layering and interweaving of musical themes in the score will be left as is for the purposes of this translation.

#### 4.3.4 Dances

The use of kinesics (movement and gesture) as sign system is most important in regards to the translation of *Bat Boy*. This is because (as discussed in section 4.2.4) unlike the other elements of music, lyrics and dialogue which are prescribed to by the score and script, the role played by dance or movement is more flexible. As discussed in Chapter 3.3 it can be assumed that the function of the choreographer is to interpret the encoded gestic text in the playtext. Whilst this gestic text (as discussed above in section 4.2.4) is implied by the other elements – the music, singing and scenic action, there has to be an allowance for different interpretations subject to each individual choreographer's frame of reference (also discussed in Chapter 3.3). Thus, in the context of this translated playtext, the choreographer can intuit the gestic text whilst making the choreography and movement indicative of the South African context. The question begs: where does one start to try and decipher the relative kinesics of the South African multicultural so that the movements used in the musical will be recognizable as 'South African'? Sharon Friedman – dance lecturer and academic – in her article *Navigating the byways of polyculturalism – whose dance are we teaching in South African schools?* (2009) paraphrases a question posed by Antjie Krog<sup>221</sup> 'Is there such a thing as the South African dance? Two-step? Toyi-toyi? Tickiedraai?' and speculates if it is something to be invented as in the 'toyikiehiphopdraai' (ibid 141)?

Young choreographer and scholar Nicola Elliot in her paper at the *2008 Confluences 5* conference hosted by the University of Cape Town posited that "[d]ance language like verbal language plays a seminal role in constructing identity" (Friedman 2009:136) and it can be extrapolated that for the purposes of this translation the

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<sup>221</sup> Antjie Krog is a South African poet and authoress (Friedman 2009:1)

performers would be called upon to access their own cultural codes to reference movement and gesture known to their own cultural or ethnic groupings. These movements and gestures would then be incorporated into their performance to help create the kinesics of their characters. These movements can be used to advantage to signify the cultural groupings and their associated features which would be recognizable to the target audience. For example, in the song “Another Dead Cow” which in its country folk music style bears some resemblance to Boeremusiek, the use of the *tiekiedraai* would be employed for the Afrikaans farmer characters.<sup>222</sup>

However, as per the criticisms of multiculturalism advanced in Chapter 3.3, Liane Loots (2006:94) points out that separation can have the effect of “isolating dance styles and their practitioners in a remembered colonial image of ideal racial and gendered stereotype of cultural practice”. The most scathing criticisms of such multicultural dance stagings belong ironically to the 1994 inauguration of South Africa’s first black president, Nelson Mandela, directed by returning exile Welcome Msoomi (Gevisser 1995:9). Both Gevisser (*ibid*) and Loots (2006:93) describe the multicultural spectacle where female Bharatnatyam<sup>223</sup> dancers stood next to traditional, male Ngoma<sup>224</sup> dancers, and ballerinas in tutus moved to the beat of African drummers but bemoan the fact that no actual mixing or integration of style or practitioners was taking place.

Whilst the dance styles, steps and gestures common to specific cultures found within the South African multiculture can be used as an advantageous tool to signify character within the context of this translation (in which the employment of character stereotypes has the explicit function of interrogating those stereotypes) cognizance must be taken of this translation’s intercultural aim to promote the desire for dialogue and exchange between cultures. Amongst others, the opportunity for this arises specifically within the opening number of the playtext. As discussed in section 4.2.1

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<sup>222</sup> The ‘*tiekiedraai*’ is a fast dance in which couples link arms and make turns (‘*draai*’ being the Afrikaans term for turn) in the space of a ‘*tickey*’ (small coin the size of a current one-cent piece), usually to the accompaniment of ‘Boeremusiek’ or South African country music in which the musical instruments mainly comprise the accordion, the concertina and guitar (Froneman 2012:53).

<sup>223</sup> Bharatnatyam is a popular classical Indian dance form which has become a symbol of India and is practised all over the world including South Africa (Radhakrishnan 2003:537)

<sup>224</sup> The term ‘Ngoma’ refers to the tradition line formation dances that Zulu warriors performed before going into battle (Loots 2006:101).

this 'prologue of sorts' introduces the plot and main textual themes as well as the style of the piece. It is also told in flashback by the performers who have already learned the lessons the show is yet to introduce to the audience.

Whilst the style of the music at this point is rock,<sup>225</sup> there are also gospel<sup>226</sup> elements in certain sections of the number and since the show itself sits within the realm of musical theatre (which immediately invokes intercultural codes as per section 2.7 of this study) the choreography of this piece needs to reflect not only the dramatic purpose of the piece but also the interculturalism of the translated context. Whilst I am not advocating a complete dance fusion for as Loots (2006:94) points out fusion occurs when "elements of two or more cultures mix together to such a degree that a new society, language or genre of art emerges" but am suggesting an integration of some of the broad styles available which are part of South African cultural expression. With this in mind a very brief overview of some uniquely South African styles of dance is necessary.

Pantsula<sup>227</sup> emerged in the 1950's and 60's from the Sotho dances Mquaquanga and Marabi influenced by American jazz. It was originally performed by groups of men and featured high energy, quick stepping (Myburgh 1993:1-16). More intricate footwork was introduced through the Tswana dances along with movements related to other "tribal" dances (Khomo 2014:[sp]).<sup>228</sup> This "popular dance form" (Craighead 2010:270) has developed a much wider following, now being performed by both genders and people all ages. Pantsula can be divided into three separate styles. 'Western Style' is the most standard form, closest to the original where the feet shuffle, move and jump as the dancers move in and out of geometric formations (Myburgh 1993:1-16). A slower steady beat is kept when performing 'Slow Poison'

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<sup>225</sup> Rock music originated as 'Rock and Roll' and is a genre of popular music influenced by Rhythm and Blues as well as country music (Studwell & Lonergan 1999:1).

<sup>226</sup> Gospel music is a genre of Christian music generated from the African American religious experience. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and through radio, this form of music moved into popular culture, developing a large following (BBC Religions 2011:[sp]). There are traditional moves associated with this form of music such as rhythmical steps with the arms pushing upwards in a 'praising' gesture.

<sup>227</sup> The term 'Pantsula' is derived from a Zulu word meaning to waddle like a duck and a flat-footed move with the buttocks sticking out behind the body is common in this dance form.

<sup>228</sup> Thabiso Khomo is a renowned South African dancer and choreographer with expert knowledge of Pantsula and Kwaito. This information was received from him in personal communication (2014.07.13).

although as in 'Western Style' the arms stay stationary as the lower body moves intricately. As Pantsula was danced to international pop music, the most recent form 'Futhuza' is interculturally infused with elements of American breakdancing and hiphop and has also incorporated the somewhat disjointed, sometimes fluid, robotic motion of popping and locking (ibid).

Whilst Pantsula had emerged from the township shebeens<sup>229</sup> where social dancers had dressed in their finest outfits including Florsheim shoes, Brentwood pants and Pringle tops<sup>230</sup> (Khomo 2014:[sp]), in the 80s and 90s Pantsula dress incorporated new trends like tycoon suits, Chuck Taylors<sup>231</sup> and spoties<sup>232</sup>. Later, and in keeping with the intercultural feel of Pantsula, dancers sported Italian influenced, crushed linen pants and silk shirts along with Italian shoe brands like Superga (Khomo 2014:[sp]).

After the end of Apartheid, Pantsula persisted as an expression of cultural roots for many black South Africans, although becoming more popular in the white community too. Then, the first cultural expression of the post-Apartheid generation began to take form (Khan 2010: 151) and the Kwaito<sup>233</sup> music phenomenon was born (Friedman 2009:137). Although seen as a sub-genre of hip-hop (Khan 2010:151), this blend of African rhythms, house music and American hop (ibid 15) gave expression to the urban youth in South Africa and along with it developed an accompanying dance form also known as Kwaito. Just as its musical antecedent, which encourages artists and the audience to "become aware of the many perspectives in the world that contradict, complement, affirm, negate and confirm their views of life" (Khan 2010:159) and to draw on the experience and values of other cultures, so too does Kwaito - the dance form - incorporate Pantsula, elements of a central African dance

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<sup>229</sup> The word shebeen derives from an Irish term meaning 'illicit whiskey' and originally referred to an illegal bar selling alcoholic beverages without a license. Many shebeens in South Africa are now licenced but prefer to keep the same name to preserve what is seen as cultural heritage (Stanley-Niaah 2007:193-217).

<sup>230</sup> All brand names.

<sup>231</sup> Chuck Taylor was a basketball player turned shoe salesman for Converse. He upgraded the basketball sports shoe in terms of flexibility and support and his name was eventually included in the design hence his name becoming synonymous for Converse All Stars (Freeman 2006:[sp]).

<sup>232</sup> The term 'spoties' refers to the narrow brimmed cloth hats often of the Kangol brand (Fourie 2005:[sp]).

<sup>233</sup> The term Kwaito derives from the Afrikaans term 'kwaad' meaning 'angry' or 'cross' (Fourie2005:[sp]).

Kwassa Kwassa,<sup>234</sup> hip hop and locking and popping. Some styles within Kwaito are known as Manyisa, Twalatsa, Skere (from the Afrikaans meaning scissors) and Thobela (Khomo 2014:[sp]).

In this all important opening number elements of Kwaito, Kwassa Kwassa, hip hip and gospel should be infused within the presentation frame of musical theatre dance to create a spectacle which not only entertains the audience but immediately locates the playtext within the South African situation whilst continually alluding to the musical theatre form. In other words, the movement sign systems relevant to the South African context will be used to signify location all the while being used within the textual codes of musical theatre necessary to uphold the fictive discourse of the playtext, ensuring the faithfulness of the translation.

This approach is also relevant to other sections of the choreography, such as the 'strut' in "Show You a Thing or Two" amongst others. These will be discussed in section 6.1.1.3 which provides examples of choreography in the resultant translation.

However, before moving on to a description of the translation process on the level of the *mise-en-scène*, one final observation regarding the choreography of the piece must be made. As referred to at the beginning of this section, if it is assumed that the choreographer's work is to interpret the gestic text and that the gestic text is governed by the fictive discourse of the piece, then the choreographer should try to adhere to the conventions implied by the fictive discourse. As suggested in section 4.2.4 the original playtext uses the signifying system of dance to comment not only on the themes of the work but also on the very form of the show. Thus, even within the translation the choreographer should be mindful that the presentational nature of dance in musical theatre should be observed so as to continue to question the medium through which the show is presented. This has a definite application in the translated playtext for as has been pointed out previously, the validity of musical theatre and in specific the hybridized South African 'township musical' and the

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<sup>234</sup> Kwassa Kwassa was originally a dance to Soukous Music (linked to the Cuban Rumba) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo that started in the 1970's. The dance style is generated from the pelvis and the hips move back and forth while the hands move to follow the hips. It spread to the rest of Africa and was very popular in the late 1980's.

continuing relevance of crossover theatre has been strongly questioned in the South African theatrical context.

The purpose of this chapter was to undertake a critical review of the playtext with reference firstly to the elements (dramatic shape, character, dialogue and stage directions) as put forward by Aston and Savona (2013:10) as the starting points of semiotic analysis. The original playtext was also analyzed with regards to the further textual elements particular to the musical theatre genre: the lyrics, score and dances. The start of the translation process as set out in *Table 1* was then explored using the general ideologico-aesthetic codes of the South African situation as well as the pertinent codes governing the South African theatrical framework so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the South African context. This chapter therefore formed the theoretical examination of the playtext within the dramatic discourse. This was intended to facilitate the first tier of translation and thus Chapter 4 concludes the second research phase. However, since *Bat Boy – the Musical* is a theatrical production and as such, translation must also necessarily occur on the level of the *mise-en-scène* (Pavis 1989:25). This has been referred to as the second tier of translation in this study and it falls within the theatrical discourse. The following Chapters 5 and 6 will therefore capture the third research phase or the practice-led part of the research. Chapter 5 describes how the performers were able to inform the development of the translation in the rehearsal process by using their own cultural and lingual backgrounds and Chapter 6 describes the resulting translation including the pictorial and auditory sign systems as indicated by *Table 1* in Chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 5

### **SECOND TRANSLATION TIER**

#### **Engaging the cast**

Chapter 4 described the theoretical examination of the dramatic text in order to facilitate the first tier of translation. Not only were certain factors, signs and sign systems within the written text that are familiar to the target culture (as ascertained by the cast) and lend themselves to the translation identified, but also specific elements from the playtext which are foreign to the target culture. So too, in the previous chapter, were possible adjustments for such foreign elements suggested in order to inform the translation process. However, without prior knowledge of the performers, the potential shifts of the elements as provided for in this first tier of translation were only options which were to be considered by the ensemble in the rehearsal process. A main aim of the rehearsal process was to allow for the multicultural and multilingual cast to source their diverse, individual cultural backgrounds and unique social codes in order to facilitate the second tier of translation as provided for in *Table 1*. As indicated by Blocks 6 and 8 of *Table 1*, this second tier of translation which occurred on the level of the *mise-en-scène*, falls within the performance sphere – or theatrical discourse.

This chapter will describe aspects of the rehearsal process which were used to effect the start of the second tier of translation whilst Chapter 6 will discuss the shifts made throughout the playtext of *Bat Boy* and the rationale behind those shifts. The following chapter will illustrate the resultant performed translation through the pictorial and auditory sign systems as listed per *Table 1* at the end of Chapter 3.

#### **5.1 Aims of this chapter**

This chapter will focus on how the performers were encouraged to source their own experiences in order to facilitate the translation of the playtext and will include reflexive, self-observation from both the director and the cast.

- This chapter traces the methods used by the director to guide the performers through the workshop process in order to facilitate the translation of the playtext. Since the notion of Stanislavski's magic 'if' was used as the



theoretical baseline for the translation of the characters within the playtext and the point of departure for the exercises designed, a brief explanation of the principle of the magic 'if' is necessary.

- The chapter outlines examples of some of the exercises and improvisations used to enable the performers to draw from their own perspectives and paradigms with the intention of, firstly, developing characters congruent to the original American characters in the script but which are understandable within the South African paradigm; secondly, enhancing the shift of the entire show to resonate within the South African context and thirdly promoting intercultural communication within the cast initially but with a view to possibly extending this interchange to the broader audience.

It must be mentioned that *Bat Boy* as a piece of theatre lends itself to an organic workshop process as it was originally a workshopped piece put together by members of the repertory theatre company, the Actors' Gang. As put forward in section 4.1 this company uses a performance method called 'The Style' which combines elements of commedia dell'arte and vaudeville and is derived from the work of the Theatre du Soleil in Paris, the political agitprop theatre of the 1930's and the Off Off-Broadway movement of the 1960's (Miller 2011:179). Whilst presentational in nature 'The Style' focuses on developing emotional states and creating truth in order not only to entertain but also to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about society and culture (theactorsgan.com [sa]:our history).<sup>235</sup> Not only does the playtext of *Bat Boy* examine the four emotional states which 'The Style' emphasises (Happy/Sad/Anger/Fear), but 'The Style' also blends easily with the presentational nature of the musical theatre genre as discussed in Chapter 2.

According to Miller (2011:179) 'The Style' was instrumental in the writing and the execution of *Bat Boy* and I contend, contributed largely to the fictive discourse of the piece. For the purposes of this translation, it can be determined that the elements of

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<sup>235</sup> In response to budget cuts which eliminated arts programmes in Los Angeles schools, the Actors' Gang provides free in-school, after school and summer programs to students in the area as well as working directly in economically disenfranchised communities providing theatre programmes to children that develop social skills, peer support, non-violent expression of anger and tension and support for academic success (theactorsgan.com [sa]:education). In its commitment to enriching and enlightening its community, the Actors' Gang runs free Theatre in the Park as well as managing a Prison Project which is committed to the rehabilitation of prisoners.

'The Style' resonate quite clearly with our 'crossover theatre'. As discussed in section 2.7.2, South African crossover theatre emphasizes elements of mime, music and narrative (Hauptfleisch 1997:60) and developed expressly out of the need to create a platform – where none was available, politically – to contribute to the dialogue about, and artistic expressions around, society and culture. In fact, Van Graan (2011:280) lists certain characteristics of protest theatre – the main forerunner of crossover theatre, which could be applied to the original playtext of *Bat Boy* as developed through the medium of 'The Style' and which include:

- Didacticism – the primacy of the message over the theatrical vehicle;
- Presentational combination of music, dance, poetry and theatre to advance storytelling;
- Versatility of the actors playing a variety of parts;
- Characters often represent caricatures or stereotypes rather than multi-faceted characters;
- No large sets, props or fantastical costumes;
- Use of the workshopping method in accordance with democratic principles rather than one intransigent writer.

The techniques of our crossover theatre, 'The Style' and that of Stanislavski's magic 'if' are not mutually exclusive and this section will indicate how these practices with their common search for truth in performance may be combined. It was through this rehearsal process that the second tier of translation began and it was expected that here the cast members would consider the proposed shifts as set out in Chapter 4 and either extend these or develop new shifts so that their characters and dialogue (lyrics included) would be more indicative of contemporary South African cultures. The resultant translation will be discussed in the following chapter. Before moving on to describe the tools used to engage the cast in the translation process, a brief outline of Stanislavski's magic 'if' is necessary.

## **5.2 Brief introduction to Constantin Stanislavski and his technique of the magic 'if'**

Constantin Sergeyevich Stanislavski (17/01/1863 – 07/08/1938) was a Russian actor and theatre director whose system of acting developed to international acclaim. After

his works were translated into English in the 1920's and 30's, his techniques began to dominate acting training in the West. In 1925, two of his former students founded the American Laboratory Theatre and one of their students Lee Strasberg went on to co-found the Group Theatre and put some of Stanislavski's theories into practise transforming the "Russian's System into the American's Method" (Carnicke 2009:4). However Elizabeth Hapgood, original translator of Stanislavski's work, points out he only claimed to have set down the principles that all great actors have used – whether consciously or unconsciously (1979:4) and that while he never intended for his statements to be taken as rigid rules applicable to all situations his objective was always the same:

“to help an actor to develop all his capacities – intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional – so that he will be enabled to fill out his roles to the proportions of whole human beings, characters who will have the power to move the public to laughter, to tears, to unforgettable emotions” (1979:4).

Jean Benedetti (2008:xv-xxii) explains why Stanislavski's system has often been misunderstood; citing not only the differences in various translations and Stanislavski's jargon but also his fragmentary and constant rewriting up until his death as well as the problems of editing due to publishers' space constraints and other political influences along with the confusion of his system with Strasberg's Method. However, Stanislavski's system can be seen as an attempt to apply certain natural laws of acting so that the actor can bring his subconscious powers of expression into play (Stanislavsky 1986:33). According to David Magarshack's translation there are ten elements which make up the core of his system: 'if', given circumstances, imagination, attention, relaxation of muscles, pieces and problems, truth and belief, emotional memory, communication and extraneous aids (ibid). According to Sakhnovsky however, the magic 'if' is one of the nine key techniques of Stanislavski's system (Carnicke 2009:149). While some might disagree as to the number of core elements in Stanislavski's system what is clear is that the magic 'if' is an integral part of that system. In order for the actor to create a believable performance he must sincerely believe that everything on the stage is true:

“Just as a little girl believes in the existence of her doll and in the life in and around her, so the actor, the moment the creative ‘if’ appears is transported from the plane of real life to the different kind of life he has created in his imagination. Once he believes in it, he is ready to start his creative work” (Stanislavsky 1986:23).<sup>236</sup>

While every actor will know that the stage and the scenery and props are mere pretences, through the use of the magic ‘if’ they can make strong theatrical choices that would seem believable and convincing to the audience (Sawoski 2012:7). As Stanislavski (2008:48) explains: the magic ‘if’ is the lever that lifts the actor out of the real world and into the world of creativity. This magic ‘if’ allows the actor to ask the question: “what would I do if I find myself in this circumstance?” (Carnicke 2009:221) or what would have happened if the given circumstances of the play had really happened (Stanislavsky 1986:48). The actor must ask ‘if’ I am such and such a character, what is the true nature of my feelings and therefore what are the correct physical movements for me now” (ibid 93). The answering of these questions by the actor leads to a more believable performance being communicated to the audience. However, Stanislavski does observe that it takes much devotion to exercises and years of work to achieve this (ibid)!

Many such exercises are set out in his work, for Stanislavski believed that in order for his books to assist young actors they should be practical rather than theoretical. They are set in an acting school where he is the teacher and guides young actors through his system while explaining the psycho-techniques by examples of dramatic scenes – which he invented himself or took from other plays – and discussing the actors’ reactions to them (ibid 78).

While the magic ‘if’ as well as the given circumstances and the internal and external action that arises from them are important elements of the system they are not the only factors in an actor’s work. Stanislavski posits that the actor requires, amongst others, such skills as imagination, attention and the feeling for truth and insists that

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<sup>236</sup> Although the masculine pronoun is used in the quotation, this would apply equally to actors of either gender.

the art of controlling all these elements of psycho-technique demands much practise and experience (Stanislavsky 1986:36). Even as imagination is documented as a separate element of the system (as listed in the second paragraph of this section above) Stanislavski advances that the actor's best friend is imagination "with its magic 'if' and the 'given circumstances'. For it not only adds to what the author, producer and others have omitted, but makes it all come to life" (ibid 37/38). It can be deduced that all the elements are to a certain extent inter-related for even in discussing another element of the system, the relaxation of the muscles, Stanislavski insists that each pose must not only be checked by the muscle-controller to see if it is free from strain and would read as natural from the audience's point of view but must also be "justified by the invention of his imagination, the given circumstances and 'if'. When this is done the pose ceases to be a pose and becomes action" (1986:45) for Stanislavski believed there was no place on stage for a pose.

While the circumstances as set out in *Bat Boy – the Musical* are by no means ordinary or even necessarily believable, the authors go to great lengths to insist that underlying the dark humour, and through the use of 'The Style', the pathos of the piece lies in the actors' dedication to and belief in their situation and the tragedy arising therefrom. In order to create a believability and truthfulness on the stage and to allow the audience to suspend disbelief and be immersed in the poignant and passionate exploration of the human condition the rehearsal process aims to help the actors cast in the production to use the notion of the magic 'if'. This truthfulness, which is imperative for the success of this particular production, can be discovered through the magic 'if'. Stanislavski (1986:189) states that truthfulness is not regarded as a separate entity in his system because he believed it to be the very foundation of the art of the stage and that it has its own qualities in each individual actor. The magic 'if' enables the actor to blend his own powers and thoughts with that of his part or character (ibid).

However, the use of the magic 'if' in this study on theatrical translation will have a further purpose. Yes, the actors will use the magic 'if' to ask themselves how they would react if placed in the character's situation. However due to the translation of the text from one cultural paradigm to another, the actors will first be allowed to use the magic 'if' to ask themselves how they can alter the given cultural circumstances

– although not the through line of the plot – to suit themselves. ‘If’ my character was South African as I am and was in the South African context, what would the true nature of my feelings be and also what would the correct physical movements be for me? It could be deduced that drawing the source text towards the target culture or rather bringing the specific ideological or cultural context of the characters closer to the actors themselves makes for an easier transition into the character and therefore easier to achieve the merging of self and part as advocated by Stanislavski (1986:193). The intention of incorporating the technique of the magic ‘if’ was to create more believable performances on the part of the actors and therefore the greater success of the translation.

### **5.3 The Rehearsal process**

The rehearsal process was initially divided into two phases. Since a large part of the translation had to be shaped by the individual performers themselves, the performers needed to engage with their own histories and backgrounds to translate their characters and the production *Bat Boy* into the South African context. Thus, in the first phase of rehearsal the cast were requested to investigate and own their own, personal cultural stereotyping and resultant prejudices so that the relevant themes could be explored in depth throughout (and perhaps subverted in) the performance of the show. In order to achieve this, various tools incorporating the techniques of the magic ‘if’, ‘The Style’ and crossover theatre were used and these will be elaborated on below. The second phase of rehearsal (although incorporating the aspects developed in the first phase) involved the actual staging of the production, the learning of songs and harmonies, dance routines and so forth. Whilst this phase will not be discussed per se, the resulting elements were apparent in the performed production and will be evidenced in the following chapter.

#### **5.3.1 The objectives of the initial workshop rehearsals:**

1. For the performers to explore their own worldview
2. For the performers to find the common ground between them by encouraging listening to and acceptance of others so as to fully grasp the message of the production
3. To foster trust between the cast members

4. To free the performers from inhibitions and to encourage them to allow their own cultural codes to guide them
5. For the performers to examine stereotypes and decide how they could be incorporated into our production
6. To release the performers from pre-conceived notions about themselves and/or the playtext and to allow them to interact with the text from their own cultural paradigm.

In order to achieve the above, the use of the following devices were employed:

### 5.3.2 Journaling

The cast were asked to document their process. To this end they were asked not only to record their experiences and thoughts related thereto, but also to write down their responses to specific questions as determined by the director.<sup>237</sup> The object of the questions was twofold. Firstly, they were focused so as to allow the performers to discover their own worldview in order to align their characters within the translated context and secondly, to enable the diverse cast to find the common ground.

With regards to the former objective the performers had to explore their own worldview and that of their characters in order to facilitate the process of translating their characters into the South African context. In their book *Acting in Musical Theatre: A comprehensive course*, Joe Deer and Rocky Dal Vera (2008:15-19) cite the 'Given circumstances' as the first fundamental of the acting process. They declaim that first, a full investigation of the facts of the world of the script must be made. This should include the plot, the characters, their relationships and the social and physical environment of the story. Then the actor can start to infer or deduce information that may not be implicitly stated and that "inference is the beginning of entering the land of IF" (ibid emphasis in original). Deer and Dal Vera (ibid 18/19) suggest creating a list of worldviews<sup>238</sup> that are shared by actor and character as well as a list of where the two worldviews are divergent. The actor should then also address how his<sup>239</sup> daily experience would change if he had the same worldview as

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<sup>237</sup> Please see Appendix 7 for a review of the journal questions.

<sup>238</sup> Please see Appendix 7 for a review of the questions used to explore the principle of worldview.

<sup>239</sup> Please note that although I have chosen to use the male pronoun, I am referring here to actors of either gender.



the character. However, Deer and Dal Vera (ibid) also point out that as the actor places himself in the worldview of the character it must be consistent with the circumstances as expressed by the writers.

In the development of the translation of *Bat Boy*, the process had to be organised slightly differently. Whilst it was accepted that the plot or story line was to remain exactly as originally expressed by the writers, the given circumstances (with regards to where the story takes place and how the characters articulate within those translated given circumstances) were to be altered. The performers therefore had to answer three separate questions in their journals when translating the worldview of their characters. Firstly, what is my worldview? What is the worldview of the original character? Thirdly, how can I use my personal cultural worldview to inform the character I will be playing so that my character resonates authentically within the South African context? Once the South African worldview(s) of the character had been established and taking into account the character's purpose or actantial function within the playtext, the performers can then ask themselves the magic 'if' question: If I was this character how would I react in this situation? The use of the magic 'if' question would most certainly help to create a more believable performance but since the circumstances and worldview of the character are not far removed from the performer's own, the answers to the magic 'if' questions should not be too hard to find. This in essence, would add to the truthfulness in performance and enhance the resonance of the characters within the South African situation. Since truthfulness is a pre-requisite of 'the Style' the use of the magic 'if' is not only imperative in the creation of character but also in the preserving of the fictive discourse of the original piece. Thus, these techniques speak directly to the success of the translation as just that, a translation of the original work. For as discussed in Chapter 3 the directorial intention is not to create a stand-alone production but to remain faithful to the original while translating the content from one cultural paradigm to another, as if the work was created in the current South African context.

The journals were also used as a tool to explore the principle of endowment. The cast members had to list the five most important people in their lives and the three most important objects that they cherished (not necessarily of monetary value) and explain why – in one sentence. Then they had to do the same for their characters.

Deer and Dal Vera (2008:19) posit that in a musical, the performers are in a relationship with everyone and everything from the smallest prop to the largest lead character. They suggest that the performers describe the people and objects that they interact with – this is the process of endowment (ibid 20). They point out that when an actor (as character) characterizes another person or object, he endows a relationship. While this characterization may or may not necessarily be true, it need only be true for the character (ibid 22). Heeding this, the cast was also encouraged to endow other characters with metaphoric titles such as ‘my angel’, ‘my rock’ or ‘my nemesis’ which aided the development of relationships between characters. All the journaling processes were discussed in rehearsal times and with regards to the process of endowment it emerged that, as the relationships between characters were made clearer, individual characters became more distinct. It was also discovered that just as relationships change over time, the process of endowment could be used to signify and clarify such changing relationships. For example, at different times in the show, Shelley could refer to Edgar as ‘my pet’ or ‘my love’ or ‘our saviour’.

The purpose of the latter objective of the journal questions was to provide a platform for the introduction to the main concept of the show, the futility of intolerance (as discussed in Chapter 4.2). Although it was reiterated that the sharing of personal information was completely voluntary, rehearsal time was allocated to discuss the performers’ answers to the relevant questions which revolved around discrimination and acceptance. In the sharing of their experiences of discrimination and bullying the performers reached across cultures and found parallels and connections between them. In so doing, they identified the destructive force fuelled by prejudice and aligned themselves with the message of Edgar’s journey and the production itself.<sup>240</sup>

In the discussion that revolved around the questions regarding love and revenge, the cast concluded that the emotional connotation most associated with love was happiness and that with the loss of love was heartbreak or sadness (also possibly anger), while the emotional impetus for revenge was fear or anger. As director I

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<sup>240</sup> Please see Chapter 7, the critical review on the study which describes an interesting inference drawn from this particular exercise.

pointed out that while love and revenge form the driving forces behind all the characters' actions in *Bat Boy* these four emotional states happiness, sadness, fear and anger correlate exactly to the emotional states employed by 'The Style' and that as performers they should constantly be aware of which state was driving their character at which particular time and record this in the relevant journal entries.

### 5.3.3 Ice-breakers

The open and frank discussions necessary to enable the journaling process would not have been possible if were not for another device employed in the rehearsal process: the ice-breaker. Ice-breakers are exercises generally used as 'warm up'<sup>241</sup> or orientation exercises especially when participants in a workshop do not know each other. Although in this case most of the cast members were generally familiar with each other (there were one or exceptions where students in different years didn't know each other) the rationale for the using of ice-breakers was to engender trust amongst the cast members and allow them to see each other in a new light. This was not only to free the performers from inhibitions so that they could allow their own cultural heritages to guide their character creation, but also to foster dialogue and communication as demanded by the intercultural theatrical arena within which the translated playtext articulates.

One such exercise, called '**Face to Face**' was used at the start of rehearsals. The performers were asked to form two lines and to turn towards the opposite line with each person staring at their opposite. There was an initial period of giggling and fidgeting, which are – amongst other signs of tension and loss of concentration – completely normal (Schotz 1998:13) and it was agreed in the discussion afterwards that such a seemingly simple exercise was deceptively difficult. However it was noted (specifically by student 003 but agreed to by a majority of the others) that as the exercise was prolonged, the person ceased to be a 'whole', becoming instead a sum of individual features: eyes, ears, mouth, nose, beauty spot, freckles etc. While it could be assumed that this visual breaking up of the other into their component parts may have had an alienating effect quite the opposite was experienced. It was

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<sup>241</sup> A warm up exercise is performed at the beginning of a theatre class or workshop, activating right brain (artistic) activity and giving participants the "opportunity to tune in to their creative nature and readies them for the adventures ahead" (Hurley 2009:3).

concluded that whilst the individual parts may differ from person to person in size, shape or colour, in the mere fact that we are all composed of these parts a sense of sameness was experienced. Whilst the main objective of the exercise had been to engender trust between the performers, this conclusion demonstrated that the performers had begun to probe the concepts of diversity and acceptance intrinsic to the production.

Another ice-breaker exercise, known as '**You and Me**', was employed in the rehearsal process. In the traditional version of this game, the group is divided into pairs and each partner has to tell the other something about themselves (Schotz 1998:15). There is no pressure regarding what information the pairs relate and it can range from the completely arbitrary such as "I'm wearing a blue shirt" to a deeply held secret. After this the performers take turns to relate that information to the group as a whole. This often results in consultations regarding permission to pass on certain information and then an ensuing sense of camaraderie not only between the pairs but within the group as a whole (ibid). The version in this rehearsal process was played with a slight variation. The larger group was divided into groups of three and the smaller groups sat in a circle. Each person had to tell the person on their right three things about themselves while listening simultaneously to the person on their left impart their information. Then, separately, each person had to relate the information they had heard to the group. We repeated this exercise a few times interchanging group members.

The purpose of this exercise was not only to allow the cast members to become more familiar with each other and begin to form the bonds of trust needed to perform as an ensemble but also, as discussed afterwards, to foster the realization that listening is a skill. It had become clearly apparent that this was a skill that some performers possessed with more proficiency than others. In acting, both in improvisation and in performing set pieces, listening is a critical skill but in musical theatre listening is crucial. Not only does the performer have to listen for and react to vocal cues but also has to listen for musical cues, be able to count musical bars whilst performing as well as listen for the correct placing of intricate harmonies all while singing on pitch, dancing choreography, staying true to character and telling

the story. This exercise was a good introduction to the complexity of the genre within which the performers would be working.

It was through exercises like these that trust between the cast members was fostered. In this 'safe space',<sup>242</sup> the performers were released from any personal inhibitions and could allow their organic instincts to guide them as they continued to explore their own personal heritage and paradigms to support the translation of the playtext within the musical theatre genre. This exploration was accomplished through the use of improvisations and will be discussed below.

### 5.3.4 Improvisations

As indicated previously, a main function of the rehearsal process was to allow the cast to draw on their own cultural perspectives and in so doing, to be able to create characters recognisable in the South African context. This function was articulated through the use of improvisations. However, before the cast embarked on any improvisations, one of the most widely established techniques of improvisation was explained: the '**yes...and**' rule (Magerko et al 2009:122). Often considered the basic principle of improvisation the '**yes..and**' rule is always to accept a new plot development proposed by a fellow performer and then to build on it (Sawyer 2004:18). Negating a statement or action made by another performer, known as denying, and blocking are violations of this rule. When followed, this principle can be a powerful tool used to train the mind for accepting change and for generating innovation which can be useful not only when playing theatre games but also when applied to other spheres of life (Taylor 2011:[sp]). Ivana Taylor (ibid) also posits that listening is another key tenet of improvisation. This is affirmed by R. Keith Sawyer (2004:18) who posits that when actors try and playwright in advance or predict the next dialogue turns they stop listening and the scenes stagnate which defeats the purpose of improvisation.

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<sup>242</sup> It was constantly reiterated that the cast circle was a 'safe place' and that within the circle the performers had carte blanche to share and to experiment without judgement or recrimination. It was also understood that whatever occurred within our safe space was to be respected and had no place outside of the circle.

An example of an improvisation used in the rehearsal process that allows the performers to explore cultural contexts and the associated stereotypes is called '**Who's who?**' (Schotz 1998:117). The cast members were divided into groups of five or six. One member of each group was made to leave the room and the others decided upon a character for that performer. When the performer returned the others created a scene around that character until the performer guessed who it was that they were supposed to be. The only rule imposed on this game for the purposes of this rehearsal process was that the character had to be some-one/thing common to the South African situation. The game, apart from encouraging performers to make quick decisions regarding getting into character also aids performers in interpreting social or cultural contexts. In this way the cast members were able to explore the stereotypes found in our cultural heritage in a non-threatening and respectful way. This exercise was also useful specifically for the cast members playing the townfolk as they could then easily reference the stereotypical viewpoints, accents and gestures of a certain type of character.

Another improvisation used, which explores relationships between characters, is a game called '**Family portrait**'. The cast was divided into groups of four or five. As categories were called out the performers had to gather in a freeze frame tableau as if for a family photograph. The objective of the improvisation is that the relationships between the members of each 'family' or persons involved in the situation have to be clearly defined. Categories ranged widely and included traditional family associations (parent/child/grandparent) amongst others such as wedding party, neighbours, marine platoon, pet shelter, the office, model shoot, bigfoot/hunter, presidential speech, mad scientist laboratory, courtroom drama, assembly line, blind date, *Monsters Inc*,<sup>243</sup> sinking ship etc. This improvisation not only teaches quick thinking but also allows the performers to represent relationships clearly through body language and positioning as well as teaching the performers to define their own character in relation to others.

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<sup>243</sup> *Monsters Inc* (2001) was a Disney Pixar computer-animated comedy film that featured talking monsters. *Monsters University*, a prequel, was released in 2013 (boxofficemojo.com [sa]:[sp]).

A further example of an improvisation, which examines character creation, used in the rehearsal process is a game called **'You'd never guess'**. Again the larger group was divided into smaller groups of three or four. Each of the performers is told a secret about the others of which he/she is himself/herself unaware, for example that his or her breath smells bad. A scene is then played off, for example the characters are at a party, or waiting at the bus-stop or in a queue at the bank or waiting to be seated at a restaurant etc. The performers should be able to guess what it is about themselves that attracts/repels/interests those around them while maintaining a character they have created as well as giving clues to the others regarding their specific traits. Apart from investigating character creation, this improvisation also explores the use of stereotypes and stereotypical reactions to others for as Amiel Schotz (1998:120) asserts that a basic aspect of society is that "we all have private opinions of the people around us that colour (sic) our attitudes towards them even if we keep our thoughts to ourselves". This improvisation is quite complex as it also touches on the formation of relationships. As director I felt that the cast did not quite master this game, sinking instead to playing the basest of stereotypes or neglecting the formation of their own character and only playing the reaction to the other characters' secrets. I had intended however of returning to this improvisation at a later stage and seeing how the cast had developed throughout the rehearsal process. However, elements such as this will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 7 which is concerned with the critical review of the study.

Through the use of the aforementioned devices: journaling, ice-breakers and improvisations the cast were encouraged to interact with the material from their own cultural perspectives and this formed the basis of the second tier of translation. Along with the techniques of the magic 'if', 'The Style' and crossover theatre, the concepts learned in the improvisations were applied, to greater or lesser success and informed the translation of words, lyrics, movement and gestures, all of which added to the depth of the translation. The actual changes made in the translation of the playtext will be elaborated on in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER 6

### SECOND TRANSLATION TIER

#### The Resultant Translation

Following on from Chapter 3 in which it was argued that, as Pavis (1989:25) indicated, real theatrical translation should take place on the level of the *mise-en-scène* this chapter will not only describe how the translation was effected but include the shifts made throughout the playtext of *Bat Boy* and the rationale behind those shifts.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation surveyed the codes and signs at work in *Bat Boy – the Musical* by taking cognisance of the ideological and aesthetic codes within which the piece operated originally. Chapter 4 also identified which signs need to be altered and offered possible alterations to align the work within the socio-cultural domain to which it was translated. The start of the process of the translation on the level of the *mise-en-scène* was described in Chapter 5 and the consideration of the proposed shifts or the deviations therefrom as well as resultant choices informing the translation, was captured through journaling by both director and performers. Whilst the previous chapter described some of the methods used to facilitate the start of the second tier of translation, this chapter will indicate the resultant performed translation.

It has been pointed out (in Chapter 3) that when attempting translation within the theatrical framework, a linguistics-only approach is insufficient and since theatre texts are so closely linked with their historical, social and cultural contexts a more aesthetics-based orientation which emphasises the cultural and political values should inform the translation process (Aaltonen 2000:3). Thus, as Aston and Savona (2005:100) posit, in order to cross the sign systems of two societies (and in the case of South Africa, the added complexity of heterogeneity within that society), languages, cultures as well as theatrical traditions, the relevant sign systems must be carefully considered.

For the purposes of this translation the application of the sign-systems, hierarchized by the director, would be to create an integrated whole, linked by the directorial vision, in this case, of aiming to allow the audience to relate to the very real journeys of the characters in the unreal situation. This unreal context, or fictive discourse, refers not only to the bizarre premise of the show but also the presentational theatrical medium of musical theatre through which the story is communicated. Whilst remaining 'true' to the fictive discourse (and in so doing substantiate the translation as just that, as opposed to a variation or adaptation), a further aim of the translation was to emphasize the cultural and political values of the individual cast members so as to facilitate the synthesis between varying cultural groups as described in the discussion of intercultural theatre in Chapter 3. As per the table at the end of Chapter 3, the translation will be described taking into consideration the pictorial and auditory sign systems.

In exploring how meaning is created for the spectator, Pavis (1985: 208) devised a questionnaire for a third year seminar course entitled 'Semiological Analysis of Performance'.<sup>244</sup> This questionnaire whilst not utilizing semiotic terminology, was to direct the respondents' attention to aspects of theatrical signification in order to clarify, pragmatically, the application of semiotic processes. The aspects referred to within this questionnaire will be referenced when applicable to the sign systems as discussed below.

### **6.1 The Semiotic Sign-systems used in the translation**

As discussed previously it was never the intention of this study to do an in-depth analysis of semiotics or the use thereof, but only to use the theory as a tool to track the process of the theatrical translation of this particular playtext, *Bat Boy – the Musical*. Chapter 4 provided examples of the relevant ideological, textual and social codes within which the playtext articulates and defined the value or cultural connotations of certain signifiers in the text (dramatic action, character, dialogue). Chapter 5 then described how the performers were guided through the translation process to use the signifiers of their own cultural and social codes to inform the

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<sup>244</sup> Please see appendix 8 for a reproduction of the questionnaire as devised by Pavis.

translation. In contrast, this chapter describes the actual paradigmatic shifts of the sign-systems as set out in *Table 1* which occurred as a result of the translation.<sup>245</sup>

Eco (1977:116) points out that “all the objects, behaviours and words used in theatre have an additional connotative power” proving that, as discussed in Chapter 3, everything on the stage by its nature signifies something else. Therefore, within the theatrical framework, signs need to be hierarchized in order to create clarity of meaning (Aston & Savona 2005:101). A main aim of the directorial process is to prioritize the sign systems contained within the directorial process so as to facilitate the realization of the directorial concept. For the purposes of this study the two main categories of signs in the theatrical discourse, as identified by Tadeuz Kowzan (Nikolorea 2002:1), namely the auditive and the visual or pictorial signs, were used as a starting point for the sign systems considered in the translation of *Bat Boy*.

### 6.1.1 Pictorial Sign Systems

#### 6.1.1.1 Actor as Sign:

Aston and Savona (2005:116-120) posit that the actor has always been considered one of the foremost signifying systems in the theatrical sphere and since the nature of theatre is “as rooted in the physical and sensual, as much as it is in words and ideas” (Fortier 2002:4) the physicality and appearance of the actor is a primary signifying factor. Indeed Elam (1980:17) writes that at the apex of traditional western theatre is the actor and the lead actor “attracts the major part of the spectator’s attention to his own person”. Following Peirce’s theory, as was stressed in Chapter 3, an audience receives and interprets signs employing their own cultural filters (Chandler 2002:39). South Africa is a country previously divided in terms of race and the resultant focus on ethnicity was used to advantage in *Bat Boy*. The casting of certain performers in various roles, as well as their use of the stereotypical accents, physicality and gestures often associated with their own ethnic groupings,

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<sup>245</sup> As explained in Chapter 4.1, any proposed shifts set out in Chapter 4 may well have been coloured by the director’s own cultural experience. Also, as director with final control, it is possible that my own cultural experiences could have impacted the translation of the production as a whole but this was not an express aim of the study. It was hoped however, that any inherent cultural bias on the part of the director would be effectively countered as the multicultural and multilingual cast (sourcing their diverse, individual cultural backgrounds) could offer varying alternatives for any of the suggested shifts.

was used to interrogate preconceived notions of race, class or physical characteristics.

Whilst a primary objective had been to cast a Bat Boy of colour so as to resonate with the struggle for equal rights in South Africa's history, other ethnic stereotypes were used with the express purpose of, through the message of acceptance espoused by the show, negating such stereotypes.<sup>246</sup> Examples of such stereotypes could be seen in student 010's creation of her 'kugel'<sup>247</sup> Lorraine, student 011's Magda and 014's Ntate<sup>248</sup> Modibakgomo. As can be seen from the previous examples and following on from the semiotic principle of the actor as sign, was the transfer of the names of the characters into the South African context which informed an essential part of the translation.<sup>249</sup> Interestingly enough the cast could not decide on a name for the town. The paradox of the name Hope Falls could not be adequately translated into any language to our satisfaction<sup>250</sup> and in the end the decision was made to leave the town un-named so that it could in fact be 'every'town.<sup>251</sup>

#### 6.1.1.2 Visual Design/Scenography:

It was posited in Chapter 3 that linguistic translation occurs by intralingual translation or rewording, interlingual translation as well as intersemiotic

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<sup>246</sup> The use of the stereotypical characters in both the original and the translated playtexts, overtly indicates the us/them binary, a binary expressly eschewed by the message of acceptance championed by the playtext.

<sup>247</sup> The term kugel was originally used to describe a traditional Jewish dish, baked pudding or casserole. The term became used by the elder generation of South African Jews to describe a younger Jewish woman who favoured ostentatious dress instead of traditional Jewish dress values. In current South African slang it has come to be an amusing term describing a materialistic young woman (Britten 2006:198-199) often with a pretentious style of dress.

<sup>248</sup> 'Ntate' is a Sesotho term denoting respect for any adult male.

<sup>249</sup> The translation of the names in the playtext was an organic process but was led by the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the performers. Some performers immediately felt a resonance with the character and the name change seemed easily accessible. For other characters such as the Taylor family the translation occurred as part of a group discussion and the whole cast agreed on the choice of Chester, Charles and Charity Moloi as appropriate for 'gansta' teens. For some performers the choice did not become apparent until much later in the rehearsal process with most of the scenes having been staged such as Ntate Mothibakgomo.

<sup>250</sup> Some options were 'Goede Vergelegen' meaning 'Good situated Far Away' and 'Goede Dal' or 'Hoop Dal'. 'Hoop' means hope (or heap) and 'Dal' is the Afrikaans word for valley but with a small alteration 'Daal' means fall or drop.

<sup>251</sup> In literature and drama, the term 'everyman' has come to mean an ordinary individual and so in this case the town could be any ordinary town found anywhere in the country.

translation or transmutation where verbal signs of the source text are altered or replaced with customary non-verbal signs known in the target culture. However it was also posited that within the polysemic theatrical experience, translation will also occur on a fourth level where non-verbal, semiotic signs contained in the source playtext will be translated using non-verbal signs known to the target culture. It is in this fourth category that the visual design of the show can aid the translation process. Pavis (1985:210) posits that the importance of the non-literary visual aspects and situation in performance have been amply highlighted so that it seems logical to begin with a description of spaces when analysing semiotic systems in performance.

- **Set**<sup>252</sup>

According to Elam (1980:56) the “theatrical text is defined and perceived above all in spatial terms”. Since this production falls within the musical theatre genre and the stage design most associated with Broadway<sup>253</sup> is that of the proscenium arch stage it was decided to mount the South African production of *Bat Boy* in the “picture frame stage” (Brockett 1992:135) setting, which is still the most commonly used theatre setting (ibid). However, within this frame a secondary frame of scaffolding was created and the entire show played off within the cold, steel frame of the abattoir. As Taylor (2012:2) suggests, musical theatre is often denigrated as “just entertainment” and this setting was used to juxtaposition the generally accepted ‘fun’, ‘feel-good’ format of the show with the harsh reality championed through the show’s message. Instead of the commonly used fabric legs or wings, plastic was hung to differentiate the performers’ entrances and exits. This had a dual purpose, not only did the plastic resemble butchers’ curtains – used in butcheries so as to make for easy cleaning of blood spillage, enhancing the macabre nature of the storyline – but since the performers could be seen making their entrances and exits this clearly reinforced the notion that this was a theatrical production. That there was no pretence to reality rooted the production within the premise

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<sup>252</sup> Please see Appendix 9 for pictures of the Set Design.

<sup>253</sup> There are a few notable exceptions to this general rule of Broadway such as Harold Prince’s revival of *Candide* (1974) and *Spring Awakening* (2006) directed by Michael Mayer.

as proposed by the fictive discourse of the original production. Whilst the steel frame and butchers' curtains were not necessarily more reminiscent of a South African butchery than one found elsewhere in the world the scene set would not be unfamiliar to the South African audience.

Elam (1980:56) elaborates, suggesting the performance itself begins with the "information-rich registering of stage space and its creation of the opening image". As described above the opening image or preset<sup>254</sup> of *Bat Boy* included the macabre, stark steel frame within a frame. However, on either side of the stage were rigged two large screens which greeted audience members with the over large, overdramatic images of the original front page article in the *Weekly World News*.<sup>255</sup> The exaggerated images (for which the *Weekly World News* became known)<sup>256</sup> on the screens contrasted immediately creating a surrealistic yet comic atmosphere. The screens were not camouflaged as an intrinsic part of the set but more than blatantly obvious and with the content depicted in this opening scene, far removed from the inclusive theatrical experience. This was used as a technique to once again reinforce the artifice of the theatrical situation. As the production went forward the images portrayed were not realistic but merely atmospheric to aid in the creation of the mood of each scene, except however, in the case of family house interior. This, again drew the distinction between the real family in their home and the generalizations made elsewhere.

In keeping with the themes of the piece, the cold steel of the whole frame resembled the steel of *Bat Boy*'s cage. This also represented the director's vision for the piece as a whole and its relevance to the South African situation as the set signified how all the town inhabitants are trapped within the confines of their own prejudices. *Bat Boy* eventually escapes his cage by dying, his example leading Shelley to offer the townsfolk (and the

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<sup>254</sup> The preset refers to how the stage is set and lit as the audience enters the auditorium before the show commences.

<sup>255</sup> Please see Appendix 10 for the image used as the screen preset.

<sup>256</sup> The characteristic black-and-white covers of the *Weekly World News* featuring outlandish stories have become pop-culture images widely used in the arts.

audience) a way of escaping their cage but the production is left open-ended. The cage still exists (literally and figuratively) – it is up to the individual to decide whether to look beyond the restrictions and embrace tolerance.

- **Décor**

Décor was, as far as possible kept to a minimum, reducing any scene change time but the décor used, was employed to enhance the themes running through the piece and their application in the South African context. The large steel table was kept mostly centre stage and had a dual function. It doubled as the Parkers' kitchen table as well as the slick counter in the abattoir. In the hospital scenes it also became the first victim's hospital (and death) bed. This dual function, signifying both home comforts and death, suggests that what is learnt in the kitchen, at mothers' knee, so to speak, can be dangerous and detrimental. In the revival scene the table was pushed back into the frame of the set to provide extra seating for the followers. This position, regressed into the frame upstage, was also the position for the table in the veld scenes and provided the opening to the cave at the end of Act II. Again, the table had the semiotic function of signifying that no matter where we come from (cave or kitchen) our differences should not be feared but tolerated and even celebrated. The table specifically allowed the use of décor as a sign system to underscore one of the main themes of the American playtext and that of the translation.

The large butcher hooks hanging from the back scaffolding also had more than one physical function as they were used to hang crosses in the revival scene and picture frames in the Parker house. As macabre symbols of death, they were present in all the slaughterhouse scenes signifying the ensuing destruction, consequence of the discriminatory acts of the townspeople. In the cave scenes however the hooks were removed suggesting that this 'primitive' state was far more civilized than the 'civilized' town. Here, the butchers' hooks became symbolic of the ideological codes questioned in the playtext.



The décor was also used to signify the distinction between the family and the townspeople, the Parker home and the rest of the set. In contrast to the stark steel set, the scenes set in the Parker home were embellished with plush, soft furnishings such as the couch and pillows and the ottoman. (The ottoman was also used as coffee table and as a perch for Bat Boy, in this duality having a similar function as the table discussed above.)

In the section of his questionnaire allocated to Scenography, Pavis (1985:209) draws attention to the system of colours used and the connotations thereof. The set and majority of the décor was kept as sparse and cleanly, coldly clinical as possible and the entire framework was silver steel as was the table and cage. The only colour used in any of the décor was red. The kitchen chairs were red, scatter cushions on the beige couch were a deep, rich red as was the ottoman. The obvious connotation of the colour red was to represent the blood spilt but it also symbolised the love and passion which fills the piece in keeping with emphasis on these strong emotional states as advocated by 'The Style'. The stark colour scheme was clearly depicted in the poster design for the production.<sup>257</sup> The contrast of white on black indicates the perceived notions of the battle between good and evil a binary investigated in the playtext. At the same time this indicates the struggle between races and the past history of white dominion in South Africa. The focal point in the poster is that of the red outline of the Bat Boy's face within which you can see the mine buildings oozing blood and the silhouettes of the militant farmers. Most of the images on the screens too throughout the show were in grainy black and white with only a hint of colour which was kept within slight variations of red.

- **Costumes**

The function of the costume design was primarily to underscore the translation of the characters into the South African paradigm and in so

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<sup>257</sup> Please see Appendix 11 for poster design.

doing to aid the translation process as a whole. The main objective was for the characters to be represented as realistically as possible in the South African context therefore wholly recognisable signs found within the South African culture such as South African Police Service (SAPS) uniform for Constable Reynolds were used. In this regard the performers playing younger characters sourced outfits from their own wardrobes and those playing older characters from their parents or older relatives which were likewise familiar to the South African audience. Pavis (1985:209) suggests that costumes as sign system should also be evaluated taking into account how the costumes worked in accordance with the performers' bodies. This particular facet of the costume design similarly had consequences for the translation process as in the case of those performers playing younger characters, the naturalistic design and familiarity of the costumes allowed the performers to move easily as their characters would have done. Alternatively in the case of those playing older characters the choice of costume aided the development of the character for example: student 038 who is essentially youthful and slim played an older, married woman. The design of her oversized, flowing ethnic kaftan helped her to modify her movement and gesture to that of a heavier, more mature, woman. So too, was the style of movement used by student 002 completely different when playing her primary character dressed in unisex denims and a tee-shirt to that she used when playing a townsperson dressed in a matronly dress with matching headscarf which emphasized her curves. The use of these costumes not only signified identifiable characters within the South African multiculturalism but also allowed the performers to access the kinesic sign systems necessary for the translation to occur successfully.

In terms of all costuming, attention was paid to the colour scheme.<sup>258</sup> There were very few costume changes in the show although some of the performers chose to make alterations to their costumes for the revival scene signifying their characters' observance of religion by demonstrating

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<sup>258</sup> Please see table of characters in Appendix 12 for more detailed notes on the transference of the characters into the South African context and their accompanying costumes.

the difference between the characters' ordinary wear and then smart church outfit. This costume change also had the effect of underscoring the theme of religion and hypocrisy.

The only scene which demanded a complete costume change was that of "Children, Children" (Act II, sc 3) when the ensemble has to be transformed into the animals to which Pan sings. In the original playtext, as discussed in section 4.3.1.1, this number parodied utopian numbers from other works featuring animals and did so by using big, furry animal costumes to heighten the impression of ridiculousness. It was decided however in this context to root the number slightly more in reality as the signification of these costumes in the original may not have been interpreted appropriately in the translation. The fear was the fact that as it was a student production, the audiences (possibly not being overly familiar with such conventions) may not immediately make the necessary connection and would merely consider the production grotesquely amateur.

Also, as suggested in Chapter 4 the character of Pan would need to shift in order to resonate more fully in the South African context. To this end the character of Pan was translated into the Khoisan god Heitsi-Eibib<sup>259</sup> but since the production was set in contemporary times, it was decided to give him a modern, updated look. In keeping with the dual nature of Heitsi-Eibib, the horned nature of Pan and the grittiness of the orgy which is exposed in this number, the stimulus for the costume design was taken from the genre of S&M.<sup>260</sup> Consequently he was dressed in tight leather-

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<sup>259</sup> The dilemma had been to find a deity which resonated within the target culture. On suggestion from student 034 who was playing the role it was decided to model this character on the Khoisan god, Heitsi-Eibib. Heitsi-Eibib employs the duality present in Khoisan religious belief systems by maintaining the ambiguity between good and evil, and shape-shifting between creator and destroyer. The position of this god is fluid and varies from patron of hunters to god of nature and responsible for elements of the creation. At other times, Heitsi-Eibib also plays the role of rogue or prankster.

<sup>260</sup> S&M is the abbreviation for Sadoomasochism which refers to the giving or receiving of pleasure—sometimes sexual—from acts involving the infliction or reception of pain or humiliation. The fetishes associated with this movement have given rise to certain fashion trends including leather and latex suits with chains and whips as accessories. Langman (2008:665) posits that some repudiate the alienation, banal sterility and inauthenticity of modernity through their clothing and fashion and that

look pants and studded belt, with a leather and chain harness over his shoulders exposing his bare chest. The harness was embellished with spines creating an animalistic look and insinuating, just as the spiked, leather collar of the 'punk' does, that he is fierce and powerful (Langman 2008:666). The design of this costume was useful in denoting the shift of this character into the South African situation but also in signifying the translation into the *current* South African context.

Also, a key element in the translation of this number into the South African context and as suggested in Chapter 4, it was decided to reference the wild animals for which our country is known including the lion, rhino, buffalo, springbuck, giraffe and warthog. To this end wire masks were created out of steel wire, the silver grey toning in with the steel frame of the set. A further advantage of the wire masks was that they created the illusion of the animal, yet the performers' faces were still visible which acknowledged the artifice of the theatrical experience, an integral feature of the fictive discourse of the work as a whole. The rest of the costumes of the 'animals' took their inspiration from the patterning of the relevant animal (in muted colours with black as a base) but also in keeping with the 'porn-chic' (ibid 671) feel created by their leader – leather, fur, horns, spines, studs etc. Here, the intention was to illustrate the ironic difference between the guileless, wholesomeness of the animals as represented by the masks and the cunning, artfulness of people which is more often than not used to accomplish adverse and possibly perverse, self-satisfying ends. The costumes – as theatrical sign system – were used to signal the critique of the three typologies of codes: ideological, textual and social contained in this number as discussed in section 4.3.1.1.

As student 034 (Pan/Heitsi-Eibib) was not confident in his ability to reach some of the notes in the song as it is written in a very high key and since

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there has been an explosion in the fashion industry of transgressive attire simulating the S&M look (ibid 671).

in our larger company there were extra female performers<sup>261</sup> it was decided to give this god four acolytes. These acolytes represented the four classical elements of nature: earth (underworld), air (wind), water and fire.<sup>262</sup> Whilst not as provocative as the animals' costumes (the acolytes merely incited but did not take part in the orgy) their costumes could however be placed in the same category as the animals – but at the same time illustrating characteristics of the different natural elements. Thus, these rustic elements signalled the connection between spirituality, ritual and nature and as discussed in section 4.3.1.1, also served to place the translation in a familiar context.

As a result of this costume change which, unlike the original production, could not happen in full view of the audience it was a directorial decision to swap Scenes 4 and 5 in the second act. In the original playtext Scene 3 where the Bat Boy and Shelley's union is presided over by the god Pan and the animals ("Children, children") is followed by the scene where the townspeople congregate at the burning Abattoir and Ron is killed (Scene 4). This is in turn followed by Shelley and Bat Boy singing the love song "Inside your heart" (Scene 5). Whilst the ensemble had sufficient time to change into their animal costumes, the later scenes were swapped to gain the necessary time for them to change back again. Whilst this affected the 'placement of songs and dances' – an element Novak (1988:15-25) asserts is a necessary element of the book of a musical,<sup>263</sup> this was an entirely functional decision and was not made to impart any greater meaning in the translation or make any difference to the storyline whatsoever.

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<sup>261</sup> Please see section 7.2.1 for an explanation of the casting decisions and the consequences thereof.

<sup>262</sup> Many philosophies, throughout history and from around the world, have a set of classical elements believed to indicate the simplest parts or principles of which anything can be comprised or upon which the formation and essential powers of everything are based (Ball 2004:[sp]).

<sup>263</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2.6.

- **Lighting**

The set design itself created various interesting opportunities for the lighting design to underscore the various principles contained within the playtext and establish the necessary atmosphere for the production. Firstly, installation lighting was included in the steel frame of the set. These fluorescent lights shone white light only and were intended to create the naked bright white lighting as found in an abattoir. In Act I these fluorescents were used only in the scenes set in the abattoir, however at the end of Act II they were also used at the mouth of the cave scene as the confrontation of Bat Boy occurs with the resultant murder/suicide signifying the slaughterhouse created by the misguided principles of the townsfolk.

The second feature of the set which augmented the lighting design was the use of the plastic legs and borders. These had a dual effect. Firstly, they allowed for added atmospheric effect as light could be spilled onto the plastic and allowed to diffuse (used to create the effect of the seepage of a bloodpool as well as the spread of flames). Secondly, as the top lighting bars as well as the parcans<sup>264</sup> in the wings were then rigged in direct sight of the audience, they also served as a constant reminder of the artificiality of the stage setting and thus were used as signifiers of the fictive discourse of the work.

In terms of more conventional theatrical lighting, certain lighting states were created and used to different effect. In the opening number the centre lighting special was used to signify a distinct physical separation between the flashback, vignette scenes and the rest of the song in which the performers comment upon the action. The effect of the use of this device was also to create a distance in time. At the end of the opening number (which is styled as a rock song) the lighting rig was used garishly to emulate the flashing lights at a rock concert. The purpose of this

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<sup>264</sup> A 'parcan' or parabolic aluminized reflector lamp is a specific type of light which can be used in theatre (Brockett 1992:407-408). These lights and their fixtures are also widely used in concerts and motion picture production when a substantial amount of flat lighting is required for a scene.

contrivance was once again to remind the audience that this production was not committed to naturalism or realism. This was used to keep the translation as faithful to the original fictive discourse of the source text as possible and in so doing, to validate the work as a translation.

Whilst the lighting in the family home scenes was more naturalistic (again drawing the distinction between the family and the rest of the characters) the lighting states in the abattoir scenes consisted mainly of steel blue and green to create a feeling of discomfort and alienation in the audience.

Another textual code in musical theatre is the convention of using follow spots.<sup>265</sup> There were 4 main segments of the production where the follow spots were used, each having a different rationale. Firstly, In Act I sc 3 the follow spots provided a purely, functional theatrical purpose. Due to the positioning of the front of house lighting bars – which was unchangeable – there was absolutely no other way to light Rick on top of Bat Boy’s cage. Without the follow spots he would have ended his song in darkness. The follow spots did however emphasize his heedless oblivion to his bigoted behaviour and Shelley’s protestations. Secondly, in the latter part of the same scene as Meredith sings “A Home for You” the use of the follow spot served an important but naturalistic purpose. In the story the lights have gone out and a blackout was observed on the stage, as Meredith lights a candle so the follow spot creates a small pool of light presumably that of the light thrown by the candle. Whilst this is an observation of naturalism, this moment (as pointed out in Chapter 4) is a very poignant and most important part of the show in which intimate details are revealed and in which the audience must believe if the plot is to unfold to great effect. It is also one of the only times where the song develops diegetically from the

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<sup>265</sup> Follow spots are designed to illuminate a restricted area with a concentrated beam (Brockett 1992:406). Spots are used to throw light from the auditorium (ibid). When spotting a single character two spots are used to create a cross focus and avoid unbalanced shadows on the performer. If, as in our production, there are only two follow spots, when two characters need to be spotted the follow spot operators are each assigned a character to follow. Intelligent lights can also be used for this function and their route can be pre-plotted. This does mean that there can be no deviation on the part of the actor as the follow spot cannot adjust mid performance. However to compensate for this, follow spots have been developed which can be programmed to follow a receiver on the performer’s person.



action and it was felt that in terms of the lighting, the deference to this instrument of naturalism/realism was necessary to enhance the poignancy of the journeys of the characters at this particular moment.

In the second act the follow spots were also used. In “Inside your Heart” (Act II, sc 5) it had been intended to insert pink gels into the follow spots to create a rosy glow, reminiscent of traditional musical theatre shows as – as explained in Chapter 4 – this song comments directly on musical theatre staging traditions. This would have resulted in dual sign systems at work: the textual codes of musical theatre and the inversion of these codes by the playtext of *Bat Boy*. Unfortunately however, the only gels available within our budget could not be used with the intense follow spots so this never occurred. Also, in the run of performances, one of the follow spots ceased working so we had to adapt the staging to having only one follow spot which was not ideal. Unfortunately the follow spots had no irises so the size of the spots were not adjustable and therefore the practice of narrowing the spot down to a pinspot before a black-out could also not be used.

The follow spots were also used in Act II, sc 7 or the “Revelations” scene. As discussed in Chapter 4, in this scene in the original playtext the characters of Meredith and Dr Parker talk directly to the audience with the rest of the performers being at once listeners and active participants in acting out the flashback scenes. At no point is this scene committed to naturalism or realism and in some stagings of the show the acted-out vignettes are made to be wholly tawdry and tasteless. By the overtness or ‘over the top’ usage of the sign systems of theatre in this endeavour, the artificial nature of the theatrical experience is emphasized and the fictive discourse of the playtext is upheld. In the South African translation however, most of the acted out scenes were cut: firstly, as the cast was struggling to get to grips with the musical complexity of this climactic scene which can be compared to a rock opera and time was running short, and secondly as described above with reference to the orgy scene, it was feared that the audience might not recognise the double-entendre of the

devices used and would merely consider the results amateur.<sup>266</sup> However, the follow spots were used to isolate the characters of Meredith and Dr Parker as they delivered their (now) monologues to the audience, employing this stage convention so as to keep with the commitment to the fictive discourse, yet still allowing the audience to empathize with their stories.

- **Props**

As with costuming, the directorial choice regarding stage properties was to make them as credible as possible in order to heighten the realism of the character's journeys within the unreal circumstances. This was to expediate the translation by heightening the reality for the characters and consequently their recognition by the audience. The most important props belonged to Bat Boy and consisted of latex ears designed and made by special effects experts as well as large, extended canine teeth which fitted over his own teeth. Without a doubt the props signified the foreignness of the performer and in this way the themes of the general distrust of the foreign and the resultant scapegoating or condemnation of those perceived to be 'other' as discussed in section 4.2.1.1 could be interrogated and the intercultural aims of the production as put forward in Chapter 3 could be served.

Also, in the pursuit of authenticity the shotguns, revolver, pistol, (retractable) knife and hospital drip stand all looked as genuine as possible within our budgetary constraints. So too did the burning torch, used by Mrs

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<sup>266</sup> Interestingly enough, a show which had originally relied on garish, seemingly amateur, devices was the 1977 production of *Fangs* co-written and starring Bill Flynn, Tobie Cronje and Michael Richards. This hilarious comedy written in rhyming couplets told a nonsensical story of a vampire losing his teeth. Whilst continually using theatrical conventions to admit the artifice of the theatre, this show garnered a cult following (Feldman 2006:[sp]), revelling in the authenticity of the emotional content of the story and it was revived successfully in 1981 and 1982. In 2006 an expensive, revamped version of the show was staged at the State Theatre in Pretoria and Montecasino, Johannesburg directed by Tim Plewman and in which I had a small role. This realistic version in which the vampires actually 'flew' across stage amongst other things failed dismally at the box office, the show having lost most of its quirky humour and audiences preferring not be asked to suspend disbelief in such vast quantities.

Taylor to set the abattoir alight, work convincingly.<sup>267</sup> As with costuming the realistic design of the props was to aid in the translation of the characters into the South African situation (to make the characters' journeys as believable as possible). This sign system was also employed therefore to underscore the objectives of the acting technique of 'the Style'. The props used were real even though the circumstances in which they were used were completely illusory just as 'the Style' insists on truthfulness within an overtly presentation medium.

In keeping with the colour scheme as described in the section on décor, the tea-set used Act I, sc 7 far was white with red detail. In this scene Edgar is trying to learn to be 'civil' but the result is the spillage of the tea prophesizing the spilling of blood yet to come. Then, a prop which not only denoted the colour scheme but was also representative of the translation was the exchange of a red wheeled cart (typically used by American children) for a red wheelbarrow in which the teens transport Bat Boy in Act I, sc 1. The wheelbarrow is well-known in South African households specifically those with larger gardens as it is used in garden work as well as in construction.

Other realistic props included the stew pot and wooden spoon used by Meredith and the enamel basin (well known to South African households) used by Dr Parker to catch the blood as he slashes the neck of his first offering to Bat Boy. The other props in this particular scene offered a very real opportunity to transfer the playtext. In a very South African twist instead of carrying in a brace of dead ducks Dr Parker carried in a brace of hadedas.<sup>268</sup> Their long curved beaks were prominently displayed and always elicited a few titters when recognised by an observant audience

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<sup>267</sup> The UP props department made a theatre-safe torch which burned with a real flame as long as the actress depressed the catch. The flame was deadened as soon as the catch was released but the end result was quite realistic.

<sup>268</sup> Although ducks are common to South African dams and rivers the Hadedas ibis is a large, heavily bodied breed of bird, common to most areas of South Africa. After a decline in population due to hunting in colonial times, increased numbers of this bird are now becoming more and more commonly seen in urban areas due to commercial afforestation (Allan, Harrison, Navarro, van Wilgen & Thompson 1997:173) leading to tasteless jokes about the necessity of hunting or how this could possibly solve hunger issues amongst the poverty stricken.

member. The one hadeda had a small opening into which a blood-filled<sup>269</sup> balloon could be inserted which was burst by the performer playing Dr Parker, as he mimed slitting it's throat, releasing the blood convincingly into the enamel basin.

As in the original playtext other animal props were used to become Edgar's meals, including a rat and a Scottish terrier which were both quite lifelike. The dog was chosen instead of a rabbit, as in the original, as it heightened the gruesome nature of Dr Parker taunting Edgar with, and then slaughtering somebody's pet. Edgar's last victim in the playtext is a cow and in "Apology to a Cow" he sings to the cow's head. This was perhaps the least realistic prop in the show, being at once overly large and also slightly comic, but under the circumstances and the budgetary limitations was not a poor effort. However, this element of comedy (whilst originally unintended) in the final scenes of the translation underlined the fictive discourse insisted upon by the original – that of the artifice of the theatrical experience.

#### 6.1.1.3 Spatial Codes

De Toro (1995:50) asserts that physical manifestation which is present in the performance text gives meaning to what is absent (only potential) in the dramatic text. As discussed in Chapter 4 the use of kinesics (movement, gesture and choreography) plays an important role not only to impart meaning to the playtext but also to inform the translation. The following are a few pertinent examples of how movement, gesture and choreography placed the translation in the South African context.

As discussed in section 4.3.4 the opening number "Hold Me Bat Boy" was critical to establishing the location of the translation as well as representing its intercultural aims. To this end certain movements were included in the number. Whilst the number begins quite statically, the choreography in the verse following the first chorus incorporated the hip roll (and accompanying

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<sup>269</sup> Stage blood was used.

hand) movements from Kwassa as well as a hip-hop sequence with rib isolations demonstrating 'fighting' movements to accompany the lyrics "they beat him like a gong" (Act I, sc 1, p 10). This verse finished with a traditional musical theatre dip, as one partner lowered the other to the floor and back up again, illustrating the vulnerability of the excluded Bat Boy.

Directly after this followed the gospel section of the song in which traditional gospel moves (which involve stepping in time with the arms upraised as if in praise) were included. However, the movements here were given a distinctly African flavour with more inclusive use of the pelvic area suggested by student 012. As the music segued back into the rock feel so the movements became sharper, harder and more angular and included knee pops and the raising of one hand often used by rock stars in performance.

A large part of the second half of the song, in between the vignette scenes, involved the ensemble forming groups and walking to change position. This was executed to signify their roles in the community and then how they all become unified as characters against the Bat Boy, but also as performers in commenting in unison that as Neumann preached, the inclusion of the shadows in society is necessary

Mention has to be made of one movement included in the final verse though, which is a primary move in a Kwaito street dance known as 'Sbujwa'. Each night as the move was performed there was a ripple through the audience as it was recognised. It is my contention that in this singular move, the location for the playtext was established beyond doubt and the translation cemented in the South African context.

A typical musical theatre convention was invoked to end the song reinforcing the textual codes of this genre. The entire ensemble walked towards and finished the number in a straight line across the front of the stage. A line up of this sort is associated with musicals such as *Rent* (1996) and *Fame* (1995) where the characters, whilst still retaining their individuality, are united in single purpose.

The approach of amalgamating South African styles of dance within the musical theatre framework was adopted throughout the production. Another example of this would be the kickline at the end of “Show You a Thing or Two”. As discussed in section 4.2.4 the style of the movement suggested by the music is quite stylized. Incorporated into this piece as Bat Boy celebrates the educational pinnacle he has reached, was a key Pantsula move. This move is however known as the Charleston (and exactly as its dance namesake) describes a knock-kneed manoeuvre from American jazz (Myburgh 1993:1-16).

Another example of amalgamating South African styles of dance was in the incorporation of the tickiedraai in “Another Dead Cow” (Act 1, sc 4, p 27-30). The rationale behind this was, as discussed in section 4.3.3 the music here could possibly have been made to be reminiscent of Boeremusiek to which the tickiedraai is usually performed. However, since the translation of the score was not a priority in this study so the music in this number retained its ‘Country and Western’<sup>270</sup> feel. This was also interculturally represented by the intertextual inclusion of some traditional moves from the country line dance<sup>271</sup> genre. However all of these steps were incorporated into the presentational framework of a typical musical theatre number. The employment of distinctive musical theatre movement vocabulary such as the ‘box step’, ‘drag step’ and ‘jazz hands’ was also used in the following number performed by the townspeople, the “Christian Charity reprise” (Act I, sc 8, p 43-48). As discussed in Chapter 4 (sections 4.2.4 and 4.3.4), in this instance the musical theatre convention whereby characters “burst out dancing” (Lodge 2014:84) was specifically designed not only to further the plot and delineate character but also to interrogate the very genre of the piece. . The sign system or mode of communication (dance) at this point was used with dual purpose: it signified not only the fabrication of the stereotypical townspeople but also drew attention to the fiction or artifice of the theatrical situation.

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<sup>270</sup> Originating in the Southern United States in the 1920s, Country music is a genre of American popular music (Petersen 1999:9).

<sup>271</sup> Line dancing is a dance in which a group of people, regardless of gender, perform the same steps at the same time, facing in the same direction. Line dancing is most often associated with American country music and is practised in country-western bars (Lane 2000:2-4).

Along with choreographed movement, gesture forms part of the kinesic sign systems through which meaning is generated in the theatrical event. A gesture worth mentioning here was one which, although not essential for the translation per se, indicates the power of gesture as signifying system. In “Dance With Me Darling” Dr Parker feeds Edgar blood. In the musical interlude or dance break of this song our performer dipped his hand into the blood and then Edgar sucked the blood from his teat-like fingers. In this irregular parody of a mother suckling her young, this gesture signified Dr Parker inappropriately assuming the role of mother. Implied in this was that no matter how hard Meredith (as natural mother) tried to atone for her original abandonment of Edgar, her attempts at the role of mother would fail as the position had already been usurped by unnatural forces. A simple gesture such as this suckling, which lasted not more than a few seconds, contains much and loaded meaning.

An example of where gesture was used to intersemiotically translate meaning was in the musical number “Another Dead Cow”. Student 034 created the role of Ntate Modibakgomo, unemployed miner turned farmer. He had the line: “[l]ittle Bonnie, God rest her soul was barely one-quarter pounder” (Act 1, sc 4, p 25). As discussed in section 4.3.1.3 the decision was made not to intralingually translate this particular line as South Africans do have experience in buying hamburgers from McDonalds. However at this point, the performer made a hand gesture used in South African vernacular languages to indicate size. This gesture, whilst in this case indicating a very small size and intersemiotically translating the meaning, also signalled the character’s belonging within the South African context and so aided the shift of the character into the South African situation as well as reaffirming the translation as a whole.

It can be seen therefore that the interpretation of spatial codes through the kinesic sign systems of movement and gesture had clear and essential implications for the translation of the playtext of *Bat Boy*.



In this section the pictorial sign systems of the actor, visual design and spatial codes were examined but Chandler (2007:169) points out that visual codes are far more mediated and codified than sound codes which are often under-emphasized in comparison. Therefore, the following section will examine the auditory sign systems at work in the production and highlight examples of how these sign systems enhanced the translation.

### 6.1.2 Auditory Sign Systems

Under this heading, not only the auditory sign systems relating to the sound created by the human participants (performers/band members) will be considered, but also the technical elements which constructed the soundscape of the production.

#### 6.1.2.1 Actor as sign

If one accepts that as Elam (1980:17) posited, the actor is a primary sign system of the theatrical experience, it follows that the vocal sounds he or she produces are of prime importance in communicating meaning. De Toro (1995:20) asserts that it is “the deictic verbal function that creates the simultaneous presence of utterance and enunciation in theatre. The utterance – or *what* the actor says, will be dealt with in the following section but the enunciation - or *how* he says it, will be the focus of this section. De Toro also asserts that the conditions of the enunciation are determined by the text or alternatively by the staging of the text (ibid 24). For the purposes of the staging of the playtext in this case, the actor as sign was imperative for the translation.

Helga Finter (1983:506) postulates that the prosodic systems of pitch direction, pitch range, loudness, tempo, pauses and rhythmicality have great importance in the performance of a theatrical text. She argues that while some of these systems are inscribed within the text, some can be added by the players themselves in performance or by means of directorial design to add, interpret or focus meaning. Specifically in this translation how the performer gave resonance to the spoken dialogue was of prime importance. As Finter (1983:507) posits, in a performance of a theatrical text the actors bring additional information to the playtext through the quality of their voices

including their expressive value and even more specifically through “the idiolect’s social and regional connotations” (ibid).<sup>272</sup>

For the purposes of this translation the performers were encouraged to drop any affected accents (especially when singing)<sup>273</sup> and use the accent of their home language or, in some cases a South African accent with which they were very familiar. Using their own cultural heritage and experiences formed the foundation for the performers to reflect the South African paradigm in the enunciation of the dialogue.

Whilst Finter (ibid 508) argues that rhythm is distinct from accent (intensity, glottal pressure/pitch duration), rhythmicality as a combination of tempo and pause is interlinked with accent. Much was made in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.3 and section 4.2.2, of how in the original playtext the rhythms of the Southern American accent was incorporated into the dialogue and lyrics respectively. The translation of the characters’ accents proved quite challenging specifically with regards to lyrics (in which rhythm is determined by the score). However, care was taken not to impede either the through-line of the plot or the fluidity of the musical numbers as the South African accents were incorporated into the translation so as to represent the locality of the playtext. Examples of the translated utterances will now be explored.

#### 6.1.2.2 Dialogue/Lyrics

As expressed in Chapter 4, the main functions of the dialogue and lyrics (the utterances) was to establish time, location, characters and the relationship between the characters. With regards to the translation the dialogue and lyrics were an important element in relocating the playtext into the South African context and establishing the characters within that context. Throughout rehearsals the performers were encouraged to find their own specific South African equivalents so as to translate the various words, expressions and

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<sup>272</sup> Meier (2012:9) posits that each individual has a personal way of speaking, an idiolect.

<sup>273</sup> It seems that due possibly to the over-exposure to American pop music and also to the perceived demands of Broadway musical on the musical theatre genre, singers in South Africa adopt a pseudo American accent when singing (as experienced by Dr Mortimer – musical director).

figures of speech. This occurred mainly through intralingual translation whereby the performers replaced or rephrased words found in the original playtext with other English words or phrases so that the word or phrase remained concurrent with the original meaning but became more applicable to the target culture. In some cases this also occurred through interlingual translation where the performers translated words or phrases into another language the most common of which being Afrikaans, Sesotho and Zulu. Through these translations they were able to create characters which were, arguably, easily recognisable to the South African audience. Whilst this started from the very beginning of the show and almost every line thereafter was altered in some way, in this section only pertinent examples will be given.

After the overture the preset lights faded and the entire stage and auditorium was plunged into darkness. As three performers descended onto the stage the only light was from the headlights on their hardhats and as the audience struggled to adjust their eye-sight to the diminished lighting conditions the dialogue overheard was emphasized. Without a shadow of a doubt the accents of the performers and dialogue spoken placed the production in the South African context. Within the opening seconds of the show it was conveyed to the audience that the action of the show takes place in South Africa, the actress playing the role of Charity even inserted a “yoh!” before her first line which is a commonly heard South African expression indicating surprise.<sup>274</sup>

The rest of the colloquial speech used by the teens in this first scene of the original playtext was replaced with intralingual South African equivalents which the performers felt would be used by their characters, not only establishing the location but also the current context of the production. Whilst it was decided that the line “this cave rocks” does resonate in the somewhat Americanized South African slang-speak adopted by the current youth so did not warrant any translation, the line “this is a total scoop” was replaced by

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<sup>274</sup> This expression is distinct from the American term “yo” which is an informal address or imperative declaration (urbandictionary.com [sa]:[sp]).

“this cave is sha-na-na!”<sup>275</sup> and “fully” was replaced with “totally”. Also, “who’s packing?” was replaced by “who’s got the zol?”, ‘zol’ being South African slang for a joint of marijuana. “The phrase “cave monster” was interlingually translated to the “tokolosh”<sup>276</sup> which elicited immediate reaction from the audiences.<sup>277</sup>

The above of course, represent changes to dialogue which is easier to alter than lyrics, since in trying to modify lyrics there are the added complications of rhyme and meter. As explained in Chapter 4, not only must the translation ring true in the target culture but must also fit musically into the song. An example of aptly revised lyrics, that not only captured almost-exact meaning but also the syntax and expression of the character concerned, occurred in “Another Dead Cow” (Act I, sc 4 p 28) when student 008 suggested changing the lyrics:

“Sweet Jesus now I’m petrified, they’re gonna repossess my  
double-wide”

to

“Yislaaik-it now it’s really bad, they’re gonna repossess my double-  
cab”.

Also in this number there were some direct interlingual translations of lines for example, when one of the farmers was bemoaning the fact that he was no longer a coal-miner, the line: “I just don’t know what to do anymore” (Act 1, sc 5, p 28) was translated directly into Sesotho. This translation in fact allowed for a counter reaction establishing the character of the town council leader

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<sup>275</sup> Interesting to note that this expression references an American rock and roll band that hosted a syndicated variety television series that ran from 1977 to 1981. This series was shown widely on South African television in its early days and this expression is another example of how South Africa has been Americanized.

<sup>276</sup> The name ‘tokoloshe’ is believed to be of Xhosa origin but is used widely by all peoples of South Africa. The tokolosh was originally believed to be a water-sprite but the name has become synonymous with a small or dwarf-like evil spirit known to do mischievous deeds and reputed to delight in causing pain.

<sup>277</sup> Interesting to note that in the South African translation of the musical *Blood Brothers* (2013) directed by David Kramer the word ‘devil’ in all the lyrics was translated as ‘tokolosh’ and yet this translation was set specifically in the coloured community of Cape Town.

who could show her ignorance of this vernacular language and frustration with the complexities of leadership in the current, multicultural South African context. Another line at the end of the song was also translated into Sesotho and referenced a social code known in this context. Instead of the farmer asking whether: “Do you think Dr Parker will put it down?”, he alluded to the use of human and animal parts for ‘muti’-making.<sup>278</sup>

Throughout the playtext social references made by the characters were changed to represent the equivalent in South African context for example in “Watcha Wanna Do” (Act 1, sc 3, p21) Bat Boy is taunted by the lyrics:

“We’re gonna chain your arm to an atomic bomb  
And make you take your grandmamma to the Senior Prom”

This reference to the formal school dance which is the highlight of American teenagers’ school calendar was changed to the equivalent in the South African school system so the lyrics ran:

“We’re gonna chain your arm, you won’t get a chance  
We’re gonna make you take your grandmama to the matric dance”.

The second line of this phrase proved quite a challenge for the performers as musically, the stresses fall differently to the original line. This is an indication of how delicately the replacement of lyrics needs to be organised not only for cogency but also musical sense.

So too, in “Let Me Walk Among You” (Act II, sc 1) did Bat Boy reference traditional South African social occasions. (Original lyrics on left, translated lyrics on right)

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<sup>278</sup> ‘Muti’ is a term for traditional medicine as practised in Southern Africa and is derived from a Zulu term (Loots 2006:100). Occasionally there are murders and mutilations which are associated with some traditional cultural practices, termed muti killings. These are not human sacrifices in a religious sense, but rather involve the murder of someone in order to excise body parts for incorporation as ingredients into medicine and concoctions used in witchcraft. Most traditional healers however are opposed to the evil practice of mutilating human bodies for purposes of muti making.

“Let me join your carpool	“Let me join your carpool
No, let me drive the car.	No, let me drive the car.
Let me throw a barbeque	Let me throw a braai <sup>279</sup>
Or join you at the bar.	Or join you at the bar.
Come and watch the ballgame	Come and watch the soccer
I’ll bake a pecan pie	I’ll make some pap en slaai <sup>280</sup>
And I will shake your hand	And I will shake your hand
when you drop by”	when you drop by”

The song “Show You a Thing or Two” in Act I, sc 7 also offered vast opportunity to transfer lyrics in to the South African context. As Bat Boy evolves educationally, he references historical figures and places. Although some references were left untouched, the majority were shifted to represent people, places and items in South African history and popular culture, commonly known to the local audiences as can be seen below. In this particular process student 043 who contributed a large proportion of the translated lyrics showcased her innate sense of rhyme.

Brooklyn Bridge	Beit Bridge
Lenin’s tomb	Jonty Rhodes
Watergate	Guptagate
Rainbow room	Zuma’s abodes
Ruby Ridge, Liberty bell	Lynwood Ridge, Cape slave bell
Beiring Strait, Bates motel	Beiring Strait, Bates Motel
Spartacus, Fargo	Spartacus, Fargo
and Anchors Aweigh	and Arrive Alive
Love story, Key Largo	Love story, Key Largo
and remains of the day	and all the big five
Puccini, Cole Porter,	Zakumi, Cole Porter
Rossini, Otello	and Hestrie’s victorious

<sup>279</sup> Afrikaans term for barbeque where meat is cooked over an open fire.

<sup>280</sup> Pap is a traditional porridge or polenta made from mielie-meal (ground maize) and a staple food of the many inhabitants of Southern Africa. The Afrikaans word pap is taken from Dutch and simply means ‘porridge’ but is often served as a carbohydrate accompaniment to a braai. ‘Slaai’ is the Afrikaans word for salad, also served at braai’s to offset the otherwise protein heavy meal.

Bellini, Wayne Shorter  
and Elvis Costello

Bellini, Naas Botha  
and Oscar Pistorius

Also, in this particular number every time the lyrics ran as “Show ‘em a thing or two” the decision was made to reference the massive South African musical hit, “Show Dem (Make the Circle Bigger)”.<sup>281</sup> The very Americanized “Show ‘em” was replaced with the flat accented “Show dem”.

On one occasion meaning which was important for the translated context was also added to the existing playtext. In between two versus of the opening number in the first scene which ran:

“Would no one defend him, protect him, befriend him,  
Would none hear his cry”

and:

“or would they detest him, arrest him, molest him  
Or just let him die”

it was decided to add the lyrics:

“Or would they export him, report him, deport him.  
Would you just walk by?”

to reference the ongoing xenophobic attacks in our country and the current reticence on the part of law-abiding citizens who are too afraid to get involved least they too become targets. It was decided that the fear of the unknown (as one of the main tenets of the original playtext) needed to be highlighted and there was no better place than the opening number which as discussed in

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<sup>281</sup> “Show Dem” was released on rapper JR’s second album *Colourful* and featured rapper HHP and comedian Joey Rasdien. The track was nominated at the 2010 Channel O Music Video Awards as ‘Song of the year’ and was performed at the 2011 South Africa Music Awards (SAMAs) for which I choreographed the dancers used in the song.



section 4.3.4 was committed to serving the intercultural ideals of discussion and exchange between cultures.

Throughout the course of the dialogue, many other small changes were made which cemented the existence of the playtext in the South African context and these small mentions often received the most appreciation from the audience. For example in Act I, sc 3, p 23 when the lights go out, a reference was made to 'loadshedding'<sup>282</sup> and in Act I, sc 5, p 26 in explaining why the meeting is being held in the slaughterhouse, the town council leader lamented the fact that their office was being used as an E-tolling office.<sup>283</sup>

### 6.1.2.3 Music

The decision was made not to alter any of the music for the following reasons:

- As a director/choreographer, the musical score is not my area of expertise. Such translation lay out of the scope of this study and also my skills for if any translation of the score was attempted it would have to have been overseen by the musical director. The score of *Bat Boy*, as discussed in Chapter 4.2.3, is immensely layered and to have had to alter musical parts, instruments, rhythms or tempos in order to create a different ethnic sound would have been challenging enough as a primary focus of a separate study undertaken by an expert in such musical direction.
- The types of music used in the production including rock, rap (hip hop) and gospel are already so well known to the intended target audience as was evidenced in section 4.3 that it was decided that translation of the music was not needed for the translation to be successful.

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<sup>282</sup> According to the official Eskom website (Eskom being the Electricity Supply Commission of South Africa) 'loadshedding' is planned power outages which are scheduled to occur when there is not enough supply of power to meet the demands placed on the system by Eskom customers (Eskom: What is loadshedding [sa]:[sp]).

<sup>283</sup> E-tolls, a tolling system for motorists, have been instated by government on the highways in and around the Gauteng province. This has occurred to massive public consternation.

#### 6.1.2.4 Technical Elements

- **Sound Design**

Chandler (2007:169) suggests that the following: Diegesis, Hierarchy, Seamlessness, Integration, Readability and Motivation would be features of sound codes in the dominant Hollywood tradition. I suggest that even though sound design is one of the most complex aspects of musical theatre, these categories would also be applicable to this theatrical medium and they will be discussed in this and the following section.

Specifically in musical theatre where the needs and levels of the vocalists need to be balanced against a live orchestra – in this case a five piece rock band – *hierarchy* is very important. This is where more important sounds should be more audible than less important sounds, for example lead vocalists should be heard above back-up vocals. No matter how good the musicians, the music should never drown out the vocals as the audience is introduced to much important information through the lyrics.

*Seamlessness* implies no gaps or abrupt changes in sound (Chandler 2007:169) which can be disconcerting for an audience and is also key to sound design in musical theatre. Seamlessness is problematized in this genre due to the shift from pure dialogue scenes to those incorporating band and vocalists, the sound levels need to adjust for these changes in mood and number of microphones in use flawlessly.

Linked to this, *integration*, not only of all the voice groups to achieve balanced harmonic levels but also of all the sound elements, needs to be achieved. Some scenes involve dialogue, underscored dialogue and song – using some or all of the instruments in the orchestra/band.

Within the code regarding readability, all sounds should be identifiable. Inexperienced performers often assume that when they are ‘mic-ed’ (fitted with cordless lavalier microphones), they do not need to project their voices. This is untrue as the microphones only enhance the natural voice and do not improve enunciation. Also, in terms of *readability*, sound must

be designed in such a way that the amplified voice does not become disembodied as it is relayed through the public address system (PA). This is often a criticism of sound design as it can give the impression that the voices and music are disconnected from the action on the stage.

Whilst these categories are necessary for the effectiveness of the performance they do not have direct bearing on the translation unlike the following categories.

- **Sound Effects**

*Diegesis* informs the sound design by asserting that sound should be relevant to the story. This directly informs the translation in terms of what is said and how it is said – as discussed earlier in Chapter 4 and sections 6.1.2.1 and 6.1.2.2 – with regards to dialogue and lyrics and the accents and expressions adopted by the characters. However, this is also relevant when considering sound effects for the production. For example, in the original script there is a sound effect of a door knock when the Constable arrives at the Parker family home. In the South African situation with the high crime rate (as discussed in section 4.3.1.2) there are very few middle class households who are not concerned enough with security to allow unrestricted access to the front door. In this case the door knock was substituted for a doorbell ring.

Also, in the production any unusual sounds which occur should be those that the characters are supposed to be hearing. Thus, *motivation* is important. For example, whilst the lowing of a dying cow is a most unusual sound, within the playtext of *Bat Boy* it is quite motivated. The sound of ululating<sup>284</sup> would have been unmotivated in the original playtext but in setting the revival scene in the South African context the sound of ululating in “A Joyful Noise” is most fitting. It accesses specific South African social

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<sup>284</sup> A ululation, a long, high-pitched sound which wavers, is practised in certain types of singing or a communal ritual events specifically found in the Middle East or Sub-Saharan Africa (Pendle 2001:430).

codes and in so doing helps to place the translation in the South African situation.

This chapter identified the various sign systems of the musical theatre genre which were used in the translation of the playtext of *Bat Boy* and described examples of how shifts in these sign systems were generated so as to place the translated playtext, via intercultural translation, within the larger South African multicultural. The following and final chapter of the dissertation will evaluate the efficacy of the directorial process as established in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

## CHAPTER 7

### **CRITICAL REFLECTION**

The translated production of *Bat Boy – the Musical* had six performances in front of a live audience. Whilst there seemed to be an overwhelmingly favourable response to the show from the audience members this chapter will critically reflect on the development of the production with a view to considering the efficacy of the directorial process of translation as devised in this study. This chapter represents the fourth and final research phase and comments on the three, preceding research phases.

#### **7.1 Evaluating the directorial process of theatrical translation**

##### **7.1.1 Considering the framework:**

In order to contextualise the genre within which the study was placed, this dissertation offered a brief overview of the development of the genre of musical theatre in Chapter 2. This chapter also identified the elements which characterize the genre as well as providing a succinct overview of the development of this form of theatre in South Africa. I contend that this was entirely necessary so as to facilitate the development of the directorial translation process taking into account the specificities of the musical theatre genre and also to frame the proposed translation of the concept musical, *Bat Boy* in the South African social and theatrical context.

Then, in Chapter 3 – which also formed part of the first research phase – three main concepts were identified. These three concepts informed the theoretical framework within which the study articulated and these will now be evaluated. Firstly, I posit that the choice of the term translation (as described in Chapter 3) was appropriate for the directorial approach of theatrical translation as developed in this study. In section 3.1 it was argued that the intention of the study was not to create a stand-alone production but to remain faithful to the original while translating the content from one cultural paradigm to another. I offer that the resultant production substantiated this choice as the show replicated the story and plot of *Bat Boy* as written in the original

with the same emphasis on the original themes of the piece<sup>285</sup> but as if the work was created in the current South African context.<sup>286</sup> The actual translation will be evaluated below in section 7.1.2.

As was also discussed in Chapter 3, theatre studies and translation studies intersect at the point of intercultural theatre. Therefore, in terms of the second underpinning of the theoretical framework and as the practice-led part of the research progressed, it became more evident that the field of intercultural theatre did in fact provide an arena within which to work. However, to be clear, as discussed in Chapter 3.2 the intercultural theatre to which I refer is not that which entrenches the 'West and the rest' binary (Knowles 2010: 21-30) but that is more open to interaction and dialogue between members of disparate cultures (Meer & Modood 2012:182-190). Taking into account that culture is not static and is continually evolving (Kumar 2000:84) this intercultural framework was important in not only allowing the melding of form (American musical theatre as well as 'the Style', with that of South African crossover theatre) but also the crossing of modes used to express the translated work specifically in terms of dance, gesture and movement. I argue that this production provided, as Khan (2010:150) argued similarly in terms of the South African hip hop culture, a space in which resources from the local context as well as the global cultural arena were appropriated so as to allow for the remaking and shifting of intercultural identities. I posit that the intercultural approach seemed more in line with aims of the piece and the genre within which we were working than other theatrical approaches (such as multicultural or post-colonial theatre – as discussed in section 3.2) would have offered. Whilst intercultural theatre provided an apt framework for this piece and I would suggest it to other directors working within the presentational musical theatre genre, I am not completely confident that this approach would work in another theatrical genre. Without the elements of music, song and dance which provided such fertile ground for intercultural cross pollination, I would caution any director working in another theatrical genre against adopting the processes as developed in this study without ensuring adequate research beforehand.

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<sup>285</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4

<sup>286</sup> Not only was it gratifying when the audience recognised and reacted strongly and positively to the translated dialogue and movement but even more so when audience members – not being familiar with the original musical – admitted that they thought the production was of South African origin.

The third underpinning of the theoretical framework was the use of semiotics as a tool with which to manage the translation. Relevant theatrical semiotic processes were used as a means to structure and hierarchize the many sign systems of the polysemic theatrical experience. In Chapters 4 and 6, general semiotic processes as well as dynamics within the constructions of theatrical semiotics were useful in identifying certain social and textual codes at work in the original playtext of *Bat Boy – the Musical* as well as corresponding codes within the socio-cultural domain to which the playtext was to be translated. Not only did semiotic practices aid in the description of certain factors and codes within the playtext that were known, but also those foreign to the target audience. By suggesting ways in which those foreign elements could be translated the use of semiotics informed the translation process. However, whilst this method certainly gave structure to the study specifically with regards to the analysis of the dramatic playtext, it did prove to be quite unwieldy at times. Even Pavis (1992:3) argues for the need to give up hope of reconstructing the totality of a performance and that any notation thereof can by design only be partial and tentative. The vastness of the ideological and aesthetic codes described in Chapters 4 and 6, and their interrelatedness on all levels of the analysis, as well as the intertextuality of the work necessitated that the study merely skimmed the surface of such processes. Whilst semiotic processes were useful in providing a broad structure within which to analyse the principles of the dramatic and theatrical discourses I found that the structuralist semiotic intentions of the simplification of the various elements down to their basic components oftentimes eradicated the meaning of the larger picture (or final meaning?) which presumably is the all-important result, specifically in a practice-led study such as this. In a corollary of the well-known idiom, the depth of certain semiotic processes specifically in terms of linguistics, often meant not being able to see the trees for all the wood.

## **7.1.2 The two-tiered translation approach**

### **7.1.2.1 The first tier of translation:**

This first tier of translation represented the second research phase. Here, semiotic processes, as suggested by Aston and Savona (2013:10), provided the points of departure to be used in the analysis of the existing playtext. The dramatic analysis of the playtext was definitely necessary in order to be



sufficiently prepared for the rehearsal process. In Chapter 4 not only was the existing playtext analysed but examples of the general ideologico-aesthetic codes of the South African situation as well as the codes governing the South African theatrical framework were identified so as to place the translation of *Bat Boy* accurately within the South African context. However as stated in Chapter 5, without prior knowledge of the performers, the potential shifts of the elements as provided for in this first tier of translation were only options which were to be considered by the ensemble in the rehearsal process. As director, one had to be prepared for changes to the directorial vision specifically where, as in this practice-led case study, the rehearsal process involved workshopping. For example, as explained in Chapter 4 one of the core reasons for choosing this particular musical was that I was of the opinion that it resonated within the South African ideological and political context specifically in terms of the main themes of discrimination and acceptance, prejudice and tolerance. In the initial rehearsal phase I had specified questions which the performers were to answer in their journals, drawing on their own experiences. Given the history of colonialism and racial segregation of our country, I had phrased these questions with the goal of examining racial discrimination which I had deemed necessary to the retelling of *Bat Boy* in the South African context. I had made this assumption from my own, personal experience of having lived through the Apartheid era and the various forms of the racial unease which resulted. However, I was most surprised that not one single cast member framed the stories of bullying or discrimination that they shared in racial terms.<sup>287</sup> It was after the rehearsal in which this was discussed that I realized that I would have to re-evaluate my directorial vision. This particular generation of young performers, some of whom are even young enough to fall into the category of 'born-free's',<sup>288</sup> had not experienced the same level of racial discrimination as had previous generations and so did not

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<sup>287</sup> The experiences ranged from school bullying on materialistic grounds to discrimination within family units or that based on gender or sexual orientation. When I remarked upon the absence of racially based discrimination, one cast member (student 007) then admitted that he had been the victim of racial discrimination. He commented that his girlfriend's family did not approve of him due to the colour of his skin but went on to say that it was not as much his issue as hers as he quite frankly didn't care whether they liked him or not but that she had suffered far more because of it.

<sup>288</sup> A term denoting anyone born in South Africa after the first democratic election was held in 1994 (SouthAfrica.info 2012:[sp]).

relate to the source material as I had expected. Their interaction with the themes of prejudice and discrimination occurred not on a racial level but on a more universal, interpersonal human level. However, incidentally this shift in directorial vision was completely in line with and underscored the production's interaction within the intercultural theatrical sphere. Such shifts which occurred in the second tier of translation will be discussed further below:

#### 7.1.2.2 The Second Tier of Translation

The third research phase began as the production moved into the second tier of translation. The directorial goal of this phase was to realize the performance of the translated playtext. For this to be successfully achieved, it was necessary to engage the cast in the translation process in order for them to bring their specific and unique cultural and lingual backgrounds to advance the translation so that it could resonate more fully within the multicultural and multilingual South African context. Three tools were used to effect this engagement namely journaling, ice-breakers and improvisations.<sup>289</sup> All three of these tools were effective in helping the cast create their characters which, while congruent to the characters in the original playtext, had to resonate within the South African context.

As discussed in Chapter 5, without the ice-breakers the lengthy and frank discussions of the journal entries would not have been possible. And it was these discussions of the performers' initial journal entries which were most beneficial for the translation process. The sharing of the performers' experiences of discrimination and bullying drew the cast closer together in their identification with the main tenet of the piece – the futility of intolerance. Through what became quite an emotionally charged process the cast not only identified with the main theme of the piece but also found the intercultural common ground between them so necessary for the translation to occur.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> As discussed in Chapter 5

<sup>290</sup> It was never my intention to psychoanalyse any of the cast members' experiences – indeed I was careful not to direct or council them as I am not a therapist, this particular exercise was merely intended to provide a platform from which we could work. However, as the cast seemed to draw strength from the sharing of these experiences and also develop an understanding of how they had been shaped through these happenings, I could not have asked for a better introduction to the main concept of the show.

In the exploration of worldview and endowment, the journals also provided a useful tool in aiding the transition of the characters into the South African context. Of course, due to constraints on the performers' time – study commitments and other productions (as well as their own personal motivations or lack thereof) some of the performers were more committed to the journaling process than others. On review of their journals which were handed in as the production drew to a close, it became clear that those who had committed fully to the process had in fact reaped the benefits and had created fuller, more rounded characters which were most recognisable in the South African situation.

The final tool, that of the improvisations, was also most important for the translation of the characters into the South African context. However, the improvisations also aided character creation in an unforeseen way. Since most of the performers had to portray characters older than the majority of the performers themselves, the performers were required to draw on the experiences of their parents/older family members/role models in order to create the necessary cultural stereotypes needed to further the plot. The collective improvisations aided in this process as the performers used these exercises to explore shared community experience - one generation up – to create the necessary political or racial stereotypes.

In terms of the creation of all the characters, I had intended to continue to use improvisation as a tool throughout the rehearsal process and allow the cast to use the characters they were creating for *Bat Boy* in various improvisational scenarios. By asking the magic 'if'<sup>291</sup> in these scenarios (other to those stated in the playtext) they would have been able to explore how their characters would react in certain situations and this would also have helped them to make strong choices regarding their characters within the context of the show. Through such experimentation they would have been able to intuit which acting choices resonated well with their characters and which choices were

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<sup>291</sup> As discussed in Chapter 5

not as wise. In so doing the cast would have been able to define and establish their characters more strongly within the production. This process was however impeded by two main problems.

Firstly, we found ourselves bound by a very limited rehearsal time period. We just did not have the luxury of time to spend on what could be seen as 'extraneous' activities when there was so much work to be done in terms of the actual business of the production: the blocking of scenes, learning of lyrics and harmonies as well as choreography and the most challenging aspect of musical theatre – putting it all together. The second complication compounded the first. As students trained in straight drama the cast was not experienced in the genre of musical theatre or more specifically in coping with such a complex musical. They did not seem to have the necessary skillset to manage the demands being made on them in terms of the singing and dancing and most importantly the combination of the two.<sup>292</sup> At this point in rehearsal any remaining time was devoted to learning harmonies, and mastering steps and the planned improvisations for allowing the cast to experiment and discover the translation shifts for themselves fell by the wayside.

Also, in the performance of the translation, some of the cast struggled to reconcile the presentational nature of the show with the need for truthfulness – within the staged reality – demanded by the playtext. In hindsight though, I believe that had I encouraged the cast to use the techniques of 'the Style'<sup>293</sup> and crossover theatre<sup>294</sup> more fully in rehearsal this could have been

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<sup>292</sup> For instance, most of the ensemble singing was written in four, five, six, seven and sometimes eight part harmony. The musical director, Dr Harold Mortimer within the first week of his rehearsals had reduced this all to four part harmony: sopranos, altos, tenors and baritones. Then as performance dates neared he reduced some of the sections into two part harmony, male and female and then in desperation just before the opening night to avoid the ensemble sounding off-pitch, he set some lines as unison singing. As described in Chapter 4 much of the appeal of the show is dependent on the very full, rich score and so this was a little disappointing. So too did the cast struggle to retain dance moves so that I found myself teaching and re-teaching sections. Even when the steps were memorized the cast seemed to lose specific nuances from one rehearsal to the next and much time was lost in constantly having to recap the basics let alone have time for the cast to add fine distinctions in terms of their character to the choreography.

<sup>293</sup> Please see Chapters 4 and 5 for a discussion of 'the Style'.

<sup>294</sup> Please see Chapter 2 for a discussion of crossover theatre and Chapter 5 for its relevance in the second tier of translation.

countered to greater effect. That being said, there were also some great moments when certain cast members had the confidence to make bold choices regarding their characters and making the text their own.<sup>295</sup> I believe that with more time or rather, more consolidated rehearsal hours this could have applied to the rest of the cast too.

## 7.2 In Conclusion

On the whole, I am of the opinion that the theatrical framework and the four research phases created an adequate framework for the translation of this particular playtext. The translated playtext was also, arguably, successful in that the various sign systems identified were placed in the South African situation and the production resonated within the South African context.<sup>296</sup> Therefore it follows that that the directorial process as advocated in this study has merit and that through such translation, stories which resonate within the South African situation can be told through the medium of musical theatre. Although, in such translation, recognition must be given to the various and distinct cultural viewpoints which exist in our society at the present time.<sup>297</sup>

As was pointed out in Chapter 1 of this study, there is a lack of available research on current South African musical theatre and in this regard I believe that this study has been of benefit in adding to a body of work describing a hitherto, somewhat academically neglected art form. In her discussion of musical theatre as entertainment or art, Millie Taylor (2012:8-9) points out that musical theatre

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<sup>295</sup> Examples include student 010's creation of her character Lorraine which garnered some of the biggest laughs in performance (not to mention rehearsal) or student 016's presentation of her butch yet sensitive farmer Jo(hanna) as well as student 014's creation of the stereotypical Ntate Mothibakgomo in which he used clichéd characteristics such as an accent which would most generally be associated with the previously disadvantaged. "Along with that I used physical traits such as an overworked physical stature and over exaggerated facial expressions typically associated with the rowdiness of township characters" – student's own account.

<sup>296</sup> A DVD of the show is available on request.

<sup>297</sup> Another such playtext recently translated into the South African context was that of *Blood Brothers* (2013), directed by David Kramer. Whilst this production had successful runs in Johannesburg and Cape Town, reviewer David Fick (2013:[sp]) posits that while some moments work beautifully, the production is "an object lesson in the challenges of transferring international plays to a local setting". He argues that unless the translated production interrogates the original deeply, problems can range from awkward oddities such as the narrator's use of 'the tokoloshe' (as discussed in a footnote to chapter 6) to ideological disasters which do not engage the audience critically (ibid).

performances, as mass entertainment – capable of answering producers’ needs for predictability and profitability in the market, “are still seen within an ideology of social functionality, against which they are denigrated” (ibid 9). This study has tried to prove that notwithstanding the emotional attachment which musical theatre productions such as *Bat Boy – the Musical*, arouse in their audiences (ibid 12) the multi-tiered and pluricoded theatrical genre of musical theatre offers – and is deserving of – marked opportunities for research.

As an aside, I must also conclude that the implementation of this directorial process, bore advantage for all of the young performers involved in the production whose growth and development in this genre cannot be undervalued. Unaccustomed to musical theatre, the performers were given the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to manage the demands placed on them by this genre. This I contend has far-reaching importance for their futures, not only increasing their versatility as performers but also their job potential in what is a highly competitive, entertainment industry. Added to this experience, the performers (and I) had the privilege to work with Dr Harold Mortimer<sup>298</sup> as musical director and in so doing benefitted from his vast expertise which will not only assuredly benefit any further personal career in this field but also advantage the musical theatre industry in this country as a whole.

### 7.2.1 Shortfalls of the study

Whilst this translation placed the story successfully in the South African context, I had specifically aspired to adhere to the original fictive discourse of the playtext in order to keep the translation faithful to the original and thus justify its existence as translation and not adaptation or variation (as discussed in Chapter 3). However, one obstacle to acknowledging the artifice of the theatrical situation as prescribed by the original playtext was encountered. In the original production all the characters had been played by 10 performers, swapping costume and gender roles in plain view of the audience. Due to the relative inexperience of the performers in the musical theatre genre it was decided (in consultation with the musical director) that they

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<sup>298</sup> Dr Harold Mortimer from the Weitzenhoffer School of Musical Theatre at Oklahoma University (and former Fulbright scholar studying musical theatre in South Africa) was the musical director for this show. His joining of the production of *Bat Boy – the musical* was made possible through funding obtained from the Embassy of the United States of America.

would be unable to cope with the vocal demands if the characters were doubled up, so a larger company was cast. However, as there was also a dearth of male performers auditioning for the show, once the roles of Bat Boy, Dr Parker, Rick and the Sheriff were cast there were not enough male members of the company to play all the remaining male roles.<sup>299</sup> It was felt that if only the female members of the cast were asked to play across gender the comic effects of this device would be unbalanced and the effect would be counter-productive. It was unfortunate that this theatrical device could not be used in the translation and the lack thereof somewhat undermined the use of the stereotypes who were then taken at face value. This had the unfortunate result of negating some of the intercultural impact of the production as it seemed the playtext was placed back within the genre associated with colonialist structures.

Also, with regards to the casting of the performers it was unfortunate that the cast was not as representational of the South African multiculturalism as I would have hoped. The choice of performers was limited not only by the stringent vocal and physical requirements of the playtext but also by the number of students who auditioned and the specific cultural groups they represented. In this regard the final cast was not as multicultural or as multilingual as had been anticipated, with predominately Sesotho, Zulu, English and Afrikaans cultural groups represented.<sup>300</sup> Although, as stated in section 7.1.2.2, in an attempt to temper any imbalance in the cast, the guided improvisations were also used as a tool to explore shared community and shared cultural experiences.

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<sup>299</sup> Another consequence of the additional female performers meant that the lines of the male character Clem were absorbed into other characters' parts, the role of the rancher, Ned became a female farmer and the townspeople Roy was adapted to become the wife of the character Mr Dillon. So too did the role of Pastor Hightower played by student 009 become a female pastor, Pastor Mamohuti Joyce. Due to the wonderful deep and rich timbre of student 009's voice the pastor's song was left in the original key, no mean feat for a female vocalist. All four of these performers worked hard to transfer the new characters into the South African context. As rehearsals progressed, however, it was found that the actresses playing the pastor and Ruthie had very little stage time in the first and second acts respectively and so for those acts they developed their own female townspeople. Student 002 created Mama Mimi as a townspeople, presumably a domestic servant and employing stereotypical gestures and expressions, and judging by audience feedback, her reactions in Act II shaped the best cameo performance of the show.

<sup>300</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 for a break-down of all the students who auditioned, their ethnicity and their home language.



A further shortcoming in the performance of the production which undermined the intercultural aspects of the playtext was that nuances of gesture appeared to be lost and the execution of some of the intercultural choreography was questionable. This was perhaps due to limited and fractured rehearsal time. Not only did some of the cast members appear to lack the ability to emulate any steps outside of their comfort zone (for example the Kwassa Kwassa) but they seemed unable to consolidate the relative movements. Unused to moving their bodies in certain ways and without the necessary exposure to other influences, the choreography at times – even the street dance – appeared ‘watered down’. However, I contend that this production offered the performers the opportunity to explore movement beyond that of their own cultural groupings and so facilitated exchange between cultures, even though it may not always have been apparent to the audience in the performance.

Upon reflection of the study in its entirety, it transpires that the topic chosen for the dissertation was perhaps too broad. The end result was a skimming of the surface of all the aspects involved in the theatrical translation. Whereas, had the study been limited to one aspect of the directorial process such as either costume design or set design or the transference of a specific character within the translation I feel that the relevant dynamics within the semiotic processes could have been explored in more depth which would have realised the academic potential of this study more fully.

And finally, even if the dissertation had been confined to a smaller research area, another drawback of this study is that the directorial process was only investigated in regards to a single production. To draw a fuller conclusion as to the efficacy of this directorial process, it would have to be applied to the theatrical translation of more than one playtext. In so doing, comparisons could be drawn and further strengths and weaknesses of the directorial process could be identified.

### **7.2.2 Possible opportunities for further study**

As stated in the previous section it appears that each aspect of the directorial approach would provide opportunities for further research. However, in terms of my particular skill set (that of director/choreographer combined) one avenue which I briefly touched on in this study drew my attention.

As argued in Chapter 4, the role of dance and movement in a musical is traditionally the domain of the choreographer, who creates meaning through the semiotic systems known as kinesics. It is my contention as espoused in section 4.2.4 that the role kinesics have come to play in the postmodern musical<sup>301</sup> is ever more important. The days of the contrived musical comedy shows with superfluous dancing girls or the incorporation of concert dance (Deer 2014:60) for mere spectacle's sake have passed. The signifying systems of movement and gesture in musical theatre have become so much more, from furthering the plot or concept, (even to the point of being the primary method of telling the story) as well as help to delineate and develop character (Thelen 1990:197). Kinesics can not only express the style of the piece but also comment on the action. However, unlike the dialogue of a musical which is set out in the script and the music and lyrics which are contained in the score, the choreography has traditionally been left to the appointed choreographer to interpret – from the music, singing and scenic action. To my mind this suggests that there is in fact an encoded gestic text that can be implied from the other elements but one which allows for different interpretations subject to each individual choreographer's frame of reference. I would find it particularly interesting to explore what prompts the choreographer to make decisions in decoding this gestic text and how these decisions are implemented.

This leads to another, as yet, only partially explored field. Lodge (2014:81) points out that in practical terms, dance breaks serve to provide spectacle. It appears that the role of dance – as a visual art, lends a prime element of display<sup>302</sup> to the musical theatre genre and that this is true whether the movement vocabulary is the primary method of story-telling as in *CATS* (1981) or develops diegetically from the scenic action as in *A Chorus Line* (1975) or *Spiderman* (2011). However, Millie Taylor and Dominic Symonds (2014:6) point out that to speak of performance (specifically in the realm of song and dance) is not only to suppose a demonstration of skill, an act of entertainment or an interpretation of text. They posit that there are complex dynamics at work between performer and audience and that beyond theatrical concerns of pretence or entertainment, this performativity can exceed the boundaries of the

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<sup>301</sup> The postmodern musical is described in Chapter 2.

<sup>302</sup> I hesitate to use the word 'entertainment' as the connotations and associations thereto are problematized and this will be briefly explained in the next paragraph.

performed piece and can form cultural discourse (ibid 5). Ben Macpherson (2014:63) suggests that the intertextual signification of song and dance extends beyond the fiction, firstly, drawing attention to the artifice of the performance but secondly, engaging the audience through these heightened inputs which prompt prior knowledge, memory or cultural associations.

This intertextual signification was touched on in this study as gesture and movement, or kinesics, were used not only as cultural signifiers but also to draw attention to the fictive discourse of the work. I maintain that there is scope in this arena to investigate the role of dance in creating the performativity in the musical theatre genre. I suggest that it is this performativity which creates the empathetic identification to plot and character (Taylor 2013:10) and in so doing creates the double edged sword: on one side a weapon of mass entertainment but on the other, the insinuation of unsophisticated, lowbrow practices. This would in turn explore how the genre of musical theatre operates within the complex dialectical relationship between art and entertainment.

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*42<sup>nd</sup> Street*. 1980. Book: Michael Stewart & Mark Bramble, Music: Harry Warren, Lyrics: Al Dubin.

*A Chorus Line*. 1975. Book: James Kirkwood, Jr & Nicholas Dante, Music: Marvin Hamlisch, Lyrics: Edward Kleban

*African Footprint*. 2000. Music and Lyrics: Dave Pollecutt, Poetry: Don Mattera, Choreography: Debbie Rakusin & David Matamela

*Africa Umoja (Umoja – The Spirit of Togetherness)*. 2000. (SA). Creators: Todd Twala & Thembi Nyandeni

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. 1962. Book: Burt Shevelove & Larry Gelbart, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Allegro*. 1947. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*A Little Night Music*. 1973. Book: Hugh Wheeler. Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*American Idiot*. 2010. Book: Billie Joe Armstrong & Michael Mayer, Music: Green Day, Lyrics: Billie Joe Armstrong

*Antjie Somers*. 2000 (SA). Book: Hannes Muller. Music & Lyrics: Didi Kriel.

*Anyone can Whistle*. 1964. Book: Arthur Laurents, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Applause*. 1970. Book: Betty Comden & Adolph Green, Music: Charles Strouse, Lyrics: Lee Adams

*Around the World in 80 Days*. 1946. Book: Orson Welles, Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter

*Asinamali!* 1987 (SA). Devised by Mbongeni Ngema & Cast

*Avenue Q*. 2003 (Off-Broadway). Book: Jeff Whitty, Music & Lyrics: Robert Lopez & Jeff Marx

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<sup>303</sup> All dates represent the Broadway opening unless otherwise specified.

*Barnum*. 1980. Book: Mark Bramble. Music: Cy Coleman, Lyrics: Michael Stewart

*Bat Boy – the Musical*. 2001 (Off-Broadway). Book: Keythe Farley, Brian Flemming. Music & Lyrics: Laurence O’Keefe

*Billy Elliot – the Musical*. 2005 (West End). Book & Lyrics: Lee Hall, Music: Elton John

*BoyBand*. 2000. Book: Peter Quilter. Music & Lyrics: Contemporary Artists

*Brigadoon*. 1947. Book & Lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner, Music: Frederick Loewe

*Bring in ’da noise, bring in ’da funk*. 1996. Book: Reg E Gaines, Music: Daryl Walters, Zane Mark & Ann Duquesnay, Lyrics: Reg E Gaines, George C Wolfe & Ann Duquesnay

*Brolloks en Bittergall*. 1998. Book: Liz Meiring & Hannes Muller, Musical Arrangement: Didi Kriel

*BUDDY! The Buddy Holly Story*. 1989 (West End). Book: Alan James. Music & Lyrics: Various

*Cabaret*. 1966. Book: Christopher Isherwood, Music: John Kander, Lyrics: Fred Ebb.

*Camelot*. 1960. Book & Lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner, Music: Frederick Loewe

*Candide*. 1956. Libretto: Lilian Hellman, Music: Leonard Bernstein. 1974. Book: Hugh Wheeler. Music Leonard Bernstein, Lyrics: Richard Wilbur

*Carousel*. 1943. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*CATS*. 1981 (West End). Poetry: TS Elliot, Music & Additional Lyrics: Andrew Lloyd Webber

*Chess*. 1986 (West End). Book: Richard Nelson, Music: Benny Andersson. Bjorn Ulvaeus, Lyrics: Tim Rice & Bjorn Ulvaeus

*Chicago*. 1975. Book: Fred Ebb & Bob Fosse, Music: John Kander, Lyrics: Fred Ebb

*Christian (Follow That Man)*. 1980 (SA). Written by: Nick Taylor.

*Cinderella (Television Musical)*. 1957. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*Company*. 1970. Book: George Furth. Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Contact*. 2000. Book: Susan Stroman John Weidman, Music & Lyrics: Various

*Dancin’*. 1978. Concept: Bob Fosse, Music & Lyrics: Various

- Dawid*. 2010 (SA). Book: Renier & Lisa Keyser, Original Music & Lyrics: Frits de Groot, Translation: Bernard Odendaal
- Die Spook van Donkergat*. 1999. Book: Liz Meiring & Hannes Muller, Music & Lyrics: Didi Kriel & Wikus du Toit
- Dirty Dancing*. 2004 (Australia). Book: Eleanor Bergstein. Music & Lyrics: Various
- Dreamgirls*. 1981. Book & Lyrics: Tom Eyen, Music: Henry Kriegler
- Droomkind*. 2014 (SA). Book: Renier Keyser & Elizma Badenhorst, Music & Lyrics: Various, Musical Arrangement: Mattys Maree
- Ester*. 2011 (SA). Book: Renier & Lisa-Marie Keyser & Joe Niemand, Music & Lyrics: Joe Niemand
- Evita*. 1978 (West End). Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber. Lyrics: Tim Rice
- FAME*. 1988 (Miami). Book: Jose Fernandez, Music: Steve Margoshes, Lyrics: Jacques Levy
- Fangs*. 2006. Book: Tim Plewman, Music: Bobby Louw, Lyrics: Bobby Louw, Bill Flynn
- Fiddler on the Roof*. 1964. Book: Joseph Stein, Music: Jerry Bock, Lyrics: Sheldon Harnick
- Follies*. 1971. Book: James Goldman. Music and Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.
- Footloose*. 1998. Book: Dean Pitchford & Walter Bobbie, Music: Tom Snow (& others), Lyrics: Dean Pitchford, Additional Lyrics: Kenny Loggins
- Flower Drum Song*. 1958. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers
- Fosse*. 1999. Conceived by: Richard Maltby Jr, Chet Walker, Ann Reinking
- Gigi (Movie Musical)*. 1958. Screenplay & Lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner, Music: Frederick Loewe
- Godspell*. 1971(Off-Broadway). Book: John-Michael Tebelak, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Schwartz
- Good Vibrations*. 2005. Music & Lyrics: Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys
- Grease*.1972. Written by Jim Jacobs & Warren Casey
- Guys and Dolls*. 1950. Book: Jo Swerling & Abe Burrows, Music: Frank Loesser
- Gypsy*. 1959. Book: Arthur Laurents, Music: Jules Styne, Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Hair*. 1967 (Off-Broadway). Book & Lyrics: James Rado & Gerome Ragni, Music: Galt MacDermot

*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. 1998. (Off-Broadway). Book: John Cameron Mitchell, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Trask

*Hello Dolly*. 1964. Book: Michael Stewart, Music & Lyrics: Jerry Herman

*High School Musical*. 2006. Book: David Simpatico, Music & Lyrics: Matthew Gerrard, Robbie Nevil, Ray & Greg Cham, Drew Seeley, Randy Petersen, Kevin Quinn, Andy Dodd, Adam Watts, Bryan Louiselle, David N. Lawrence, Faye Greenberg & Jamie Houston

*How Long*. 1973 (SA). Written by Gibson Kente

*I Love My Wife*. 1977. Book & Lyrics: Michael Stewart, Music: Cy Coleman

*Into the Woods*. 1988. Book: James Lapine. Music and Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

*Ipi Tombi*. 1974 (SA). Created by Bertha Egnos

*Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. 1968 (Off-Broadway). Book: Eric Blau & Mort Shuman, Music: Jacques Brel, Lyrics: Jacques Brel, Eric Blau & Mort Shuman

*Jersey Boys*. 2005. Book: Marshall Brickman & Rick Elice, Music: Bob Gaudio, Lyrics: Bob Crewe

*Jesus*. 2013 (SA). Book: Johan Scholtz, Existing Contemporary Music: Robbie Wessels, Heinz Winkler & Others, Original Music & Lyrics: Janine Neethling

*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. 1973 (West End). Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lyrics: Tim Rice

*King Kong*. 1959 (SA). Book: Harry Bloom, Music: Todd Matshikiza, Lyrics: Matshikiza & Pat Williams

*Kiss Me Kate*. 1948. Book: Samuel & Bella Spewack, Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter

*Kiss of the Spiderwoman*. 1992 (West End). Book: Terrence McNally, Music: John Kander, Lyrics: Fred Ebb

*Les Misérables*: 1980 (Paris). : Book: Claude-Michel Schonberg & Alain Boublil (Adaptation: Trevor Nunn & John Caird) Music: Claude-Michel Schonberg, Lyrics: Alain Boublil (English Language Libretto: Herbert Kretzmer)

*Little Mary Sunshine*. 1959 (Off-Broadway).Book, Music & Lyrics: Rick Besoyan

*Little Shop of Horrors*. 1982 (Off Off-Broadway). Book & Lyrics: Howard Ashman, Music: Alan Menken

*Mama and the Load*. 1979 (SA). Written by: Gibson Kente

*Mame*. 1966. Book: Jerome Lawrence & Robert Edwin Lee, Music & Lyrics: Jerry Herman

*Mamma Mia*. 1999. Book: Catherine Johnson, Music Bjorn Ulvaeus & Benny Anderson, Lyrics: Bjorn Ulvaeus, Benny Anderson & Stig Anderson

*Man of La Mancha*. 1965. Book: Dae Wasserman, Music: Mitch Leigh, Lyrics: Joe Darion

*Marikana – the musical*. 2014. Book: Aubrey Sekhabi, Music & Lyrics: Various

*Me and My Girl*. 1937 (West End). Book & Lyrics: Douglas Furber & L Arthur Rose, Music: Noel Gay

*Merrily We Roll Along*. 1981. Book: George Furth, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Meropa (Kwa Zulu)*. 1974 (SA). Created by Joan Brickhill & Louis Burke

*Milestones*. 1999 (SA). Book: Mandla Langa, Music & Lyrics: Hugh Masekela, Motsumi Makhene & Khumalo & Mokale Koapeng

*My Fair Lady*. 1956. Book & Lyrics: Alan Jay Lerner, Music: Frederick Loewe

*Naughty Marietta*. 1910. Libretto: Rida Johnson Young, Music: Victor Herbert

*Miss Saigon*: Book: Claude-Michel Schonberg & Alain Boublil, Music: Claude-Michel Schonberg, Lyrics: Alain Boublil & Richard Maltby, Jr

*Oh, What a Lovely War*. 1963 (Stratford). Book: Joan Littlewood, Music & Lyrics: Various

*Oklahoma*. 1943. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*Ons vir Jou*. 2008 (SA). Book: Deon Opperman & Sean Else, Music: Johan Vorster

*On Your Toes*. 1936. Book: Richard Rodgers, George Abbot & Lorenz Hart, Music: Richard Rodgers, Lyrics: Lorenz Hart

*Our House*. 2002. Book: Tim Frith, Music & Lyrics: Madness

*Pacific Overtures*. 1976. Book: John Weidman, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim.

*Parade*. 1998. Book: Alfred Uhry. Music and Lyrics: Jason Robert Brown.

*Passion*. 1994. Book: James Lapine, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

*Phantom of the Opera*. 1986. Book: Andrew Lloyd Webber & Richard Stilgoe, Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber, Lyrics: Charles Hart & Richard Stilgoe

*Pipe Dream*. 1955. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*Pippin*. 1972. Book: Roger O Hirson & Bob Fosse, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Schwartz

*Ragtime*. 1998. Book: Terrence McNally, Lyrics: Lynn Ahrens, Music: Stephen Flaherty

*Rent*. 1996. Book, Music & Lyrics: Jonathan Larson.

*Rose Marie*. 1924. Book & Lyrics: Otto Harbach & Oscar Hammerstein II, Music: Rudolph Friml & Herbert Stothart

*Sarafina*. 1987 (Off-Broadway). Written by Mbongeni Ngema

*Saturday Night Fever*. 1998 (West End). Book: Nan Knighton, Arlene Phillips, Paul Nicholas & Robert Stigwood, Music & Lyrics: Bee Gees

*Scribble*. 1991 (SA). Written by: Jervis Pennington

*Sekunjalo, the Naked Hour*. 1988 (SA). Written by Gibson Kente

*Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. 1982. Book: Lawrence Kasha & David Landay, Music: Gene de Paul, Al Kasha & Joel Hirschhorn, Lyrics: Johnny Mercer, Al Kasha & Joel Hirschhorn.

*Show Boat*. 1927. Book: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Jerome Kern, Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II & P G Wodehouse

*Spring Awakening*. 2006 (Off-Broadway). Book & Lyrics: Steven Sater, Music: Duncan Sheik

*Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark*. 2011. Book: Julie Taymor, Glen Berger & Robert Aguirre-Sarcasa, Music and Lyrics: Bono & The Edge

*State Fair* (film). 1945. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*Songs for a new world*. 1996 (Off-Broadway). Music & Lyrics: Jason Robert Brown

*Sophiatown*. 1986. Devised by Malcolm Purkey & The Junction Avenue Theatre Company

*South Pacific*. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*Sponono*. 1961(SA). Book: Alan Paton & Krishnah Shah. Musical Arrangement: Gideon Nxumalo

*Starlight Express*. 1984 (West End). Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber, David Yazbek & Alistair Lloyd Webber, Lyrics: Richard Stilgoe, Don Black, David Yazbek & Nick Coler

*Sunday in the Park with George.* 1983 (Off-Broadway). Book: James Lapine, Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

*The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.* 2005 (Off-Broadway). Concept: Rebecca Feldman, Book: Rachel Sheinkin, Music & Lyrics: William Finn

*The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.* 1978. Book: Larry L King & Peter Masterson, Music & Lyrics: Carol Hall

*The Black Crook.* 1866 (New York). Book: Charles M Barres. Music: Thomas Baker, Giuseppe Operti, George Bickwell, Lyrics: Theodore Kennick

*The Disappointment.* 1767 (Philadelphia). Book: Andrew Barton. Music and Lyrics: Samuel Adler.

*The Dancing Years.* 1939 (west End). Book & Music: Ivor Novello, Lyrics: Christopher Hassall

*The Desert Song.* 1926. Book and Lyrics: Oscar Hammerstein II, Otto Harbach & Frank Mandel. Music: Sigmund Romberg

*The Fantasticks.* 1960 (Off-Broadway). Book & Lyrics: Tom Jones, Music: Harvey Schmidt

*The Rink.* 1984. Book: Terrence McNally, Music: John Kander, Lyrics: Fred Ebb

*The Rocky Horror Show.* 1973 (Off-Broadway). Book, Music & Lyrics: Richard O'Brien

*The King and I.* 1951. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*The Last Five Years.* 2002. Book, Music & Lyrics: Jason Robert Brown.

*The Merry Widow.* 1905 (Vienna). Librettists: Viktor Leon & Leo Stein, Composer: Franz Lehár (English Adaptation Librettist: Adrian Ross)

*The Most Happy Fella.* 1956. Book, Music & Lyrics: Frank Loesser

*The Pirates of Penzance.* 1879 (New York). Libretto: W S Gilbert, Music: Arthur Sullivan

*The Sound of Music.* 1959. Libretto: Oscar Hammerstein II. Music: Richard Rodgers

*The Threepenny Opera.* 1928 (Berlin). Book & Lyrics: Berthold Brecht, Music Kurt Weill

*The Wall* (Movie Musical). 1982. Screenplay: Roger Waters, Music & Lyrics: Pink Floyd



*The Wizard of Oz.* 1987. Book: John Kane, Music: Harold Arlen, Lyrics by EY Harburg

*The Ziegfeld Follies.* (1907 – 1931). Conceived and produced by Florenz Ziegfeld

*Too Late.* 1974 (SA). Written by Gibson Kente

*Tree Aan.* 2011 (SA). Book: Deon Opperman. Music & Lyrics by Janine Neethling

*Umabatha.* 1970. Written by Welcome Msomi

*Uncle Tom's Cabin.* 1852. Presented by George L Aiken

*Urinetown.* 2001. Book: Greg Kotis, Music: Mark Hollman, Lyrics Greg Kotis & Mark Hollman

*We Will Rock You.* 2002 (West End). Book: Ben Elton, Brian May & Roger Taylor, Music & Lyrics: Queen

*West Side Story.* 1957. Book: Arthur Laurents, Music: Leonard Bernstein, Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

*Working.* 1978. Book: Stephen Schwartz & Nina Faso, Music: Stephen Schwartz, Craig Carnelia, Micki Grant, James Taylor & Mary Rodgers, Lyrics: Stephen Schwartz, Craig Carnelia, Micki Grant, James Taylor & Susan Birkenhead

*Woza Albert.* 1981 (SA). Written by: Percy Mtwa & Mbongeni Ngema.

## Appendix I

### List of Bat Auditionees for *Bat Boy – the Musical*

Code:	Year of Study:	Ethnic Group:					Home Language:
		Asian	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	
001	4 <sup>th</sup>		√				Sotho
002	3 <sup>rd</sup>		√				South Sotho
003	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
004	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
005	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
006	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
007	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	English
008	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
009	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Sotho
010	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
011	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
012	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Zulu
013	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
014	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
015	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
016	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Zulu
017	2 <sup>nd</sup>						French
018	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
019	3 <sup>rd</sup>						Afrikaans
020	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
021	4 <sup>th</sup>					√	Afrikaans
022	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
023	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
024	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Lebanese/English
025	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
026	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
027	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	English
028	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
029	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans

030	3 <sup>rd</sup>		√				Ndebele/English
031	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
032	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	English
033	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	English
034	3 <sup>rd</sup>		√				Tsonga/Sotho
035	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Setswana
036	2 <sup>nd</sup>			√			Afrikaans
037	2 <sup>nd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
038	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Zulu
039	2 <sup>nd</sup>		√				Sotho
040	3 <sup>rd</sup>					√	Afrikaans
041	3 <sup>rd</sup>		√				Pedi
042	4 <sup>th</sup>		√				Zulu
043	4 <sup>th</sup>					√	Afrikaans

**Yellow** highlight indicates those chosen for the cast of the production

**Green** highlight indicates those chosen to be part of the band

**Blue** highlight indicates the production assistant who didn't audition for the show but was involved in scheduling and rehearsal

Cast List of *Bat Boy – the musical* and corresponding student codes:<sup>304</sup>

Role:	Code:
Bat Boy/Edgar	001
Meredith Parker	002
Thomas Parker	003
Shelley Parker	004
Sheriff Reynolds	005
Rick Taylor	006
Ron Taylor	007
Ruthie Taylor	008
Mrs Taylor	009
Lorraine – a rancher's wife	010
Maggie – senior	011
Daisy – a school teacher	012
Reverend Billy Hightower	013
Pan – the Greek satyr-god of	014
Ensemble <sup>305</sup>	015
Ensemble	016
Ensemble	017
Ensemble	018
Swing	019
Swing	020
Rehearsal Pianist/band	021
Production Assistant	043

<sup>304</sup> Student codes are used as means of identification through-out the dissertation

<sup>305</sup> Role division within the ensemble to be decided in rehearsal

## Appendix 2

Kaitlin Hopkins:<sup>306</sup> *Bat Boy* and 9/11

(Facebook status update 9/11/2013)

It's hard to believe how many years have passed since Sept 11...it seems like yesterday Jim and I had our first date together the night before, and then overnight our world changed forever. I think of many things on this day, the friends that were lost, what we all lost as a country, and as a theater community. I am not sure my heart will ever recover from the memories and what it was like to be in my beautiful city, my birth place, my home that day, and the days that followed but I know I still thank God every day for my theater family at that time for being. Our show "Bat Boy" was playing the Union Square theater and we had to shut down, then we reopened, then we shut down for good. I love you all so much, and want to say thank you for everything...I miss you all and think a reunion may need to be in our future soon. There are so many memories that come flooding back but one in particular, when some of the cast walked into Union Square after the show and there was that candlelight service that just...happened.... and people were still hoping to find family members and there were walls with photos and people singing and talking and just being together because we all didn't know what else to do....I remember the 13 rescue workers from Detroit and the evening we spent with them at City Crab after we invited them to see the show, I remember us having to hold the curtain because the audience started shouting and cheering for them in gratitude when they entered the theater and giving up their seats for them...I remember the audiences that came those first few nights... before we had to close and then just waiting outside the theater for the cast, to talk to us, to say thank you, just needing community.....all of us, just trying to make sense of it....I remember the weight of the air....of a city grieving...it felt like it would never lift. It took more than year for it even to begin to feel different. But most of all, I remember thinking that theater got a lot of people through hard moments, it offered an escape, laughter, community and hope for a future where surely, if nothing else, artists would help heal us. So, to all you artists out there....what you do matters...what you

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<sup>306</sup> Kaitlin Hopkins took the role of Meredith on the original Actors' Gang production of *Bat Boy* as well as the Off-Broadway production.

did...mattered....I am sad today but hopeful for tomorrow thanks to all the artists in the world who didn't give up and kept going. Thank you for all the light and good you all bring into the world every day. We need you.

## Appendix 3

### Synopsis of Plot

#### ACT I

Whilst caving, the three Taylor siblings stumble upon the Bat Boy. In the ensuing chaos the youngest, Ruthie is bitten by the Bat Boy as her brothers manage to overpower him and bring him to the surface. The humanoid creature is placed in the care of the sheriff who brings him to the home of the local veterinarian Dr Parker hoping for a quick solution to the problem. Meredith, Dr Parker's wife, agrees to take him in and christens him Edgar. Shelley the Parkers' teenage daughter is initially repulsed by Edgar but when her boyfriend, Rick Taylor (Ruthie's brother) threatens him, she is greatly upset. While Mrs Taylor promises Ruthie justice, the desperate residents of Hope Falls are worried by their feeble cattle dying inexplicably and start to blame the Bat Boy. When Dr Parker returns home and is about to euthanize Edgar, Meredith steps in and in return for sparing Edgar's life she promises Dr Parker sex which he sees as an upturn in their failing marriage. Parker in celebration feeds Edgar animal blood. With Meredith's patient teaching Edgar is 'civilized' and yearns to be accepted into society. The town council, however, convince Parker to prevent Edgar from attending the upcoming revival but Meredith relents and she and Shelley decide to accompany him. Incensed by having his word undermined Parker grabs Meredith and Edgar instinctively attacks. Parker, humiliated and furious plots to destroy Edgar and save his marriage; he gives Ruthie a lethal injection intending to blame her death on the Bat Boy's poisonous bite and continues to taunt Edgar with what he craves for sustenance, blood.

#### ACT II

At the revival Edgar implores the townsfolk to accept him and finally embracing him they take him into the fold. At this point Parker arrives and informs everyone of Ruthie's death compelling them to turn on Edgar. In the ensuing struggle Edgar attacks Rick Taylor and, pretending to minister to his wounds, Parker administers yet another lethal dose to prove that Edgar is a grave threat and the enraged residents pursue Edgar into the woods. As Meredith and Shelley continue to look for Edgar, Shelley reveals that she is in love with him. Believing her mother's



horrified response to be the same as the bigoted townspeople Shelley runs deeper into the wood where she finds Edgar. They confess their love for each other and their union is presided over by Pan and the woodland creatures. In the meantime, Ron Taylor wanting vengeance for his siblings searches the slaughterhouse. Hearing the commotion within, the Hope Falls residents led by Mrs Taylor set fire to the building unwittingly murdering Ron in the process. Back in the woods Edgar is weak from hunger and begs Shelley to leave before he harms her. Instead she offers him her own blood. As he is about to bite, Meredith arrives and reveals that she is actually Edgar's mother too. Overcome with grief and shame Edgar flees into a cave and pledges to embrace his inner beast and kill both his parents. As the townsfolk arrive at the cave Meredith and Parker reveal that Edgar is the result of a pheromone experiment gone wrong leading to her being violated, not only by her husband but also a colony of bats. At the birth of the twins Edgar and Shelley, Meredith asked Parker to kill the deformed child. Since he could not bring himself to do it Parker instead left Edgar at the mouth of the cave where the bats adopted him. Edgar now begs Parker to kill him and when he is refused discloses that he slept with Shelley. Parker overcome with grief slits his own throat causing Edgar to fall upon him to feed whilst Parker stabs him in the back. Meredith tries to intervene but is stabbed too and all three fall to the ground, dead, leaving Shelley and the townsfolk to reflect on what has happened.

## Appendix 4

### List of Songs in *Bat Boy – The Musical*

#### ACT I:

Hold Me, Bat Boy

Christian Charity

Ugly Boy

Whatcha Wanna Do?

A Home for You

Another Dead Cow

Dance With Me Darling

Mrs Taylor's Lullaby

Show You a Thing or Two

Christian Charity (reprise)

A Home for You (reprise)

Comfort and Joy

#### ACT II:

A Joyful Noise

Let Me Walk Among You

A Joyful Noise (reprise)

Three Bedroom House

Children, Children

More Blood/Kill the Bat Boy

Inside Your Heart

Apology to a Cow

I Imagine You're Upset/Kill the Bat Boy

Hold Me Bat Boy (reprise)

## Appendix 5

### List of Characters in *Bat Boy – The Musical*

Bat Boy (Edgar) – the bat boy

Meredith Parker – the veterinarian’s wife

Thomas Parker – the town veterinarian

Shelley Parker – rebellious daughter of Thomas and Meredith

Sheriff Reynolds – the local sheriff, coming up for re-election

Rick Taylor – rowdy teenager, son of Mrs Taylor, brother to Ron and Ruthie,

Boyfriend of Shelley

Ron Taylor

Ruthie Taylor

Mrs Taylor

Lorraine – a townswoman

Delia – a townswoman

Maggie – mayor of Hope Falls

Daisy – a townswoman

Mr Dillon – a rancher

Bud – a rancher

Ned – a rancher

Roy – a townsman

Clem – a townsman

Reverend Billy Hightower

Pan – the Greek satyr-god of nature

A Doctor

Institute Man

Chorus – singer/dancers, additional townsfolk

### Doubling

Originally the show was written for ten people to play all twenty-two roles. Except for performers playing Bat Boy, Meredith, Dr Parker and Shelley, every cast member plays multiple roles including at least one of the opposite gender. Cast breakdown is as follows:

- Sheriff Reynolds/Delia (male actor)
- Rick Taylor/Lorraine/Mr Dillon (male actor)
- Ron Taylor/Maggie/Clem (female actor)
- Ruthie Taylor/Ned (female actor)
- Mrs Taylor/Roy/Reverend Billy Hightower (male actor)
- Daisy/Bud/Pan/Doctor (male actor)

## Appendix 6

### List of Caves in South Africa<sup>307</sup>

Name of Caves	Other Names	Province	Nearest Town
Apocalypse Pothole		North West	Oberholzer
Baboti Caves			
Blombos Cave		Western Cape	Heidelberg
Boesmangat	Bushman's Hole	Northern Cape	
Boons Cave			
Border Cave		KwaZulu-Natal	Ingwavuma
Cango Caves		Western Cape	Oudtshoorn
Chaos Cave			
Coopers Cave		Gauteng	SterkfonteinKromdraai
Die Kelders		Western Cape	Gansbaai
Diepkloof Rock Shelter		Western Cape	
Ech Cave		Mpumalanga	Ohrigstad
Gladysvale Cave		Gauteng	SterkfonteinSwartkrans
Gondolin Cave		North West	
Howieson's Poort Shelter		Eastern Cape	Grahamstown
Klasies River Caves		Eastern Cape	Humansdorp
Kromdraai Fossil Site		Gauteng	Sterkfontein
Makapansgat	Makapan's Cave	Limpopo	Mokopane
Motsetsi Cave		Gauteng	SterkfonteinKromdraai
Onmeetbarediepgat		Western Cape	Bredasdorp
Pinnacle Point Caves		Western Cape	Mossel Bay
Plovers Lake		Gauteng	SterkfonteinKromdraai
Sibudu Cave		KwaZulu-Natal	Tongaat
Sterkfontein		Gauteng	Sterkfontein
Sudwala Caves		Mpumalanga	Nelspruit

<sup>307</sup> Retrieved from Wikipedia, 26/07/2012

[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List\\_of\\_caves\\_in\\_South\\_Africa&oldid=435110601](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_caves_in_South_Africa&oldid=435110601)

<b>Name of Caves</b>	<b>Other Names</b>	<b>Province</b>	<b>Nearest Town</b>
West Driefontein Cave		Gauteng	Carletonville
Wonder Cave Kromdraai		Gauteng	SterkfonteinKromdraai
Wonderwerk Cave		Northern Cape	Kuruman

## Appendix 7

### Review of Journal questions

Performers were asked to answer the following questions to explore the main themes of the production.

1. Have you ever been discriminated against? If so, Why? How did it make you feel? How was it resolved?  
OR have you ever been bullied? OR been a bully? How did the situation resolve? Are there any residual emotions? Did the situation have a positive outcome or how could it have been handled to create a positive outcome?
2. What is your definition of Love?
3. What leads us to act with a desire for revenge and can acting out of revenge have positive outcomes?

From student 027's journal notes:

#### *My definition of Love*

What is love?

Love is just a bunch of electrical signals beings sent to and from your brain.

It only becomes a feeling after that.

Hormones being secreted have this euphoric feeling.

...that's the physical side.

The spiritual side of love though, that's different...

....it's fulfilment, wholeness.

Love is your soul's endorphin, your soul's perfect state, equilibrium.

It comes in the form of family, individuals, tasks, actions, moments, laughs

Loving is life

Life is love



List of questions to establish worldview (Deer and Dal Vera 2008:18/19):<sup>308</sup>

1. Where do I live?
2. How do I speak?
3. What is beautiful?
4. What is sexy (turn on & off)?
5. What is my perception of gender roles?
6. What is good etiquette and what is taboo?
7. What do I do for fun?
8. What are my religious beliefs and my sense of the afterlife and what is a sin?
9. What is my relationship to authority?
10. What is my level of education level?
11. What is my profession?

Lists to be created to explore endowment (ibid):

1. List the five people most important people to you.
2. List the three most important things (not necessarily of material worth).
3. Describe why in one sentence,
4. Do the same for your character.

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<sup>308</sup> Examples of the performers' answers in their journals available on request.

## Appendix 8

### Semiological Analysis of Performance

Questionnaire developed by Patrice Pavis during the 1983-84 academic session at the Institute of Theatre Studies at the New Sorbonne.

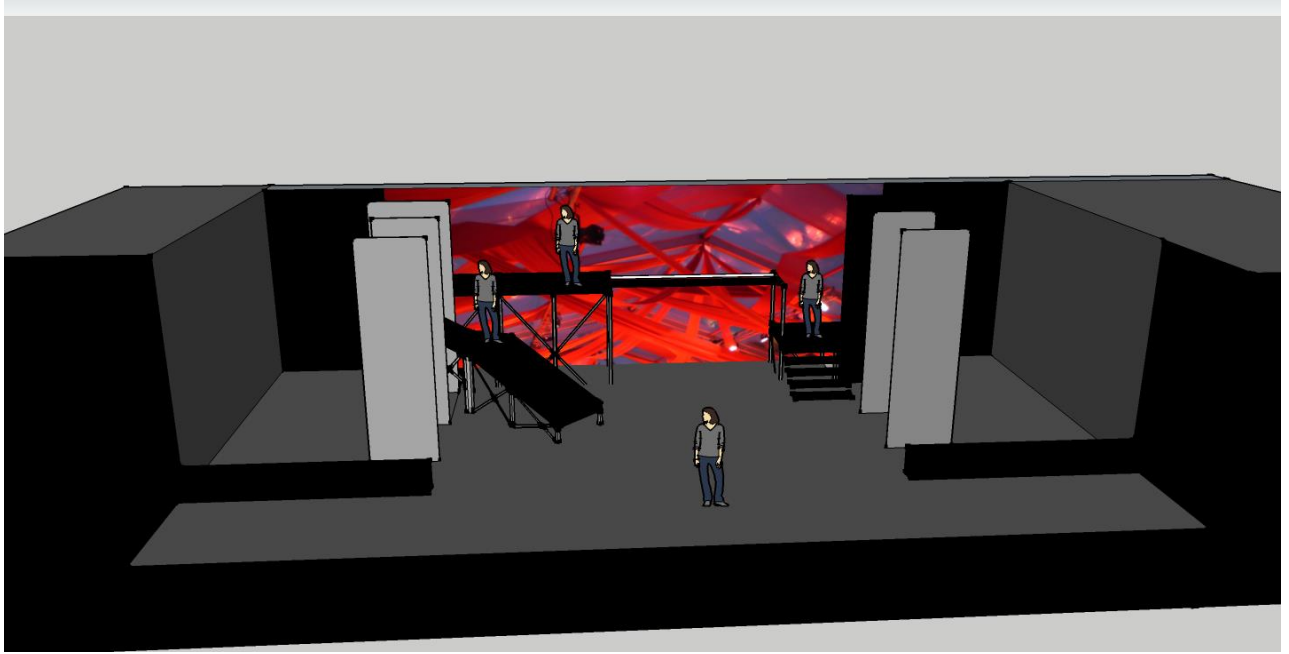
<p><b>1. General Discussion of performance</b></p> <p>(a) What holds elements of performance together</p> <p>(b) Relationship between systems of staging</p> <p>(c) Coherence or incoherence</p> <p>(d) Aesthetic principles of the production</p> <p>(e) What do you find disturbing about the production: strong moments or weak, boring moments</p> <p><b>2. Scenography</b></p> <p>(a) spatial forms: urban, architectural, scenic, gestural, etc</p> <p>(b) relationship between audience space and acting space</p> <p>(c) system of colours and their connotations</p> <p>(d) principles of organization of space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relationship between on-stage and off-stage</li> <li>- links between space utilized and fiction of the staged dramatic text</li> <li>- what is shown and what is implied</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Lighting system</b></p> <p><b>4. Stage properties</b> Type, function, relationship to space and actors' bodies</p> <p><b>5. Costumes</b> How they work; relationship to actors' bodies</p> <p><b>6. Actors' performances</b></p> <p>(a) Individual or conventional style of acting</p> <p>(b) Relation between actor and group</p> <p>(c) Relation between text and body, between actor and role</p> <p>(d) Quality of gestures and mime</p> <p>(e) Quality of voices</p> <p>(f) How dialogue develops</p>	<p><b>7. Function of music and sound effects</b></p> <p><b>8. Pace of performance</b></p> <p>(a) Overall pace</p> <p>(b) Pace of certain signifying systems (lighting, costumes, gestures etc)</p> <p>(c) Steady or broken pace</p> <p><b>9. Interpretation of story-line in performance</b></p> <p>(a) What story is being told</p> <p>(b) What kind of dramaturgical choices have been made</p> <p>(c) What are the ambiguities in performance and what are points of explanation</p> <p>(d) How is plot structured</p> <p>(e) How is story constructed by actors and staging</p> <p>(f) What is genre of dramatic text</p> <p><b>10. Text in performance</b></p> <p>(a) Main features of translation</p> <p>(b) What role is given to dramatic text in production</p> <p>(c) Relationship between text and image</p> <p><b>11. Audience</b></p> <p>(a) where does performance take place</p> <p>(b) what expectations did you have of performance</p> <p>(c) how did audience react</p> <p>(d) role of spectator in production of meaning</p> <p><b>12. How to notate (photograph and film ) this production</b></p> <p>(a) How to notate performance technically</p> <p>(b) Which images have you retained</p> <p><b>13. What cannot be put into signs</b></p> <p>(a) What did not make sense in your interpretation of the production</p> <p>(b) What was not reducible to signs and meaning (and why)</p> <p><b>14.</b></p> <p>(a) Are there any special problems that need examining</p> <p>(b) Any comments, suggestions for further categories for the questionnaire and the production</p>
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## Appendix 9

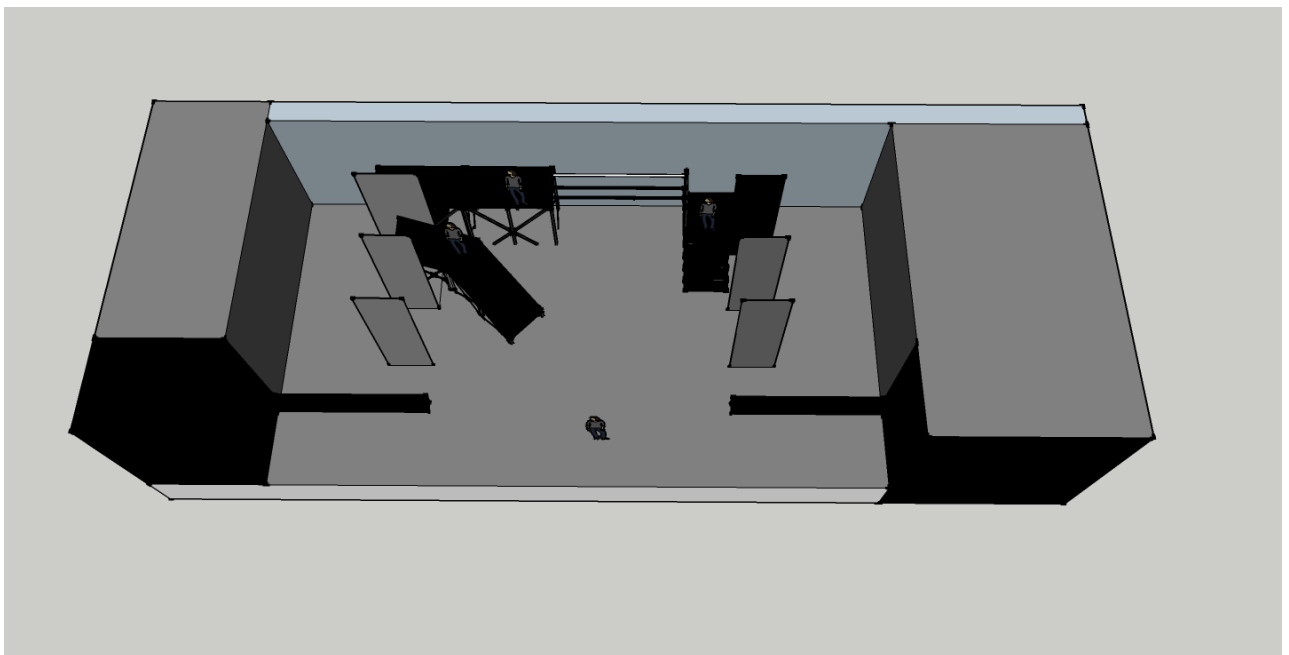
### Set Design

(drawn to scale of the Masker Theatre)

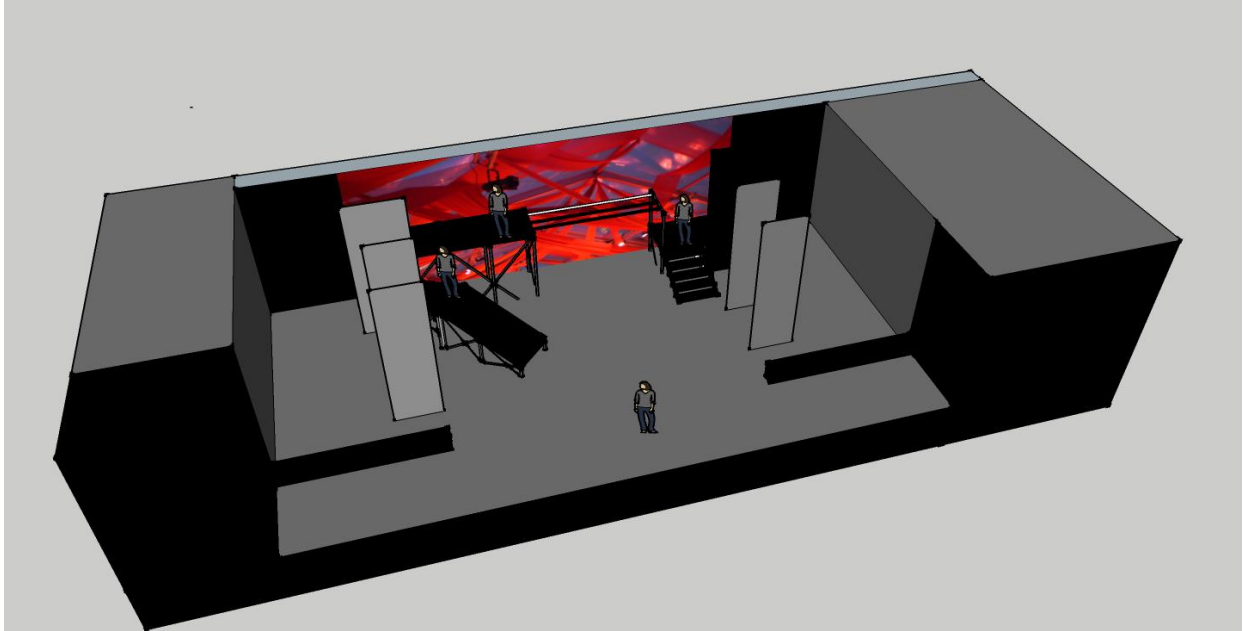
View from front:



Overhead view:



Angled view:



## Appendix 10

Original front page article of World Weekly News used as screen preset.



Appendix 11

Poster for *Bat Boy – the Musical*

Drama Department in association with the Embassy of the United States of America  
by arrangement with DALRO (Pty) Ltd presents:

# BAT BOY

## THE MUSICAL

BOOK BY **Keythe Farley** AND **Brian Flemming**  
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY **Laurence O'Keefe**  
DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY **Anitra Davel**  
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY **Harold Mortimer**

**MASKER THEATRE,  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**  
**20-24 AUGUST '13**



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## Appendix 12

### Table of Character and Costume Translation: <sup>309</sup>

Original Character:	Translated name:	Rationale/Character Description	Costume notes:
Bat Boy/Edgar	Unchanged	As the title character there was no need to change the name Bat Boy. In the original, the name Edgar, is meant to be ridiculous obsequiousness to what Meredith deems to be 'civilized' and as such is highly unsuited for the Bat Boy. This remains the same in the translation: a more unsuited name for the Bat Boy would be hard to find.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Naked (flesh g-string) to start</li> <li>2. Prison overalls (black)</li> <li>3. Smart suit – black pants and jacket with white shirt &amp; white vest underneath</li> <li>4. White jockey shorts with comic red hearts</li> <li>5. Blood-stained (red) white vest</li> </ol>
Meredith Parker	Miriam Parker	Considering the ethnicity of the actress and in line with the pictorial sign system or the actor as sign, Miriam was deemed a more suited name.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Light blue pantsuit floral print blouse, Afro-chic in style but also symbolic of her choosing her now immaculate, conservative life and suppressing her more passionate self.</li> </ol>

<sup>309</sup> Please refer back to *Table 1* at the end of Chapter 3. All the following tables fit within the second last block in the last column of that table – the Theatrical Discourse.



			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Red skirt &amp; jacket, red scarf as she comes into her own, discovering her love for Edgar, defying her husband, ultimately signifying her death.</li> </ol>
Thomas Parker	Unchanged	<p>The performer playing Thomas was Caucasian and the name suited him well enough. In fact the performer acknowledged that it had been one of the choices for his birth name.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Khaki hunting jacket over brown pants, white shirt. All low-key, natural and conservative colours</li> <li>2. Brown pants with blue-pinstriped shirt and brown bracers</li> <li>3. Doctor's lab coat</li> <li>4. As his life unravels and he descends into madness his appearance becomes more and more dishevelled, shirt unpresed and stained.</li> </ol>
Shelley Parker	Unchanged	As above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. White summer dress with pink rose pattern to symbolise purity of the young romantic heroine but also to allude to the budding romance</li> </ol>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Navy church dress with silver belt and pumps – this conservative outfit she sheds to reveal...</li> <li>3. White bra and panties and white short petticoat (tutu-style)</li> </ol>
Sheriff Reynolds	Constable Reynolds	<p>Since the common perception is that officers of the SAPS (South African Police Services) are generally either Afrikaans or of Black ethnicity, I had originally envisioned this character as one of those. The male performer cast in this role however was neither Black nor Afrikaans and so we incorporated this into the show by making the Constable very English and incessantly frustrated by the townsfolk continually referring to him as 'Konstabel'.<sup>310</sup> This became a running gag<sup>311</sup> throughout the show, the final application of which occurred</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blue SAPS uniform with white vest underneath. Blue SAPS cap and black workman's shoes.</li> </ol>

<sup>310</sup> The Afrikaans term for 'Constable'.

<sup>311</sup> A 'running gag' is a theatrical term for a joke or humorous allusion which is used recurrently throughout a production, play, television skit or similar for cumulative comic effect. This joke can then later be twisted or reversed to create irony.

		in the climactic 'Revelations' scene, allowing for some release of tension.	
Rick Taylor	Chester Mloi	As student 022 was the only choice for this character it led to an interesting multi-racial family which would have asked the audience to accept colour-blind casting, a facet of small 'm' multicultural theatre. This issue was resolved as the rehearsal process progressed (see below). In terms of the name change, the cast decided collectively on the change as well as those of Rick's siblings based on what they reasoned were 'gansta' names or in Charity's case, ethnically appropriate.	1. Black denims, black vest with red trim and pattern
Ron Taylor	Charles Mloi	As above	1. Khaki shorts, navy and khaki two-tone shirt, red cap
Ruthie Taylor	Charity Mloi	As above	1. ¾ denims, navy tee-shirt with red sleeves and pattern
Mrs Taylor	Mrs Mloi	Due to an unexpected cast change student 006 who was originally cast as swing ended up playing this role. This change to a	1. Long shabby dress with small bolero and sandals – the point of the outfit was that it did not quite

		<p>Caucasian actress led to a more probable reason for having one white child (her eldest and most probably illegitimate) and then two children of colour with her current husband. Student 006 also portrayed this character as if she was definitely originally from the wrong side of the tracks (underscored not only by her actions as stated in the playtext but illuminated by her accent and dress) and would do anything to safe-guard her current position and that of her off-spring in society.</p>	<p>gel indicating the character trying to main appearance of properness but not quite succeeding. Colours were muted as she tries hard to fit in.</p>
Lorraine – a rancher’s wife	Name unchanged – a ‘kugel’ townswoman	<p>Student 010 created a loud and opinionated character who was continually (although genuinely unwittingly) politically incorrect. This resulted in laughs throughout the show.</p>	<p>1. Very loud, tight-fitting royal blue skirt and jacket, with black lace trim in keeping with the ostentatious nature of the character. High heels.</p>
Delia	Cindy	<p>For all intents and purposes this name could have remained unchanged. Student 005 seemed inexperienced and unsure of her role in the translation process and waited constantly for guidance from the director.</p>	<p>1. Black Leggings and heeled pumps with belted purple blouse.</p>

		Close to the end of the rehearsal process it was decided that she would be a rich farmer's wife who modelled herself on her friend, Lorraine.	
Maggie – senior representative, Hope Falls Town Council	Magda - voorsitter van die Stadsraad <sup>312</sup>	Student 031 created a believable character, a product of the old regime having to cope with the demands of the new South Africa in both a political and personal capacity often leading to humorous results. The name change reflected the character's identity and possible Germanic heritage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal black dress with grey jacket, black stockings and medium heeled 1.pumps.</li> <li>2. Long-sleeved blue print dress for the revival</li> </ol>
Daisy – a school teacher	Name unchanged	This name was left unchanged as student 012 played a dogmatic character, rooted enough in the past so as to continue to use her 'white name' <sup>313</sup> but still proud enough of the changes in our country to insist on adherence to new policies and politically correct terminology.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tan, flowing long skirt and brown blouse with traditional head-covering or 'doek'.<sup>314</sup></li> </ol>

<sup>312</sup> Chairperson of the Town Council

<sup>313</sup> In the past black children had been given two names one from their own culture and a 'white' name which was presumably easier for the ruling elite to pronounce.

<sup>314</sup> Doek is an Afrikaans word for head-scarf which has been absorbed into other cultures.

Mr Dillon – a rancher	Ntate Mothibakgomo – a farmer	Student 034 created a full-bodied character. As the ranchers in the original playtext knew little of what it took to be a rancher, student 034 used this issue to inform his character who was likened to those who are thrown into farming redistributed land without the necessary skills. <sup>315</sup> He used an accent which would typically be associated with those previously disadvantaged, whose access to formal education was curtailed. By his own account, Student 034 also used physical traits such as an overworked physical stature and over exaggerated facial expressions that he believed to be typically associated with the rowdiness of township characters.	1. Denims and collared, check shirt
Bud – a rancher	Jonty – a farmer	The name was chosen by the performer as he thought it suited his dim-witted character	1. Khaki shorts and shirt with long khaki socks suggestive of the

<sup>315</sup> The redistribution of land to those previously disadvantaged was begun in 1996, two years after the end of apartheid, at which stage some 60,000 white commercial farmers owned almost 70% of land classified as agricultural and leased a further 19%. The ANC pledged to redistribute 30% of white-owned agricultural land to black farmers by 1999, and to make restitution of property lost as a result of racist legislation. By 2012, some 7.95 million hectares had been transferred, only about a third of the 24.6 million originally targeted (Cieplak 2013:[sp]). An estimated \$3.2 billion was spent on the land reform programme (ibid). The government has prioritised grafting redistributed land onto existing commercial units and to date much of this land has been deemed “no longer productive” (ibid) fuelling public perception that black farmers lack the necessary skills to undertake such ventures.

		and as the cast agreed, he seemed to look more like a Durban surfer than a farmer – hence his ignorance regarding anything to do with farming.	safari suit often seen as the traditional dress of the Afrikaner ‘boers’ <sup>316</sup> , worn perhaps in an attempt to conceal his lack of knowledge of all farming – at least he looks the part.
Ned – a rancher	Jo(hanna) – a farmer		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Denim dungarees, green check shirt, long socks and takkies.</li> <li>2. Exchanged shirt for luminous green blouse and bright socks – the character’s misguided attempt to dress up for the revival.</li> </ol>
Roy – a townsman	Dolly Mothibakgomo		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blue floral traditional ethnic kaftan</li> </ol>
Clem – a townsman	Character’s lines absorbed into the other townfolk.		
Reverend Billy Hightower	Pastor Mamoruti Joyce	‘Mamoruti’ is the Sesotho word for a female pastor. In this case the tautology of the character’s name (Pastor Joyce) was	Black robe with satin, purple trim and clerical collar. Black pumps with satin purple bows.

<sup>316</sup> ‘Boer’ is the Dutch and Afrikaans word for farmer, which came to denote the descendants of the Dutch-speaking settlers of the eastern Cape frontier



		deliberate, commenting on a bizarre tradition of apartheid: in the past black children had been given two names one from their own culture and a 'white' name which was presumably easier for the ruling elite to pronounce.	
Pan – the Greek satyr-god of nature	'Heitsi-Eibib' – Khoisan god	The dilemma here was to find a deity which resonated within the target culture. Heitsi-Eibib employs the duality present in Khoisan religious belief systems by maintaining the ambiguity between good and evil, and shape-shifting between creator and destroyer. The position of this god is fluid and varies from patron of hunters to god of nature and responsible for elements of the creation. At other times, Heitsi-Eibib also plays the role of rogue or prankster.	Tight leather-look pants and studded belt, with a leather and chain harness over his shoulders exposing his bare chest. Harness embellished with spines to create an animalistic look.
n/a	Mama Mimi	Stereotypical domestic servant	Brown work tunic with matching 'doek'. Black lace-up shoes.

