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Reference:

Van den Dries Luk.- Prospective dreams of a field to come: the emergence of theatre studies in Flanders
Documenta : mededelingen van het Documentatiecentrum voor Dramatische Kunst Gent / Documentatiecentrum voor Dramatische Kunst Gent; Universiteit Gent.
Onderzoeksgroep S:PAM - ISSN 0771-8640 - 35:1(2017), p. 40-69
To cite this reference: <https://hdl.handle.net/10067/1560110151162165141>

Prospective Dreams of a Field to Come

The Emergence of Theater studies in Flanders

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Theater studies in Flanders is a young field of research. This is a statement one often encounters in early texts mapping the birth of this discipline in Flemish academia (see, e.g., Van Schoor, "Theaterwetenschap hic et nunc" 210; Tindemans, "Ziele und Methoden" 49; Schrickx 189). In these writings, the somewhat belated arrival of theater studies is frequently invoked as a compensation for the fact that we hardly got any further than where we were, or as an excuse that everything moved so slowly and that still so much was lying ahead of us. The main culprit of this default was the university system, in which there was no place for innovation and a lack of elementary funds for research. In 1971, Jaak Van Schoor summarized this well:

In Flanders, Theater Studies is practically non-existent. What has already happened in Leuven and Ghent, what will happen in Antwerp this year, has little to do with theater studies. One should rather speak of an encouraging preamble than that it can be seen as a thorough and fundamental approach. Something like this supposes a sufficient potential of staff, of funds, of knowledge and trust of the university authorities. Unfortunately, the latter is very often lacking, because the question of its functional use cannot be answered by the hierarchic upper structure of our universities. (Van Schoor, "Theaterwetenschap hic et nunc" 210)¹

Theater studies as Van Schoor imagines it ought to be an academic discipline with its own educational profile, effectuating an outflow of students who will take up specific functions within the performing arts scene. In the beginning of the 1970s, this was still a very distant dream. To be sure, a long tradition of theater study already existed, also in Flanders, albeit outside the university system. Fascinated with the theater, many individuals were already intensely concerned with analyzing theatrical phenomena based either on their own knowledge and insight or on their familiarity with certain methods for theater studies that were already developed elsewhere in Europe. This early research often focused on historical overviews, such as Lode Monteyne's *Een eeuw Vlaamsch Tooneelleven* (A

¹ All quotes from Dutch, German, or French are the author's translation.

Century of Flemish Theater Life, 1936), or his magnum opus *Het Vlaamsch Tooneel* (*The Flemish Theater*, 1927). Yet there were also publications on new theater phenomena, such as Constant Godelaine's *Het Vlaamsche volkstooneel* (*The Flemish Popular Theater*, 1939), or on emerging theater movements, such as Monteyne's *Wendingen in de moderne toneelkunst* (*Turns in the Modern Art of the Theater*, 1937), or Willem Putman's *Het tooneel na Ibsen* (*The Theater after Ibsen*, 1936). These texts were mostly written by critics, writers, teachers, and essayists who, next to their other professional activities, passionately devoted themselves to the study of (mostly Flemish) theater. As a result, there was in fact already a remarkably rich soil of theater research in Flanders even before the discipline slowly began to emerge academically.

The new generation who at the beginning of the 1970s would lay the foundation of theater studies in Flanders was indeed predominantly concerned with gaining academic recognition. The first traces of this process date back to 1963 when the first International Symposium for Theater Education took place in Brussels. The impulse for the conference came from the International Theater Institute (ITI)² that, during its 9th assembly in Vienna one year earlier (1962) and on behalf of the Finnish delegation, had decided to choose for the theme of education. Eventually it was the Belgian division that would be responsible for the practical organization of the conference, which consisted of two main components. A first working group was headed by Fons Goris, who at the time was leading the Studio of the National Theater of Belgium (which later became the renowned Studio Herman Teirlinck). This group dealt with theater pedagogy and more specifically with the different vocal and physical methods taught at various theater schools. The other working group was led by Professor Raymond Pouillart (Université Catholique de Louvain) and focused on the workings of drama departments at universities.

The report of this assembly published by Carlos Tindemans in the cultural magazine *Streven* shows he attended the debates with more than mere journalistic curiosity (Tindemans, "Universiteit en theater"). He signals different trends on an international scale: in Austria and the German-speaking regions, a primarily historical and theoretical approach prevails in theater studies; the same goes for Paris, although guest lecturers with an active artistic practice were regularly invited too; in Bristol (UK) where "the

² The ITI was founded in 1948 and was "the first consulting organ of the UNESCO," branching off into nearly 60 national centers. The Belgian division was established in 1952. See De Roeck 27.

prospective dreams are still green" (*ibid.* 574), the emphasis lies, besides theater, mainly on radio, TV, and film education; in the United States, there are several systems that either bear resemblance to European traditions or gravitate towards professional training for different functions in the theater (actor, designer, costume designer, director).

What is striking in Tindemans' account of the 1963 conference in Brussels is again his focus on academic accreditation:

Already from the opening papers it became clear that two very different directions have been developed. The professors Heinz Kindermann (Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, Vienna) and Jacques Schérer (Institut d'Études Théâtrales at the Sorbonne, Paris) mentioned that, with the start of their department, there was strong resistance from the literary critics. They refused vigorously to acknowledge theater studies as an autonomous discipline, and while Vienna was principally vindicated as early as 1943 ..., still no valid degree is granted at the Sorbonne, but merely a certificate without any kind of legal value. (*Ibid.* 573)

Another constant in this story is indeed the emancipation of theater studies from the grip of literary studies.³ Historically, the scholarly interest in theater grew out of philology: next to poetry and prose, drama is traditionally seen as one of the three principal literary genres and, sporadically, research on dramatic texts also sparked interest in their concrete stagings over different historical periods. It was Max Herrmann, the nestor of theater studies in Germany, who claimed the autonomy of performance over its textual basis, arguing that the analysis of this "actual theatrical" should happen with a specific methodology and thus within a distinct scholarly field. Herrmann's premise that the performance of a dramatic text leads to an autonomous work of art that is different from that text, will grow into the core of his foundational and extensive research into the aesthetics of theater.⁴ He was the first in Europe who succeeded in creating an institutional framework for his aspirations: at the University of Berlin, he was able to set up the first academic chair for Theater Studies in 1922, which grew out of the foundation he

³ For a detailed discussion of the tensions between theater studies and literary studies, see Bart Philipsen's contribution to this issue.

⁴ See, for instance, Max Herrmann's first major study, published in 1914: *Forschungen zur deutschen Theatergeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (*Research on Theater History of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*). For more on the influence of Hermann on the development of German theater studies, see Fischer-Lichte 30-37.

helped to establish in 1920, the “Gesellschaft der Freunde und der Förderer des theaterwissenschaftlichen Instituts an der Universität Berlin” (Society of Friends and Patrons of the Theater Studies Institute at the University of Berlin).⁵

The symposium in Brussels made it clear for a couple of Flemish intellectuals concerned with theater research that a proper academic discipline in their own country was not merely possible, but even more so, it was necessary. The pioneering position of the Netherlands, where the University of Utrecht already had its own theater studies institute, was obviously an important trigger. Perhaps this was also Carlos Tindemans' personal wish or even his dream, as he remarked in his conference report with a slight sense of envy that also “the South of the Netherlands is doing prospection work in order to start within a brief period of time” with a new theater studies department (Tindemans, “Universiteit en theater” 573).

Another attentive spectator during this international conference on theater education was Jaak Van Schoor.⁶ He too saw opportunities to introduce theater studies in Flanders and would ardently plea for this in several of his writings, such as in a 1967 article for *Tijdschrift van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel* (*Journal of the Free University Brussels*). In this text, Van Schoor reports on the 8th summer seminar for theater studies in Bregenz (Austria) that took the staging of the classics as its central theme. What captivated him was that “a right place was given to the creative priority of the acting and in particular to the interpretation of the drama on stage” (“De dramatische wetenschap” 188). Van Schoor goes on to claim that only theater studies as a field of its own, with its own perspective and methodology, can guarantee adequate research on such topics: “this can no longer be the task of the philologist, [who works] according to literary patterns” (189). In the same contribution, he also includes the outline of a curriculum for the foundation of an Institute for Dramatic Science that was drafted by Herman Teirlinck.⁷ From 1966 onwards, Van Schoor worked as an assistant at the department for German Philology at Ghent University and he

⁵ For more on the increased attention for the actual staging and the context of the theatrical event in the emergence and development of theater studies, see Van den Dries, *Omtrent de opvoering*.

⁶ The following passage is based on the introductory chapter “Theaterwetenschap hic et nunc” by editors Christel Stalpaert, Stijn Bussels, and Bram Van Oostveldt in the volume *Liber Amicorum Jaak Van Schoor: Meester in vele kunsten* (*Master in Many Arts*, 8-15).

⁷ A shorter version of the same curriculum was published by Alfons Goris in 1966 in the brochure *Over de opleiding van de tonelist* (*On the Education of the Dramatist* 20-21). In his 1971 article “Over de opdracht van een teaterwetenschap” (“On the Task of a [sic] Theater Studies”), Alfons Goris mentions that, already in 1959, Teirlinck was brooding on these ideas: “Herman Teirlinck talked to me in 1959 about establishing chairs for drama at universities” (183).

assiduously committed himself to gathering the interest from the university authorities for this new field of study. It turned out to be a long-term effort. When, in 1971, the Ghent magazine *Teater* (of which Van Schoor was the editor-in-chief for years) devoted a special issue to the state of the art of theater studies, the thought of establishing a genuine theater studies department in Flanders still sounded like a mere wish and a distant dream:

If we could concretely agree upon a department of theater studies, then it should in our opinion be posited that this department definitely must *not* be a theater museum, a drama school, nor an information center for contemporary theater. On the contrary, it should be a *research institute* and an *educational institution* for theater, in which opportunities are given to attend classes and seminars and in which experts from theater practice are invited to give lectures. In this context, it should also be made possible that, besides the classes of the fulltime department, one or more courses in theater studies are open to students from other departments. (Van Schoor, "Theaterwetenschap (2) XXX)⁸

Jaak Van Schoor and Carlos Tindemans, the two pioneers of theater studies in Flanders, will do everything possible to academically anchor their discipline. It is notable that, for both of them, the starting point of their long quest was the same symposium in Brussels. Moreover, they also shared the same university background, as they both studied German philology at Ghent University. Tindemans received his Master's degree in 1954 with a thesis on American Negro Poetry; Van Schoor graduated in 1961 with a thesis on the theater of Herman Teirlinck. They were both active members of various committees, counsels, or cultural magazines, while always keeping in close contact with theater artists too. They also worked as guest lecturers at several drama schools, where they taught the more theoretically oriented courses. Nevertheless, in nearly every other aspect, these two pioneering theater academics were also each other's opposite, perhaps seeing each other as rivals, doomed to fish in the same proverbial pool. The outright negative review Carlos Tindemans wrote on *Een huis voor Vlaanderen* (*A House for Flanders*, 1972), Van Schoor's history of 100 years of professional theater in Ghent, certainly did not help to improve their already cold and detached relation.⁹

⁸ Jaak Van Schoor: 'Theaterwetenschap (2)', in *Teater*, jrg. 4, nr 4, 1971, p. 205-208. Originally in cursive and progressive spelling.

⁹ In his review of Van Schoor's book, Tindemans wrote: "What Van Schoor lacks is a cultural-historical understanding that would enable him to situate the theater as a societal phenomenon ...

In the texts that Tindemans and Van Schoor wrote during the early stage of their academic career, it is mainly their attempt to defend their own ambitions that stands out. Van Schoor, for instance, would call upon his network to clarify his position:

Thereby we start from an experience that stems from a direct encounter with the activities of the institutes of Vienna, Berlin, Stuttgart, Amsterdam, and Utrecht and not from our own improvisation. The opinion of Herman Teirlinck and his associates Alfons Goris, Walter Tillemans, and Fred Engelen seems to me a useful addition that is grown from a local need. In this manner, a corrective was offered from theater practice towards all too theoretical standpoints. (“Theaterwetenschap hic et nunc” 210).

In this quote, Van Schoor clearly construes a discursive opposition between practice and theory, as he distinguishes between a kind of theater studies closely affiliated with artistic practice and another kind that gives primacy to theory. While this opposition is of course nothing more than a rhetorical construct, it does correspond with a deep-rooted suspicion of theater practice towards theater studies. The kind of suspicion that cannot be wiped out with reasonable arguments, because it starts from a schism between people with a practical knowledge of theater and those who are standing on the sideline, yet still permit themselves to comment on that same profession.¹⁰ This mistrust will last for decades and will only start to fade away when theory and practice are no longer seen as opposites or as each other’s corrective, but as a productive chiastic couple. Nonetheless, Van Schoor’s description – its rhetorical function in the race for academic legitimacy laid aside – also has an element of truth, to which I will return shortly.

Foundational Views

It is impossible to achieve this if you (as Van Schoor tends to do) an unshakable belief in the value and the truth of your sources. ... My disappointment in its quality [of this study] stems more from what in relation to theater is necessary than from what this book now already offers ... The history of theater comes off badly” (“Toneel te Gent” 603).

¹⁰ In the early 1970s, various authors signal the suspicion of theater practice towards theater studies. See, for example: “It is striking how theater has always been suspicious of every alienating, intellectual bidding” (Goris, “Over de opdracht van een theaterwetenschap” 182); “The resistance of the purely practicing theater people is so large that even four centers of theater studies (one for every university) will not exert influence of any importance. We should clear the way for creative talents, and not let it be suppressed by cerebral interferences” (Van Vlaenderen 216).

Both Jaak Van Schoor and Carlos Tindemans were self-made theater researchers who have grown into their field through their own insight and perseverance, but also through patient reading and by modeling themselves on already existing institutes or figures in other countries. For Van Schoor, however, the most pertinent model was not distant at all, as the influence of Herman Teirlinck is clearly traceable in his view on theater studies:

From the very beginning, Van Schoor stated that theater studies should focus on the theatrical performance. The ideas of Herman Teirlinck in this context exerted an undeniable influence on the perspective of Van Schoor. The chairs in drama at the universities that Herman Teirlinck envisioned, were based on the core ideas of his *Dramatisch Peripatetikon* (1959) and explicitly stated that the dramaturgical study “no longer belonged to the in this case only partially qualified literary studies.” (Bussels et al. 9)¹¹

Herman Teirlinck is known as one of the greatest authorities in the Flemish theater scene until far in the twentieth century and Van Schoor was one of his close intimates.¹² He had access to Teirlinck’s personal archive, he was from 1963 until 1966 his guest student, and he would become lecturer at the Studio Herman Teirlinck in 1969.¹³ The study of Teirlinck’s legacy became one of Van Schoor’s major ambitions: after his Master’s thesis, he would also devote his PhD dissertation to this monumental figure.¹⁴ In this respect, it is perhaps telling that he did not obtain his doctoral degree at a Flemish university, but at the University of Amsterdam, under supervision of Benjamin Hunningher, who is generally seen as one of the founding fathers of theater studies in the Netherlands.

Teirlinck’s ideas continuously resonate in the background when Van Schoor reflects on how Flemish theater studies should look like: “The theatrical act finds its extended image

¹¹ The authors are quoting Goris, “Over de opdracht van een theaterwetenschap” 183.

¹² Herman Teirlinck started his career as a literary writer of both novels and theater plays in the 1910s and 1920s. Following his interest in theater, Teirlinck began to teach acting at the Studio van het Nationaal Toneel in 1946, which in 1967 became the Studio Herman Teirlinck. For more on Teirlinck and the “pedagogical project” he developed at the Studio, see Toon Brouwers’ recent book, *Niets bestaat vóór het spel (Nothing Precedes the Acting)*.

¹³ On the influence of Herman Teirlinck, see also the interview with Van Schoor by Karlien Vanhoonacker for Toneelstof: <http://www.belgiumishappening.net/home/interviews/jaak-van-schoor-toneelstof-60-1> (Accessed 10 January 2017).

¹⁴ Van Schoor received his PhD in 1974 with a dissertation titled *Herman Teirlinck en het Toneel*. Afterwards, he published extensively on Teirlinck and was also curator of several exhibitions on Teirlinck. See “Selectieve bibliografie,” in Bussels et al. 326-337.

in the image of the stage, the stage composition, the individual and collective movement and rhythm, the dramatic word, etc. But pivotal to all this remains the *act*, not in the first place as a primal instinct but as a *technical motive*" ("Theaterwetenschap (2)" 207). Alfons Goris, the successor of Teirlinck as the head of the Studio, claims in the same special issue of *Teater* on the status quaestionis of theater studies in Flanders that Teirlinck saw a theater researcher as someone with a great deal of practical experience:

He did not have any confidence in the approach of philologists, sociologists, or aestheticians without any kind of experience in the theater. Only an engaged leader-director ["spelleider-directeur"] could, in his opinion, elucidate with authority the history of acting or of dramatic literature, along the lines of the phenomenological study of drama, that ought to be continuously buttressed by practical examples. (Goris, "Over de opdracht van een theaterwetenschap" 183-184)¹⁵

It is this kind of phenomenological approach, deeply rooted in Flemish theater practice, that would become Van Schoor's guiding principle in establishing theater studies at Ghent University.

In his 1972 article "Theaterwetenschap: Een terreinverkenning" ("Theater Studies: An Exploration of the Field"), Carlos Tindemans outlines a different approach, which indeed could be seen as more "theoretical," even though his perspective on theory is more multi-layered than generally acknowledged. Tindemans makes a decisive stand for a systematic approach to theater that uncovers its structural elements and key dynamics. In his opinion, theater studies should "in the first place, search for the nature of this systematic structure" (369). As he explains:

What is necessary is a basic model for the theater event. A time of collecting should now be followed by a time of constructive knowledge. The time of small facts is over, the time of understanding has arrived. Energy should now be devoted to the objectification of theater, the measurability of the theater event. (369-370)

¹⁵ According to the editors of the *Liber Amicorum Jaak Van Schoor*, Herman Teirlinck saw Jaak Van Schoor as the fulfilment of his ideal type of a theater scholar (see Bussels et al. 10).

In this text, Tindemans lays the foundations of his vision of theater studies and he pleads for a triadic model of the system that theater is: a combination of intention, demonstration, and effect. He nevertheless emphasizes that, “only during the analysis, [it is useful] to separate these three stages,” because “in the reality of the theater performance, they form an immediate trinity” (372).

In his systematic approach to theater studies, Tindemans clearly builds on Dietrich Steinbeck’s theories, who in his in 1970 study *Einleitung in die Theorie und Systematik der Theaterwissenschaft (Introduction to the Theory and Systematics of Theater Studies)* had already proposed a similar kind of threefold perspective. According to Steinbeck, the art of theater consists of three heteronomous modes of being: intentional, real, and believed being, of which the latter is most important, since it marks the finalization of the art work, even though it does not coincide with it:

With the staging, the layered structure of the theatrical work of art is constituted. The intended stage character is conceived in full concreteness, whereby the spectator’s act of belief corresponds to the intentional act of the actor who provoked it. And this correspondence between opposed acts of consciousness makes theater happen. (Steinbeck 111)

Another unmistakable influence on Tindemans’ view on the founding principles of theater studies is theater semiotics. An important instigator of the interest in applying semiotics to theater was the Lithuanian-Polish literary scholar Tadeusz Kowzan, who himself drew on the famous structuralist Prague School of, amongst others, Roman Jakobson and Jan Mukařovský. Kowzan’s 1968 essay “Le signe au théâtre” (“The Sign at the Theater”) sparked an explosion of semiotically oriented research. During the 1970s and 1980s, theater semiotics undoubtedly grew into the most important paradigm in theater studies and Tindemans was eager to signal its importance also in Flanders.¹⁶

As suggested earlier, when comparing Van Schoor’s and Tindemans’ seminal ideas on theater studies, not only clear methodological divergencies, but ever so many convergences appear. Especially their joint focus on an interdisciplinary approach to

¹⁶ For an overview of the different schools in theater semiotics, see: Van den Dries, *Omtrent de opvoering* 41ff.

theater studies is striking. They both advocated that, despite the hard struggle to emancipate itself from literary studies, theater studies should not lock itself up in its own autonomy and appeal instead extensively to several other scholarly disciplines in order to deepen our understanding of the phenomenon of theater. This is fairly remarkable, given that Van Schoor and Tindemans were writing more than forty-five years ago, during the earliest stages when theater studies in Flanders was still searching for its own identity. Another clear parallel that stands out is that they both call for a definition of theater as not merely an aesthetic event, but also as a broader and deeply human social practice. Jaak Van Schoor formulates it in this way:

The subject of theater studies as a study of corporeal creativity commands an open approach, it also presupposes a general human approach that does not constrain itself to the limited environment of theater alone. Essentially, it is in the end about an inevitable facet of human existence, which evokes ties with existential issues in the most general sense. ("Theaterwetenschap (2)" 208)

Carlos Tindemans primarily sees potential in abandoning a purely aesthetic contemplation:

It should become possible to look at theater no longer solely for its aesthetic aspects, but also to explore it as a social phenomenon, as a function of communication, which transmits social contents by means of an aesthetic information technique. Theater studies should no longer approach theater exclusively as an object of a general art theory, but it should see it just as much as an object of the social sciences and the media and communication research that is developing therein. ("Theaterwetenschap: Een terreinverkenning" 370)

Theater studies is thus summoned to take up a truly interdisciplinary position: it has everything to gain from an approach that, open-mindedly, draws on neighboring scientific fields and their specific methods to fully understand specific aspects of theatricality. As Tindemans claims, "literary studies, language studies, art and cultural studies, sociology, economics, anthropology, and psychology have each in their own way touched upon aspects that belong to the total project of theater" (*ibid.*).

In this respect, both Tindemans and Van Schoor connected to a more general international trend in the development of theater studies. In the beginning of the twentieth

century, theater studies was predominantly concerned with the historical reconstruction of facts, but, during the 1940s, it evolved quite rapidly into a mostly anthropologically based research.¹⁷ By the end of the 1950s, however, a second and even more incisive paradigm shift ensues from the influence of sociologists and psychologists (such as Jean Duvignaud, Ervin Goffman, Georges Gurvitch, Donald Woods Winnicott, and many others), who began to research theatrical processes in daily life, or studied sociological data of theater.¹⁸ Accordingly, the attention of theater scholars was drawn to the analogy between certain ceremonies of social life and theater (Goffman), or to the fact that a society questions or confirms itself through theatrical formats (Duvignaud). In these types of sociological research, theater serves as a paradigm for processes acted out by society.¹⁹ Various theater scholars tried to make this sociological perspective productive for their own field. Arno Paul, for instance, reconceived the communication process inherent to the theatrical event by describing it as a symbolic interaction:

The mutual conditionality of actors and spectators, who are interchangeable at any given time, specified by a certain symbolic role behavior in a socio-culturally determined field of interaction. (179)

Given these developments, it seems that the first generation of Flemish theater researchers is ready to integrate the enormous influence of Richard Schechner and to open up to the then burgeoning field of performance studies.²⁰ In reality, however, this process of opening up to “other” kinds of theatricalities took place only partially and rather reluctantly, since the first generation’s top priority was to legitimize theater studies “pur sang” within academia. For Schechner’s famous fan- and web-theory,²¹ which broadened the category of performance to include also sports, games, rituals, everyday life, or shamanism, it was still a bit too early...

¹⁷ See, for instance, Carl Niessen’s three-volume *Handbuch der Theater-Wissenschaft* (*Handbook of Theater Studies*, 1949-1958). For a more contemporary view on the developments Niessen depicts in his three-part work, see Balme.

¹⁸ For more on the influence of sociology and psychology on theater studies, see Helbo et al. 77-91.

¹⁹ This paragraph is based on Van den Dries, *Omtrent de opvoering* 13-14.

²⁰ The rise of performance studies as a new academic field is marked by the 1977 publication of one of Richard Schechner’s most influential books, *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970-1976*. The book is currently better known under the title of its 1988 revised edition, *Performance Theory*.

²¹ Schechner unfolds his fan- and web-model of performance in the introduction to *Performance Theory* (xvii-xix)

Slow Entries into the University

OR: The Search for Academic Legitimization

From a contemporary viewpoint, Tindemans' 1972 article "Theaterwetenschap: Een terreinverkenning" ("Theater Studies: An Exploration of the Field") reads like an application of someone who has intensively studied the fundamental principles of theater studies. By that time, Tindemans had been able to get up to speed at the HRITCS (Hoger Rijksinstituut voor Toneel en Cultuurspreiding [Higher National Institute for Theater and Culture Dissemination]), where he was responsible for the courses "Principles of Dramaturgy," "Criticism," and "Contemporary Problems of Drama and Theater."²² But it was not until 1973 that his dream of an academic study of theater finally comes true. The Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen, which was founded only two years earlier,²³ engaged Tindemans as a part-time guest lecturer at the department of German Philology, where he would teach the elective course "Theater Studies." From the academic year 1975-1976 onwards, Tindemans offered a second course, "Modern Dutch Drama Texts," and another three years later, in 1978, he finally held a full-time professorship in Theater Studies. In Ghent, a similar development took place: after a brief intermezzo as the head of the city theater company NTG, Jaak Van Schoor devoted himself fully to the establishment of theater studies at Ghent University, gradually adding theater studies courses to the curriculum.²⁴ While the universities in both Ghent and Antwerp thus began to offer specific course modules related to theater through the figures of Tindemans and Van Schoor, it should be emphasized that there was still no question of a complete program (and hence also no degree) in Theater Studies. Instead, these courses were integrated in the Master's program of German Philology, which reflects – once again – the subservient position of theater studies to language and literary studies.

Slowly but surely, theater studies in Flanders was germinating, but in the story I have unfolded so far, two other important figures have not appeared yet: Ludo Verbeeck at the

²² The HRITCS was founded in 1962 and offered professional training programs in theater, film, radio, and television. The school still exists, but was renamed in 2015 as RITCS (Royal Institute for Theater, Cinema, and Sound). Tindemans worked from 1962 till 1973 as a guest lecturer at the HRITCS. This and the following passage is based on Van den Dries, "Aanzet tot een biografie" ("Beginnings of a Biography").

²³ UIA was created as a third university in Antwerp that would offer Master programs, next to the existing two other universities UFSIA and RUCA. In 2003, the three universities merged into the University of Antwerp.

²⁴ These courses are integrated in the master's degree of German Language and Literature Studies and can be taken as a so-called minor. A fully-fledged Theater Studies degree is still out of the question.

Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven) and Dina Hellemans at de Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels, VUB). In contrast to Tindemans and Van Schoor, Verbeeck and Hellemans were not so much concerned with programmatically declaring what a theater scholar should be or do. Neither did they feel the need, certainly at that point in their career, to establish a full-grown theater studies department at their own universities. Instead of formulating an overarching top-down view on what theater studies ought to be, they rather developed their research in a bottom-up fashion by working in a project-based manner, which absolutely does not mean they did not have a clear vision of where they wanted to go.

The KU Leuven already had a long tradition of student theater, which was coordinated by literature professor Joos Florquin. When, in 1988, dance critic and later dramaturg Hildegard De Vuyst took stock of the development of theater studies in Flanders for a special section on theater education in the performing arts magazine *Etcetera*, she discerned the following evolution: “The Leuvens Universitair Toneel (University Theater of Leuven) led by professor Joost (sic) Florquin was part of the Institute for Literature Studies. Participation in the theater production was rewarded in course hours. The inspiration for this came from the American model of the Drama Department of the 1950s” (De Vuyst, “Dossier opleiding” 47). When Florquin passed away in 1978, his hours were redistributed to offer a couple of theoretical courses next to the theater production, which nonetheless retained its central role. Literary scholar Ludo Verbeeck took the lead in this development. Already in a 1971 article, Verbeeck had defended the stance that “at university level, a critical forum should be created, where thinking and doing, theory and experience meet one another in a productive manner” (220). He gathered a young team of assistants and researchers around him, such as An-Marie Lambrechts, Geert Opsomer, and later on Erwin Jans. In this way, he was able to form a dynamic group of scholars and to develop a varied set of courses that, from 1982 onwards, was honored with a “Certificate in Dramaturgy.” The strong emphasis on practical experience remained, probably in part because “the performance somewhat served as the showpiece for the academic authorities” (Verbeeck qtd. in De Vuyst, “Dossier opleiding” 48). Verbeeck and his team made great efforts to attract interesting professional theater artists, such as Herman Gilis and Pol Dehert, Paul Peyskens, Jos Verbist, Guy Cassiers, and others. But the program also offered some of the more “traditional” courses in theater studies, including “Dramaturgy” and “Performance Analysis.”

At the VUB, it was theater researcher Dina Hellermans who persistently tried to implement her passion for the theater in an academic context. In her opinion, literary and theater studies do not need to stand in each other's way. In a course on the theater play *Vrijdag* (Friday), written by Hugo Claus in 1969, she devoted an important part to the development of avant-garde theater, showing how the ideas of Antonin Artaud had a decisive influence on the young Claus. Dina Hellermans was talented in building bridges between different disciplines and had a strong sense for anything possible and achievable, even if sometimes she had to fight for it for years. The autonomy of theater studies was not her primary concern, simply because it was unrealistic at that time. Yet she closely watched the developments in Flemish theater and as a self-proclaimed Marxist she was mainly fascinated by the fierce rise of political theater in Flanders and the Netherlands at the beginning of the 1970s. Since its premiere in 1972, *Mistero Buffo* by the Internationale Nieuwe Scène (International New Scene) was *the* newest phenomenon in Flemish theater. It was an artistic apex of an evolution that had a longer history and which announced itself perhaps most clearly with the foundation of the Werkgemeenschap (Working Community) of the Beursschouwburg in 1968. The Werkgemeenschap was the first company specifically devoted to experimental political theater, but already one year later the company was disbanded due to a conflict with the Flemish government. Several of its members went on forming their own companies, such as Het Trojaanse Paard, Vuile Mong en zijn vieze gasten, and Mannen van den Dam. Their work heralded a new movement in Flemish theater that presented itself in concurrence with international tendencies.²⁵

To study this movement, Dina Hellermans established within the Center for Language and Literary Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel the “Werkgroep voor Vormingstheater” (Working Group for Political Theater).²⁶ The impetus for this initiative probably also came from Marianne Van Kerkhoven, who was a co-founder of Het Trojaanse Paard and who

²⁵ The renewed attention for political theater from 1968 onwards was a decidedly international phenomenon. Amongst the most important theater groups associated with the movement were the Living Theater, El Teatro Campesino, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, Bread and Puppet Theater, Théâtre du Soleil, or Proloog and Sater in the Netherlands. Theater artists such as Augusto Boal and Dario Fo also played an influential role.

²⁶ Literally translated, the “Werkgroep voor Vormingstheater” would be “Working Group for Educational Theater,” but we translate it here as “Political Theater,” since this is the kind of work the researchers associated with the group were interested in. The general trait that connected the various theatrical practices that were studied by the Working Group was that they demonstrated some degree of social engagement or an attempt to expose societal or political structures. Nevertheless, a specific concern of the Working Group was to develop a more precise and at once more varied definition of the general label “Vormingstheater” (see, e.g., Abs et al.).

began working as a researcher at the same center in 1976. Hellemans and Van Kerkhoven managed to attract not only a diverse range of researchers (such as Hans Van Maanen, Paul De Bruyne, or Carlos Tindemans), but also graduated students to join them in their study of political theater in Flanders.²⁷ The research activities of this working group would eventually result in no less than five (!) volumes that together give an overview of the development of Flemish theater from the beginning of the 1970s until the middle of the 1980s, covering the period of political theater until the rise of the so-called “Flemish Wave” and postdrama.²⁸ In his discourse analysis of the entire book series by means of digital tools from computer linguistics, theater scholar Thomas Crombez came to the following conclusion:

The Working Group Political Theater realized in this way something that few academics from art or literary studies had achieved before. A critical-scientific discourse was started on an art form that was still fully developing. While literary and art studies have a reputation to keep themselves occupied with meticulous autopsies of only historically relevant cultural products, these (predominantly young) researchers attempted to catch hold of political theater “in full flight.” (129)

The productivity of this working group as well as the interest of students in scholarly research on theater became the stimulus to implement at the VUB a set of courses in theater studies. In the middle of the 1980s, then, a basic curriculum of elective courses, whether or not they were clustered in a minor or leading to an official certificate, were offered at four Flemish universities. It seemed that the search for academic legitimization,

²⁷ In January 1980, I became a member of the Working Group as well. At that moment, I was assigned as a researcher by the VUB to work on this project on political theater, which was funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO).

²⁸ The five volumes published by the Working Group between 1979 and 1986 included: Abs, Dyane, et al. *Blijf niet gelaten op de wonderen wachten: benaderingen van het vormingstheater in Vlaanderen van 1968 tot nu* (*Do Not Wait Passively for the Wonders: Approaches to Political Theater in Flanders from 1968 till Now*, 1979); Van Berlaer-Hellemans, Dina, and Marianne Van Kerkhoven (eds.). *Tot lering en vermaak: 9 manieren voor 10 jaar vormingstheater* (*For Education and Enjoyment: 9 ways for 10 Years Political Theater*, 1980); Van Berlaer-Hellemans, Dina, Marianna Van Kerkhoven, and Luk Van den Dries (eds.). *Het politieke theater heeft je hart nodig: Het theater tussen emotionele werking en politieke werkelijkheid* (*The Political Theater Needs Your Heart: Theater Between Emotional Effect and Political Reality*, 1981); Van Berlaer-Hellemans, Dina, Marianne Van Kerkhoven, and Luk Van den Dries (eds.). *Het teater zoekt... Zoek het teater: Deel 1 Variaties op volkstheater* (*The Theater is Searching... Search for the Theater: Part 1 Variations on Popular Theater*, 1985); Van Kerkhoven, Marianne, and Luk Van den Dries (eds.). *Het teater zoekt... Zoek het teater: Deel 2 Werken aan vernieuwing* (*The Theater is Searching... Search for the Theater: Part 2 Working on Innovation*, 1986).

which was the main goal of the first generation of theater scholars, had been accomplished. But nothing is what it seems. I will return to this shortly.

A changing landscape in the arts

A Changing Scene

When, during the mid-1980s, theater studies began to settle at Flemish universities, a passionate interest in Flemish theater had always been the fueling force behind it: theater studies grew in and from theater practice. In this respect, it is also important to take into account the specific context and institutional habitat that buttressed and partly steered this blossoming of theater studies in Flanders. In 1977, for instance, the art center 't Stuc was founded in Leuven, and six years later (in 1986), the biannual international dance festival Klapstuk, which was first organized at 't Stuc, turned into an autonomous non-profit organization. 't Stuc belonged to a new circuit of Flemish art centers that shared a specific interest in innovative forms of theater, dance, and performance. As such, it managed to introduce to Leuven audiences an impressive range of international and national theater companies, choreographers, and performance artists, including Maatschappij Discordia, Jan Fabre, Epigonentheater vzw, Steve Paxton, Karole Armitage, and others.²⁹ This circuit of art centers also provided crucial support to a young generation of Flemish artists, which emerged at the beginning of the 1980s and would become known as the "Flemish Wave." Between 't Stuc and the theater studies program at KU Leuven, various cross-connections grew quite naturally, if only because the art center was located very close to the university, offering an exciting selection of the contemporary performing arts that furnished both faculty and students with subjects to write about. In addition, a vibrant center as 't Stuc made clear that there might be a field with job opportunities for graduates with an academic certificate in dramaturgy, even though these jobs were not always immediately paid positions.

A similar dynamic can be observed at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, where the activities of the Working Group for Political Theater flourished alongside those of the Kaaitheater. From 1977 onwards, Hugo De Greef organized a biannual international theater festival in

²⁹ Next to 't Stuc, the other arts centers participating in this new or "alternative" circuit were: Monty (Antwerp), Vooruit (Ghent), Nieuwpoorttheater (now Campo, Ghent), Limelight (now Buda, Kortrijk), Beursschouwbrug (Brussels), and Kaaitheater (Brussels). For a historical overview, see Hildegard De Vuyst's 1999 book *Alles is rustig. Het verhaal van de kunstencentra* (*Everything is Quiet: The Story of the Arts Centers*). For more on 't STUC (renamed STUK in 2002), see Marleen Broeckhoven's recent study, *STUK, een geschiedenis: 1977-2015* (*STUK, A History: 1977-2015*).

Brussels, called “Kaaitheater,” which also offered a selection of the avant-garde performing arts at that time. Together with the non-profit organization Schaamte (also founded by De Greef), Kaaitheater would grow into a central platform supporting young Flemish artists. In 1986, Schaamte merged with Kaaitheater, which continued as an art center presenting its first full seasonal program in 1987.³⁰ Quite organically, Kaaitheater and theater scholars at the VUB found each other through collaborations, such as the joint organization of debates and introductions to performances, or simply *on the road*, as is often the case when people find each other talking about a controversial performance. Together with Johan Wambacq, Hugo De Greef also founded in 1982 a new theater magazine, *Etcetera*, for which they explicitly looked in the direction of theater studies. *Etcetera* would prove to be a crucial outlet, not only for me personally, but also for an entire generation of theater artists and critics.³¹ While Marianne Van Kerkhoven was still appointed as a researcher at the VUB, she began to collaborate more intensely with the artists of Kaaitheater/Schaamte, until she decided in 1985 to leave the academic context to become the resident dramaturg of the Kaaitheater.

Ghent also had its own experimental performing arts scene during this crucial period at the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s, when theater studies started to plant its roots into academic soil and theater departments began to expand. One of the earliest venues to present national and international artists was Proka, which started its activities already by the end of the 1960s.³² From the early 1980s onwards, new art centers, such as Vooruit and Nieuwpoorttheater, welcomed cutting-edge work that left the habitual paths of theater, providing space for the development of new mixtures of theater, dance, music, and performance.³³ For many years, Jaak Van Schoor was editor-in-chief of the theater magazine *Teater*, which steadily paved the way for a change of mentality in Flemish theater by tenaciously attacking, amongst other things, the censorship that was still in force then.³⁴ When Van Schoor became the director of the city theater Nederlands Toneel

³⁰ See Van Gielen 64. See also: <https://www.kaaitheater.be/en/articles/kaaitheater-1977-2017> (Accessed 13 September 2017).

³¹ From the start of the magazine in 1982, I was secretary of the editorial board and from 1989 until 1991, I was editor-in-chief. Marianne Van Kerkhoven and Paul de Bruyne were also on the editorial team. During the first year, Carlos Tindemans was asked to write guest columns as well.

³² For more on the history of Proka, see Stalpaert, “Doorgeefluik van meesters en methoden” (“Hatch of Masters and Methods”).

³³ For more on the development of these art centers in Ghent, see Stalpaert, “Huizen voor kunst en kunstenaars” (“Houses for Art and Artists”).

³⁴ In 1972, for example, an issue of the magazine *Teater* (5:1) was devoted to the question of censorship in light of a trial caused by a staging of Spanish writer Fernando Arrabal’s play *En ook*

Gent (NTG) in 1976 and carefully wanted to include more innovative work in the new season's program, his plans were met with strong and obstinate opposition and he eventually resigned supposedly due to health problems.

Carlos Tindemans too saw one of his own dreams vanish when he, together with Hugo Claus and Alex Van Royen, wrote the manifest T68, a blueprint for a new contemporary theater company, defined as a workspace and a laboratory:

T68 does not want to be a side activity for private intellectual circles but wants to achieve the consolidation of its own profile through the risk of unrelenting experiment. On the other hand, we wish to conceive of our experiments as laboratory work that cannot be tested unconditionally at the expense of the audience. In the workspace of T68, attention and energy go principally to the experiment, but only the results, which after a probationary period and a checking of their maximal value turn out favorable, will be included in a final performance. (273)

Politicians found the initiative unrealistic and promptly consigned it to the trash bin. Nonetheless, Tindemans remained committed to theater practice: for the career of Franz Marijnen at the Ro-Theater (the city theater of Rotterdam), for instance, he was of crucial importance.³⁵

Adjacent to the only chair of Theater Studies in Flanders at that time, instituted by the Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen (UIA), many other initiatives emerged and did grow. At the UIA, the Centrum voor Experimenteel Toneel (Center for Experimental Theater, CET) was established in 1978.³⁶ Frank Coppieters, then assistant at Antwerp's modest department of theater studies, was the steering force behind it and he gathered around him a whole team of people, such as Bart Patoor, Luk Mishalle, Paul De Bruyne, Hugo Durieux, and many others. With an extremely limited budget, mountains were moved: the CET presented international theater and dance, organized a Performance Art festival at

de bloemen werden geboeid (*And Also the Flowers were Handcuffed*, 1969) by Theater Arena in 1971.

³⁵ See Franz Marijnen's contribution "Dan maar een brief..." ("Then Just a Letter") in *Bij open doek: Liber Amicorum Carlos Tindemans* (*With the Curtain Raised*), edited by Luk Van den Dries and Frank Peeters.

³⁶ To support the CET, which was a university center, the non-profit organization Open Theater was founded, an initiative of academics and theater practitioners. See Brouwers, *Antwerpen theaterstad* 218; 228n8-11.

the university campus in Wilrijk, published their own magazine *Data*,³⁷ but it would also fully invest in workshops and seminars in collaboration with invited theater artists and scholars. In 1982, the CET also created its own production, *De stilte ervoor (The Silence Before)*, directed by Saskia Noordhoek-Hecht. In retrospect, however, the most important event in the history of the CET was Richard Schechner's lecture, "The Decline and Fall of the American Avant-Garde" (1980).³⁸ Schechner was the spokesman of a new vision on theater, the prime example of an academic who had both feet strongly rooted in theater practice and who at the same time was building an impressive critical oeuvre. His foundational view, which basically laid the foundation of the field of performance studies, would gather following, not so much amongst the first pioneers of theater studies in Flanders, but there was a younger generation of attentive listeners attending his lecture and they were definitely all ears. Yet Schechner did not come to Antwerp to present his model for performance studies. Instead, he came to announce the end of the American avant-garde: the collapse of the theatrical vanguard coincided, in his opinion, with the end of the belief in collective systems, leading to a deficit of social action, incomprehension by the press, a lack of continuity, and an acute shortage of financial means. The irony was that Schechner's scathing judgment came at a moment when everything in Flanders had yet to begin, the new "Flemish Wave" still had to arrive!

Finally: Collaboration

There is little sense in signaling a lack of connections between theater studies and theater practice, as Hildegard De Vuyst did in her overview of the different theater studies programs anno 1988 ("Dossier opleiding" 48). As a matter of fact, from the very start until our present day, there has always been some kind of link between theory and practice, even though these interactions obviously took on many different guises. De Vuyst did have a point when she criticized what she termed a "never-enough-degrees-in-the-pocket-mentality" (47), which Flemish universities seemed to stimulate by offering various so-called "Bijzondere Licenties" or Special Master's Degree programs. Theater studies would also be placed under this heading of a Special Master's Degree and, from 1988 onwards,

³⁷ The magazine *Data* was in itself more of an experiment: only three issues appeared, each of them numbered "zero" and designed by visual artist Annemie Van Kerckhoven. Because their application for subsidies was declined by the Flemish government, the CET decided against investing in the magazine.

³⁸ Schechner's lecture was published in Dutch in the summer issue of CET's magazine *Data* in 1981. In the same year, an extended version appeared in two parts in *PAJ: Performing Arts Journal* (5:2 and 5:3).

students could enroll for this type of program at all four major universities in Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven, and Brussels.³⁹ These programs were more specifically aimed at incoming students who already had a Master's degree (or an equivalent) but wanted to get an additional degree in Theater Studies through a concise but intense curriculum that, in all cases, consisted of a loose patchwork of courses that in some way or another dealt with theater and which were actually a part of a variety of existing Master's or Bachelor's programs. For the university administrations, it was merely an economic calculation and those extra students were very welcome. For the departments in question, it was more a matter of defining their area of specialization and to highlight both their profile and potential in terms of theater studies. In this early period, there was an ardent ambition to create an autonomous academic discipline, but the means or manpower to achieve this were profoundly lacking.⁴⁰

These different proto-“departments” of theater studies were run by an absolute minimum of staff members (with many of them still responsible for literature courses) and one assistant. At best, the “team” would also have one or two researchers working on projects with external funding. The subsequent waves of cutbacks affecting the Faculties of the Arts would endanger various times even this minimum. For each assistant position, hard struggles had to be fought. At the beginning of the 1990s, red alert was imminent: due to illness, Carlos Tindemans had to resign and Dina Hellermans died at the untimely age of 50. While theater studies had always been extremely vulnerable in Flemish academia, it was now threatened with extinction and struggling to survive. Marianne Van Kerkhoven repeatedly made her voice heard to offer support and to raise public awareness on this precarious situation.⁴¹ When she was awarded the KU Leuven Culture Prize in 1995, Van Kerkhoven stands up for theater studies once again:

By the sudden passing away of Dina Hellermans at the VUB and the sickness of Carlos Tindemans at the UIA, the intellectual potential has been decapitated, as it were. But even more significant is the societal mentality that regards disciplines such as theater studies as economically not useful; they rather want to break them

³⁹ To be entirely accurate, I should mention that the Special Master's Degree offered at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel was called “Cultural and Movement Studies” instead of “Theater Studies.”

⁴⁰ It was only with the implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Flanders 2003, that it became possible to get a Master's degree in Theater Studies.

⁴¹ See also Van Kerkhoven, “Omtrent een (on)mogelijke eenheid: een verhaal voor Carlos” (“On a (Im)possible Unity: A Story for Carlos”).

down than to build them up. In this space within the walls of one of these universities, in my capacity as dramaturge, a capacity in which theory and practice have always been the two intimately intertwined veins from which [a] work could spring, I want to make an ardent plea for the safeguarding and the development of the discipline of theater studies. Practice is always in need of theory, but today probably even more than ever. (Van Kerkhoven, “Vanaf nu tot aan het einde” 3).

Around the same time, dramaturg Erwin Jans too sounded the alarm: “In Flanders, hardly anything serious on theater is being published, from which it could be deduced that theater is a less serious art form than, for instance, literature or the visual arts. There is no historical research at all. The universities have little or no interest in the theater studies programs” (21). And Geert Opsomer, who felt the full impact of the financial cutbacks, wrote a razor-sharp analysis of where we were at by the end of the 1990s in Flanders:

New rounds of cutbacks have severely marginalized the position of the core [programs] in theater studies, the financial leeway is non-existent, the teaching staff has been halved, there is hardly any room left for research. The critical threshold to be able to meet educational, intake, and research needs has been reached. Here as well there is no other alternative than a collective initiative of the four universities to save theater studies as an academic discipline. (188)

Making a virtue of necessity, but also understanding that collaborating was the only way to ensure the future of theater studies in Flanders, a new generation slowly took over the wheel in the middle of the 1990s and put their heads together.⁴² Out of these negotiations, the interuniversity Specialized Study in Theater Studies arose, a so-called GGS, which means that it was aimed at students already having some prior knowledge of the discipline.⁴³ The program, at first coordinated by the VUB and later on by the University of Antwerp, wanted to find a right balance between courses focused on academic research and modules preparing for employment in the arts scene. The intake of students coming

⁴² The people involved in this process were: Geert Opsomer (KU Leuven), Ronald Geerts (VUB), Christel Stalpaert (UGent), and Luk Van den Dries (UIA). In early 1996, they again will raise the alarm in a document titled “The Tragedy of Theater Studies in Flanders.” In this text, the authors denounce the disquieting situation of the different theater studies departments propose to found an “interuniversity center (department) for theater science” in which there is extensive collaboration. Unfortunately, this center will never be realized.

⁴³ GGS is the abbreviation for “Gediplomeerde in de Gespecialiseerde Studies” (“Certified in the Specialized Studies”).

from different universities in Flanders as well as the Netherlands generated a productive dynamic between people with various backgrounds.

Yet the most decisive turning point that eventually led to a definitive (?) breakthrough of theater studies in Flanders was the Bologna Declaration, which became effective in Flemish higher education in 2004-2005 and which completely redrew the map of the university landscape. The previous “Kandidatuur” (Candidacy) and “Licentie” (License) programs were replaced with a Bachelor and Master structure. The smaller departments saw this as an opportunity to solidify and expand their position. At Ghent University, the theater studies program, which had already moved to the department of Art and Archeology, became more autonomous and renamed itself Performing and Media Arts. VUB collaborated with RITS to create a minor in theater studies with a broad intermedial perspective and close ties to theater practice. At the University of Antwerp (which by that time was unified into one single institution), theater studies became a part of a new Bachelor program in Theater, Film and Literary Studies and a Master in Theater and Film Studies. The earlier interuniversity GGS-course was converted into an Advanced Master’s degree that continued to exist for several years next to the Master. Only KU Leuven chose for a different direction in this story and discontinued its theater studies program.⁴⁴ The success of these new curricula and the number of students they attracted have permitted a considerable growth of the theater studies departments. Sadly enough, the survival and continued existence of certain programs like theater studies at universities still is, above anything else, an economic reality: quantifiable numbers remain a primary criterium. Nonetheless, the developments following the Bologna Reformation did lead to more solid groups of faculty members, larger research centers with clear profiles, and significantly different emphases in education and scholarly research.

Whether or not theater studies has earned its definite place at Flemish universities, only time can tell. The subsequent waves of budget cuts of the last decennia have, unfortunately, not come to an end yet. With every change in staff, another struggle needs to be fought and, every time, there is the anxious uncertainty if a position can be maintained. There is little time to look back, or to rest on one’s laurels. The performing arts scene changes at a bristling pace and, as such, it also needs other kinds of theater

⁴⁴ KU Leuven also canceled its involvement in the Advanced Master in Theater Studies in 2005-2006. The program was continued by Ghent University, VUB, and the University of Antwerp until it was disbanded in 2014.

researchers than ten or twenty years ago. But then again, that is a different story for another time...

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