

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PUBLIC POLICY

EMBODIMENT IN PLANNING: WHAT CAN PLANNERS LEARN FROM COMMUNITY-
BASED THEATER?

By
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A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2020

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

More than anybody I wish to thank my wife, Chloe Vanessa Penney Lane. Without your unabating love and support, this dissertation would not have taken shape. Every day you challenge me to be a better man just by being you. To that I am eternally grateful. I hope one day as you are completing your dissertation I can return the love and support you have given me.

Secondly, I would like to thank William Butler, my advisor and friend. You have been my witness these last four years as well as a pillar of support. We could all use a Will Butler in our life, and simply saying thank you is not enough. I hope in some small manner I have left a similar mark upon your life as this journey comes to close.

Third, to my committee members; Dr. J, Tyler, and Dr. Dahl. You were always there when I needed help grappling with conception, perception, and writing. I look up to each of you, and each of you provided me the mirrors I needed to keep growing. Your presences on this journey, whether physical or in my imaginings, always said, “Never stop digging, never stop questioning, and never give up.”

Fourth, my love goes to Juno and Dionysus. You know who you are. Words can never adequately capture what life you have given and returned to me. My mind and body are full of the experiences and memories we share. I hope, more than anything, you feel witnessed and seen. For that was my goal above research and writing. Making sure that each of you, in your own ways, were seen as the courageous, vulnerable, and beautiful people that you are.

Lastly, my gratitude goes to my department. You saved my life by providing the soil my soul needed to find itself again. My life, my present world, and its future are inextricably linked to the opportunities and experiences provided. Thank you for taking the chance on me and for supporting my radical change in research from emergency management to community development.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an examination of two community-based theaters operating in informal and social contexts to co-create cultural change. More specifically, through performances the two theaters in question seek to build relationships between community members as well as produce differential social movements/actions. Through the co-created performances at the grassroots level, the enactment of salient cultural messaging and relationality became the overall contributing base of this dissertation. One theater is in middle Appalachia and is called Appalachian Theater; the other is located on the Gulf Coast of Florida and is called Sitting in the Shade Together Theater.

The research with both theaters was conducted, to varying degrees, through actively assisting performances, participants, and the construction of interpersonal and intimate relationships. The implications of this vulnerable transparency as a reflexive positionality led to the theorization this dissertation stands upon. The research led to a questioning of current theorizations and conceptualizations regarding how one begins to know others/self/world through relationality as a socio-cultural intimate and supportive praxis of constructivist embodiment (chapter 2). The chapter argues that planners must behaviorally adapt themselves to the lived experiences of others for the ethical integration of institutions with the everyday lives of citizens – particularly those who are oppressed and vulnerable. As an extension of this theorization, I build on and critique current theorization and conceptions of therapeutic planning (chapter 3). In this critique, I problematize the use of short-term interventions seeking to ameliorate long-standing community traumas and suggest more generative and long-term relational community building praxes. Lastly, as an examination of intensive communicative and relational performance, the last chapter provides guidance on how the two community-based theaters operate as places of asset-based community development (chapter 4). More specifically, this chapter problematizes and reformulates McKnight and Block's (2011) conceptualization of abundance. This piece emphasizes a need to progress beyond asset-based praxes and more into generative dimensions of 'incarnation' (Brummans, 2011) to assist in both building relationships, as well as adjusting how relationships are experienced at the community level.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Planning theory and practice has often focused predominantly on issues of scale. City building, or rather the practice of putting the city on the plat, has historically dominated planning's proverbial mind's eye. In truth, great cities were created, built, and advanced through this synoptic lens of cartography, organization, and categorization (Scott, 1998; Friedmann, 1987). However, as bright as the White City may have been in 1893, the colossal structures bathed in the omnipotence of rational power hid much of the lay, historical, and cultural realities of human life. The anguish of colonial power, slavery, and ideological supremacy found new faces to perpetuate oppression through urban development's capacity to demonstrate dominance over space and time (Burg, 2015). Whose imaginary landscape is being built and why? Further, how were these imaginary landscapes of segregated inequity being sustained?

In the 1960s, during the height of Urban Renewal and in indirect response to planning's historical racial misogynistic technique, two seminal pieces were published critiquing planning at its core. The first piece was by Paul Davidoff titled *Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning*. The central thesis for Davidoff (1965) was the right for planners to enter the political foray to advocate on behalf of those that have been historically nullified, and further to begin the democratization of planning beyond purely a developmental pseudo-science. According to Davidoff and other scholars, planning has relied heavily on the rationality of objective science through top-down spatial approaches. Thus, planners were the technical instruments that implemented the will of elected officials (who need be said were, and to a large degree still are, white men) (Innes, & Booher, 2010; Sweet, 2018). Without cliché, Davidoff argued against the perpetual production machine feeding on the cogs of political-economic bureaucracy. Foucault would later coin the term governmentality in his attempt to explain this a/temporal regulatory, calculating, and disciplinary power of the State (Foucault, 1991).

The second seminal piece was written a few years later by Sherry Arnstein titled *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*. Arnstein (1969) dug a little deeper than Davidoff, choosing instead to observe participatory planning processes directly. Arnstein created a conceptual ranking system based upon what power participating citizens did or did not have in influencing planning decisions. The interface of institutions, bureaucracies, developers and citizens is a

nexus that has continued to plague planning practitioners and theorists to this day (Innes & Booher, 2010). Arnstein's ladder still has relevancy and is still used as a basis for much participatory planning theory as a source of reflection and inspiration (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). The top rank of Arnstein's ladder is citizen control, and it depicts citizens jointly deciding what planners and public administrators do or do not do. Towards the bottom of Arnstein's ladder are such practices as manipulation and therapy (essentially practices that revolve around the disempowerment of citizens). Towards the middle of Arnstein's ladder are informing, consultation, and placation (i.e. symbolic participation). These practices generally revolve around forms of tokenism, practices that note the existence of participants, and give some input into decision making, but overall little to no participant inclusion or substantive influence. Generally, the highest form of citizen participation observed in planning involves joint decision making with planners (Innes & Booher, 2010; Healey, 1997), and evolving relationships and partnerships that are based on negotiation, reciprocity, and tradeoffs (rung 6 of 8 in Arnstein's ladder).

Upon skipping a few decades to the early to mid-1990s after the white revanchism of the 1980s (Hackworth & Smith, 2001), and in furtherance of Arnstein and Davidoff, planning found itself amid what has now been deemed, the communicative turn in planning (Healey, 1997). "The planning tradition itself has generally been trapped inside a modernist instrumental rationalism for many years and is only now beginning to escape" (Healey, 1997, p. 7). The communicative turn, and the eruption of communicative rationality, is based upon Habermas' conception of communicative action (Innes, & Booher, 2010). Habermas, in an endeavor to reincarnate and reinvigorate the public square, a space supposedly free of dominance and oppression, sought to argue for the value of the best argument. In other words, Habermas believed in a political agency – based within the progression of postmodernism – that arguments should not be won based purely upon the ideological supremacy of certain epistemologies (i.e. rational positivism). Further, that argumentation itself framed within an intersubjective environment should be concluded upon multiple forms of knowledges, and thus asserting that assumptive claims be scrupulously examined and questioned before consequential decisions are made (Healey, 1997).

There is much appeal in this perspective, but American pragmatists and Marxists alike were quick, and with merit, in noting the purely theoretical and somewhat dismissive underpinnings to Habermas' perspectives on equity and history (Fainstein, 2010; Forester, 1999). Despite critical attention being made by Habermas to refute processes of disenfranchisement, Habermas' explanation on the mitigation of power differentials still assumes equal understandings across individuals of differing forms of knowledge. Forester (1988) spoke extensively on the authoritative and exclusionary capacity technical language and expertise has to 'speak over' lay, local, and experiential knowledges. Further, power, particularly economic power in the neoliberal state, cannot be quashed through a theoretical public sphere of argumentation. For example, in the disembodied dimension in which Habermas' theory of communicative action exists, intersubjectivity and the integration of multiple knowledges is an embodied process. Meaning that within an interpersonal and negotiated space, knowledge democratization is an active process wherein the best argument does not necessarily speak for itself. This counter argument to the 'half-way' communicative turn would be both supported and critiqued by Davidoff and Arnstein in a refutation of the instrumentalism that is still embedded within Habermas' rationality.

Since the 1990s, planning has found itself both burgeoning with diverse theorization on the merits of collaboration, negotiation, participation, inclusion and more, and struggling to upend planning's vicious grip on administrative rational, prescriptive, and technical praxes (Healey, 1997). From the perspective of this presented work, there is a fixation within planning for rational utility even after the communicative turn. The competition for best and highest use, even within our theoretical domains, still lingers within the supposed viability of planning strategies leaving out much of the nuance that planning so desperately needs. That even after much work regarding emotion, dualities of mental models, critical race theory, perspectives on gender and the masculinization of planning, praxes of participatory processes such as storytelling, , plans/policy adoption versus implementation, the reflective practitioner, and even decolonization, planning theory and practice still turns to the reductive, and detached, and not the enacted and experiential (Sandercock, 1998; Sweet, 2018; Lyles, White & Lavelle, 2018; Jackson, 2018; Healey, 1992; Erfan, 2017; Wilson, 2019).

One last domain that theorists have argued over is the role and power of the institutional contexts of planning. The breadth of this literature is both complex and ever expanding. However, much of the theorization provided in later chapters (2 and 3) takes inspiration from Healey's (1997) framings of institutionalism. More specifically, Healey's early formulations and assertions regarding everyday social life is compelling and relevant. Healey particularly emphasized the importance of social relationships as a courier for lived experiences, and to the overall understanding one's own mode(s) of being (expanded upon in chapter 4) so as to more fully understand planning's dominant role in the West. Healey argues that planning institutions, from a backdrop of modernist instrumentalism, must adapt to the social lives of people in cultural contexts. The question since this time is this: how do planners and institutions alike pay homage not just to the spatial-economic-built environments, but also to history, survival, meaning, and equity? Such a question is paramount in progressing beyond the theoretical idealism of Habermasian intersubjectivity as a basis of communicative planning for the inclusion of diverse cultural groups *into* plan construction and implementation (Innes, & Booher, 2010; Forester, 1999; Faintein, 2010).

A note on method

It is here, within the relational, social, cultural, and historical that this thesis is framed. There are reasons for this beyond planning's communicative turn and push for institutional democratization. The basis of this work was housed within two community-based theaters in the American rural South. Each theater, one in middle Appalachia and the other along Florida's Gulf Coast, is a place of survival, expression, collaboration, interdependence and artistry. They are Arnstein's top rung. One question was at the foundation of this multi-case study. That is, what are individuals doing in their own lives to find meaning in public contexts? Despite appearing simple, this question challenged me to my core. In a country divided along lines of race, class, and gender, where do those that have been historically nullified find meaning and places of agency? In a country that equates all individuals equally within the rational autonomy of Neoliberalism, where does identity emerge and continue? In counties that have little to no resources, that contain centuries-old trauma which reaches back to the founding of the country and beyond, where is healing found amongst others? If planning is to take seriously its attempts to listen to the 'low' places of the human condition, does it have the capacity to bring itself a

grace that has been so long held at bay through instrumental processes? These are but a few of the questions that teased and stretched my capacities to work with and support community members in their attempts of social artistry over months long projects.

Everyday life does not fit neatly within the foray of spatial analysis. Sometimes the chaotic processes in social and informal environments too are boundlessly opaque and out of reach to the process driven mind. Everyday life at the most basic, but also most elusive, is experiential, dynamic, and unpredictable. No single story or experience is the same; meanings may be inferred and learned from, but to solidify an absolute from experiential narratives misses the point entirely. The identification of a singular point in time and space between individuals to base decisions upon again, and dangerously, misses the point. *If* there is one solid and resounding take away this work can provide, it is that reductive myopias used as a projective political defense decimate the lived being of an individual (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Space must be made for the intangible, the nuanced, the vulnerable, the intimate, the ineffable, the mysterious, and the experiential. Meaning that if recognition between institutions, planners, and people are to occur, then individual truths of living must be heard *as they are* in both space and time. To do otherwise, would reduce the potential to be had in understanding not just the developmental future, but an understanding to how communities have arrived to where they are.

In the beginning methodological formulations of this work, I attempted to utilize Charmaz's (2018) conceptualization of constructivist grounded theory. Many of Charmaz's perspectives, especially the use on constructivism and on documenting and analyzing interpersonal and experiential data were paramount in my own adjustments to performative ethnographic research sites. There is much merit to how Charmaz emphasizes the need to really 'explore' multifaceted situations, identities, and overall happenings through relational work as an integral act of methodological self-consciousness. However, I began to soon realize that my questions, when explored in practice at the two community-based theaters required a turn in method. When combining questions concerning the behavioral dimension of planners, and the socio-cultural entangle performative environments of the theaters, I needed a different skill set to reach into the open intimacy of the research sites. As such, I had to progress even further in 'working with' the two community-based theaters.

I was assisted greatly by two theorists in getting as entangled as possible (Conquergood, 2002; Spatz, 2017). Conquergood and Spatz openly suggest and explain the need for a more progressive and critical examination of qualitative methodologies' rootedness in the 'observational' to garner greater conversations on research ethics, the interpersonal and cultural dimensions of being 'in the field,' the need for greater collaboration, and an open understanding of the ineffable and wordless domains of being. Further, that rather than coding experience, I needed to experience 'experience' as an ongoing construction 'with' the participants and leadership of the community-based theaters. Here, in a refutation of the post-positivist underpinnings of grounded theory, I turned to constructivist embodiment to learn as much as possible, in real time, through lived experience with participants in their respective communities. This move permitted a deeper expansion into the behavioral, communicative, narrative, participatory, affective, and cultural. Most importantly, however, the transition to a more embodied and participatory research process garnered deeper relationships at both research sites. Now I was more 'in' the research sites working with others, rather than looking 'on' and documenting.

Despite intensive labor put forth towards the relational and participatory, I still extensively documented my own experiences through memos/journals (150+ pages), and recorded approximately seven hours of personal audio files. These documenting processes occurred after each direct experience in the field, and would cover interpersonal experiences, experiences shared with me by participants, direct performance work, organizational frameworks, and the cultural dimensions of the participants and communities. I would routinely revisit, reorganize, and reread these extensive compilations – particularly in the narrative constructions of chapters/articles. Further, I accumulated approximately 25 hours of interviews with 32 participants across both research sites after the creation and enactment of performances. These interviews were transcribed and were used extensively as reference material.

In person, at Sitting in the Shade Together Theater I spent approximately six months assisting, building, and acting in performances. At Appalachian Theater I spent approximately three intensive weeks assisting in performance design and relationship building. The difference in time spent at each theater is due to the length of performance cycles. Appalachian Theater has very short, but nonetheless rigorous, production cycle in the creation of performances.

Productions at Sitting in the Shade Together Theater generally can take three to four months to complete due the utilization of scripts, set design/construction, and rehearsals.

At all stages of the research I was engaged in frequent and intimate conversations with the Presidents of both theaters to garner their perspectives on the research narratives being constructed and to maintain ethical research practices. At no point was any part of this work done in isolation or separation from the two community-based theaters. There are very important reasons for such an inclusive and relational research process beyond the immediacy of method. The cultivated intimacy between myself and the two community-based theaters were by far the most powerful sources of data. However, intimacy is a vulnerable interpersonal domain. From the moments of conceptions of this work I knew that being a white and young male from a large research university posed a significant challenge while working with vulnerable and oppressed populations in ethnographic contexts. As a part of constructivist embodiment, I needed to be a point of support for the community-based theaters as an act of reciprocal understanding and contribution (McCreary & Murnaghan, 2020). However, this reciprocity only occurred after trust and permission was established, deepened, and sustained. This dynamic process of working with oppressed and vulnerable populations deeply shaped the research narratives because of the ethical need to be a point and source of empowerment for both community-based theaters. I, in short, made sure to be a contributing participant without trespassing into roles or behaviors that took these sites for granted (Christians, 2007).

The process of data analysis took many forms. Over the weeks and months of working with the community-based theaters, there were enormous discursive efforts made during performance construction and enactments. These relational and extensively conversational efforts covered such things as stage design, the artistic expression of scenes, the translation of scenes to audience/communities, etc. Performative dimensions such as these predominantly focused on the interpretive elements of performances, and the creation of identifiable themes and attributes that were salient to the local communities. Further, the interpersonal interactions between myself and others changed over time as memory and experiences were shared and created. In other words, these interpretive and performative discursive actions were a way of deepening and challenging the observed.

However, the research narratives became most elucidated during the writing phase of the work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). As I began to position this work in relation to available and related literature, I formulated narratives to sense make my observations and experiences through the existing literature. As a part of this process, all compiled documented data and direct experiential knowledge took shape in relation to the work done with the theaters, and thus allowed for the interpretive theorization to be situated (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steingberg, 2011). The research narratives were an act of constant reconstruction particularly relating to the reconstitution of meanings for the creation of clarity pertaining to the performative, communal, and cultural change. As literatures, interviews, and compiled participant-observation data were continuously interrogated, I produced emergent contributions as an act of analysis itself (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). Most simply put, the data that I collected, far from being disembodied, was interpreted during the writing process through an iterative cycle that can be thus summarized: data collection; comparison of data and early interpretations with existing literature to begin uncovering themes; discussion with/bouncing off ideas of participants and theater leaders in in-depth conversations regarding these themes; reinterpretation and documentation of emerging understandings; development of new understandings; and, finally, reconsulting those at the research sites to corroborate and add further meaning to the layers of meaning and themes.

A note on community-based theater and embodiment

Community-based theater is a unique form of theater. Community-based theater has a myriad of forms, and there are more emerging continuously, but nonetheless it purposefully blurs the lines between education and entertainment. Situationally, community-based theaters are generally sites of performative expression that are built upon and created by community member participation (Cohen-Cruz, 2005). In contrast, community theaters despite having a very similar name, are typically sites of amateur acting purely for the joy of performance. Further, community theaters generally utilize scripts that are from well-known sources (i.e. Broadway, Shakespeare, Disney, etc.) (Cohen-Cruz, 2005). The term “community-based theater” used in this work, then, will refer solely to the former iteration of theater.

Community-based theater, due to its push for education and interdependency on community participation/inclusion, is highly interwoven into the lives of the participants (Cohen-

Cruz, 2005). More, considering how performances are co-created to speak on community issues through performative art, community-based theater is a cultural apparatus for behavioral and communicative interaction. As such, community-based theater is an extension of not only the day-to-day lives of the participants, but is also a source of meaning, empowerment, and place-making (Haedicke & Nellhaus, 2001). Lastly, as sources of generative affirmation, community-based theater routinely speaks on topics of trauma, history, politics, economy, culture, and society (race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) (Geer, et al., 2012).

Embodiment as a concept can at first appear nebulous because it may paradoxically incite feelings of the disembodied and abstracted through contrast. For example, is it possible to not experience one's own body? We can project through mental models onto a set of happenings, but embodied methods argue that this is behavioral (Spry, 2011). Further, embodiment can simultaneously be a process and extension of a person through such things as acting, storytelling, deep listening, and playing a musical instrument (Spatz, 2017). Embodiment can also include the multifaceted and behavioral dimensions of identity. In short, embodiment is a concerted *attention and focus* on the behavioral, communicative, lived, and enacted (Inckle, 2010). As such, by extension into the methodological, embodiment as a research practice also spans into the behavioral, communicative, and enacted but with greater emphasis on expanding this attention into the cultural and performative to elucidate processes and forms of societal/cultural power (Giardina & Newman, 2011).

A note on theory

This work does not provide a gateway to understanding how power differentials may be mitigated or ameliorated. Such a position is too consumed on avoiding the truth in plain sight. Such a position overlooks the reality that power inequities are ingrained to such a degree that hardly any one singular process or action can rectify them. It is here too, within the community-based theaters that I learned, amongst differential racial, economic, and gendered relationships, that constructive actions may be found. However, the creation of such constructive actions amongst societally 'unequal' individuals elucidates, to a painful degree, the very inequity that the action taken is in relations with. Action, true collaborative interdependent action, is an intensification of the experiential knowing that meanings are radically different even amongst friends. *That* awareness, that grief of history living on, is not simply an epistemology of

multiplicity (Sandercock, 2010), but a cutting reminder of being human. Actions taken together, across differences, is a decision to progress into the unknown. For as much as the idea of equal freedom rings with provocative morality within Neoliberalism, it is nothing more than a laughable perspective of economic and political delusion (De Lissovoy, 2013). Freedom sounds nice when the rearview mirror of history falls away from the windshield of forward progress.

As a piece of conscience and creation, action must be taken to call forth modes of being that have had no place to do so. As discussed by Sandoval (2013),

“Differential consciousness re-cognizes and works upon other modes of consciousness in opposition to transfigure their meanings: they convert into repositories within which subjugated citizens either occupy or throw off subjectivity, a process that simultaneously enacts yet decolonizes their various relations to their real conditions of existence. This dialectical modulation between forms of consciousness permits functioning within, yet beyond, the demands of dominant ideology: the practitioner breaks with ideology while speaking in and from within ideology” (p. 63).

Planning, has for better and worse, acted as a dominant force in how individuals experience their life, the opportunities afforded or not affording to them, and the creation and re-creation of social, political, economic, and cultural contextual manifestations of inequality. Planning has the power to determine and shape lives. Regardless of statutory responsibilities, such a responsibility is an awesome power. Such a power is hardly free from values, positions, and agendas. Planning is cultural, not scientific.

As an anchoring point within planning theory, this work, takes further inspiration from Friedmann’s (2008) piece titled *The Uses of Planning Theory: A Bibliographic Essay*. From a position of humanism, Friedmann (2014) states, “From the moment of conception until we die, human beings can only be understood as multidimensional, socially related beings, or *persons* who, over the entire arc of their lives, evolve biologically, psychologically, and in the social relations that constitute out collective existence” (p. 249). If planning institutions are going to attempt to intersect more fully with the happenings of everyday life per Healey’s (1997) work, and if planning seeks to expand beyond the instrumental rational epistemologies that curtail its latest iteration of communicative theorization (Innes & Booher, 2010), then homage must be

paid to the behavioral and experiential domains of the planners themselves (Lyles, White & Lavelle, 2018). In the least, a reimagining of the nexus between institutions, citizens, and planners based within the historical present, is of paramount importance.

What do we experience with one another face-to-face in moments of uncertainty? This is a simplistic way of framing the experiential grounds of interaction between planners and citizens, but nonetheless draws attention to paying attention (Forester, 1988). In other words, through paying attention to the cultural dimension of interpersonal relationality, perhaps planning and planners may transgress beyond the self-isolating dislocation that prevents planning from finding its own meaning. In such a conscientization of consequence and power, within a more human domain, planners may find that the linkages between knowledge and action are intrinsically bound to human life (Friedmann, 1987). Not to ground planning in a singular identity, but rather a questioning of the monolithic nature that planning and planners have cemented into dogmatic constructions of professionalism and expertise (Sweet, 2018). At that point, where the badge and title lose the meaning of assumed power, beyond the assumptions of legitimacy, is there a *person* that *sees* the constructions and arrangements of frictional boundaries working to contain some while elevated others at the cost of human life? Planning has come to the cul-de-sac of change after decades of reifying the assumed supremacy of expertise and failing to achieve a scientific quantity of unquestionable liberty (Sandercock, 1998; Scott, 1997; Fainstein, 2010; Flybjerg, 1998).

Overview of the dissertation

The following chapters are not attempting to imagine the ‘just city.’ Rather the work that follows is a dive into the embodied planner, and the necessity of embodiment as method in planning. Further, this work is seeking, in its own small way, to engage with sites of differential modes of being outside of the private, governmental, and institutional contexts. Here, through the engagement with two community-based theaters across geographies and cultures, I experienced what are people doing to change their own lives with each other through interpersonal interventions. Here I wish to share a brief story not contained in the following chapters. Mountain County, the home of Appalachian Theater is extremely poor, but rich in an understanding that numerable community members live on a razor’s edge between getting through and collapsing out of sight. Whilst waking up in my Airbnb at the back of a wooded

holler I received a text from Juno (the President of Appalachian Theater) asking to postpone our meeting for the day to a later time. One of her fellow church member's house had burned down the night before. There are no emergency services besides a very small volunteer fire department in the county. So, Juno, and a group of men and women, gathered their trucks and trailers to move the gentleman to a temporary living arrangement with what belongings he had that survived the fire. By the end of the following night the man had a place, even temporary, to rest his head. Appalachia has been romanticized for its rugged masculine individualism, but in this small but compelling example, I found a relational culture of mutual support knowing that tragedy is always right around the corner threatening to end a life.

This work does not seek to paradoxically pigeonhole planning into an unescapable ideology. Rather this work is an effort to challenge normative conceptions of planning to more exemplify the various domains planning inhabits. If we expand conceptions of expertise steeped in masculine design and social engineering, we create space for such things as social organizers, community activists, advocacy organizations, non-profit program managers and the like to be included in the realm of planning (Friedmann, 1987). Further, if we expand beyond the rational and more into the experiential and negotiated domains of planning, greater space may thus be created to translate multiple knowledges into more nuanced, flexible, and democratized plans and policy creation and implementation.

In chapter 2 the overarching question is how planners and institutions can begin to reconnect with their own communities through shedding the layers of separation through critical examinations of self and other based within experiential socio-cultural interactions. To invoke Freire (1972), a basic transition for planning is to move from a banking model of categorical and territorial spatial analysis to an experiential model. One of the basic theoretical assumptions here is that planners are pedagogues. Planners construct worlds both imaginary and physical, and the nature of these frameworks are built upon, and then are overlaid, on historical, cultural, social, and economic relations. A brief comment on limitations must be made. In no way does this piece believe in a panacea of cross-cultural and contextual relations even if deep friendships are made during planning processes. The happenings and doings of communities and community members are too vast, complex, and everchanging to believe in a utopia of isometric harmony. In other words, this work does not attempt to find an intrinsic universalizing social field of co-existence

(Wilson, 2019). Rather, the theorization provided, with full awareness of the agency of individual behavior, is that embodiment as a method can begin and sustain a conversation regarding the changing identity of planning. Here I describe how I navigated two theaters (including their contexts, methods, and intentions), the differential methods between planning and theater, myself as a doctoral candidate, and the people with whom I worked with through dialectical and experiential practices. The purpose of this exercise is to bring insight into how planning has positioned itself in contrast with people on the ground changing their own lives. The overarching take-away is how planners, through deep relationality, may begin to understand and make co-constructed meaning *with* the historically excluded domains of the lay, local, narrative, and cultural.

Other scholars and theorists have similarly called planning's colonial underpinnings into question. For example, Erfan (2017) and Sandercock and Attili (2014) propose that the decolonization of planning supported through dialogical and discursive practices may promote healing between indigenous and settler populations. In chapter 3, I work to extend this work in contexts outside of indigenous studies with the help of Juno (President of Appalachian Theater) and Dionysus (President of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater) as community leaders. Juno and Dionysus are gravitational forces within their communities working to cultivate, grow, and harvest positive experiences from theater work. The chapter is a contextualization and examination of Juno and Dionysus in their theaters and communities to elucidate the behavioral dimensions of their work to support an extension of embodied planning. Here, intimacy across theater leaders and participants provide ripe soil for expression, affirmation, and trust. By providing opportunities within the informal, cultural, and pedagogical for the interaction between participants in the co-creation of culturally salient performances, Juno and Dionysus are key figures through which planners may draw inspiration from for historical and present pains and traumas within their communities. This work is also an extension upon, and further support of, a deeper incorporation of cultural humility within planning.

After digging deep into these intimate stories, chapter 4 takes a broader view to connect these theaters to community development. Chapter 4 is a discussion with the intimate and scalar components of community-based theaters as an avenue through which differential modes of being are 'incarnated' (Brummans, 2011) via communicative practices. More specifically, this

chapter challenges taken for granted assumptions regarding Block and McKnight's (2011) conception of abundance. As formulative and foundational contributors to asset-based community development (ABCD), Block and McKnight's proposal of supportive community-based relationships leading to abundant resources and co-constructed opportunities of engagement leaves much out as it relates to the socio-cultural differences and intensive labor required as a part of ABCD. The contribution this piece holds is an analytical conception of place making through interpersonal interaction. Elements of this chapter include how salient cultural narratives within affective environments are generated across the two theaters, as well as the common threads of behavioral and communicative exchanges that generate working relationships in spatial and cultural contexts.

As I began this research, I did not set out with the intent to discover a new line of planning theorization. Rather, I expected to expound upon existing lines of theory and add nuance and depth to those theories taking inspiration from community-based theaters. However, through the process, I came to understand more than just an extension of existing communicative and therapeutic planning, although the lineage is clear, and began to articulate a more fully developed theorization of embodied planning. This dissertation takes the first steps toward defining what I mean by embodied planning as a practice and embodied planners who engage in that practice.

A note on transparency and publications

As per formatting and editing requirements, at this time chapter 2 *Discovering through experience...embodiment caught between planning and theater* has been accepted for publication within *Liminalities: a journal of performance studies*.

CHAPTER 2

DISCOVERING THROUGH EXPERIENCE...EMBODIMENT CAUGHT BETWEEN PLANNING AND THEATER

I had been rehearsing for three months as a stage manager for a second production in Water County. The group consisted of myself, the director, the tech, and six other actors. Two weeks out from our first performance we were drained and looking for some new air to breathe. Scheduling had plagued us through the journey leading to many missed opportunities. Many were still reading from the script, and we barely had the set put together. We had gone through a string of actors for a major role, and another had just dropped out because of personal troubles at home. I switched from stage manager to actor. I had never acted before this.

Four months prior, I was working with the leadership of an Appalachian theater. The project entailed a two-week grind to find the heart of the home they call storytelling theater. Before going to the first rehearsal at the local high school, I sat at a renovated historic park looking at the sole walking path in the county which follows one of the many creeks. The theater, with the help of a small grant, built this walking path that now stands as a little symbol of renewal; salt was made on these grounds over 100 years ago across past generations. This area is familiar with hardship and pain, as well as such renewal...so when I saw a group of courageous community leaders (mostly women) marshalling people to speak of their lives and the lives of others on a high school stage...I lost my words. The sight of everyday men, women, and children performing the lives of each other with little directing and only supportive affirmations rendered me speechless. In another of many awe-inspiring moments, a group of women from the local prison came to the high school auditorium to watch a rehearsal. One of them was to see her own story unfold through the performance of Appalachian Theater's dedicated cast on a small, elevated, and well-worn stage ten feet in front of her. She could do little more than cry as her companions, dressed in orange uniforms, held her.

I chose to study community-based theater (CBT) to bring more humanity to planning as well as to the veritable battle arenas of policy. Currently, the field of urban and regional planning is at a deadlock regarding how to ameliorate social inequities, and much of the emergent theory suggests furthering planning democratization as a solution (Healey, 1997; Innes, & Booher, 2010; Feinstein, 2010). However, this viewpoint is contested through a reprisal of post-

modernism, post-positivism, and post-structuralism in the name of reflective pragmatism (Baum, 2017; Hopkins, 2010; Huxley, 2010). As such, I purposefully chose to study what citizens are doing, practicing, and creating through embodied participatory processes in their own lives outside of private, formal, bureaucratic, and/or governmental contexts. For me, it is not just a question of democratization, but also one of changing the identity of the “planner.”

There is value in sharing what I went through in the delicate and personal process of research at these sites (Inckle, 2010). In this paper, I explore the practice of embodied methods in these cases. My aim is to problematize still further the epistemological individualism born from the Enlightenment which pervades planning’s systems of pedagogy and to problematize, in particular, the inertia of urban and regional planning’s historical practices which are based in Foucauldian governmentality (Conquergood, 2002; Brown, Cromby, Harper, Johnson, & Reavey, 2011; Foucault, 1991; Scott, 1998; Inckle, 2010). Succinctly put, in planning, there is still work to be done in connecting our personal identities and our bodies to our methods, both in and out of the classroom (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011; Inckle, 2010; Sandercock, 1998).

An examination of community-based theaters (CBTs) can serve the field of planning, as CBTs are often highly affiliated, intertwined, and communicatively based upon personal identity and personal identity’s intersection with history, culture, politics, economy, and geography (Cohen-Cruz, 2005). This is a rather nebulous and non-descript commonality, but one that is based firmly within processes of scalar identity change and transformation (Leonard, & Kilkelly, 2006; Cohen-Cruz, 1999; Sánchez Ares, 2015). As such, before entering these communities, and before navigating relationships of trust and expectation between myself and the leadership of the organizations, I questioned myself: who am I in relation to these performative communities? What role(s) was I to balance with them as I simultaneously navigated the research? Further, to what degree would I be open, transparent, reflexive, conscious, and even apologetic for my own fumbling mistakes in performing the work? How far will I let them in? If planning is to be challenged through the use of such embodied methodology on behalf of planners, all of these experiences matter in our creation and construction of knowledge in embodied practices and are questions that need deeper exploration in planning pedagogy and practice (Inckle, 2010; Garcia, 2018; Jackson, et al., 2018).

The research I conducted, and the methods practiced therein, were embedded in two small impoverished southern communities which utilize CBT as a social intervention for identity and community change. The two CBTs are in rural counties that either have no or very little planning and have sprung forth as community hubs within socially and economically challenging environments. For all intents and purposes, these theaters are akin to planning agencies as they seek developmental change, but the theaters' approach is one of cultivating culturally embedded relationships and partnerships rather than one of formal bureaucracy. Each of the two CBTs are headed by small groups of leaders and are reliant on volunteerism and inclusivity to realize their initiatives, performances, and events. Further, the CBTs are situated within a permeable and liminal relationship between non-profit and public status. They are the fleshy bodies entangled with socio-cultural and socio-economic structures striving to create a space and place they can call their own (Denzin, 2003).

Continuing to push beyond the limits of rational expertise in planning

Urban and regional planning, at its core, seeks to bound and facilitate community development in local-regional geographies. However, planning has often fallen short in doing so. In conventional conceptualizations of the planning profession, planning is generally performed through centralized and siloed bureaucratic organizations of government and performed by experts. Traditional planning processes create a constrained continuum including everything from "decisions proceeded from goals provided by elected officials, to data collection, analysis, and formulation of plans and policies by experts, to implementation performed by both elected officials and bureaucrats" (Innes, & Booher, 2010, p. 5). Possibly the most crucial to problematize is the fact that knowledge produced scientifically is deemed as legible and functional within traditional systems of planning (Scott, 1998). Prioritization of scientific data leaves little room for the inclusion of local, informal, lay, historical, or experiential knowledge and participation in both the construction and implementation of plans (Sandercock, 1998; Friedmann, 1987; Dewey, 1986; Scott, 1998).

Planning is, for the sake of brevity, a practice of order-making in the pursuit of development (Scott, 1998). Western civilization, and the global north, has long used abstract regulatory systems in order to promote this order. As it stands, planning's history is riddled with a pattern of methodically and calculatedly worsening inequities in the name of progress and

developmentalism (Davidoff, 1969; Maskovsky, 2012; Scott, 1997; Connerly, 2005; Friedmann, 1987; Castells, 2015; Jacobs, 1992). The normative forms of knowledge, policy, positionality, and methods historically used to make decisions in planning limit the potential of the vulnerable human touch that is necessary to supplement and even argue against such plans (hooks, 2014). Normative practices often other, denounce, displace, and omit social interdependencies that give rise to culture, policy, and structure through supposedly neutral positionality (Forester, 1988; Flyvbjerg, 1997). Planning dislocates itself from the present through a prescriptive rationality that Oyěwùmí (2005) summarized beautifully:

“The much vaunted Cartesian dualism was only an affirmation of a tradition in which the body was seen as a trap from which any rational person had to escape... ‘Bodylessness’ has been a precondition of rational thought. Women, primitives, Jews, Africans, the poor, and those who qualified for the label ‘different’ in varying historical epochs have been considered to be the embodied, dominated therefore by instinct and affect, reason being beyond them” (p. 5).

CBT laid the groundwork in this research for the emergence of more embodied participatory processes based in the expression of intimacy in co-created affective environments. As stated, the choice to study CBTs was purposefully made as the leadership of and planning-esque processes within the CBTs stand in stark contrast to the modernistic and ‘enlightened’ training that still reifies institutional racism and misogyny within planning (Frisch, 2002; Doan, 2015; Bordo, 1986; Ross, & Leigh, 2000).

My research within the two sites studied stands to further push planning into a more communicative, democratic space as part of the relatively new challenge to modernist planning which has called planning theory and practice into question (Healey, 1992). Within this challenge to historical practices which are based within positivistic epistemologies, there has been a partial re-conception from the traditional scientific planner to planner as facilitator (Forester, 1999). Planners as facilitators help support, construct, and sustain public participatory processes for the construction and implementation of plans. The purpose of such facilitation is to integrate, in theory, socio-cultural realities/knowledges into the construction of plans. However, much of the communicative rationality and collaborative planning literature hangs on process

and system dynamics, which as valuable as they are, leave out critical dialogue regarding interpersonal embodied behavior across differences (Innes, & Booher, 2010; Forester, 2009).

Planners as facilitators are largely concerned with process, or rather with the adjudication of time and resources for public participatory processes under the banner of communicative planning/rationality (Forester, 1999; Feinstein, 2010; Innes, & Booher, 2010). Various interpersonal skills are necessary in successfully coordinating such things as public meetings, forums, and negotiations, which include emotional sensitivity and active listening skills (Forester, 1988; Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). However, participatory planning processes risk exacerbating existing inequalities and conflicts, and can even instill deeper hegemonic regimes through a non-consequential approach to public participation (Arnstein, 1969, Innes, & Booher, 2010; Forester, 1988; Friedmann, 1987; Healey, 1997). Put another way, public participation in its weakest form can be summarized as DAD (Decide, Announce, Defend) (Innes, & Booher, 2010). In general, much of the current theories of collaborative planning contain two positions; one being the use of communicative rationality as derived from Habermas' set of ideal speech conditions, and the other being the use of negotiation theory to reach agreement through mediation and consensus building (Innes, & Booher, 2010; Glenn, & Susskind, 2010; Forester, 2009). I argue that this very set of methodological conditions for dialogue and collaboration within participatory planning processes, despite being an advancement upon instrumental rationality, is still openly Western, white, and omits the identities, lived experiences, and bodies of the participants.

In order to push the field of planning with this work and in order to ethically do so, I needed to be personal. The work needed to be “descriptive, not prescriptive” (Blomberg, Giacomi, Mosher, & Swenton-Wall, 1993, p. 123). The compassion and trust exercised in such work not only affirms critical literature but also challenges the consultative tradition that still pervades planners' interactions with the public (Rogers, 2016; Lyles, White, & Lavelle, 2018). What if we, as planners, invested in the construction of avenues of intimacy that are capable of and necessary in resituating our embodied behavior with each-other (Pratt, & Johnston, 2007; Pratt, & Johnston, 2009)?

The culturally embedded cases

Appalachian Theater (AT) – Mountain County. Located in middle Appalachia, Mountain County is privy to the experiential dislocation of being spoken over by those that have little understanding of what life is like in the mountains. For over 150 years, the inhabitants of the county that AT serves have personally experienced the pain of state coercion, elitism, feudal violence, extractive industries, and the projected prejudicial shame of sensational journalism that omits the complex experiences of those simply trying to build a life worth living (Billings, & Blee, 2000). This history has culminated into a present-day sense of loss and grief as the county's inhabitants pursue self-recreation in the midst of entrenched and chronic poverty – poverty created and ongoing due to systems of greed shaped by those with power and privilege (Billings, & Blee, 2004). AT is not suited for the amelioration of poverty in Mountain County, but rather for driving forward on the hope of creating belonging, connection, and relationships based in care. The President of AT (a 65-year-old white woman), who owns a 200-year-old tobacco farm and practiced as a speech pathologist for 30+ years, shared with me regarding her theater:

“I think it tells the people you can take a sensitive issue and you can talk about it commonly. You can present the way it is. You can give it the respect that it needs, it deserves, and you're not gonna follow, and you're not gonna culture them. You're not gonna die over it. You're still gonna live and breathe” (President of AT, personal communication).

AT, and its leadership, takes personal responsibility for the vulnerabilities present within the lives of their Appalachian participants. The generation of hope through the theater's participatory experiences is what AT fights for in a county with annual poverty rates that consistently exceed 40%. Collaboration in this county is the difference, quite literally, between life and death when tragedy strikes. Without the generation of this collaborative hope between participants, the theater, and other non-profits, there exist no other initiatives (governmental or otherwise) which have the potential to change the conditions within the county.

AT does not have a building to call its own, but rather utilizes supportive relationships to access resources that enable performance productions through a decentralized grassroots relationality. AT works in conjunction with other non-profits in the effort towards the sustained

creation of positive community space for constructive lived experiences (i.e. soccer fields, campgrounds, coffee shops, preservation of a historic park with a stage, a paved walking path, outdoor activities, and more). All of these efforts are made outside of governmental and private contexts and are largely initiated by the leadership of the theater as it aids in the creation of relationships. The combined work is a collective effort for the preservation of cultural heritage, as well as for the creation of evolutionary experiences to simultaneously heal and activate social potential through performative and intimate mediums (Norman, 2012).

Where's home? AT's performance. The ties that bind and the connections that make a house a home were the themes of AT's production that I observed and participated in during my research. Given the history of Mountain County, these themes are salient and important; what happens when abrupt change arrives? Where do we go, and who do we reach out to? What happens when tragedy strips you down to isolation? Will you have what you need? For Mountain County's inhabitants, the answer to this last question may well be a resounding "no" as planning, bureaucracy, and elected officials have historically failed them. Still, AT is dedicated, in what ways it can be, to sustaining its community where government has failed through the sharing of stories and the generation of intimacy.

Towards this end, AT's performance culminated into a story of a boy who loved his grandfather. While seemingly inconsequential, the simplicity of a story about family ties belies the importance which such ties carry in a community that has been isolated like Mountain County has. The grandfather in the story had no technology, not even a phone, and lived deep in a wooded holler. This home and bond were sanctuary for the child in the story as his own home was not safe. In the scene, the grandfather had two near death incidents; one from a heart attack, and one from being hit by a car at his mailbox while getting the daily mail. The scene ends with the grandson coming onstage to find his grandfather dead from a final heart attack, as his body could go on no longer after a lifetime of manual labor. "I loved my Papaw," was the final declaration under the spotlight on stage. In the context of the isolation, shame, and degradation faced by inhabitants of this county, such a story takes on meaning of deep personal significance for the members of the community to whom it was told. It is in this way that AT's performances and productions assuage feelings of disconnectedness within the county as they seek to forge bonds of trust, intimacy, and understanding.

Sitting in The Shade Together Theater (SSTT) – Water County. Located on the Gulf Coast of Florida, SSTT is situated in a county with a troubled past. SSTT experiences daily friction with the historical hegemony of white political, cultural, and economic power. SSTT uses social praxes to incrementally assist in adjusting the socio-cultural landscape of its participants. SSTT, through the cultivation of generative citizen-based relationships (similar to those utilized in AT), pursues a demonstrative community based in racial, gender, sexual, intergenerational, and class diversity. However, the struggle to achieve such an intention often finds itself in direct opposition to historic headwinds that threaten violence for disrupting the status quo; a place and state of social positioning that many marginalized and oppressed populations know all too well when facing Southern honor (Cohen, & Nisbett, 1994; Connerly, 2005). Nonetheless, SSTT engages in the empowerment of both oppressed populations, particularly the Latino/Latina and Black communities within the county, as well as that of established citizens. SSTT often houses moments of celebration, empowerment, and remembrance for the Black community on such days as the county's historic day of Emancipation.

SSTT juggles its position and intentionality with localism as well as with regional shame which characterizes the county as backwoods, backwards, and stupid. I cannot share the degrading social title that the county has been given through typecasting, but the name is used to project fear, dominance, and ownership of the county evocative of white revanchism. Further, this name given to the county is reproduced by many within the county through bumper stickers often adjoined to a truck/SUV with a Rebel Flag and camo paint. The President of SSTT - who is gay, Black, and male, but also a professionally trained director, playwright, actor, and local - had this to say,

“But there's so many things about [Water County] that, um, that has been *signaled* that we're a backwoods group of people. That we are all completely ignorant. That we are nothing more than the good old boy network, and we don't have the guts to stand up to fight for what it is that we want ... but this is my home. And even I used to think that about [Water County]. When I was a student in school, and especially in high school, I had no idea that when I was sitting on the front lawn of the high school, having lunch with my friend...Chatting it up. That I was

literally sitting in the middle of a lawn area that was designed as a confederate flag” (SSTT President, personal communication).

SSTT, unlike AT, has a house to call its own. Using a traditional black box theater (a room no larger than 50ftx30ft that has seats, raisers, lights, and sound but no stage), SSTT operates and thrives in close proximity to volunteers, actors, crew, and audience. Closeness, interaction, and co-production is implied by its very nature. This closeness and work-oriented relationality help ameliorate individuals’ reticence to collaborate. Almost inevitably people become closer, and thus the often-estranged relationships between race, gender, sexuality, age and class change and grow. Diversity becomes a strength of expression in the realization of lived experiences that become fuel for performative art in a scripted affective environment. In exploring this strength, I asked a theater participant what she thought the theater brought to the county. Without missing a beat, she responded, “Diversity. Which it desperately needs” (Theater participant, personal communication).

Who’s our neighbor? Performing at SSTT. The performance that I participated in during my research at SSTT was a narrative representation of intra-white elitism and violence. In the script, a new house in an upscale satellite community is raffled off by the homeowner’s association, and guess who wins the house? A callused, white, blue-collar, old-truck-driving, emotionally-wounded construction worker who had no care in the world for personal boundaries or bougie role-playing...An apt story considering the county’s self-perception is that of the exiled backwoods stepchild in the shadow of the larger, ‘hipper’, nearby regional city.

Trust was key in this performance as actors were challenged to channel deeply held beliefs in regard to themselves and the themes of the narrative itself. Over time during rehearsals, we worked up to the powerful scenes that shook the audience. However, it took real vulnerability amongst strangers to make the emotions real and to express the shared and often shameful experiences of those within the county. Speaking on the vulnerability that allows SSTT’s performances to bridge divides between individuals, the president of the theater had this to say:

There's gotta be a certain thing where I am looking you in the eye and I feel comfortable with you enough to take a chance to be vulnerable. And then when you become vulnerable and you get that signal that the other person recognizes that you are vulnerable, and that we are in this together, then I am going to be

vulnerable with you. And then...that's exactly what happened” (President of SSTT, personal communication).

In the play thus described, the blue-collar outsider was to be shot on stage with blank .22 rounds after the lead actor’s character cultivates a neighborhood militia with the aim of driving the outsider away. Fear and secrets were the narrative drivers among the all-white cast of characters, conjured towards the end of upholding the façade of wealth and status. These themes were not incidental, as the president of SSTT had chosen the play because of those themes’ relevance to Water County’s history and current circumstances. We needed the audience to feel the seduction of gun violence and to recognize the implications of class-driven violence as it relates to Water County and the divisiveness therein. Without vulnerability on behalf of both the actors and those witnessing the performance, however, the impact of the narrative could not have been felt.

Getting involved - multilocal embodiment

Experiencing socio-cultural details, moments in time and place, and processes happening at each theater was vital to the overall conception and refinement of my work through constructivist embodiment. In order to break these unique experiences down, investigating multiple places over time within the theaters was also required to find a grounded understanding. The practice of co-participating in differing but overlapping simultaneous processes provided the proverbial backdrop to these key experiences in both cases, particularly when placing these moments in historical and temporal contexts. Methodologically, this helped me to more deeply understand social interaction across differences in time and space.

During post-performance dialogues at SSTT, which myself and the director facilitated, audience members were predominantly middle-aged, white, and of mixed gender. However, within each performance there were a few Black individuals that were of mixed gender and in the 30-50 year-old age range. However, no Black individuals spoke during the talkbacks. Each were noticeably focused on and attentive to the conversations as many other audience members were waiting for the dialogue to be over. This observation can be explained by Conquergood (2002): “Subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness, the luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communications, free and open debate on a level playing field that the privileged classes take for granted” (p. 146).

After a talkback when everyone was packing to leave, though, a middle-aged Black woman from the county felt safe enough to come to me while I was still in costume and beseeched that I “don’t ever stop fighting for kindness.” She was speaking in reference to racial violence in the county and the hand that opens in support of vulnerable contact between community members which aims to stymie that violence. I was left reeling for days on the statement’s meaning as it pertains to the challenges faced by the county as well as those faced by planning. Would this exchange have been possible in a formal participatory planning process in this county? I believe, truly, that more honest and vulnerable communication can occur if a planner is not behind a podium but is, rather, face-to-face in a co-constructed space of dialogue with people on the ground (Arnstein, 1969).

At each theater investigated in this research, working relationships are communicative and action oriented. These intra-action behavioral modalities are contained in multiple processes that organize into intentional actions that support and create performances (Herbert, 2015). In other words, the differing forms of being face-to-face, and being with each other, are navigated through emotional reflexivity as a form of awareness based in shared subjective environments for the construction of multifaceted meanings across differences (Burkitt, 2012). Social interaction in the theaters, in contrast to the structures of planning, is not manifested or mediated through technical/instrumental techniques or methodologies (Spatz, 2017; Sandercock, 1998). Rather, the technical apparatuses of the theater architecture help transmit the co-constructed meanings of the shared and differing narratives. As Spatz (2017) states, “embodied research asks questions like: what can voices do? What can fingers do? What can bodily rhythms do? What can sensitive listening do? What can unison movement do? What can storytelling do?” (p. 5). By placing my body in multiple situations and systems, I was able to learn through my body as I was coordinating with the bodies of others in a performative, community-based space of interdependent responsibilities, artistries, and functions.

The flexibility of constructivist embodiment, as well as the flexibility to perform constructivist embodiment in multiple locations, was vital in tapping into the dialogic, experiential, and socially constructed spaces/places of the cases. Further, the depth of these experiences helped me to understand myself, my position and history, as well as those of the others with whom I was working and co-participating. As stated by Sandercock (1998), “local

communities have grounded, experiential, intuitive and contextual knowledges which are more often manifested in stories, songs, visual images and speech than the typical planning sources” (p. 131). This level of engagement, of interdependent trust, and of vulnerability necessary to learn is obfuscated by the modernistic paradigm hanging on the coattails of planning which intensifies the hierarchy of personally detached episteme and methods.

As part of my own methodology, I needed to recognize these interdependent microcosms to comprehend and refine my own experiences through embodied co-participation (Conquergood, 2002). I needed to situate myself in multiple interdependent contexts to delve *into* systems of relationships, places, spaces, contexts, action, coordination, performativity, and intentionality. The practice of engaging in multiple entangled and embodied participatory actions allowed me a deeper understanding of the confluences and collisions happening between and within individuals that uncover artifacts and relationships of and with culture. For example, being a bisexual Jew has left indelible marks upon my perspectives which have been derived from lived experience. Meanwhile, learning about the lived experiences of oppression in both counties from locals created connective resonance within myself that ultimately supported the investigation of creative expression both on and off the stages. I once watched the Black director at SSTT backstage look at a six-foot four-inch, massive white male (the actor to be shot on stage), and say jovially backstage with pointed finger, “I’m gonna shoot you.” The director oversaw firing the blank .22 rounds because of the obvious responsibility and care necessary to carry out such an act. This slightly morbid humor occurred during the halfway break in the performance, and this fascinating moment, caused us all to laugh uncontrollably (a moment literally not possible a generation ago). This laughter emanated from the trust underlying the juxtaposed disease of gun violence and it allowed us all a moment of comic relief.

Whilst working in each theater, I had to ensure that I didn’t interfere with the progress of each theater, since both theaters walk the knife’s edge between education and entertainment. This means that if the theaters push too hard on sensitive cultural topics, the public will not come to performances, but if the theaters don’t push at all, then nothing worthwhile is addressed.

“Our first group of stories that we staged, Zech, were very lighthearted. Stories of just stories. You know true stories, but just stories. They did not [portray] any kind of serious issue, or issues in the county. That’s the way [AT] has evolved, it

evolved into a trusted group that we can now stage sensitive issues” (President of AT, personal communication).

This sensitivity to historical and present cultural interpersonal boundaries is a necessary condition for the vitality of the theaters because they are culturally embedded within and reliant upon voluntary local relationships. The acts of seeing and understanding, as well as honoring, are powerful motivators for increased engagement with participants as they push deeper into lived experiences and belief systems.

Further, AT in particular seeks participatory experiences for children with the knowledge that those children within the county need intergenerational food to grow. After AT’s performance cycle, I spoke with the president of an affiliated non-profit in the county that uses outdoor experiences to also help children;

“We try to look at kids’ lives. You know...what do they need exactly? ... Being a whole person. There’s a lot of kids in the county, that are impoverished. I can take you up in the holler, and most of the folks that live up through there live off government assistance and teach their kids to live off government assistance. ... I’ll be honest with you, some of those kids, and the majority are very smart, but they don’t have the opportunity because of their parents to get out and do what their ability is” (President of Outdoor nonprofit, personal communication).

These non-profits, including the theaters in Mountain and Water Counties, work with the messiness of socio-cultural life so that pointed and intimate messages and projects can be more finely tailored. At both theaters, this work of engaging with social life permits individuals fuller access to themselves by way of providing open opportunities of expression. This intimacy of expression subsequently supports new relationships, and in the case of AT, this intimacy has the capacity to put clothes on children’s backs and food in their stomachs while also providing places for play where no other places exist.

In this work itself, empathy and sincerity through deep listening between myself and community actors also allowed for more descriptive and analytical discussions of individuals, groups, and the wider community (Poncelet, 2001). This constitutes a reflective and present engagement that is of key importance in such things as the acknowledgement, inclusion, and

representation of gender, age, race, sexuality, history, and class (Sanchez-Hucles, & Davis, 2010; Winker, & Degele, 2011). I don't wish to re-ascribe, and further cement, the racialized categorical determinism that reifies inherited power, but rather to seek a reconstitution of power through the contact senses of bodies (Oyěwùmí, 2005).

Multi-locational embodiment required that I be flexible with how I work with others, and fundamentally necessitated a negotiation of personal behavior (and the reasons behind such behaviors). In order to find a sense of understanding with those with whom I worked, I made efforts to meet others where they were by being sensitive to power and position and by not asking them to work on my schedule (Innes, & Booher, 2010; Healey, 1997). Multi-locational embodiment in this work is a dismantlement of, and in part a personal choice of attempting to obliterate, a centralized 'world view' held by Western institutional power through intentionally abandoning knowledge certainty as a paradigmatic function of bureaucracy and planning. Without this decentralized action of learning through others, planners and institutional actors fail to reflexively see the self in the other (Oyěwùmí, 2005; Sweet, 2018).

The art of active listening...There's more than meets the eye

In conjunction with my work in embodiment, I examined a wide range of practices from both normative and transformative participatory planning practices (Arnstein 1969, Healey, 1997; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Friedmann, 1987; Schön, 2017; Innes, & Booher, 1999; Poncelet, 2001; Iveson, Fincher, & Gleeson, 2018). Knowing the challenges and questions posed by such literature, I held myself in a simultaneous state of support of and opposition to my own field and myself. This dialogic between planning practices that struggle with power – symbols, ideology, politics, networks, language, processes, social positions – and the intentional organizational salutation of behavioral change was the basis of the studies in constructivist embodiment (Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1). Further, the methodological discussion became manifest through dialogic, performative, and embodied practices, and these efforts to conscientize these elements substantiated a grounded meta-discussion through the transdisciplinary collaborative work between planning and CBT (Lee, Hart, Watson, & Rapley, 2015; Englund, et al., 2000).

In order to explain this complex process, I am utilizing Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg's (2011) concept of bricolage. Bricolage is a situational work that seeks to employ

multidisciplinary and even transdisciplinary theory and methods for critical research. As stated by Kincheloe et al. (2011):

“Such multidisciplinary demands a new level of research self-consciousness and awareness of the numerous contexts in which any researcher is operating. As one labors to expose the various structures that covertly shape our own and other scholars’ research narratives, the bricolage highlights the relationship between a researcher’s way of seeing and the social location of his or her personal history... The critical researcher-as-bricoleur abandons the quest for some naïve concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his or her position in the web of reality and the social locations of other researchers and the way they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge” (p. 350).

Acting from an epistemology of complexity, the bricoleur seeks to actively employ methods within the social context of the work site through co-creation and inclusivity with/in the activities, people, and settings that are being investigated (Kincheloe et al., 2011).

In lieu of the situationally negotiated investigation, this research was conducted through the simultaneous acts of observing power differentials and fluctuations, participating in the research sites as a co-creating volunteer in the management of interdependent responsibilities and relationships, interpreting relevant moments/situations/processes as related to available theory and literature, and negotiating research methods (such as interviews) within socially sensitive environments. Simply put, “the task of the bricoleur is to attack this complexity, uncovering the invisible artifacts of power and culture” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 350). An openly transparent (i.e. researcher’s identity, intention, and purpose), complex, and time-intensive process that is close in epistemological nature to that of the conceptual bricoleur allowed for rich and context laden understanding of the individuals, organizations, and operating environments within this research.

Methodologically, the research focused on the physical, imaginary, subjective, and embodied apparatuses to visit and experience the interdependencies between the universes of the performances, the audiences, and the wider communities (Norman, 2012). This theatrical thesis of embodied and experiential spatial apparatuses is antithetical to bureaucratic participatory planning processes which are built upon the reductive inoculation of the public by experts and

that dismantle social, cultural, economic, and ecological interdependencies (Sandoval, 2013). In other words, this process of research and self-criticality in the web of socio-cultural experiences would necessitate that a planner open personal boundaries with themselves towards the public as a reflexive action of vulnerability in an awareness of positionality.

The establishment of workable and flexible relationships at both theaters, ranging in various degrees from familiarity to deep friendship, required a decolonization of myself and the knowledges that create dualities and divisions within informal social realities and practices (Conquergood, 2002). My position as researcher was to be a position of reflexively knowing my field of planning, its troubles both past and present, and understanding the dangers of Cartesian behavior in contexts of identity change. Planners have the chance to provide opportunities for others to be a part of the development of the very worlds people live in, and planners also have the opportunity to learn from others in the very same process to help unveil the living history in the present to help prevent the continual inflammation of socio-cultural oppression. In other words, personal identity built upon lived experiences becomes the point of negotiation within a participatory process which includes the reflexive acknowledgement that not all identities have had an equal voice historically. As Sandoval (2013) states:

“The self-conscious operation of differential social movement represents the opportunity to engage in social praxis through the constant surveying of social powers and interjection in them by a new kind of depoliticized citizen-warrior. Differential oppositional social movement[s] and consciousness represent constructive functions that perceive power as their world space, and identity as the monadic unit of power via subjectivity capable of negotiating and transforming power’s configurations” (p. 178).

The trained cognitive separation between self/method, and between self/other, is a function of institutional control (Friedmann, 1987). Socio-cultural realities are deep, complex, messy, and require concerted participation to understand, and this form of participation is often not advocated for in planning practice or taught in planning classrooms (Watson, 2006).

Self-knowledge is not a prerequisite for the employment of these methodologies (Hebert, 2015), but being able to reflect-in-action and maintain sensitivity to the “experiential, moral, emotional, and personal dimensions” of social experiences is (Van Manen, & Li, 2002, p. 22).

Further, dialogue is needed to assist in the transition from partaking in intense social experiences to knowing whilst actively participating (Lieberman, 2013). This is the dialectic built in personal and relational trust, the point of opposition/support to my own field, and the breakthrough that permits deeper learning. It is also important to note that dialogue, in conjunction with interdependent deep listening, is a method in itself that is capable of reinstituting ourselves in the social ‘world sense’ through concerted conscientization (Oyěwùmí, 2005; Forester, 1988).

Informed by these methods, I was participating in environments of performative expression as I sought to assist others in self-actualization through the generation of a supportive organizational structure which enervated their voices and bodies from the bottom-up. This necessitated that I change myself lest I became disruptive in such a delicate process due to position, training, and history. As stated by Myles Horton, “you experiment with people not on people. There’s a big difference” (Horton, & Freire, 1990, p. 148). In other words, “if you’re not a part of the solution you are part of the problem” (President of AT, personal communication). This is the reversal of the projective positivistic rationale (Sandoval, 2013) through the integration of self into the web of socio-cultural worlds begotten by a time-laden relational building process. The integration of the self, or in this case of myself, into a social ‘domain’ came through an embodiment of internal nothingness (space) capable of being with myself and others in a state of concerted and labor-intensive presence without projection, comment, or permanence of knowing. In other words, I accepted that I did not know what would happen and that I would not control the course of events to ascertain a defensible position towards the end of maintaining personal position, power, or role (Lyles, White, & Lavelle, 2018).

If planning is to more deeply include the realities of social worlds in plans, constructivist embodiment can help engage planners (and the students training to be future planners) with people across difference to more intimately implement plans (Forester, 1988; Forester, 1999). Across both cases, relational and dialogic practices on and off stage assisted in more deeply knowing the lives of others by simultaneously challenging and supporting me in instantiating methods and identity in a web of local life. Constructivist embodiment in affective community-based environments, which are not entirely dissimilar to the affective environments of planning agencies, assisted in the “reading of local political culture”; “reading local political culture means going beyond the surface of both formal politics and informal power games, into the

embedded cultural practices which structure routines and styles, and flow knowledge and value around the political networks” (Healey, 1997, p. 240). In other words, the cultivation of intimacy across difference in the co-creation of performances, which can be substituted with the co-creation of plans, more deeply affirms and includes the complexities of lives that go unrecognized in traditional forms of participatory planning (Innes, & Booher, 2010).

Constructivist embodiment calls upon the planner to be fully present to those citizens with whom they engage, which includes, as mentioned in Figure 2.1, deep cognitive shifts that unveil greater layers of local life, politics, personal identity, and culture. A practice of embodied bricolage by planning actors potentializes opportunities to understand more deeply than normative methods allow, and also grants further opportunities to include the voices and knowledges of the social, experiential, lay, local, and the excluded (Sandercock, 1998).

This inclusion is an admittance that planning and planners are not synoptic or comprehensive; planners don’t have a purported position as the technical intelligentsia (Friedmann, 1987; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Constructivist embodied methodology can be likened to an intensive learning process in conjunction with others in a performative environment. In other words, intimately navigating a complex set of actors supports the subsequent hodological navigation of people and history for the execution of empowering projects, whilst also holding the institutional actor responsible for decisions made that affect the complex array of people involved (Norman, 2012). As a social praxis, constructivist embodiment specifically locates the planner in the happening of the social process and thus reorients the technical planner charged with executing plans towards planning as a cultural process.

Constructivist embodied praxes of public and social engagement align well with Healey’s (1997) well-known institutionalist planning perspective. “The new institutionalism is grounded in a relational view of social life, which focuses on people actively and interactively constructing their worlds, both materially and in the meaning they make, while surrounded by powerful constraints of various kinds” (Healey, 1997, p. 35; Powell, & Dimaggio, 2012). As such, constructivist embodiment as performed by a planner can assist in the dismantling of long-standing institutional methods that reify socially caustic practices which objectively separate personal responsibility from the end results. Constructivist embodiment, and bricolage, demands an awareness of the mode(s) of being from which actors emanate. Presence, which is the

intentional behavioral activation of interdependency, should not be conflated with the projective idea of the present. Presence is the active deconstruction of the separation between internal experiences and external happenings that separate our bodies/selves from the present and that also firmly imply heterogeneity (Buber, 2012, Young, 1986; Butler, 1988). Presence is a conscious *behavior* that is performed in the confluence of multiple times spanning from the past into the future within a system of happenings, which includes the behavior of the researcher/planner. Presence, in this case, is not a totalizing metaphysic, but rather a learning behavior that openly engages the changing elements of space and place through a conscious orientation that is intentionally driven by collaborative and interdependent relationships (Lowenthal, 2010). Lastly, and most crucially, the construction of meanings that encompass the multiplicity of situated elements of people and environment is openly and dialogically created within a state of presence so as to not further totalize through synthesis, but to instead further active negotiation of difference. From this perception of presence as behavior, and as an active negotiation of difference, presence is moreover a furthered negation of the idealism that purports the holding of truths outside of “time and change” (Young, 1986, p. 4).

Reflectively engaging culturally embedded places and socially navigating complex environments requires deep, concerted, and demanding listening. The very act of engaged listening, from an intentionally held state of presence, is a radical act capable of reinstituting history through behavioral changes (Argyis, 1977; Sandoval, 2013). Deep listening, the social practice of day-to-day compassionate embodiment, is best captured by Forester (1988) regarding the examination of planners’ behavior,

“If we listen so that we respond with sensitivity and care, our actions may be freeing, empowering others rather than mechanically generating feedback...If our listening serves as a corrective to the distorted, ideological claims we face in daily political and professional life, then when we fail to listen well we allow such claims to have influence, to go unchallenged. To understand how this can happen, we should recapitulate the subtle ways in which we can fail to listen” (p. 110-115).

Listening, and presence, is the linkage between self and other that opens consciousness to environmental and identity-based experiences in a space of dialogical and relational learning.

Without this linkage, ideology and power will perpetuate through an unexamined and normalized repetition of institutional power (Healey, 1997). Without presence and deep listening, constructive change capable of recalibrating planners' de-historicized world view to a learning 'world sense' is not possible (Oyěwùmí, 2005).

1. Assumptive Cognitive Form/Preunderstanding
2. Event(s) in Place/Time
3. Realization and Abandonment/Refinement of Previous Assumptions/Understandings
4. Integration of new Information/Experiences(s) into Theoretical Model of Individual, Organization, and Community

Figure 2.1 – Dialogical, Experiential and Performative Learning Processes based in the Conceptual Bricoleur

Table 2.1 Reflexive Experiential Learning Through Dialectical Practice*

Dialectics of Context	
<i>Urban and Regional Planning</i>	<i>Community-Based Theater</i>
Formal Bureaucracy	Informal Non-Profit
Planner Driven Positivism	Embodied Performativity
Expertise/Professionalism	Inclusive Social Learning
Formal Funding	Ticket Sales and Participant Contribution
Policy/Statutes as Structural Framework	Relational Organization Structure
Dialectics of Method	
<i>Positivism/Instrumentalism</i>	<i>Constructivist Embodiment</i>
External Absolutism	Experiential Internal/Social Learning
Scientific Process	Collaborative Process
Positionality of Expertise	Entangled Social Interdependency
Identity of Formality	Cultural Person as Process
Dialectics of Self	
<i>Academic Institute</i>	<i>Ethnographic Contexts</i>
Positivistic Training/Policy Background	Constructivist Embodiment
R1 Research Institute	Informal Social Theaters and Non-Profits
Urban and Regional Planning Program	Community-Based Theater
Dissertation/Article Research	Personal Relationality and Supportive Organizational Responsibility

*Driving Forces - Interaction with Literature, Differing Theaters, Organizations, Techniques, Processes, Leadership, Participants, Responsibilities, Audiences, and Communities

Conclusion

My work and its practiced methods can be summarized briefly in a question: what would happen if a planning administrator removed the badge, changed out of formal clothes, left the podium and poster, and engaged in intimate and personal environments to learn more about local life? Further, my work corroborates the notion that decisions which impact the lives of others are to be made after permission is provided and only after permission is preceded with dialogue (Innes, & Booher, 2010). This pivot to the personal matters when power-driven decision making has long held a historical precedent of de-historicizing the present. I assert, then, that a crucial part of the democratization of planning is the behavioral democratization of practicing planners that apply interpersonal reflexivity as a part of their developmental praxes.

If a planner is to be the facilitator of a public participatory process, the planner as facilitator must be also educated in the navigation of boundaries, in the inscription of social experiences, and in the harvesting of multiple realities across time and space in the activation of inclusion and democracy. The planner as facilitator must know the historical legacies of their communities across race, gender, age, sexuality (amongst other things) in order to realize public wellbeing beyond the institutional controls that propel inflammatory legacies (Healey, 1997; Friedmann, 1987; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Sandercock, 1998; Lyles, White, & Lavelle, 2018).

I would urge authors (Spatz, 2017; Kovach, 2017) in the consideration of embodied methods as an epistemological stance and process, but also as an epistemology that is itself amenable to multiple other epistemologies and methods. Within this research, the processes of action and reflection through coordinated relationality were performed through dialogic relationships which call into awareness the multiple facets that comprise individuals, organizations, communities, and environments. Embodiment calls into being ourselves and our existence amongst others in entangled spatial arrangements that specifically cut boundaries. Lastly, as both deconstructive and emergent efforts, praxes based in embodiment constitute a radical step towards the rearrangement of power by forcing ourselves to experience and co-experience the multiple worlds that act upon and through us all.

CHAPTER 3

STORIES OF SURVIVAL AND LEADERSHIP ON THE GROUND: SHOULD WE RETHINK THERAPEUTIC PLANNING?

A current challenge within the emerging segment of therapeutic planning is a deeper incorporation of participants' voices into text and the integration of behavior and experiences of researcher(s), participants, and planners into a more realized descriptive theoretical domain (Sandercock, 2003; Erfan, 2017; Sandercock and Attili, 2014). I endeavor to ethically propose this position knowing text cannot and should not capture all the domains of performance, experience, behavior, and cultural change (Spry, 2011). Nonetheless, the physicalizing signposts of experiential description are necessary in progressing planning theory and practice to more fully understand the vulnerability, uncertainty, bodily risks, and painful exhaustion experienced during the pursuit of healing. I worked closely with two community-based theater (CBT) leaders for months to create community dialogues through the embodied and intimate work of co-created performances. There is much practicing planners and planning scholars can learn from their highly informal but also socio-culturally nested positions, strategies, and behaviors. I provide a critical discussion of how planners can learn from these leaders within their own communities, and how the praxes, behaviors, and identities of these leaders provide critical discourse for current therapeutic planning literature.

Therapeutic planning is posing notable ethical questions to planning for both practice and theory. First, how is planning dealing with its own colonial history, as well as the vicious inequalities that the neoliberal state produces and recycles? Second, how are planning institutions realizing, or failing to realize, greater progression to cultural competency, humility, and inclusion of diverse people and groups? Third, what methods can planners and institutions use to initiate and sustain critical cultural dialogue with historically oppressed (race, class, gender, indigeneity, etc.), but also traumatized (disasters, economic failure, pandemics, etc.), communities for *ethical* healing with lasting equitable impact? These questions are highly intertwined, far reaching, and enormously complex when taken together. However, there is one overarching take away that therapeutic planning is grappling with in its own orientation to normative planning practices; that the powerful epistemically rational and abstract systems that planning relies upon, which includes participatory/communicative planning, have failed to integrate the human condition - thoughts, emotions, interpersonal embodied

behavior/communication, experiences, culture(s), identity, knowledges, and history - for constructive meaning, recognition, understanding, and equity (Scott, 1998; Davidoff, 1965; Fainstein, 2010; Forester, 1999; Sandercock, 1998; Friedmann, 1987; Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 2010).

The community leaders (Juno of Appalachian Theater (AT), and Dionysus of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater (SSTT)) thrive in places of liminal social frameworks and of rearranged personal boundaries. Their operating actions are created purposefully upon legacies of power to differentiate something new between and in people through active community engagement across time and space (Norman, 2012). I turned towards the two communities to learn more about how people are given opportunity to find more of themselves, to find breakthroughs, and even encouraged to vulnerably disclose truths held in silence and isolation. As stated by Herman (1992: 3), “The support of the group enables individuals to take emotional risks beyond what they had believed to be the limits of their capability. The examples of individual courage and success inspire a group with optimism and hope.” Juno and Dionysus have inspired optimism and hope to *build* and *lead* groups of belonging without homogenizing difference.

In short, their endeavors are to survive well through socio-cultural change in the rural American South. The stories of these two individuals are, despite being quite different regarding race, sexuality, religion, gender, lived experiences, and age, have one striking commonality; personal responsibility is always linked to care for others as a core dimension to their *identity*. If I was to appropriate their ‘methods of intervention’ it would be done so through learning from them, supporting them with permission, and challenging planning’s and community development’s habits of reductionism, abstraction, idealism, and the methodological distancing of researcher and the researched in language, practice, and theory (the planner and the public) (Agyeman and Erickson, 2012; Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg, 2011).

Looking at planning from the outside in

Planning theory and practice has emphasized, as a part of the intersection of State apparatuses and spatial power, a prescriptive utilitarianism that often speaks over the needed behavioral improvisation and critical socio-cultural discourse between planning institutions and the public (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Sweet, 2018; Throgmorton, 2003). Planning, relying on

much of its hierarchical knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2012), has wreaked havoc on people throughout the world, especially those most marginalized and vulnerable (Sweet, 2018; Ugarte, 2014; Fainstein, 2010). Planning has often myopically instrumented power and narratives for economic growth for the greatest number of people whilst purporting a form of enlightened and rational governance (Mbembe, 2017; Kirszbaum, 2019; Throgmorton, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 1998). Moving out of the knowledge hierarchy that has shaped much of planning's story and demands a reconnection with the body, the informal, the historically feminine, and chaotic (Grosfoguel, 2012; hooks, 2014).

There has been increasing attention paid to the prospects of therapeutic planning as field of planning interventions to address new and longstanding collective traumas within communities (Erfan, 2017; Sandercock, 2003). Sandercock and Attili (2014) and Erfan (2017) ask whether therapeutic planning should even be called therapeutic planning. The question carries deep ethical implications. There seems to be, at least on the surface, a peace with attempting to heal oppressed and persecuted populations through dialogic participatory planning interventions to simultaneously assist in the decolonization and democratization of planning. However, at this juncture, how to create equitable places for cathartic experiences in cross-cultural settings is still being formulated and questioned.

Collective trauma from proposed therapeutic planning perspectives, usually refers to traumatic *events*, *structures*, and *histories* that have disrupted, usually violently, the lives of groups of people (i.e. slavery and colonization). Further, and more descriptively, collective trauma has many forms but nonetheless is seen as an event or set of conditions that radically and aggressively alters a person's or group's security, health, and lived meanings/experiences (Weiss and Berger, 2010). The term collective trauma must also be analyzed for ethical and clarifying reasons, particularly if the healing and reconciliation of trauma is to become a goal within planning processes. There are traumatic histories of war, slavery, colonization, disease, forced displacement/dispossession, disasters, cultural domination, and more *everywhere*. This is not to minimize the significance of the impacts such events have had and are continuing to have on people, but to help differentiate what kind of 'collective' trauma planning academics are referring to in order to specify and adequately contextualize/question our theories and practices (Montiel, 2000; Fullilove, 2016; Davis, et al., 2012).

Trauma, particularly the complex subtext and cascading consequences collective trauma refers to, is deeply personal *and* cultural (Weiss and Berger, 2010; Stuart, 2004). Beyond the complexities of experiential violence – in its variety of manifestations – and culture, no individual or cultural group experiences trauma the same way (Weiss and Berger, 2010). If models were generalizable and replicable, would they focus on only the negative consequences of *trauma*? If so, are planners ready to handle the cascading consequences of trauma which could include hallucination, disassociation, post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, and more? To what degree would a therapeutic planning process intervene in people's lives to support healing? Potentially the most crucial question posed, is whether focusing on traumatic events rather than on structural conditions that help create and direct trauma is an appropriate differentiation (Slocum and Cadieux, 2015)? This differentiation is paramount, particularly when taking into consideration that therapeutic planning has up to this point focused predominantly on working to heal indigenous populations in Canada and Australia and simultaneously attempting to decolonize planning (Erfan, 2017; Sandercock and Attili, 2014). Great care must be taken not to disempower and recolonize populations through a projective and objectifying presence/absence duality (Vizenor, 2000).

If planners seek from a socio-cultural perspective to create positive lived experiences based on open and critical discourse with the purposeful intent of recognizing trauma, are planners ready and trained to manage the cultural and personal grief that is necessary on the journey through trauma over the long-term (Pinderhughes, 2004)? The rise of cultural competency and cultural humility in planning practices and pedagogy in recent years is attempting to address the lived experiences of people, particularly those belonging to oppressed populations, and nudging *how* planners meet and practice with people face-to-face across differences (Jackson, 2019). However, the incorporation of culturally competent practices and theories in pedagogical settings is still very limited, particularly cultural practices that work to make real and bring awareness to not only violence, power, privilege, and trauma, but also personal interdependent well-being across differences (Jackson, et al., 2018). A perception of interdependent behavioral exchange that delves deep within emotion, behavioral adaptation, learning across multiple knowledges, cultures, and behavioral modalities is vital at this point in planning's evolution (Lyles and Swearingen White, 2019; Sandercock, 1998; Scott, 1998; Throgmorton, 2003; Lyles, White and Lavelle, 2018; Agyeman and Erickson, 2012).

Pain should not be left at the door (Forester, 1999). However, if personal trust across peoples and institutions is not cultivated, then pain will not have a discursive entry point for disclosure and dialogic learning (Tzu and Bannerman, 2017; Gill and Niens, 2014; Forester, 1988). Meaning, how can vulnerable disclosure occur if trust is not present? Planning practices should incorporate processes of discourse that graciously welcome the histories of grief, degradation, dispossession, persecution, and violence still determining the lived experiences of many people and communities; but do so knowing that cultural wounds are often engrained, complex, long living, and most importantly, structural. These social, personal, and ‘lay’ realities have been ostracized from planning for decades, and even after the ‘communicative turn,’ planning still struggles to be inclusive for democratic decision making and equity (Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 2010).

Healing is relational, and to ignore this would be to inflame legacies of oppression and histories of abuses long engrained in the bodies and identities of people (Forester, 1988). As Forester (1999: 211) states, “To sanitize deliberations in this way would make a rehomogenized mockery of any supposed pluralist character they might have.” It is not a coincidence that each community leader chose to formulate groups housed within CBTs. CBTs create systems of relationships and places of expression, often purposefully so, for healing, growth, and experiential learning. Rather groups reinstituting positive experiences in a manner that protect and buffer against, if not partially ameliorate, painful experiences that have yet to be given room for constructive meaning making (Nudd, Schriver and Galloway, 2001). Some authors have termed these experiences and processes as the co-construction of political agency, the preservation of cultural heritage, the catalyzation of citizenship, identity, and more (Cohen-Cruz, 2005; Haedicke and Nellhaus, 2001; Boal, 2000).

The current iterations of therapeutic planning are still utilizing interventionist strategies. This orientation to change and healing are not effective in sustaining the reconstructive actions needed to transition beyond the institutional disconnects between planners and the public – particularly as it relates to histories of trauma and oppression. The following stories of Juno and Dionysus will help support the budding conceptualizations of embodied planning, as well as highlight the necessary reflective positionality planners need to assist in humanizing planning. Intimacy, which can be seen here as the sharing of self and other, is a praxis of relationality that

assists in moving beyond the current limitations of interventionist power orientations. Lastly, intimacy as a methodological practice is the beginning step to recognition and affirmation, without which planners could not truly see and experience the lives of others.

Constructivist Embodiment – Being with self and other

In the beginning of this work I was utilizing Charmaz's (2017) constructivist grounded theory as guidance within the multi-case study endeavor. Charmaz's perspectives on grounded theory, especially the epistemic concerns based in constructivism, help to take complex and nuanced qualitative data, and systematize that information for theory building. As I kept the epistemic frameworks based in uncertainty, methodological flexibility, and constant revision of interpretation and understanding; I began to realize the analytical methods of grounded theory coding would be too limiting. I decided that the in-the-moment behavioral changes, adaptations, and emergent/conflicting qualities of socio-cultural entanglements (Conquergood, 1991), rather than cyclical textual analysis of interviews and observations, was the ground in which the provided theorizing must stand.

This pivot to constructivist embodiment allowed an opening and expansion into understanding more deeply the multiple dimensions of the cases. Here embodiment took the form of deep relationality and ethical intimacy with the leaders and participants of the theaters. Sensitivity to "the experiential, moral, emotional, and personal dimension" must be attended to in the context of reconstituting behaviors of people and groups as an examination of space, time, and place (Van Manen and Li, 2002: 22). Relationality, and the construction of interdependent relationships, further provided understanding of the narrative constructions of the theaters, the cultural interpretations (aesthetics) and saliency of the performances, the affective experiences of participants and audiences, and thus greater understandings of the context and doings of the leaders discussed here.

I utilized Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg's (2011) perspectives of critical pedagogy and qualitative research based within the conceptual bricoleur to uncover artifacts of culture, power, and complexity. As noted in Table 3.1, embodiment within deeply entangled performative socio-cultural contexts produced a grounded meta-discussion, as well as a set of multifaceted dialogics between planning literatures, methods, the interdependent facets of the cases, and me (identity, positionality, intent). Through a concerted, and continually practiced

conscientization of myself, position, and identity, a fully interactive process based within the fields of both cases converged transparently with my training, position, and relevant planning literatures. As such, this complex pedagogical process of relationality and experiential learning joined with multiple environments, forms of power and culture(s), identity, and knowledges. Meaning this methodological process fosters engagement with the messy, chaotic, everchanging, and behavioral, and not a reduction or abstracted synthesis of the multiplicity that is inherently part of the socio-cultural and performative.

Table 3.1 Reflexive Experiential Learning Through Dialogical Practice*	
Dialogics of Context	
<i>Urban and Regional Planning</i>	<i>Community-Based Theater</i>
Formal Bureaucracy	Informal Non-Profit
Planner Driven Positivism	Embodied Performance
Expertise/Professionalism	Inclusive Social Learning
Formal Funding	Ticket Sales and Participant Contribution
Policy/Statutes as Structural Framework	Relational Organization Structure
Dialogics of Method	
<i>Positivism/Instrumentalism</i>	<i>Constructivist Embodiment</i>
External Absolutism	Experiential Internal/Social Learning
Scientific Process	Collaborative Process
Positionality of Expertise	Entangled Social Interdependency
Identity of Formality	Cultural Person as Process
Dialogics of Self	
<i>Academic Institute</i>	<i>Ethnographic Contexts</i>
Positivistic Training/Policy Background	Constructivist Embodiment
R1 Research Institute	Informal Social Theaters and Non-Profits
Urban and Regional Planning Program	Community-Based Theater
Dissertation/Article Research	Personal Relationality and Supportive Organizational Responsibility

*Driving Forces - Interaction with Literature, Differing Theaters, Organizations, Techniques, Processes, Leadership, Participants, Responsibilities, Audiences, and Communities

More concretely, I balanced a myriad of responsibilities at each case site beyond the methodological and theoretical. The responsibilities I performed were an ethical and integral necessity that provided deeper entrance into the socially entangled environments; however, they were also was a way of reciprocally giving back to the opportunities provided to me. At Appalachian Theater (AT), I assisted in scene ordering and the thematic creation of the

performance with the leadership of the theater before I was a participant-observer of the rehearsals and performances. Further, I provided a place of grounding and support for Juno.

“You let me rant at times. You let me have my time. Didn’t turn and walk away. Didn’t try to change the subject. You were there for me. I felt like you were there...Your open and transparent approach helped us.” (Juno, President of Appalachian Theater, personal communication).

However, I did not act, stage manage, or be a part of the essential process of the performance. At Sitting in the Shade Theater (SSTT), I stage managed multiple performances, acted, assisted with organizational responsibilities, and held talkbacks with audiences. These responsibilities and opportunities emerged due to the differing operational modalities of the theaters and at the request of the leadership. This facilitated a deeper connection to participants at SSTT as well.

“It was more of a real conversation. Those things open up for me...those moments helped solidify you for me as my brother. As my family. As my consigliere...as my conscience” (Dionysus, President of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater, personal communication).

After relationships, familiarity, and trust was established and deepened at each theater I performed 16 semi-structured interviews at each theater. These interviews were purposefully positioned as a point of reflection and discussion between me, participants, theater leadership, and affiliated non-profits. We interrogated our experiences, meanings, and relationships to compound the performative and methodological processes already underway at each theater.

The mother of Appalachian Theater

“Even in that environment [impoverishment] you have to have leadership that pops up or else there’s a lot of floundering...You need somebody that’s gonna provide some direction to you. You know that direction person needs to be your greatest servant. You know, to me, that needs to be your person that always works the hardest. They carried out the trash, they cleaned the bathrooms, they’ve done everything, so they completely understand every single individual that is part of that group; so that you know there’s nothing that leadership cannot do to make sure that their group is safe. Your group is accepted. Your group is protected. You

know that the group has a vision. The group has a direction.” – Juno, The Mother of Appalachian Theater

Juno is the President of Appalachian Theater in Mountain County. Juno is 65, worked as a speech pathologist for 30+ years within the county’s school system, and was born and raised in Mountain County. She also, along with her husband of 45 years, raised their three daughters in Mountain County on their 200-year-old intergenerational tobacco farm. Juno knows her county. Juno knows the pain, particularly the suffering internalized by younger generations, of the current opioid crisis, 40+ percent annual poverty, little to no education opportunities beyond high school, degrading macro-cultural perspectives of Appalachia(ns) (Billings, and Blee, 2000), state coercion, corrupt politicians, and a shrinking population due to a continual out migration. Juno’s catalyst into community work began when she was told, by a professor visiting her county, that her county is dying. Juno sought training in community-based theater to assist in building bridges in her community through the embodied work of theater and storytelling.

“I saw this as an opportunity. I knew we had stories, and I knew that’s how to communicate. We communicate in stories. You want to talk to a people. A person here in just a few minutes they’ll tell you a story because that is how they communicate. They want to connect with you” (Juno, personal communication).

Juno’s model of theater is built on improvising scenes that are adapted from true stories in the county that are respectfully welcomed by Juno and the leadership of AT. All scenes and performances are created, acted, and supported by community members. Every performance since AT’s beginning in 2013, draws scores of community members. In fact, their first performance caused such a stir, a local TV station from a nearby town came to interview the leaders/cast of AT. The latest performance, the performance I attended, drew over 250 people over two days.

The following section is a segment from Juno’s own journal, which was openly given to me, during the performance cycle. This particular story does well to elucidate Juno’s compassion, empathy, and personal integrity in sensitive and vulnerable situations.

“Our director had also scheduled rehearsal for a story about grandparents raising their grandchildren. These children had come to live with them because the

parents were drug addicts and unable to provide a safe home for them. This was not my scene to design, so I was enjoying conversation with parents of our young cast members. I realized there was much discussion on stage as the members talked about how to stage this scene. The next thing I knew two of the cast members had left the stage crying saying the scene was too close to them in that they had experienced the same thing. I followed one of teens to the outside hallway in an attempt to console her. These were not just teary eyes but tears such she could hardly talk. My heart breaks for her! She tells me she can't do this. "I have had a stepsister and stepbrother die from drug overdose. I don't like doing [AT] anymore," and wants to leave the group. I hug her and ask her to not make any decision now until she has given herself time to think thru this. She gives me a slight nod of the head.

I then see the director has dismissed the cast and they're gathering their coats. Oh NO! I can't let them leave like this! Too late several are already headed to their cars. This is something I haven't dealt with. What must I do?! After the cast had departed and our new director looked like a whipped pup, I thought it best we talk. That was good. He and I are on the same page thinking this story is too powerful for us to tell. We will take a breather and come back after Christmas and try again.

Early the next morning I received a message from a friend asking if we're going to be able to do the scene. My reply, "Yes, it's too important to put away." She had provided transportation to two of the children in the scene. It was then I learned this was their story!! Oh MY! I bet their hearts are broken and they're so disillusioned with us. It was quite the contrary. On their way home, she asked them if they wanted to do the story. The older of the two, a teenage boy, said to her, "Yes, we have to do this. There are so many kids out there just like us."

With that said, We Must Do the Story!"

The following section is some of the spoken lines where the children are asking a set of questions to the grandparents at the dinner table right after their parents were arrested. Two of the children at the table are the children of the real story, and as shown above they took the

opportunity to make meaning for themselves and others through the performance of their own life. It is important to note that the actress playing the grandmother of the story knows the real grandparents of the story, and that during the performance the real grandfather watched from the audience.

K1 - What will happen to us?

GP – That’s a tough one. Right now, nothing’s gonna change. You’re gonna be right here with us. We’re gonna take care of ya. Each and every one of ya. Nothings gonna change. The best that we can do. Okay?

K2 – Where we gonna go to sleep?

GM – Where you gonna sleep? Oh baby, you aint even gonna have to change sheets. You’re gonna be in the same place. Okay?

K3 – What’s gonna happen to Momma and Daddy?

GP – Right now, ugh, right now we don’t know. It’s early in the process. We just don’t know. But as soon, as soon, as we find anything out, we are gonna let you know.

K4 – Does this mean we are gonna switch schools?

GM – Move schools?! Now hun, you’re the star basketball player in that school. I couldn’t move you out of that school could I? No, I’m not gonna move you out of that school. Nope.

K2 – What are my friends gonna think about it when they find out about it?

GP – Well, that’s a tough one. Ugh, your real friends, they’re always gonna be there for you. If they’re your true friends, it don’t matter what happens to ya. They’re gonna be there for you.

K5 – What will happen if they come back to get us?

GM – Oh hun, I ain’t gonna let nobody take you unless I know that they’re out there for your good. I’ll never let nobody take you unless you’re gonna be took care of. I guarantee I ain’t gonna let nothing happen to ya.

GM as Narrator – That’s a true story. Takes place so many times here in [Mountain County]. And all around the state, and all around the United States I believe. That is a true story. The Momma did come back and try to take the children [knocking sound of Momma at the door] and she took them for a little period of time. But the courts saw fit to let the grandparents have the children. Because I think the judge knew they were the best ones to have em. And I think about it. You know grandparents maybe are not the right age to take a whole new responsibility of 5 children. But, you know the thing is, you just do what you gotta do.”

[Scene End]

This scene is vital in understanding the process and outcomes of what happens in AT. Juno began and grew this theater to assist in recognizing the silence that surrounds the pain individuals experience in Mountain County. Throughout the construction of this scene Juno supported the vulnerable work of creating and performing the scene in front of the live audience so as to affirm the necessary safe space for engaging with the vulnerability of the scene. This welcoming of vulnerability to openly disclose and perform brings with it a vitality of experience that Juno seeks to cultivate for her theater participants.

The soul in the South directing Sitting in the Shade Together Theater

“And I realized that in some subconscious way over the past years, I was asking for permission to create community dialogues that some might prefer left quiet. Somewhere along the line, I felt that my driving and pure motivations had reverted to autopilot. I was in that sterile, safe place where I would not risk upsetting that one, rare person who might take umbrage (or more) at the sight of a white man holding the door for me - a Black man.” – Dionysus, the Soul behind Sitting in the Shade Together Theater

Dionysus’ story is wrapped up in his identity as a Black gay man, or as he would say “hitting the jack pot,” and his work of leading a community-based theater in the rural South. Dionysus’s model of theater relies upon complex scripted plays that require intensive collaboration between community members to bring the imaginary to life. Within the

intersection of casts, performances, and audiences, diverse opportunities are created to engage in discourse regarding the cultural realities of the county. As a method, the manifestation of the scripted worlds incarnates (Gumbrecht, 2011) complex communicative processes and cross-cultural narratives and aesthetic apparatuses (Norman, 2012).

Water County is the home of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater (SSTT). Water County is rural, culturally southern, and segregated by white violence against outsized Black voices and bodies (Water County is approximately 83% white, 13% Black, and roughly 18% of persons aged 25 or more have education attainments greater than high school). The performance in which I acted in at SSTT had an entirely white cast. The story was a symbolic representation of the proverbial blue-collar outsider moving into a wealthy white-collar neighborhood. The blue-collar outsider is later murdered by the white male elites as part of a larger murder mystery story. Dionysus originally intended to direct the same story with two different race-based casts: one being entirely Black, while the other being entirely white. The point of which was to examine, and later discuss with the audiences after the performances, the relationships between race, class, and gender. However, no Black actors/actresses were willing to perform due to fear of upsetting the cultural power dynamics of the county. As such, Dionysus decided to still direct and compose the production with only the white cast having intimate familiarity with the white realities of the culturally southern Water County as a Black man born and raised there.

Dionysus knows better than most the violence the Black population of Water County endures. Dionysus' uncle was executed by the State after being convicted of a crime by the white legal, economic, and political elite of Water County. Dionysus doesn't believe his uncle committed the crime. As such, Dionysus wishes for the end of fear and violence for the Black and Brown populations of his county and does so with radical openness to truth. A Black woman once asked Dionysus for help understanding her heritage in Water County because her last name was a shortened version of the name of the county's seat. Knowing the legacy of slavery in Water County, and the inter-racial sexual domination that accompanied it (McKittrick, 2006), Dionysus went with the woman to the local historical society where they were turned away without answers. Such truths, particularly truths that reveal and help to understand self, don't belong in the light according the historical society. As such, Dionysus endeavors to bring that light in what ways he can through community-based theater...but it is not easy.

“We're sitting there, we are having a conversation, of kind of like, ‘I like that [Dionysus]! But there is too much white people around him.’ And the only reason that white people are around me is because you Black person are not there. But I have opened the door. How's it my fault? You know? I'm like everybody come forward! You know?...When you say, ‘Let's go to a theatrical presentation of?’ Well, what the hell is that? You know what I mean? Let's do that! How do you say there's more to life than wanting your son to throw a football, and be among a whole host of others trying to get a scholarship? How about we get him some things, when he gets ready to go into a job interview, he can represent himself, his intelligence in a way that lets a person know ‘I am the candidate’? Regardless of how I look. Regardless of what my name may sound like and does not come trickling from your tongue. I am a person of quality, and character” (Dionysus, personal communication).

Dionysus, besides being a remarkable director, writer, and actor, cares for more than theater. Wanting to be more than a “Black man in a white man’s world,” or a “Black man who is all about Black things,” Dionysus seeks a self-determinacy that radically alters the cultural landscape of Water County. For Dionysus accepting the degradation, drawing and quartering, and ontological impoverishment (Mbembe, 2017) expected of Black lives in Water County is an acceptance of death without dying.

“Yea it’s kind of like how do I figure this out, and make sense of it and do it in a way where I know my intention is clear? Do it in a way that when I lay down at night I am cool with it. If I am on my death bed and I say, "God I fucked that up." I can say no! I did that shit to the best of my ability, and not one mother fucker in [Water County] has ever matched it on my scale of doing it here and changing the lives of people here. You know what I mean? I'm so fucking tired of us wanting a better society and wanting it in language only and not in the action! This theater is an action! This is an action! What we do here and bring forth is an action” (Dionysus, personal communication).

However, doing the work of theater creation as an act and process of collaborative cultural expression/activism leaves Dionysus in a difficult position. Most participants and audience

members at SSTT, besides being able to recruit a respectable number of Black and Latinx participants, are white. As important and integral as these white participants are in the pursuit of cultural change, their histories, realities, and meanings derived from the theater are markedly different. The constant conflict with present realities is historical in such a way that keeps alive the Black man as object (Mbembe, 2017) that Dionysus works to make visible and dismantled. However, as he would say, “But at the end of the day, I changed a life. I did everything that your pastors and preachers are not doing [in Water County]” (Dionysus, personal communication).

The Embodied Planner – Bringing attention to the pedagogical, personal, and informal

Upon revisiting Sandercock’s (2003) and Erfan’s (2017) work, their strategies pertaining to trauma, recognition, and reconciliation fall squarely into the informal and pedagogical. Each of their approaches heavily contest the role of the expert in planning, the power of the professional and institutional, and the continuing dismantlement of epistemic rationalism that reifies Eurocentric boundaries and borders (Sweet, 2018). However, as important as these steps are, there is much that cultural humility can, with the help of Juno and Dionysus, provide in understanding and progressing therapeutic planning another step. I argue that therapeutic planning be reconsidered in name and theoretical intention to broaden upon its conception of ‘collective trauma’ and its ‘therapeutic’ underpinning through critical discourses between cultural systems, institutions, and engrained inequities by more fully engaging with collaborative embodied practices (Freire, 2018; Horton and Freire, 1990; hooks, 2014; Conquergood, 1991). To put it simply, regardless of practice, the concept of ‘therapeutic’ – even in name only – harkens to sickness, disease, and treatment.

Within this article I have repeatedly referenced three domains that planning processes must address in both participatory settings, and normative decision making – the conditions, histories, and structural inequities that determine the lived experiences of oppressed populations. In furthering this theorization, Young (1988) provides a guiding framework that will aid in centering and grounding these domains which call into necessity embodied discourses based within cultural humility. Young (1988) conceptualizes oppression through five faces: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. In the name of brevity, but not minimization, these faces are more appropriate in framing the lives, stories, and experiences therapeutic planning has attempted to address. Trauma, from a planning perspective,

is a derivative of these structural conditions of oppression, and to reduce the planning processes to ‘trauma’ would be to homogenize the contexts, differences, and opportunities permitted through critical embodied discourses.

The community needs that Juno and Dionysus address though intensive narratively driven social processes relate directly to Young’s five faces of oppression. Juno and Dionysus, each within radically different contexts, and from different identities, have confronted these five interrelated faces. Juno has watched and indirectly experienced the death of her county through collusive arrangements between government administrations and predatory extractive industries resulting in systems of economic dependency and the crippling poverty currently wracking her county. Further, Juno continually works to push back against macro-cultural perspectives of Appalachia based within degrading “culture of poverty” ideologies (Billings and Blee, 2000). Dionysus has directly experienced, and witnessed further, cultural and racial violence against populations of color that seek to sideline self-determinacy, autonomy and expression through imperialistic abuse and marginalization. Dionysus and other Black/Brown families in Water County are still trapped in cultural power dynamics centuries old that originated in slavery, exploitation, and lethal violence based in enforced supremacy.

Cultural humility, as a derivative of and extension upon cultural competency, has three main components that are actualized through embodiment: knowledge (awareness of community and societal inequities), attitudes (self-awareness and reflexive positionality), and skills (multiple forms of cultural, behavioral and communicative capacities as well as the ability to learn them) (Ross, 2010). Cultural humility is an active process based within experiential and pedagogical learning. The integral reflective process of cultural humility is both internal, and externally discursive with others, as well as both social and private (Sweet, 2018; Agyeman and Erickson, 2012; Jackson, 2019). Here the pedagogical function of socio-cultural exchange, participatory processes, and both dialogical and discursive socio-environmental conditions (including the institutional) become paramount. How experiences are or are not created/experienced, and the conditions under which these experiences occur, heavily influence what is being internally and discursively reflected upon. For example, what would have been elucidated and experienced if Dionysus and I had both casts, rather than the one white cast?

The pervious boundaries of Juno's and Dionysus' theaters are vital in supporting intimate social exchange whilst also creating performative expressions derived from lived experiences. This rearrangement of power demands support, acknowledgement, discourse, and flexible responsiveness of key figures such as Juno and Dionysus. If we revisit Juno's story briefly, we see that Juno's immediate concern was with the health and wellbeing of her young theater participants. What Juno and the theater did or did not do was predicated upon permission to tell the children's story as to help provide support during the performative reexperiencing of their trauma on stage. There is much that can be learned from this for planning theory and practice. As stated by Sweet (2018: 7),

“According to the dualistic Western thinking that dominates planning practice, if the planner is competent, then the subjects of the planning are not competent, requiring the expert to fix them and their communities. The power dynamics such a competent/incompetent framework are socially constructed but have real-world consequences for the subjects of planning.”

Erfan's and Sandercock's work, as well as the work presented here, are seeking the construction of decentralized discourses between present/historical cultures, methods, and institutions. Specifically, within Erfan's case, the facilitative process of the planner helps to navigate and safely make meaning from emergent dialogues. Within each of Juno and Dionysus' works, the ability to reflect, and be provided meaningful narratives across differences initiated further learning and experiences. The efforts to decolonize planning must continue to also address Sweet's (2018) concerns regarding the epistemic power of rational positivism, and the socio-cultural consequences of Descartes "I think therefore I am."

The tacit mental models of planners simultaneously puts normative planning at the center of interventionist strategies, as well as obfuscates from cultural responsibility through an a/temporal, a/spatial, and a/relational duality (Grosfoguel 2012; Wilson, 2019). However, the expression, sharing, and disclosure of personal lived experiences are nevertheless based within interpersonal narratives and storytelling. As stated by Sweet (2018: 8-9),

“Storytelling often traverses time and space and can delve deeply into relationships and how they shape and mold realities. Stories are often filled with

twists and turns that, from a God’s-eye view, could be interpreted as unfocused but nonetheless represent experiences in everyday life.”

Both Dionysus and Juno are linked deeply within local life as community leaders, and each provide safe platforms, places, and opportunity for *voluntary* expression and storytelling. Each have labored to establish trusted relationships with a multiplicity of citizens, non-profits, and other community leaders. Dionysus in particular – having had experienced and continuing to experience the racial abuse that recycles within his county – represents in a very specific way the journey of his own healing through social activism and performative co-created art. As Dionysus would put it, the work is like rearranging a home’s furniture through theater and art, and he is not afraid to do the heavy lifting.

Table 3.2: Juno and Dionysus - The Act of Getting to Know Others and Working Together	
Contextual	
•	Utilize performative exercises to construct, restructure and question personal and cultural narratives.
•	Seek the development of interdependent and deeply inclusive socio-cultural participatory experiences through performance construction and execution.
•	Actively develop places of diversity and multiplicity of identity.
•	Each are highly trained within their respective fields (Juno – Speech Pathology; Dionysus – Directing, Acting, and Writing).
Interpersonal	
•	Empowerment of ‘other’ is the primary motivation for action and each leader is highly supportive of each participant within individualized ways.
•	Sensitive and empathic to lived pain and suffering, but also of joy, play, and happiness.
•	Learning through experiential interaction and co-creation is their predominant behavioral modality as community leaders.
•	Each through interpersonal relationality and intimacy, invite and help construct salient cultural messages and meanings to bring the ‘world’ into dialogic view as part of narrative re/constructions at the individual, group, and community level.
•	Each, as a part of transparent disclosure, share their perspectives, beliefs, emotions, thoughts and experiences as a relational practice of openness, access and sharing of reciprocal power during all stages of narrative construction and performance execution.

Juno and Dionysus are teachers within their communities, and each have crafted these positions through informal relationality, interdependency, and collaboration. Juno and Dionysus,

“create performances of knowledge creation, taking shape in the context of complex conditions and in which art provided mechanisms and forms with which to see and hear each other’s views on local socioeconomic systems, racial and cultural divides, and potential to develop common meeting spaces” (Finley, 2011: 86).

This creative work of performative art is a meeting space of bodies in motion and collaboration. Within this process, the ‘therapy’ is in the collaboration and intimacy. For example, at SSTT participants often chose acting and volunteer roles that are personally relevant to them. As such, the opportunities take on a unique function of indirectly and personally externalizing lived experiences through local performances.

“So, without crying. I just remember, and this is very personal, I was raised in a very ignorant household. I was raised in a very ignorant household, where homosexuality, and there was a lot of racism, and being surrounded by all these people expressing themselves and we’re all becoming a family. So, they tell you personal things, it’s just... you see the other side” (personal communication, SSTT theater participant).

The multiplicity of identities, activities, and opportunities at each theater assist in activating not only connections and relationships between people, but also connections and relationships within themselves. It is through the collaborative actions beyond dialogue taken by a variety of citizens that change generatively begins, continues, and sustains itself (Wilson, 2019).

From the basis of this work, Juno and Dionysus’ performative work, supports many facets of the work done by Erfan (2017) and Sandercock and Attili (2014). Dialogic environments supported with ethical emotional intimacy have the capacity to create personal and cultural breakthroughs, relationships, and new understandings of self/other. Within such an environment pedagogical methods based within either the performative arts or facilitation of discourse can provide entrance to deeper and more critical cultural reflection. As a part of this pedagogical and experiential process, environmental considerations based within informal interactions help elucidate and differentiate with institutional methods and inertia that exclude local knowledges, experiences, and identities. However, even amid such community

engagement, it is difficult to sustain such critical dialogue without the creation of robust and enduring relationships and leadership.

Conclusion

Planners and institutions should strive to create places of intimacy and collaborative action. Dialogic interventions are necessary starting points but can be limited in their impact without continual support and action. The research here, through Juno and Dionysus and their CBTs, displays the necessity of interdependent creative action to push beyond dialogue. The construction of meaningful embodied experiences beyond discursive understandings of trauma, oppression, and pain instills further cultural insight within the group, as well as provides direction and guidance for greater interdependent action. Such intimacy and affirmation does more than heal; it supports the actualization of agency, voice, and the real reclamation of body and place as a right. This purposeful action of intimate knowing, and care is also key in the reconstitution of the symbols, meanings, and processes of institutional environments that have long held the vulnerable and oppressed at arm's length (Sandoval, 2013). Planners have much to learn from the likes of Juno and Dionysus

One key dimension to each of Juno and Dionysus is that their theater participants know who they are, and by providing this safe and open environment, Juno and Dionysus are leaders by example. Juno and Dionysus show the necessity of informal leadership and relationality in carrying forward the heavy load of cross-cultural relationship building and dialogue. More, the desperate need for local knowledge and vulnerable intimacy to be a part of the environmental conditions as a fundamental component to dialogue. Juno and Dionysus bring insight and understanding to shared and co-created experience because they too are a part of the discursive processes as community members.

CHAPTER 4

BRIDGES DON'T MAKE THEMSELVES: USING COMMUNITY-BASED THEATER TO RESHAPE RELATIONSHIPS RETHINKING THE IDEA OF ABUNDANCE IN ABCD

The transition from potential or imagined to actual in socio-cultural contexts implies the continuous construction of communication modalities, and the reinstitution of interpretation into action. The construction or co-construction of a progressive idea at any scale, sector, geographic area or situation is nested in/between *people*. No idea in nested and entangled social environments, from the original imagination to its realized construction, happens in detached isolation, or is separate from the methods used in the imagining or physicalizing (Rivers & Weber, 2011; Hutchins, 1995). Hutchins (1995) states that “human cognition is always situated in a complex sociocultural worlds and cannot be unaffected by it” (p. xiii). Imaginings of a future that either diverges from, or builds upon the present, requires continuous visualization, reflection, relationality and action (Norman, 2012). As such, if persons seek localized change within their respective lives and shared places, desired change is inseparable from history and culture.

Speaking from a backdrop of crumbling neighborhoods, economies, political systems, and the resultant exacerbation of cultural fragmentation, John McKnight and Peter Block have long advocated for asset-based community development to address community needs (ABCD). McKnight and Block (2011) describe a potential for human collaboration that transitions away from the isolating and fragmented behavior of economic consumptive scarcity for the construction of relational ‘abundance’. Their perspective in short, is that happiness and freedom cannot be solely purchased, and trying to be like Mike doesn’t work if you’re broke...the dangling carrot is an illusory materialist construct. McKnight’s and Block’s conception of ‘abundance’ is built upon human relationships that are inspired by a shared dissatisfaction with the world believing this is a time of profound institutional, governmental, and economic failure (Scharmer, 2008). Meaning, for better or worse, McKnight and Block support developing a subversive, partially utopian, but nevertheless a socially collaborative response to the current ills of Western society. However, the methods, theories, and perspectives proposed speaks little to none beyond class on such critical issues as race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and critical components pertaining to identity.

ABCD was originally introduced by Kretzmann and McKnight (1996) as a potential method of engaged social collaboration for citizens to create and share co-constructed opportunities at the neighborhood and community scales. ABCD, since its inception is perhaps best grounded as a form of perception, albeit it a normatively white perception, to imagine creative potential within socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental constraints. In essence, how do day-to-day citizens create opportunities to help address needs as well as progress beyond them? ABCD transitions away from need or deficit-based community development models (models generally implemented through institutional means) but does not entirely exclude their theoretical value of examining inequalities (Garven, Pattoni & McLean, 2016). ABCD, within these informal contexts of differential social movements, has been linked to backyard activists (Mathie, Cameron & Gibson, 2017), and has been substantially investigated for efficacious public health behaviors such as social support (Johnson & Sherraden, 1992). Nevertheless, I believe there are other processes and aspects of ABCD that can be operationalized through community-based theater (CBT) and that fall outside of the usual Neoliberal entrapments (MacLeod & Emejulu, 2014).

One of the core tenets of ABCD, as outlined by McKnight and Block (2014), is the transition from economic scarcity towards co-created relational ‘abundance’ at the neighborhood scale. Building on this perspective, CBT has been suggested to be a cost-efficient praxis through which socio-cultural change can occur through constructed relationships and performances in a localized context (Cohen-Cruz, 2005; Haedicke & Nellhaus, 2001). Further, it has been suggested that the work of theater making in a public sphere, not just the aesthetic performances themselves, aides in meaning making and supporting individuals in learning about themselves and each other as a discursive and experiential practice (Kim & Seifert, 2007; Boal, 2000; Freire, 1972). Put succinctly, the researched CBT’s were places of shared responsibility and interdependence for the generation of performative productions for a public audience. In general however, CBTs are intentionally driven and as a method offer a conduit for manifesting multifaceted messages, meanings, and actions which can include social mobilization, political agency, the preservation of cultural heritage, collective cultural expression and more (Cohen, 2005; Leonard & Kilkelly, 2006; Haedicke & Nellhaus, 2001; Geer, et al., 2012; Geer & Wei, 2012).

This article was generated through months of collaborative work with two community-based theaters and grounded in two full theater production cycles (one for each theater). I sought the assistance of CBT's situated in rural and impoverished counties in the American south. One CBT is situated along the Florida Gulf Coast, and the other in Middle Appalachia. The theaters are profoundly different regarding praxis because each theater has differing reasons for their existence, but each seek community change based in the 'collective' cultural contexts of the counties. As a point of clarity, the use of the word 'collective' is synonymous with differences within the active exchange of socio-cultural lives, identities, and experiences that occurred within these CBTs. Here, 'collective' is a collaborative process happening across differences. The environments of the researched CBTs can be likened to complex adaptive systems (Turnbull, 2007) that contain myriads of identities, histories, beliefs, and perspectives that serve as ripe soil for subjunctive spatial expression, relationality and learning between people and audiences (Sandoval, 2013; Cohen-Cruz, 2005). In this article I will be focusing on the social dynamics of place creation that serve pedagogical functions for the catalyzation and reconstitution of 'community' as a discursive process (Emejulu, 2011). Meaning, how do these two theaters within their situated praxes create functions of community development, but also places and functions of expressive change for participants and audiences?

Constructivist embodied methodology

Embodiment within this work is a focused attention on the emotional, interpersonal, communicative, and behavioral. As such, embodiment from a methodological perspective is a linkage between behavior, interaction, and expressions of power, culture, and society (Giardina & Newman, 2011). Embodiment is very much a discursive process that seeks to understand and situate how individuals interact and express themselves in a co-created process such as a community-based performance. Lastly, when embodiment is adjoined to constructivism, embodiment takes on an interpretive quality to ethically protect ongoing vulnerable formulations of identity and to understand how experiences are being reconstituted into communication and interaction (Charmaz, 2013).

My purpose when working with these two theaters was how to learn and understand the praxes of each theater that are nested in unique multifaceted cultural contexts. I endeavored to pull each of these theaters together for contribution towards performative pedagogy, which is an

embodied and experiential process for actors, crew, leadership, and audiences. Each theater creates unique lived experiences between citizens as their form of identity and community change. As such, I had to be involved with and entangled in the social milieu to tap into these experiential waters, and to ground the abstractionism that often undergirds such concepts as ‘change,’ ‘community,’ ‘identity,’ and ‘collective’ (Wilson, 2019). Further, this work does not join some community development theorists that have sought the identification of a socially unifying field (Wilson, 2019). As stated by Young (1986),

“I argue that the ideal of community exhibits a totalizing impulse and denies difference in two primary ways. First, it denies the difference within and between subjects. Second, in privileging face to face relations it seeks a model of social relations that are not mediated by space and time distancing. In radically opposing the inauthentic social relations of alienated society with the authentic social relations of community, moreover, it detemporalizes the process of social change into a static before and after structure” (p. 5).

In short, the understanding of socio-cultural processes derived from the work performed, was the navigation of constantly shifting happenings and interactions that mandated deeper engagement with others as part of the ethical and respectful investigation of differences (and personal boundaries) which are built upon temporality, lived experiences, and everchanging meanings. In other words, I stand with Young (1986) in her still relevant work, that the dichotomies and tensions between individualism and community are necessary as they stand currently to spark progression beyond the trappings of idealism and essentialism (Emejulu, 2011). As such, the methodological requirements, and the resultant emotional dexterity necessary to perform in these entangled environments, were thus unique for each theater (Johnson, 2009).

My work went far beyond simply hanging out with the leadership in seeking to understand the praxes of the theaters. While at Appalachian Theater (AT), I navigated closely with audiences and backstage crews during the multi-performance production cycle that included two performances. I needed to see how complex messages, meanings, and processes were being created, received, and experienced by participants and audiences in the Appalachian county. However, I did not intervene through stage managing or acting because the theater focuses specifically on the local Appalachian county. Further, while at *Sitting in the Shade Together*

Theater (SSTT), I stage managed, acted, assisted in set construction, and worked closely with leadership and participants in the creation of a fully scripted production performed over six nights (AT specializes in improvisational theater). I could intensify my involvement while working with AT because of the differences in intentionality and methods between the theaters.

Lastly, I conducted 32 semi-structured interviews total – 16 at each theater. The interviews were focused predominantly on leadership (the practitioners of the theater making), but also included theater participants and affiliated non-profits when necessary. The interview questions and discussions were grounded in shared experiences in the communities, as well as open exploration of salient topics pertaining to the participants and theaters. The interviews were on average 40 minutes in length and were positioned for sense and meaning making of the experiences had during the theater cycles in both communities. These interviews were instrumental in providing an in-depth exploration between researcher and community members that systematically, from diverse perspectives, reflected upon the theater productions and the theaters' places in the counties. However, the experiential in-person embodied processes that happen face-to-face through the participation in productions and collaboration with leadership and participants over space and time served as the predominant form of primary experiential data.

Relearning to learn

Much of the existing community development literature often swirls with language supporting the supposed harmony of community (Durkheim, 1965; Brow, 1990; Rescher, 1993; Wiesenfeld, 1996; Wilson, 2019; Young, 1986). I would advocate that community in the normative sense, as well as the concepts of 'the structure of feeling', or 'the structure of belonging' (Block, 2018), can at times replicate and uphold ideologies of privilege and authenticity due to their isometric underpinnings that blanket the real inequalities between people as a function of power (Brow, 1990; Clarke & Jepson, 2011; Jepson & Clarke, 2013). In other words, the desire for social transformation as an ideal (Block, 2018) can reduce important historically derived socio-cultural differences in the push for a synthesis of social identity that can result in erasure, determinacy, and essentialism (Adorno, 2003; Emejulu, 2011).

From the perspective of this paper, the usual linkage of commonality that constitutes normative definitions of community, or the often theoretically dubious transformative

community, is not what formed working relationality within the theaters (McKenzi, Pinger & Kotechki, 2011). In essence, the place of community-based theater is not enough to signify a ‘community.’ To do so would be the idealization of the theaters, and thus reduce a sense of ethical criticality necessary to investigate such things as cultural production, reproduction, and placemaking (Giardina & Newman, 2011; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). The work of this research sought the inquiry of dialogue creation, the activation of working relationships, the deepening of interpersonal trust, and open exploration of lived experiences both in and out of the theaters. In other words, the places, processes, and experiences that drive experiential learning in affective environments can be explored more deeply, for practice and theory, regarding public engagement (Langdridge, Gabb & Lawsom, 2019; Stratton, Kass & Rotenberry, 2011; Wiener, 1999).

Performative pedagogy in CBT is thought of as an experiential, embodied, and collaborative process of unveiling the background of normative socio-cultural existence; an intentional unraveling of interpersonal guardedness and ideologies through concerted participatory experiences that both helps us to see what’s going on around us, as well as in us...CBT has a way of ‘shaking us awake’ by challenging held assumptions, and then asking us to communicatively reinstitute these experiences within our webs of reality with others in the co-creation of performances. The closer one gets to the unspoken cultural realities that disrupt personal lives the more potential there is in ameliorating such realities.

“Cultural studies has always been propelled by its desire to construct possibilities, both immediate and imaginary, out of its historical circumstances. It has no pretensions to totality or universality; it seeks only to give us a better understanding of where we are so that we can get somewhere else (some place, we hope, that is better – based on more just principles of equality and the distribution of wealth and power” (Grossberg, 1997, p. 415)

During the closing remarks of the last performance, the President of AT helped to take usually personal matters that reside in the privacy of families, and make them public for shared understanding and discourse to suggest that all can help one another during times of need regardless of blood ties,

“On this stage today, you have witnessed stories beginning with birth, family hardships, fun times, laughter all the way thru [to] the death of a grandfather. These are all part of life and part of most of your families. Many of you could tell the same stories. What is most important and evident in each scene is the love of family can help us overcome many things that come our way.”

The pedagogical process of learning across socio-cultural differences is such a situational discussion based upon complex personal and interpersonal identity that I hardly believe grounded frameworks derived from these environments can achieve the status of replication. Nor do I believe that thinking models, which inevitably reduce the emotive potential of learning, experiencing, and being, should be the goal considering the grassroots nature of these theaters (Strauble, 2005). However, we as practitioners, researchers, and students seek tangible elements of projects worthy of insight into behavioral and cultural change when seeking community development strategies (Wilson, 2019).

The social collisions between methods, environments, and participants are a ripe area of learning when attempting to understand the situational experiences generated through collaborative work (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). “If people don’t talk about it, we didn’t do a good enough job” (President of AT, personal communication). Pedagogy and the praxes of the CBTs are processes of collaborative interdependency which affirm and *highlight* differences through an acknowledged situatedness within a shared place. Horton and Freire (1990) believe that education is more than being told what to think and is more akin to helping individuals see/feel with their own eyes and bodies. This is a fundamental shift away from hierarchically driven education based in authority and expertise. Here, experiential learning and CBT adjoin themselves with ABCD through the co-investigation of meaning making roles in immersive theater productions in the pursuit of community change. In other words, people discover things about themselves, each other, and their worlds through collaborative productions that they themselves voluntarily build and invest in. Further, uncertainty is the ingredient that stays consistent which prevents the sedimentation of human relations within the theaters themselves. There are no rows and chairs for students to file into for class (Connor, Kadel-Tara, & Vinokur, 1999). Productions at both theaters were emergent efforts as they mandated constant collaboration and dialogue for the realization and actualization of the projects.

If we consider ABCD and CBT as adaptive forms of human behavior to unsatisfactory socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions, then what happens in the process of theater making to actualize desired changes? Each theater, from both counties, are based within a vulnerable openness to public participation to enhance the opportunity to *discuss* lived experiences in their respective counties. Participation is purely voluntary in the theaters, which permits a genuine sincerity and directness – not authenticity – to emerge through and between people in the process of place making during the creation and performance of the productions.

“Why can’t we mix and mingle and understand each other better so that this can be a better place? Some of the people are willing to do that. Some of the people are afraid to do that. Some people lack the tools to do that. So, why not open up something that just says ‘Hey, we are doing something tonight. Why don’t you come in, check it out? And just be a part of it. Doesn’t matter who you are. It doesn’t matter what you believe. You could walk away mad if you want, but you were there. As long as you tell me what your madness is stemming from”
(President of SSTT, personal communication).

Meaning that it is not through hierarchical decision-making, strategic planning, mechanization, or idealistic platitudes that change occurs. “Letting go of technical rationality frees us to make space for sensory imagery” (Lawrence, 2008, p. 66). It is within an inherently unstable system that the method of theater making as a facilitative and meaning making process occurs and further becomes a grounding dialogic of cultural interaction and interpretation in the sea of voices.

Table 4.1 - A Brief Comparison of ABCD and Community-Based Theater		
	<i>Asset-Based Community Development</i>	<i>Community-Based Theater</i>
Orientation/Intention	Often used as a theoretical form of guidance and can be methodologically prescribed to engage individuals in forms of communion and agreement for co-created action (Nel, 2018). Often manifested as a practice of relational socio-cultural engagement to produce, share, and grow community resources and opportunities (Lam et al., 2017).	Is a ‘bottom-up’ intervention that is highly collaborative, participatory, and inclusive. Is communicatively based within social interaction to co-create culturally salient performances (Duffly, 2016).

Table 4.1 – A Brief Comparison of ABCD and Community-Based Theater continued		
	<i>Asset-Based Community Development</i>	<i>Community-Based Theater</i>
Lead Organizations	Can be instrumented through neighborhood associations, non-profits/NGOs, governmental and planning institutions, as well as through individuals, and is thus highly collaborative and boundary-crossing (Feldhoff, 2016).	Is often housed and organized within non-profit organizations, non-governmental agencies, as well as through informal social relationships (Geer & Wei, 2017).
Purpose	Often confrontational and resistant towards the Neoliberal state, as well as towards overt forms of cultural imperialism, oppression, disenfranchisement, and socio-cultural fragmentation (Liebenber & Hutt-Macleod, 2017).	Through the ‘work’ of CBT, active efforts are relationally made to build relationships towards the end of continuing participation over time and in an overall orientation of placemaking (Forenza, 2017).
Product/Outputs	The creation and organization of community resources and relationships between individuals, institutions, organizations, and agencies (Forester, et al., 2018).	As a cultural apparatus which manifests through co-created performances and participations, active work is sustained through CBT to challenge and reconstruct corrosive cultural narratives (Kuftinec, 2016).

Emergent community ritual – Expanding the definition of blood in Appalachia

It was New Years, and we were in a cabin without electricity at the base of a rocky and wooded hill. Fire provided the only light and heat. Just outside the cabin is a creek, and just beyond that is a 200-year-old tobacco farm. Farms in this county often are located in what was once the older sections of creeks that build sediment, soil, and level elevation through fluvial processes. It was dark, cold, rainy, but the beauty of this moment with friends helped me understand more about life in the mountains. As I smoked a cigarette with the theater President’s husband we spoke and discussed our love of nature, particularly its ability to evoke humility. The ability for nature to generously remind us that life is short, fleeting, but also precious (a belief that helped propel the theater into existence and action). The shared properties surrounding the farm all belonged to one family, and all are powered by an old shared natural gas well drilled deep in the rock. This is a common occurrence of sharing and self-reliance that has been

practiced for over a century. The theater's leadership (the board members), a local musician/crafter/theater participant, and I spoke much on the theater that night.

The President and I have previously spoken privately on many sensitive topics relating to the county such as race, class, sexuality, and gender. These topics are not easily broached publicly in Appalachia, and I was curious to ask about the challenges of creating belonging through theater work because of Appalachia's adherence to heteronormative gender roles (the theater itself was started by four women, one of which a woman of color). "Had we tried to stage those sensitive issues right off the bat, it would not have worked...we would've been dead in the water. It's like we've eased the door open" (President of AT, personal communication). While we were eating and conversing in the cabin, the President announced to the whole of the group, without warning, "Zech wants to talk about race!" And so, we did, particularly the difficulties of bridging racial divides despite unyielding labor being put forth to do so by the theater - the wounds regarding race, as they are in most Southern counties/states, are very old, complex, and enduring. I wanted to know what kind of community was being created. Despite the stimulating discussion about how their theater fits in the swirl of sensitive cultural topics in the county, and particularly its history, that was not the moment that shook us into our bodies and out of our heads. It was when the local musician, who has lived in the county for 70 years and who raised herself and her children from nothing with only sheer will, sang her own song whilst playing the mandolin describing the collapse of a coal mine that claimed the lives of more than 30 men.

It was a song honoring the men who would no longer return home with soot covered faces. The mines claimed their lives after a lifetime of devotion. Coal, despite its destructive capacity on people and nature, is all many families had to put food on the table. There is no romanticism here, and nor does the theater preach idealism, rather it is a gritty pragmatism that seeks to create belonging out of the rugged and often brutal history of the county. Mountain County has seen and experienced much, with legacies of leaving behind those who were not born with a silver spoon in their hand to grind out a life. A host of ills have been forced upon it which includes state coercion, political corruption, feuds that dwarf the Hatfield and McCoy's, predatory extractive industries (slavery, salt, coal, forestry), the end of family subsistence farms, and now the end of coal. Coal was the last remaining economic lifeline the county had. Every year droves of people abandon the county for employment and education opportunities

elsewhere. For those who remain, and that choose to place their courage in change, grapple with crippling poverty annually exceeding 40% and an opioid crisis. “Zech, we have been beaten down as hillbillies” (President of AT, personal communication). Collaboration and social support in this county quite literally save lives.

These are the realities of the performed stories in AT. Every scene is improvised based upon true stories from the county’s inhabitants, and many of the story’s owners sit in the audience during performances. These stores are actively and respectfully recruited by the theater’s leadership, and many who own the stories sit in the audience to see their own memories enacted. The identities of those who own the stories are never shared out of a respect for privacy. AT’s performances are improvised, and there are no lines to memorize. Further, AT uses the few stages in the county, usually at local schools, or their historic downtown park, because they don’t have a house to call their own. Close cultivated relationships between AT’s leadership and other community leaders are used to leverage these resources for performances. The actors are given the rough frameworks of the stories and are asked to create the scenes from their interpretations of the stories. The lack of scriptural expectation allows participants to interpret scenes to create the performance, but also calls upon them to take responsibility for the stories’ owners. “You want to give their story justice...You don’t know what people have gone through” (AT theater participant, personal communication).

Imagine a group of strangers collaboratively learning to sing live ‘Down by the River to Pray’ in the local high school auditorium. The actors in synchronized movement surround the audience in vocal ambiance to bring everyone into communion. “Down to the River to Pray” sang live memorialized the county’s past to create a shared, and understood, acknowledgment between the theater and local audience through the local sanctuary of Christian faith. Church is the main focal point for personal connection between the people living in the rugged Mountain County. As such, the narrative themes of prayer, song, and stories of trauma, abuse, loss, but also love and laughter became elevated to a new plane of shared affective experience through theater making. Further, the narrative themes of the performance are coded and described on stage through actors and props to elicit images of local places, jobs, clothing, mannerisms, language, food and more to bring a sense of familiarity to the participants and audience members. In all,

five generations performed in one production in the pursuit of renewal and overcoming hardship through personal connection.

Resetting the tone – Who are the insiders of a community in the old south?

I sat having a cigarette outside with the Director and President of SSTT after we just went through an exhausting rehearsal. I looked up from my cinderblock that served as a makeshift seat, our usual decompression area along the backside of the building, and said, “You’re trying to break people out of inadequacy aren’t you?” Without missing a beat, he responded, “Now you get it.” How is home created in a county known for white cultural possessiveness and southern honor? More, how do you keep a theater alive, as well as incrementally change the historically oppressive conditions for populations of color, without kicking the beehive? In a short, but rather reductive sense, SSTT brings scripted plays that are highly inclusive, and that are ‘safe’ enough to provide the proverbial mirror for critical learning...by dousing the beehive with aromatic smoke. The President of SSTT puts this effort a little differently; “I don’t mind being dangerous if I get to pick the weapon. You understand what I mean? I’m not wild about guns, but a knife will allow me a certain measure of distance that I can keep...The fact that we are here, and we are a theater” (President of SSTT, personal communication).

In Water County one can still find old Florida here, the areas untouched by man, if one knows where to look. But there are shadows lingering that sink into the skin, and into the soul, deeper than the shade of the oak trees hanging over head. When you drive into Water County, a billboard with imposing white lettering on a blank black background states, “[Water County] love’s Jesus.” It is a curious mixture of southern hospitality and hostility, like as if it says visitors are expectant to be Christian. The farther one drives into the county Trump political signs litter the yards (sometimes next to a rebel flag) of neighborhoods. These are a few of the cultural symbols that emanate an ownership of the land, and in this county, the owners are white and prefer to keep it that way. When the President and I would venture for set design materials to the local Habitat for Humanity and Walmart, I could feel the tingles of eyes running up my spin asking curiously, if not downright invasively, “what are you two doing together?” I’m a white bisexual Jew covered in tattoos, and the President is a black gay man known for his new theater. Eyes, I learned quickly, can speak (scream) volumes in this county. The President moved from the county years ago to further his craft in New York, and then came back to be close to family

and eventually start the theater. He shared with me how the quivers of fear that run up his spine is something he never felt in New York. He seeks to expand the home of his theater with as many as he can regardless of who they are. I once watched him intimately coach a local white male wearing a shirt with the words ‘All Lives Matter’ inscribed on the American flag how to act without batting an eye.

I was at SSTT primarily to assist as a stage manager, but overtime I found myself in an acting role. I was playing a recently divorced sheriff struggling to keep the white male elites of an exurb from creating a militia to drive out their new blue-collar neighbor (a task I ultimately fail in preventing). The entirety of the cast was white, but it was for a reason. The narrative of the story was a representation of intra-white classism, elitism, misogyny, and violence. There was to be a mirror play of an entirely Black cast performing a narrative of intra-Black classism, elitism, misogyny, and violence (the same play performed by differing races). However, the President was not able to put together a Black cast despite mountains of time and labor. It’s not that Black actors and actresses don’t exist here...it’s because of the county’s reputation. It was because of fear. The goal was to have the two casts and stories be told back to back over 6 performances (each would have been performed 3 times), which would allow for comparative intra-racial storytelling to be performed to an inter-racial local audience.

“I thought wouldn’t it be beautiful to do both of those plays and spread them out through a performance period? So that the people who are in [script name 1] can watch those in [script name 2] and vice versa and see what each is bringing to the table. Better their understanding of it. But also to have some talk backs with the audience, and say what did you think about this one versus that one? What does it say about Black-White relations? Not in the sense that they work together, but in their own little groups. What is the class thing here that we are looking at? What is a class outsider?” (President of SSTT, personal communication).

Nonetheless, the all-white cast, me included, performed six nights after three months of rehearsal. In consequence, the majority of the audience members were white. In hindsight, I believe the effort to attempt such an endeavor speaks volumes on the nature of the theater. It is frustrating the full project could not have been completed for it could have unveiled critical race issues relating to white classism and ideological supremacy (Dickinson, 2012).

Generating trust is not easy amongst strangers...even those of the same race. Scripted performances that last over an hour are incredibly demanding, complex, and full of nuance detail that can drown the mind. They are ensembles of emotion, timing, memory, and embodiment of character. For example, I played the conscious and shy sheriff of the exurb, which required the performance of numerous confrontations between myself and the main antagonist of the story. My aesthetic role as the conscious sheriff was to provide a sensitized mirror to the conspiring violence being generated by the elite white men. I am towering at a whopping five feet nine inches, and the main antagonist is six feet four inches, it took trust and courage to 'hold my ground' as the main actor screamed in my face in front of an audience. Though we had plenty of good laughs at ourselves about it along the way in the making of the performance because neither of us are aggressively inclined as people.

Doing community-based theater 'work'...The activation of abundance and incarnation

Acting a complex role/story forces one to pull personal experiences out to channel the being of the character for an audience. This is hard enough, let alone the learning of lines, learning/interpreting the meaning of the lines, learning the movements of characters on stage (blocking), and learning the timing of scene transitions with people you've known only for a short time. All these aspects are the creation of places and experiences from memory-based praxes that manipulate emotion, body language, and language itself for the production. The work required the navigation of trust, vulnerability, and personal boundaries. However, through the work, closeness through collaborative dialogue was indeed nurtured. This roller coaster of learning, producing, and performing this craft together *was* the experiment of CBT in both counties. However, the flow that produces the embodiment of a fictional world to transmit culturally salient messages to the local county only truly became sensitized when boundaries between strangers became relational collaboration of fellow actors and crew. As such, strangers of the counties became co-creators of complex meanings, thus producing a production of community-based performative art mirroring and contrasting diverse realities.

SSTT and AT are seeking to generate salient and constructive experiences inspired by local life through their creative praxes of performed storytelling. Theater here is a modelling and communication process of imaging a/the world – real and/or imaginary – in the space of theater. Theater making in both communities is a shared creative endeavor for participants looking out at

their local counties, but also jointly within themselves. The theaters, with the help of the participants, crafted scenes that assisted in transitioning participants and audiences from a pre-performance state to a post-performance place. The space of the theaters, as a material technical function, served as a palate for creative imagining to bring stories to life beyond the page, beyond the recollection of memory, and through shared/divergent interpretations of the lifeworlds of the performed stories. The role of the theater as an organization, was to facilitate this process by supporting active agency between participants to sculpt, craft, practice, and ultimately perform a story that local audiences could connect with as an imaginary conjuring (a conjuring that is not detached from local life/society). This complex process helps transform localized normative forms of being into a praxis of integrating creative potentiality into the present based upon *intentionally co-created* lived affective experiences.

CBT in both cases also served as a hodological (way finding) function (Turnbull, 2007) of transitioning pre-individuated selves through a socially interdependent process to more experientially ‘broken open’ places. Collaborative interdependence did not reduce individuality, if anything it strengthened the individuals’ sense of personal being in the process of co-creative imaging. CBT’s are cultural apparatuses built through dialogic and performative persons communicating a subjective set of messages about the world as they know it (Cohen-Cruz, 2005). These worlds must be navigated jointly between participants, and theater as method supports and intimately engages cultural differences as a hodological praxis. “The potential multiplicity, polyvalence, and redundancy of actual and narrative paths and trails they [participants] open up allow for adaptivity and new connections, thus growth and change in our physical and cognitive navigation patterns” (Norman, 2012, p. 4). As such, deeper interpersonal behavior was cultivated between participants whilst they simultaneously navigated the convergence of lifeworlds as a critical function of the creative praxes. For example, the main antagonist during SSTT’s performance used past lived experiences from alcoholic family members to help fuel the anger of his alcoholic character, and in so doing helped him more in the process of individuation personally and socially. “It did help me understand who I am more, well a part of me more, and who I really am. After the play it brought clarity” (Theater participant, personal communication).

Individuals (participants and audiences) are embedded within cultural contexts whilst also representing their own complex cultural identity (Nelson & Arthur, 2003; Sandercock, 2010). Conceptualized in Figure 4.1, within a shared place, agency across theater participants is communicatively navigated to create, embody, and portray multifaceted narratives with the assistance of theater architecture (stage, lighting, sounds/music, props, costumes) to the localized cultural participation of audience members (Norman, 2012). Through such processes more vulnerable forms of communication are harnessed to deepen, signify, and enhance the lived experience of engagement. For example, the main actor of SSTT’s performance is a singer song writer that used to perform in Tennessee before moving to Water County. As an introduction to the performance, he sang live, on our self-made set, his own southern blues song to manifest the setting, tone, and affect necessary to engage the actors and audience in the southern culture of Water County. This musically assisted transition in emotion to the present performance was his personalized gift to himself and the audience despite it not being originally in the script. He was breaking himself open to his new home county.

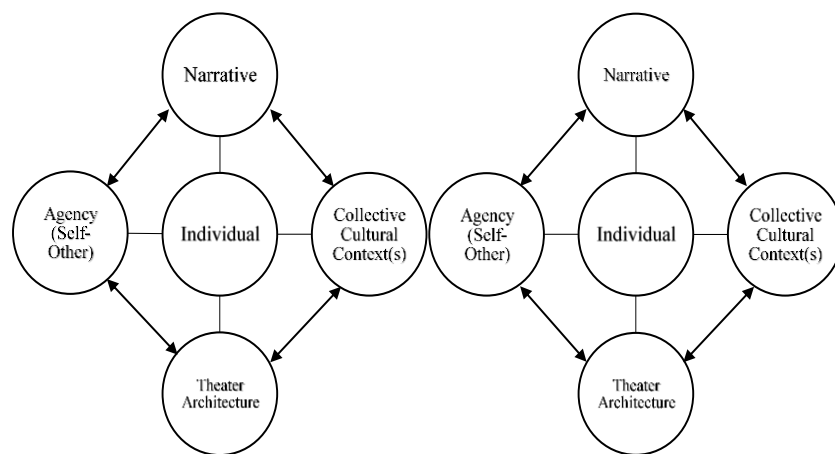


Figure 4.1 – Individuation and Emergence in Community-Based Theater

The personalized narratives that are actively created, and performed, aim to shift the manner in which local citizens experience themselves with each other. These cultivated lived experiences change awareness of participants from stranger, to acquaintance, to neighbor in an endeavor to recalibrate the lived experience of ‘community.’ The essence of this process is beautifully summarized by Gumbrecht (2011) regarding the transition away from fixed, unaltering, and power-driven Cartesian reality,

“In the process of Modernization, the dream of becoming perfectly “Cartesian” has thus been so perfectly fulfilled that we seem to have lost any material concreteness to hold onto...more so, perhaps, than we are to existentially afford. For our bodies have been reduced to a mere energy base for our minds, struggling to find pleasure and a dignity of their own” (p. 208).

The pivot away from Modernization as explicated by Gumbrecht (2011), and as embodied by CBT, constitutes a process that effectively engages a comprehensive person, within the present, to change the conditions of communication and thus change the potential forms of interaction between self, other and world. This imaginary and communicatively interdependent process creates opportunities to engage the body and mind in action and change across diverse people and environments. The performative and co-constructive process further reconstitutes memory and history in the present as an emergent act of joint meaning making across participants. Lastly, the reconstitution of memory and history within this creative praxis did not synthesize history in the present to exclude the implications of history on the present. Rather, the creative imaginary, but nevertheless interdependent praxes, made ‘space’ for history to play an embodied role within the performances.

Purposefully created characters, scripted or improvised, can be considered an incarnation of persons or beings through which theater participants can experience themselves and each other (Brummans, 2011). Further, as an embodied incarnation that is thus performed, this incarnated being is inseparable from the citizen that is doing the embodying. The entangled character that is built upon a presence of interdependent participants and audiences, is further inseparable from the cultural contexts and geographies of the performance’s location. The communicative process of incarnation is described by Brummans (2011),

“By defining incarnation as the communicative practices (i.e., the use of words and sounds, gestures, turns of talk, objects, etc. in everyday interactions) through which people transfer agencies or powers to material things or persons in order to concretize their connections and identifications with more or less abstract, ineffable/indefinable, immaterial/metaphysical, or absent/invisible/imperceptible being or concepts (values, principles, ideals, identities, etc.)” (p. 196).

Within a narratively driven performance all material items on stage have been given meaning through the transfer of agency onto them by the participants as well as the audience's interpretations of the productions. As such, the process by which characters and material items are 'incarnated' to create an affective environment, is thus manifested through the enactment of the participants' interaction with each other both as actors/actresses and local citizens. The overall purpose of this communicative interdependency (Caughlin & Sharabi, 2013) is the creation of lived experiences that are transmitted through and built upon complex co-constructed meanings, characters, and settings (see Figure 4.2).

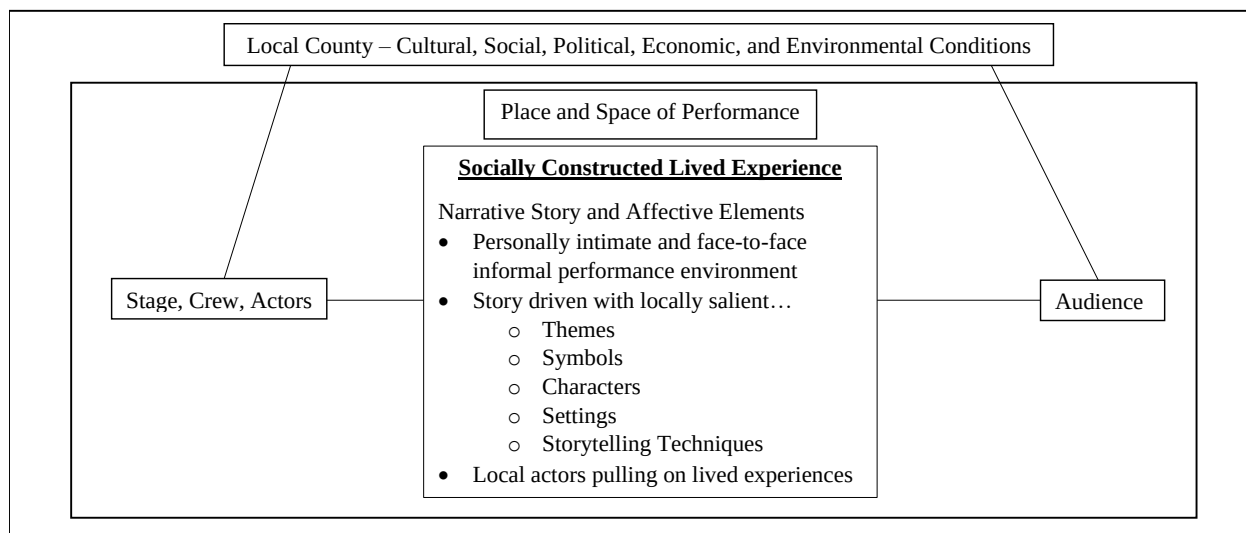


Figure 4.2 - The Hall of Local Mirrors and Meanings

Beyond the creation of meanings, there are further implications to the communicative process of incarnation. It would be wrong, at least within this work, to label the creation of an affective environment as a social field upon which social interaction stood. Rather, interaction between participants and audiences deepened due to the spatial dialogic function of the constructed narratives that drove a multiplicity of interpretations, not a purity of artificial objects, derived from the lived performative experiences (Norman, 2012; Spatz, 2017; Adorno, 2003). Even though the performances are in many ways acts of ventriloquism of local life and people, the productions nonetheless are deeply entangled with personal identity, culture, and place. This entangled irreducibility is derived from purposefully refuting the sedimentation of lame explanations of local life as to develop further discussions on the complexity of living (Buber, 2012). As a dialogic process that is narratively driven, performative incarnation is the foreground

that presents itself upon the physical presence of the local background. Inevitably, this duality and distinction buckles under the entwined form of communication that the narratives/performances have with the audiences and local communities. In both cases, this process of trans-positioning, a layering of a created narrative on top and through everyday life, provided a space through which citizens could focus discussions both privately/internally and with each other.

The performances in both cases were a complex augmentation of personal boundaries between participants and audiences, but as well as the boundaries between local life and the narratives of the performances. Acting as sites of cultural renewal and change (Barad, 2003), the drama of the performances narratively created a deeper social ontological heterogeneity to serve discursive functions assisting in the creation of understandings between people (Gumbrecht, 2011). The broken open dialogues within the theaters served as an opportunity for social relationality and collaboration beyond the confines of the theaters. In other words, strangers were now in conversation with each other. This complex set of mechanisms deepened relationships between citizens in both counties; AT deepened relationships between people and non-profits to aid in survival and renewal, and; SSTT deepened relationships between people to millimetrically – but nevertheless crucially – adjust face-to-face race and class relationships (See Table 4.1).

Table 4.2 – Incarnation of New Modes of Being Between Self/Other in a Narrative Construction

- Continuous interaction between individuals through confluences and collisions of individual lifeworlds both real and constructed
- Enactment of narrative(s)
- Local performances
- Engaged and cultivated social interdependency across participants and audiences

Conclusion

Without the seduction of cliché, it would be fair to compare both *Sitting in the Shade* Together Theater and Appalachian Theater to the matsutake mushroom (Tsing, 2015). This mushroom grows in the ecological wastes of capitalism. Like the fungal networks that undergird the rise of spores in toxic soil, so too do these theater wish to push through myriads of corrosive historical inertias that counter their efforts. These theaters are striving efforts to reconsider how individuals relate to one another, at least within face-to-face contexts, to reclaim and renew place

through dialogue. Every community has a past, and often these pasts are riddled with the legacies and vestiges of ideology, violence, trauma, but also hope. From the standpoint of ABCD, AT and SSTT use these tainted soils of history to help recalibrate social relationships for purposeful outcomes. Whether, these outcomes be the augmentation of a frictional and violent socio-cultural landscape, or the creation of cultural renewal for survival and connection.

Abundance in both AT and SSTT are risk-taking works that take inspiration, effort, and personal vulnerability. They risk failure because they know the youth and inhabitants of their counties deserve something better than what was given to them. If the concepts of ABCD are to be taken seriously, particularly as presented by Block and McKnight, then vulnerability and effort are fundamental ingredients to renewal and change based in dialogic practices. Imagine for one second, a lifetime of being told what to think. Imagine still, a lifetime of being told this is how the world is ordered, and the mechanisms upon which the world is built. This world can be your family, your education, your job, and as far as you can imagine the rabbit holes of entrapment going. In short, if you sell yourself just the right way, or if you buy the right things you may be deemed tall enough to be like Mike. Though the odds are not just long but staggering for those born into a vulnerable population in the US. This opposition, this subversion, this gravitational pull to join hands, this vulnerable welcoming of new ideas, and this desperate plea for something better is the power of compassionate survival that both AT and SSTT stand for in each of their communities. Stories here go beyond the realm of entertainment. They *are* the work.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Embodiment, as it pertains to urban and regional planning, can be an access port for the creation of deeper dialogue, discourse, understanding, recognition, and trust with communities. Planning has often spoken over these interpersonal dimensions, and as such the shape of the country and its communities reflect these decisions. More so, the focus on processes, outcomes, and rational documentation/analysis has now placed common ethical principles in a diminished light. As such, little room has been left both in practice and theory to argue for the creation of outcomes that come through spontaneous insights, the building of relationships across institutional boundaries with oppressed and vulnerable populations, and a greater operational dimension in which planners themselves may inhabit.

Embodiment as a planning method

This dissertation, and its exploration of embodiment with two community-based theaters, did not seek to remake planning as a community development endeavor. Rather, the two community-based theaters provided access into behavioral modalities that served as complex places of communication to potentially discern practical and theoretical insight for planning scholars and practitioners. Learning through experience and the making of knowledge and action from raw interpersonal material is the essence of constructivist embodiment as discussed in chapter 2. More than simply saying there should be room for multiple knowledges in planning, experiential learning through a complex and reflexive positionality is and of itself a method through which decisions can be made as consequential components to how the perceptions of self and other are formulated. The shaping of perception, and the reformulation of continual understandings, is a constant requirement in participatory processes and challenges the often-prescriptive nature of planning theory (Wilson, 2019).

As an act of awareness, constructivist embodiment can help reshape the tone, dimension, and place in which participatory and communicative planning inhabits. Meaning that participatory and communicative planning can become greater forms of collaborative actions and knowledges across differences. However, such actions and knowledges are housed, transmitted, and shaped by the nature of the relationships that the participatory processes are built upon and

carried through. Here, from the ‘Habermasian’ undertone that communicative planning is based upon, *relational* communicative action is a learning process that can require great cognitive shifts to find meeting grounds of mutual understanding across differences. Further, that such meeting grounds, when created in accordance with respect and permission, are not a reduction of lived experience, rather that lived experiences and history become the focal points of discourse.

Upon briefly revisiting normative conceptualizations of communicative planning, this work challenges the instrumentalism that is still embedded within communicative planning. If the *ideals* of communicative planning focus attention on the integration of multiple forms of knowledges for the construction of plans and their implementation, then equal if not greater attention must be paid to the behavioral and ontological (Innes & Booher, 2010). For example, if diversity of knowledge and its underpinning theoretical space of intersubjective knowledge integration, is dislocated from the physical, the social, and the cultural, then rather than constructing equity, communicative planning is reinforcing ideology. Here, as displayed both in chapters 2 and 3, embodied planning becomes a practice of pragmatically and sensitively dancing with uncertainty with other across *difference* as a learning endeavor.

Both SSTT and AT, as well as Juno and Dionysus, display one common understanding – organize and lead but don’t get in the way of spontaneous breakthroughs. Again, if communicative action is deemed a subjective interaction of knowledge integration and synthesis, both to question and ratify knowledge claims through actions of mutual understanding within a dimension of rectified power imbalances, then *how people and planners meet face-to-face is the most important procedural consideration*. More, SSTT and AT designed community events for the co-creation of performances across differences as a lived experience with open-ended pathways for creativity, flexibility, and improvisation. Within communicative planning, more must be questioned regarding how planning is itself a culturally derived lived experience to bring into focus the enactment and co-creation of plans. If this action is not performed, then again planning dislocates itself from equitable actions, and again will produce reports with no consequence (Forester, 2020). As a performance itself, if planning seeks to democratize and decolonize to greater extents, then an integration of not just knowledges but greater understandings of cultural humility/competence and embodiment are unavoidable (Jackson, 2019; Sweet, 2018).

Embodiment does not occur through text. Performances are not the scripts and plans that do little more than symbolize the intentions behind enactments. The most text can do is point *at* that place and realm we have deemed the experiential and interactive. In the middle of it all is the body - holding, feeling, seeing, doing, performing, and connecting with whatever experience is being had, including that of deep suffering and grief. Paradoxically, to come to this place is a dispelling of the solipsism that seeks the methodological removal of the self and the responsibility held for the lives of self and other (Forester, 1988). Breaking this boundary and transcending beyond projections of expertise, is in and of itself a reconstitution of how planners meet with the public. As the children of Appalachian Theater spoke their truths on the death of their family of origins, they found home, safety, and love with their grandparents. Planning as a house does not have a home without a similar behavioral enactment of compassion and understanding in its efforts to produce and translate knowledge into action (Lyles, White & Lavelle, 2018).

Rethinking therapeutic planning

Rethinking therapeutic planning, as discussed in chapter 3, is not a dismissal of the issues and problems in which current theorizations of therapeutic planning are seeking to rectify. In a basic sense, from a backdrop of cultivated intimacy as displayed by Juno and Dionysus, the conceptual confusion of therapy with planning processes necessitates review and revision. Catharsis from the standpoint of Juno and Dionysus was not a product of therapy, but rather a result of interpersonal connection built upon cultivated communications. Though the methods of Erfan (2017) and Sandercock and Attili (2014) are based within decentralized power arrangement (facilitation and videography), their research practices themselves are still arranged overall in a top-down hierarchical interventionist framework. As such, the overall structural inequalities that are enacted through cultural imperialism, within their studied communities, are not being changed from the inside-out by the citizens and indigenous populations themselves. From a theoretical perspective, more work is needed in learning how to carry conversations forward with communities rather than simply initiating them.

If planning seeks to connect itself to the everyday lives of others, and across vast and conflicting differences and geographies, then planners must put themselves forward as people first. Only after this can expertise and professionalism have any redemptive quality with regards

to oppressed and vulnerable populations. Expertise is not an authority of knowledge, but a wisdom of knowing one's own limitations, and interventionist and hierarchical dialogues are limited in their capacity to recruit, include, and sustain communal and institutional participation. In other words, the focus frequently in the praxes of cross-cultural dialogues is to reach a point in time where peace occurs rather than the focus being on the dialogues themselves. The foundational social interdependency of both theaters was the fabric into which each person entered for the recognition and creation of something greater than themselves. The intrinsic value of their being is an ingredient that must be affirmed if planning, planning institutions, and planners are to seek knowledge of the narrative and affective elements of people's stories. In other words, dialogues are more than instruments of process.

I am not asking for planners to become social workers or therapists. Rather, I am welcoming a recognition of the histories that are being perpetuated through unequal arrangements of power. If ideological supremacy based within neoliberalism is to teach anything, it is that those that have been deemed less worthy should work harder for the opportunities that are supposedly being built for 'their' betterment. As a form of rationalization, this method of collusion and persuasion that has been recycled through so many different masks and fronts is dominance enacted (Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe & Combs, 2001). As those born in Appalachia are being blamed for their own impoverishment after predation of multinational extractive industries and the Black lives of Water County being barred from knowing their own history, more must be done in the creation and recreation of meaning, opportunity, and worthiness.

Collaboration with two community-based theaters within informal contexts was not only an effort to understand how citizens are making opportunities for themselves, but to challenge in a small way the very meaning of 'planning.' Looking at planning from the outside, at the threat of sounding fanatical, permitted a tiny glimpse into the hole in which planning has entrenched itself. At face value, planners, planning institutions, and elected officials conspire to build the worlds around us as monolithic constructs (Innes & Booher, 2010). However, it is little more than a form and apparatus of human behavior. Government and governance are socio-cultural and political arrangements that organize the worlds in which people live for better and worse. However, if the decisions made to organize, contain, and build the lifeworlds of individuals are made in iron vaults of unchallengeable laws and epistemologies, then planning is not the

translation of knowledge into action but is rather an extension of oppressive ideology (Sandoval, 2013; Flybjerg, 1998). This is the difference between working with and working on communities.

Reformulating and activating abundance and incarnation

In chapter 4 I discussed how ‘abundance’ may be oriented towards a greater understanding of place creation through differing forms of social interdependency. Further, this work proceeded to redirect theoretical discussions of asset-based community development (ABCD) from McKnight and Block (2011) towards a more grounded and contextualized understanding of the cultural, historical, and geographic realities of socio-cultural interaction. Through close examination of the communication and behavioral modalities of the theaters, I sought to overlay the processes contained within the theaters with the lived experiences of the participants. The purpose of which was to develop a richer, albeit more challenging, description as to the causes, happens, and outcomes of the theaters themselves. By extension, each theater was serving their communities in a manner that permitted deep expression of lived experience, and thus offering a place of performative learning to change the very counties in which they inhabited.

Abundance, from the conceptions of this work, is grounded within seeking a more robust understanding as to why the theaters themselves emerged within their respective contexts. Each theater – AT and SSTT – are intentionally developing places of socio-cultural augmentation to address the problems of their counties. Through processes that require trust, interdependency, and open communication for the creation of a performative platform, narratives are thus created to interweave the very lives of the participants and audiences. As a form of ABCD, opportunities for oppressed and vulnerable populations are built out of a celebratory survival deeming the lives of those speaking and performing worthy of being heard and affirmed. Abundance, as displayed by AT and SSTT, is a not a homogenization of differences as often gleaned from McKnight and Block in their language, but a recognition of historical and present lived experiences through support and trust.

Some broader implications

If new worlds of equality and equity are to be built upon the ashes of old, then the grace of new life in the acknowledgement of the necessary symbolic death permits entrance into the beings of others the elements of freedom and expression. Such a space may not be appropriate for the administrative domains of planners, but as new development constantly takes shape for economic advancements, the bones of generations past are nevertheless implicated and connected with the present lives of citizens across race, class, gender, sexuality, age and ability.

In a basic sense planning is the construction and shaping of the built environment. Planning here is thus analogous to the making of bowls that contain the economic, cultural, social, and political realities of communities. This dissertation argues that embodied planning, if performed during participatory and communicative processes, would mandate the construction of partnerships and relationships across community dimensions (stakeholders, leaders, citizens, non-profits, etc). Collaboration across differences is possible. That learning itself, as a core behavior to being human, can assist in both the affirmation of another and of self. That during deliberation of the envisioning *and* resultant implementation of the co-constructed plan, deliberative relationships that hold accountable those with power are more likely to occur due to intentional inclusion. Without such relationships and partnerships as a core component to planning processes, it is difficult to truly understand the consequences of decisions upon communities – particularly as time passes. Lastly, and by extension, without such relationships and partnerships equitable decisions made to support and protect vulnerable and oppressed populations have very little chance of occurring.

More specifically, if we are seeking, as a field, an instantiation and reconstitution of planners and their methods towards greater democratization and inclusion, then a reconnection with how power is formulated through plan construction and implementation is vital. For example, embedded within the historical inertia of instrumentalism and rational positivism is a dislocation of the planner from themselves and the knowledges/plans therein produced. Further, this historical trend has become, and to large degrees still is, entrenched within an enforced objectivism that insists that these forms of knowledge constitute objective ‘fact.’ However, the creation of knowledge in any form is still little more than an interpretation and argumentative endeavor. As such, if the planner becomes relocated in relations to how methods are used and

instrumented, then the planners themselves are little more than interpretivists mutually seeking answers in turbulent seas of uncertainty. Authors John Forester (1988; 1999; 2020), Judith Innes, and David Booher (2010) have spent their respective careers arguing this single point.

However, there is still another point that must be made along these lines. Instrumented power is a reductive, extractive, and exclusionary, but instrumentalism need not be reductive and exclusionary. With a reconstitution of planners within constructivism and interpretivism, then doors are indeed opened to a whole host of possibilities such as – the use of storytelling to simultaneously learn and affirm community issues; planners acting as facilitators for the recognition and amelioration of long standing trauma (Efran, 2017); a collaboration and relational situatedness of co-creating geographic information system maps (Byrne & Pickard, 2016); advocacy and equity planning endeavors *with* political intentions (Davidoff, 1965; Krumholz, 2011); participatory budgeting (Gilman, 2012) and more. For underlying all of these potential pathways is an understanding that planning need not be considered monolithic, but rather a mutual understanding that the creation and recreation of our communities is a joint effort of struggle and deliberation.

Planning within these frameworks further reconstitutes planners as translators and middlemen/women of knowledge negotiation and plan construction. As such, embodiment, and the reassertion of the planner back into physical behavioral dimensions, makes possible the translation of multiple forms of knowledge into democratized policy – which is the only real way communicative planning can work (Forester, 1999). Planning has struggled with how to produce more than reports within participatory settings (Forester, 2020). This failure of method and institution has historically aggravated community conflicts and diminished the potentiality of equitable inclusion (Innes & Booher, 2010). More, that if planners are constituted as translators of knowledge then collaborative action across differences is thus enhanced due to a culturally humble approach to uncertainty in the face of historical nullity to oppressed and vulnerable populations (Sweet, 2018).

Storytelling should not be left in the minimized realm of roleplaying anecdotes (Innes & Booher, 1999). In other words, the actions of analysis adjoined with deep listening (Forester, 1988) permit experiences and lives to be broken open rather than purely broken down. The pursuit of the grain of fact for the implementation of an external absolute truth is a dangerous

and destructive game. I do not speak in hypocritical transcendentalism, but out of a basic consideration for the lives of human beings. As stories were told on stage during this work, theater participants were being openly supported and were provided a medium for their own self-expression, as well as given support in owning their experiences as their creation. In so doing, opportunities for actual self-determinacy, even within the confines of a community-based theater, were being actively constructed for the purposeful intent of socio-cultural discourse and dialogue. However, rather than pitting participants against one another (Innes & Booher, 1999), participants and audiences joined in the incarnation of new modes of being that directly intersected between individualized experiences and performative reproductions of communal life.

Over time, and through the creation of meaningful memory and experiences, participants of each theater grew in connection to each other, themselves, and the theaters. As an example of the creation of community beyond mere homogenized commonality, planning institutions themselves may learn to become meeting grounds of lived experiences to decide what is the best way forward as a people. For the democratization of planning means little to nothing if the place in which the democratization is happening is on a sliding scale of prejudicial discrimination. As Forester (1988) has repeatedly iterated, sometimes to do the right thing is to make a value-based stand, and “to be rational, be political” (p. vii). Such a transition of cross-boundary action is necessary for embodiment to occur in planning, and such transition would be a consequence of embodied planning. Here, the planner and the public may meet beyond the abstractions of labels which limit the construction of relationships that may more finely and informatively shape plan construction and implementation (Innes & Booher, 2010; Sandercock, 1998).

This dissertation is not a dogmatic critique of planning and planners. Rather, this work is a beginning sliver to a conversation adjoined with others calling for planning to shift beyond archaic forms of cultural compartmentalization and separation (Forester, 1988; Healey, 1997; Innes & Booher, 2010; Sandercock, 1998). There is power in identity and relationality that may hold the key to a planning paradigm that was promised in communicative planning but that was never fully delivered upon. What shape this paradigm may take is not currently known, but it is being actively constructed by planners and planning theorists alike. There may perhaps come a day when planning institutions may truly integrate historical, present, and socio-cultural knowledge with the help of community members to lift the veil blanketing vicious societal

inequities. Further, there may perhaps come a day that, after such knowledge is integrated more fully and continuously within current iterations of planning, corrective actions may begin to take shape. However, at this moment, the interpretation of knowledge, history, and identity for the creation of equitable actions is still deeply contested.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR APPALACHIAN THEATER

Study Title: A Model for Asset-Based Community Development in Rural Appalachia

Principal Investigator: Zechariah Lange

FSU Human Subjects Committee approved on 01/08/2019, void after 11/25/2019. HSC #2019.26663

Introduction

We invite you to take part in a research study at Florida State University.

First, we want you to know that:

Taking part in research is entirely voluntary.

You may choose not to take part, or you may withdraw from the study at any time. In either case, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You will receive no material benefit from taking part. The research may give us knowledge that may help people in the future.

Second, some people have personal, religious or ethical beliefs that may limit the kinds of research procedures they would want to receive. If you have such beliefs, please discuss them with the research team before you agree to the study.

Now we will describe this research study. Before you decide to take part, please take as much time as you need to ask any questions and discuss this study with anyone on the FSU research team, or with family, friends or other professional.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being conducted by Zechariah Lange, MPA, and Phd Student at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. Zechariah Lange is personally funding this study.

Rural Appalachian poverty is complex in nature, and strategies for community development in the midst of impoverished and low resource circumstances are being investigated. This study aims to develop a conceptual model for future research regarding the role of community-based theater as an intervention for asset-based community development.

The overarching research question is as follows:

How, in the context of rural Appalachia does community-based theater function as an intervention and method of asset-based community development within a rural, impoverished, Appalachian community as implemented by the leadership of Appalachian Theater?

Why are you being asked to take part in this study?

You were selected because of your leadership and involvement in/cooperation with Appalachian Theater. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

How many people are expected to take part in this study?

The study intends to interview between 10 and 15 people.

Study Procedures

If you agree and are eligible to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

The study will use semi-structured in person interviews or phone interviews, averaging 30 minutes to one hour, investigating how and why key community leaders are seeking community and economic development in a rural, impoverished, and post-industrial Appalachian community. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed, coded, and analyzed at a later time. The interview will be scheduled at a time convenient for you, and at a location you are comfortable with if being performed in-person. The interview will be audio-recorded, and you will retain the right to review your interview transcript. However, if you are not comfortable with being audio-recorded, then your responses will be typed on the Principal Investigator's personal laptop if you agree to participate.

Risks of Study Participation

The risks are minimal, but personal experiences and stories will be invited to be shared as they relate to the research study. You will not be forced to share any experiences that you do not wish to share, and if you choose to do so they will be respected and kept private and confidential. However, there is a small risk to confidentiality due to the small pool of participants that are familiar with the study. No identifying information will be published, however people familiar with the study may be able to relate the information back to the participants.

Benefits of Study Participation

The choice to share personal experiences during the research study is a potential learning opportunity. There may be a benefit to you in sharing your experiences as an act of self-reflection and contribution to the study.

Study Costs/Compensation

There are no monetary costs for participating in this study, and you will not be monetarily (or otherwise) compensated for your time and participation.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest between the Principal Investigator and the research site and participants.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential, to the extent allowed by law. In any publications or presentations, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. No identifying information

Principal Investigator: Zechariah Lange

will be presented in any report. Data and documents will be stored in either a password protected Word document and/or Excel spreadsheet, and lockable filing cabinet accessed only by the researcher.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the University or Appalachian Theater. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Zechariah Lange. You may ask any questions you have now, or if you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact them at:

Zechariah Lange, MPA, CFM
PhD Student
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Florida State University

William Butler, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty Advisor
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Florida State University

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB at telephone number 850-644-7900. You may also contact this office by email at humansubjects@fsu.edu, or by writing or in person at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, FSU Human Subjects Committee, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2742.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX B

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR SITTING IN THE SHADE TOGETHER THEATER

Title of research study: Community Theater and Community Development in Water County, FL:
HSC Number: 2019.26952

Investigator: Zechariah Lange

Key Information: The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this study. More detailed information is listed later on in this form.

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

We invite you to take part in a research study because you have participated and/or volunteered at Sitting in the Shade Together Theater events and/or projects. Such experiences are valuable regarding your perspective of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater work, and place in Water County, FL. Further, such experiences are valuable perspectives regarding social, cultural, and participatory experiences as they relate to working with other's in a community setting. This study, overall, seeks to investigate community theater as a method and intervention for asset-based community development in a small, semi-rural, and southern county. The purpose of which is to develop insight into strategies for social, cultural, and economic change in small southern counties.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

This work is being done to investigate facilitative strategies to build low-resource communities from the "inside-out." In other words, how can participatory places such as Sitting in the Shade Together Theater facilitate community members towards engaged action for community development outside of governmental contexts. Here are the research questions being investigated as it relates to this work:

1. How does community-based theater function as a method for asset-based community development in economically challenged rural communities?
2. How, and to what extent, does community-based theater create a generative space for capacity building?
3. What techniques and facilitative practices can be drawn from community-based theater processes that could be used to improve communicative planning and collaborative governance?

How long will the research last and what will I need to do?

You will be asked to partake in either a semi-structured in person interview or phone interview, averaging 30 minutes to one hour, investigating how individuals working in/with Sitting in the Shade Together Tree Theater are pursuing community development in a small, semi-rural, and southern county. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed, coded, and analyzed at a later time. The interview will be scheduled at a time convenient for you, and at a location you are comfortable with if being performed in-person. The interview will be audio-recorded, and you will retain the right to review your interview transcript. However, if you are not comfortable with being audio-recorded, then your responses will be typed on the Principal Investigator's personal laptop if you agree to participate.

More detailed information about the study procedures can be found under **“What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?”**

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

During the interview process the PI will be only asking about your experiences as they relate to Sitting in the Shade Together Theater. However, due to the often-personal nature of community experiences and community development some topics may be uncomfortable to discuss. During such time, there is no mandatory expectation to answer any question, or share experiences that result in discomfort or unnecessary vulnerability. If you choose to share such experiences, particularly those that relate to personal meaning connected to a sense of place, they will be respected, and the PI will directly ask if you are comfortable. At no point in time will the PI invade, or prod such personal experiences resulting in a space and interaction that may result in an unsafe experience or space.

More detailed information about the risks of this study can be found under **“Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? (Detailed Risks)”**

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. There are no monetary benefits for participating in this study. However, possible benefits include the potential opportunity to reflect upon experiences at Sitting in the Shade Together Theater. Interviewing is often a time and place of constructive rumination, and that such constructive rumination is a potential learning experience about oneself and their experiences. Such a learning experience, during the interview process and study, can help generate insight into facilitative practices and experiences that can create safe spaces for social interaction and community development.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. Your alternative to participating in this research study is to not participate, and such decision will not be held against you.

Detailed Information: The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at:

Zechariah Lange, MPA
PhD Student
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Florida State University

William Butler, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Faculty Advisor
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Florida State University

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at 850-644-7900 or humansubjects@fsu.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

How many people will be studied?

We expect about 15-20 people here will be in this research study.

What happens if I say “yes” to being in this research?

If you say yes to this study you will be interviewed at a time and place of your choosing. Further, the interview will be either audio-recorded or typed into the PI’s personal laptop.

What happens if I say “yes,” but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time it will not be held against you.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me? (Detailed Risks)

- **Psychological risks – The psychological risk are very minimal. However, personal experiences relating to Sitting in the Shade Together Theater and Water County may be discussed during interviews but only with permission from the participant. Such experiences may be, at most, uncomfortable as the PI will safe guard against emotional discomfort to the best of their abilities and always in relation to what the participant is and is not comfortable discussing.**
- **Privacy risks – All information will be kept confidential to the extent allowable by law, and that at no point will research protocol be performed in such a manner that invades an individual’s right to privacy.**

What happens to the information collected for the research?

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential, to the extent allowed by law. In any publications or presentations, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. No identifying information will be presented in any report. Data and

documents will be stored in either a password protected Word document and/or Excel spreadsheet, and lockable filing cabinet accessed only by the Principal Investigator. However, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality due to the highly social nature of the work and those familiar with the study.

APPENDIX C

PRESIDENTS PERMISSION TO RESEARCH AT SITTING IN THE SHADE TOGETHER THEATER

I, Dionysus, President of Sitting in the Shade Together Theater give Zechariah Lange permission to conduct research as it relates to proposal 2019.26952 titled Community Theater and Community Development in Water County FL.

*Name, signature, and date have been redacted in protection of confidentiality and privacy.

APPENDIX D

BASE LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview/ Questions for Theater leadership

1. Can you share with me your experiences that motivated you to create [theater]?
 - a. How did you get involved with [theater]?
2. Can you share with me some challenges you have experienced regarding the maintenance and growth of [theater]?
3. Can you share with me your experiences that have helped shape how you engage with local community members?
4. How does [theater] typically gather stories from community members?
 - a. How were stories gathered for [performance]?
5. How does [theater] typically use stories gathered from community members?
 - a. How were the stories used in [theater]?
6. What role(s) do you perceive community theater serves in your community?
 - a. Are there specific problems you believe community theater is trying to alleviate?
7. What impacts, if any, do you believe have been brought about by community-based theater?
8. Is there anything new you have learned through the initiative and work surrounding [theater]?
 - a. How will this performance effect future performances?
9. What impacts, both positive and/or negative, do you perceive were generated through the initiative surrounding [performance]?
 - a. Relationships? Material Resources? Partnerships? Learning experiences? Community awareness?

Interview Questions for Community and other Organizational Leaders

1. Can you share with me your experience of collaborating with [theater]?
 - a. How did you collaborate with community members and organizations other than [theater]?
 - b. What were some of the tasks you contributed to?
 - c. Why were you willing to collaborate with [theater] and others?
 - d. Is there anything you find particularly memorable from you experiences?
2. Is there anything in particular you were looking to accomplish through the initiative surrounding [performance]?
3. Do you find that you have built new relationships within [theater]?
 - a. Do you find that you have deepened relationships with [theater]?
4. What impacts, both positive and/or negative, do you perceive were generated through the initiative surrounding [performance]?

Interview Questions for General Participants

1. How are you associated with [theater]?
 - a. For how long?
 - b. What was/is your inspiration?
2. Why are you working in/collaborating with [theater]?
3. Can you please elaborate on your experiences relating to ...?
4. Can you please share with me some of the positive experiences you have had in relations to [theater]?
5. What are some challenges you have faced regarding community development in County?
6. What changes would you like to see in County?
7. How have you personally grown from your work pertaining to community development?
8. How would you like to see [theater] grow?

APPENDIX E

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM FROM FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR APPALACHIAN THEATER

Florida State University
Office of the Vice President For Research
Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
humansubjects@fsu.edu/850-644-8673

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/27/2018

To: Zechariah Lange

Address:

Department: URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

From: Florida State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research

A Model for Asset-Based Community Development in Rural Appalachia

The application that you submitted to this office regarding the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above has been reviewed by the Florida State University Institutional Review Board. Your project is determined to be **Expedited** per 45 CFR Â§ 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 11/25/2019 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by

the IRB prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the IRB. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to ensure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: William Butler, Advisor
HSC No. 2018.25691

APPENDIX F

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM FROM FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR SITTING IN THE SHADE TOGETHER THEATER

Florida State University
Office of the Vice President For Research
Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
humansubjects@fsu.edu/850-644-8673

EXEMPTION MEMORANDUM

Date: 5/6/2019

To: Zechariah Lange

Address:

Department: URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING

From: Florida State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research

Community Theater and Community Development in Water County, FL

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. The proposed research protocol is **Exempt** from human subjects regulations as described in per 45 CFR § 46.101(b)2.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This memorandum does not replace any departmental or other approvals that may be required.

The Committee expects that all relevant subject protection measures and ethical standards will be followed, as outlined in your proposal. No continuing review is required unless the nature of the project changes and it would affect the project exemption status.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project that would affect the exemption status must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to ensure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: William Butler, Advisor
HSC No. 2019.26952

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Zechariah Lange earned two bachelors from Stetson University in 2012 in environmental science and geography. Later, he earned his master's in public administration with a focus in emergency management and homeland security in 2016 from Florida State University. Noting the intersectionality of administration, geography, culture, and human life, he focused on participatory and embodied processes during the completion of his doctorate in urban and regional planning. Here, his research particularly seeks to question still further the relative absence of human and lived experience in normative planning. A domain that, in his mind, speaks to dignity, kindness, humanism, and individual expression and experience.