ABSTRACT

FROM COMMODITY TO CONVERSATION: APPLIED THEATRE, PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE MIAMI UNIVERSITY THEATRE DEPARTMENT

by Jaime M. Coaker

This creative thesis in applied theatre is from a participant research perspective focused on building community in Miami University’s theatre department. Borrowing from Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modern communities, I argue that America’s big business corporatized public higher education system has changed as community has changed overtime. This change reveals community from being defined synonymously with society to individualization. ‘Liquid moderns’ now use community as a commodity to meet their individualistic needs as a means of happiness and yet still find themselves truly alone. Though affecting all academic departments, this framework goes against the inherent community building discipline of theatre. Borrowing from Friends Provident, Michael Rohd, and Dale Savidge, I use applied theatre techniques to create spaces for conversation, empowerment, relationships, and transformation through performance, asset-based community building methods, civic practice, and spiritual and personal healing. According to Hans Georg Gadamar, Anthony P. Cohen, and Zygmunt Bauman, community in academia is through continuous deep engagement, interpretation, and conversation. In three different workshop groups, I engage liquid moderns in conversation through creative spaces for the purpose of empowering them in the direction of true community.
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Introduction:
Performance and Paradox

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term performance or the act of performing in two main ways. Though performance is defined as “the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function and how successfully it was performed, the capabilities of a machine, and the extent to which an investment is profitable”, performance is usually understood as “an act of staging or presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment or a person’s rendering of a dramatic role, song, or piece of music.” Performance then is both defined as the representation of artistry but also action, operation, effectiveness, and profitability. The term performance is used in business, sports, sex, arts, and other aspects of everyday life. Performance is not only what you perform (product) but also how you perform (process). It was in the 1980s that “the conception of performance has expanded, moving theatre aesthetics into the social, cultural and political domains” (Landy 2012, 129). Performance, specifically in the form of theatre, is now reaching outside of traditional artistic and theatrical spaces and being effective and profitable in everyday life spaces and situations.

Richard Schechner, well-known performance studies scholar, uses performance theory to examine rituals, ceremonies, sporting events and other everyday life activities and defines them as “twice behaved behaviors” also called “restored behaviors”. They are physical or verbal actions that are prepared, practiced, and rehearsed. These rehearsed behaviors are continually performed in everyday life and through study provides insight and understanding of our world and ourselves. Sociologist Erving Goffman’s The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life similarly analyzes aspects of family, work, and institutional life through the frame of performance. Goffman defines performance “as all activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Goffman 1959, 15-16). According to Goffman, all activity by any participant on any occasion that influences other participants is a performance. Goffman’s definition of performance builds on Schechner’s. The activity performed by any participant
can be defined as twice restored behaviors. However, Goffman’s definition of performance brings in a social relationship of influence between all participants. All participants have a part, role, or routine that plays a purpose in accomplishing this goal of influence. The influence that comes from all activity defines the performances’ purpose as well as success. Together, Schechner and Goffman add the concepts of rehearsal, relationship, and role to the definition of performance, and I would add to both the artistic and efficient action definitions of performance. Schechner and Goffman’s research also fuels the surge for the use of performance, in terms of theatre aesthetics, in social, cultural, and political domains.

By using performance as a tool to understand the cultural scripts of everyday life, Schechner and Goffman suggest performance becoming a lens for epistemology as well as a methodology for understanding self, the world, and how the self and the world converse and create meaning together. The use of performance as epistemology and a methodology could also be defined as “applied theatre”, or the use of ‘applying’ theatre techniques to everyday life social, cultural, and political situations for social change. Applied theatre is an umbrella term with multiple subset categories underneath as well as other similar umbrella term titles usually coined by the practitioner themselves. Jan Cohen Cruz, well-known applied theatre practitioner, uses the term ‘engaging performance’ as her term. In *Engaging Performance: Theatre as Call and Response*, Cohen-Cruz defines engage as “the act of choosing performance to respond to social controversies” and defines engaging performance as “the compelling expressive potential of performance that draws on a broad range of people involved in the social situation in question” (Cohen-Cruz 2010, 1). Cohen-Cruz engages performance in two main ways: by choosing performance as a method of response and as an avenue for compelling action. Cohen-Cruz’s definition of ‘engaging performance’ builds on Goffman’s social relationship of influence. An engaging performance has the purpose of compelling audiences with a social relationship of all the people involved working together around the social situation in question. As an applied theatre practitioner, Cohen-Cruz specifies engaging performances centered on social controversial situations in everyday life. Cohen-Cruz’s definition adds the element of the ‘response’ to those social controversies. Cohen-Cruz’s definition also centers on the choice. The choice of performance as a response as well as the act of choosing is engaging the
concepts of product and process. The process of engaging performance is the product of the choice.

Applied theatre work usually focuses on the process over the product, although in most situations “an aesthetic product [which doesn’t have to be a play or production] is created out of a dramatic process” (Prendergast et al 2009, 18). An engaging performance is a product, however, according to Cohen-Cruz, an aesthetic product can be the choice to respond through performance. Another product is the epistemology or the knowledge produced by the process of participants coming together to engage, interact, and respond to and through performance. A final product could be the compelled action produced from this social relationship of influence and engaging performance causing all participants to respond once more to the actual social controversy in question. Cohen-Cruz’s engaging performance allows for multiple opportunities to see performance as a choice, product, epistemology, methodology, process, and response.

But what makes this social relationship of influence possible in an engaging performance? There is “an ethos and an aesthetic of call and response” (Cohen-Cruz 2010, 1). In Engaging Performance, Cohen-Cruz studies different engaging performances under the lens of call and response. Some practitioners she uses are Bertolt Brecht, Tony Kushner, Augusto Boal. Brecht’s use of the alienation affect in his school of theatre called Epic Theatre was one of the first documented socially engaging forms of theatre. Brecht believed theatre wasn’t meant for the use of ‘escape or to feel good’, but that theatre should agitate and create a passionate desire in the audience to leave the theatre and do something. Tony Kushner chooses performance as a method of responding to very controversial topics such as religion and sexuality in America through his play Angels in America. Augusto Boal, another well-known applied theatre artist created a school of theatre called Theatre of the Oppressed. During an oppressive dictatorship in Brazil, Boal created theatre techniques that encouraged, influenced, and empowered the oppressed Brazilian citizens to take action in their society. Brecht, Kushner, and Boal use performance as a call and response around their social situations.

Call and response is a tradition used in African, Native American, and other indigenous communities in moments of worship, storytelling, and other community rituals. The leader calls out to the congregation where they then respond in unison. All involved
know what the calls and responses are which is very indicative of community. In an engaging performance, two calls and two responses take place. The first response and call is when the artists choose performance as their method. The second response and call is from the audience once compelled to act alongside the artists (not only in the performance space but also in the everyday life space). Though the two calls and two responses defined earlier are the main ones, small and significant calls and responses happen over and over during an engaging performance. And since all participants play an important role in an engaging performance, calls and responses can come from anywhere and all calls and responses are heard and meaningful. This “call and response” is the meaningful dialogue that allows for closer communication and conversation that is effective.

According to The Oxford English Dictionary, performance is also “the action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function and how successfully it was performed, the capabilities of a machine, and the extent to which an investment is profitable.” Though any artistic performance has a level of process, action, and effect, this mechanic and business-like quality of this definition of performance reveals a challenge and paradox. In Jon McKenzie’s book *Perform or Else*, he asserts a relationship between cultural, organizational, and technological performance. In our society today, our performance in these three different realms has become increasingly important but also crucial to our success in those realms. Terms such as 'high performance, fiscal performance, performance management, and performance excellence’ define performance as a standard to be achieved but also managed. As the title of the book alone suggest, this “perform...or else” mentality has turned performance from doing something well to failing (such as getting fired) if you don’t achieve the standard. This bar has become increasingly more challenging to reach as the relationship between the cultural, organizational, and technological intertwine and advance. Instead of just creating a standard of excellence, this ‘perform of else’ mentality has created a standard of pressure. If you don’t perform according to the standard of excellence culturally, organizationally, or technologically, you have failed in society. From performance being an artistic rendering, response to social controversies, call and response, aesthetic product from a dramatic process, and epistemology and methodology, this definition of performance defined by pressure, achievement, and possible failure creates a challenging paradox.
First, how can these two very different definitions be represented by the same word? McKenzie helps to answer this question. Because everything that is performance is put under one word when all types of performance are not the same, McKenzie argues, shows how globalized and even “too American” the term performance has become (McKenzie 2006, 7). As globalization increases, performance gains digital aspects, culture, organizations, and technology advance and progress, and people research, question, and redefine the term performance, the more contradicting it becomes. These three paradigms (cultural, organizational, and technological) are “dedicated to posing and reposing the question: what is performance?” (McKenzie 2006, 132). Henry M. Sayre says in a review of Jon McKenzie’s Perform of Else says, “a culture defined by performance constantly challenges the way things are” (Sayre 2003, 200). If our culture is defined by performance and performance constantly challenges the way things are, then our culture, organizations, and technology are always being challenged, changed as we keep asking the question what is performance. Since the 1980s, the concept and term performance has changed and constantly keeps changing and thus creates a term that is contradictory and creates a paradox within itself. In the simplest form, performance is what we do and how we do it. Schechner and Goffman define any activity as twice restored behaviors and influence. According to McKenzie, performance has become an American paradox causing cultural pressure and the need to ‘perform’, but, according to Cohen-Cruz, performance is a method of response, site of inquiry to understand ourselves and our world, and compelling force of dialogue and action to make our world a better place. In the hopes of seeking understanding and not creating more contradiction, I ask, what is performance and what are we performing?

The concept of performance is worth questioning, researching, and understanding because it affects every aspect of our everyday life. We human beings perform cultural scripts everyday. Applied theatre artists, Schechner, Goffman, and McKenzie have shown us how the concept of performance has entered everyday realms of social, cultural, organizational, political, and technological life while Cohen-Cruz has shown us how performance can be used as a lens to understand these aspects and a method of response to controversies in everyday life. Similar to performance, another constantly challenged and changing aspect in our culture is the concept of community. Community, like performance,
is so hard to define because it constantly keeps changing and has such different definitions under one word. The Oxford English Dictionary defines community as “a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.” This is the most common definition of community. These common interests or commonalities can be language, religion, socio-economic status, professional, where you live or play, physical or virtual/online. Community is performance, but from neighborhoods to social media, what are we performing about community? Moreover citing McKenzie, in this ‘perform or else’ society, are we performing ourselves or are we performing what the standards required of us? Through analyzing and responding to these questions about community through performance, we can come to an understanding of what we are performing, how that affects our society and concept of community, and how to move forward.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will be discussing the change of community. It has gone from where the society and the community were one in the same to community that is based on personal interpretation and individualism. These changes describe the problematic process to define, locate, and even ‘feel’ community as it has moved from neighborhoods to virtual and online and from public good to individual consumption. This change to individualization affects a major pillar in American society, public higher education. Public higher education was created for the public good to create educated citizens of America. As higher education becomes more focused on high performance, higher enrollment, tuition, and prestige, the students suffer under the debt, lack of educational attention, and civic engagement. Though all academic departments are affected by the reality of individualization and the change of community, a theatre department is uniquely affected because of its community building essence. As they struggle to balance the artistic performance and education with the organizational and financial performance of a department, they struggle with students and faculty members’ individualistic desires colliding with the collective departments desires.

In Chapter 1 *Individualized Commodity: Community and Theatre Departments*, I discuss, in more detail, the paradoxes of defining community today, how that relates to Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modern communities, and how his theory illuminates higher education and theatre departments as ‘liquid’ or unstable communities. As Bauman’s theory argues that community today is more found through individualization
rather than the public or social good, I argue that these changes parallels the recent changes in higher education and theatre departments. Though some theorists believe community is 'lost or dead', according to Bauman’s theory of hermeneutic communities, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s notion of ‘community as conversation’ in higher education, and the ability that applied theatre has to engage in conversation and dialogue through a ‘call and response’, I argue that applied theatre is the avenue of response for social change and community building in university theatre departments.

In Chapter 2 Professional, Civic, and Personal: How Applied Theatre Builds Community, I use three case studies of how applied theatre used in a professional business called Friends Provident, the civic world through well-known applied theatre/civic artist Michael Rohd, and personal healing by another well-known applied theatre artist Dale Savidge. These three case studies of best applied theatre practices involve three majors aspects and the paradoxes of performance and the pressure of workplace, civic, and personal life. These case studies reveal how to build community by creating spaces for embodied learning, relationships, and social and personal change even in the midst of the ‘perform...or else’ mentality.

In Chapter 3 Conversations: Case Study of Community Building in the Miami University Theatre Department, I describe the three applied theatre workshops I facilitated at Miami University that focus on having conversations about community that reveal the complexity of individualism and community. “Starting The Conversation” with Theatre 107 (introductory theatre major class) focusing on performance as a response to their interpretation of community, “Continuing The Conversation” with the Advisory Board (multiyear student liaison board to the theatre faculty) working on asset-based community building methodology that leads to interactive Town Hall (or all departmental community meetings) and “Broadening the Conversation” with Theatre 191 (introductory non-major theatre class) using more of the ethic of applied theatre in the classroom facilitating a lecture about the role of the audience that serves to educate the students on their role in live performance and the theatre department as well as and the role they believe the theatre department has in the university.
Chapter 1: Individualized Commodity: Community and Theatre in Higher Education

Introduction

In the 2000 National Bestselling book *Bowling Alone* (1995), Robert Putnam examined the decline of membership, participation, and ‘social capital’ in civic life stemming from several social, economical, and technological advances from the 1950s-1970s. “Since 1973, the number of Americans who report that ‘in the past year’ they have ‘attended a public meeting on town or school affairs’ has fallen by more than a third (from 22 percent in 1973 to 13 percent in 1993)” (Putnam 1995, 67). This decline in civic participation, he argues, has led to the collapse of American community and social connectedness. His research predicts less membership and trust as markers of the collapsing American community. Putnam’s evidence and arguments sparked a debate with Jean Cohen. In her 1999 chapter “American Civil Society Talk”, Cohen argued that certain kinds of association correlate to political discourse (and that a bowling league wasn’t one of them) and wasn’t concerned with whether membership correlates to national community or predicts future Americans lack of trust and objected to the whole ‘decline’ language Putnam used. Peter Levine, director of the Center of Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) quotes this debate in his article *Bowling Alone after (almost) 20 years* (2015). Levine agreed with Cohen 20 years ago but finds himself sympathizing with Putnam and the criticism he received. Levine said “the state of our political situation as a country speaks for itself.”

In 2014, The Washington Post said voter turnout was the lowest since World War II. This voter decline reveals a lack of connectedness but also trust in the American government and policy. However this lack of connectedness, trust, and membership has revealed disunited states. Nearing the end of the Obama Administration (2008-2015), one major example of disunity has been the race riots. White male cops have killed multiple black men causing an uprising of fighting, rioting, and louting in the African American communities in Ferguson, Missouri (2014) and Baltimore, Maryland (2015). The last major
race riot was in 1992 when Rodney King, a black man, was killed by a white police officer. Events such as these have caused blacks all over the country to feel as though they still do not matter as other Americans. This is just one example of disunity and there are many others.

Communities have also found themselves almost completely online as Americans have found some form of connectedness through social media. The Internet, smart phones, and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become the new public meetings, voter polling places, and church sanctuaries. 56-68% of smart phone users use their phones to follow and share the breaking news events such as Ferguson and Baltimore (Smith 2015). Though people aren’t gathering much in person anymore, they are still getting together and discussing the political, social, and civic issues plaguing them.

Henry Jenkins, America media scholar, suggests the use of social media in civic engagement. Called the “Digital Generation”, Jenkins argues that young people today have the power and means to participate in diverse and multi-connected ways for social change.

With the cop killings, many Americans blasted social media with hastags (#blacklivesmatter), comments, reposts of videos, news articles, and pictures bringing awareness, rallying together, speaking up, and demanding to be heard. Some even initiated and participated in peaceful protests offline and some were arrested. But for most Americans today, social media connectedness has become ‘Slacktivism’. The Oxford English Dictionary defines slacktivism as “actions performed via the Internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or involvement”. In the article “Slacktivism or Revolution: Is Social Media Doing the World any good?” Katie Wilkins questions the difference between participation and engagement. Social media has increased the level of participation [in the sense of liking, commenting, sharing, and creating an online social dialogue], challenges the global institutional powers of censorship and freedom of speech, and transcends social, political, and geographical barriers. We can make change online, but let’s work harder offline” (Wilkins, 2013). Levine citing Cohen would agree with Wilkins discussion of the need for Americans to take their free speech and democracy to form associations and use them effectively for public discourse and political action, online for the purpose of offline.
Putnam’s predications of less connectedness, membership, and trust were accurate, however, those three qualities taken from a bowling reference were just the beginning of this social and political discourse of America’s declining community. Though some Americans use social media as an organizing ground for social and political reform, it is mostly a façade for connectedness. This decline in connectedness has become race riots and social media. Though that was extreme and not to argue that America’s community was ever perfect, I am arguing however that a lack of true connectedness that can only be found in relationships and community both personally and nationally. For this thesis, I choose the American pillar of higher education to discuss the decline of American community. Again, not to argue that it was ever perfect, but that public higher education combines national and personal relationships and community, it was created to prepare educated citizens and leaders in our democratic community, higher education is linked to social change, and because of personal experiences the lack of connectedness does to community inside an academic department.

As stated above, public higher education was created to prepare educated citizens and leaders in our democracy for the public good. Public higher education was also specifically to provide free education to all students made possible by the American citizen taxpayers. Unfortunately in the 1800s, all people meant the same as white males. Women, African Americans, and other minorities weren’t allowed to participate. As time went on, public higher education became more inclusive. It also went from being free to a tuition-based model that created economic exclusion. There have also been many predictions about public higher education. Dr. Bill R. Path, president of the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology in his article, “Higher Education Paradigm Shift” discusses how throughout the 80s and 90s, university professors warned the students against the “dangers of being caught off-guard and how lives have been ruined, businesses destroyed, and governments crippled when they did not heed the warnings. History is filled with examples of new technologies, understanding, and methodologies that have redefined our paradigms” (Path, 2014). Though Dr. Path is confused at why those same teachers have remained quiet during the many paradigm shifts still remains hopeful for the institution. Two major paradigm shifts that happened simultaneously are social and economic inclusion and exclusion. “Educational attainment in the United States has increasingly been
linked to socioeconomic mobility” (Strong 2007, 51). From starting a tuition-based model in the 1960’s, public higher education has increasingly become more financial performance minded raising tuition costs, seeking higher enrollment, and ranking highest on the “U.S. News Best Colleges & Universities” list. While on the outside colleges and universities with the highest prestige are more attractive, Dr. Path’s statistics aren’t. Students have more debt and fewer opportunities for jobs after graduating from college. As of 2010, outstanding student loan debt (830 billion) has surpassed outstanding credit card debt (825.6 billion) in the U.S. Researchers also found that 8 out of 10 college graduates move right back in with their parents after graduation. 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor’s degree-holders under the age of 25 in 2011 reported themselves to be unemployed or underemployed. In 2012, the CCAP reported that as of 2008, there were 17 million college graduates working in jobs that did not require a degree. Universities are becoming more expensive, students are still unemployed, but also uneducated, prepared, or citizen leaders. However, there are some colleges and universities as well as researchers and practitioners working on ‘reviving citizenship’ in higher education. Harry Boyte, Co-director of the Center of Democracy and Citizenship at Augsburg College, Peter Levine at Tisch College, the home of CIRCLE (discussed above), and Dennis C. Roberts and Matthew R. Johnson at our very own Miami University (in Oxford, Ohio) using ‘deliberative’ pedagogical techniques for classroom, campus, and community transformation have shown that measures can be taken to bring back civic importance into public higher education. These same measures can be taken to bring education and community back but also to (perhaps for the first time) higher education.

This chapter continues by examining the term community and the challenges and paradoxes that come with defining it. Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modern communities illuminates and defines the decline of social connectedness and civic engagement through the historical change of community overtime. I argue that Bauman’s theory directly parallels with the change in public higher education and subsequently affecting the individual academic departments. I conclude the chapter choosing to call and respond to the lack of community in higher education through engaging performance. I argue that the use of applied theatre can be used to study, ‘resurrect’ community in higher education and create spaces for dialogue, transformation, change, and community.
Paradoxes in Defining Community

Community a concept and idea used in many fields and disciplines such as social sciences, sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy (to name a few) and each field/discipline defines community according to their framework and background. Though there isn’t one set definition of community, there are typical ‘guidelines’ or categories these definitions typically fall under. There are three paradoxes simultaneously at work that make defining community such a challenge.

The first paradox creates the two main categories under which most definitions of community fall: the tangible and the intangible. Community is both tangible and intangible and has tangible and intangible qualities. It is also important to note that not all theorists use every part of these definitions but my sample and combine with other concepts and ideas. That being said, the tangible is mostly defined as ‘geographical areas’, most specific as C. J. Galpin’s coined term in the social sciences ‘delineating rural communities’ or neighborhoods and least specific as ‘social networks’ like social clubs. The tangible defines ‘communities’ as the physical place where physical groups of people come together. In other words, community is the place and the people. Robert Putnam mostly spoke of the collapse of tangible communities, but even in discussing the decline of voting, participation, and membership in these tangible places, the lack of trust represents something intangible. The intangible is mostly defined as ‘attachment’ and ‘sense of belonging’ allowing for individuals to identify with their communities, however, there is another way of seeing the intangible.

Well-known theorist Anthony P. Cohen in his book The Symbolic Construction of Community argues that community is made by people’s repeated and deep engagement with it, physically, emotionally, and/or imaginatively. Cohen is arguing that community moves outside of geographical limitations and is made up of symbols like traditions and forms of communication. This sense of belonging, identity, and attachment doesn’t just happen because a community is a community. It happens through traditions, communication, and repeated and deep engagement with the concept of community and the community of people. Another well-known theorist Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities, predecessor to Cohen, suggests that through an imagined or collective
imagination of a community’s identity, one can understand themselves in the face of modernity. In other words, our identity comes from within the identity of a community and through community; individuals are more equipped to handle life’s changes and challenges. As Dr. Path stated earlier, history is full of new technologies, methodologies, and understandings that cause a paradigm shift. For Anderson and the rest of the world, modernity in the 90s created another shift in how the world worked. “The development of new technologies of mass communication, particularly the print media, is the precondition of all modern ‘imagined communities’ which ‘are to be distinguished not by their falseness/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined’ (Anderson 1991, 6). For Anderson, print media is our social media. These modern technologies allowed for people to communicate with more than just the people directly around them and become global ambassadors. According to the tangible definition of community, it is found in a physical place. These new technologies allowed for communities that transcended physical space. Anderson and Cohen call them imagined communities. Imagination is the ability to create things that don’t already exist or something that wasn’t real and now is real. Imagined communities are not ‘real’ based on the tangible definition of community. Anderson argues not to define them by if they are or aren’t communities based on our understandings of communities, but to define them by how they were imagined, created, or constructed. And according to Cohen, community is made up of restored behaviors of engagement, traditions, and communication, which define community as performance. With a group of people, in a physical space, an online space, or in a space you create, community becomes community and is performed through our repeated and deep engagement with it (or lack their of).

The second paradox comes when looking deeper into the tangible and intangible properties of community. To define a place, group of people, or imagined community, one defines what is not those things as well. Though community is most commonly understood as an inclusive term, community also excludes, even without intention but by definition. Gated communities and state lines are examples of tangible boundaries. The feelings of pride, otherness, and privilege in belonging to this church, that friend group, loving this team and hating that one are examples of intangible boundaries. Community can also be seen as an ‘exclusionary act’ (Smith, M. K. 2001). Performances of exclusion are
seen in the extreme cases of the KKK, the Nazi’s, or even very conservative religious organizations such as ISIS and in less extreme cases such as selective enrollment high schools, colleges, and universities and Greek organizations of sororities and fraternities. The issue isn’t just that people are included or excluded, but that people use boundaries to exclude others. This is often referred to as the ‘dark side of community’ as repeated and deeply engaged behaviors perform exclusion. These negative behaviors often make people weary of a ‘revival’ of the community that Putnam suggests is declining.

In the case of public higher education, exclusion was the ground on which it was built and yet while being very exclusive, it inclusively focused on creating a civic community of educated leaders. Though there have been efforts to widen participation, race, gender, and class has and continues to be dominant factors in creating social inequality in higher education. Moreover, the performance of inclusion is more than physical integration as community is more than just it’s tangible place. Perhaps the kind of community Putnam suggests is declining is because the increase of widened participation and inclusion. The kind of community he suggests traces back to the historic nineteenth century definition of community, where community is associated with ‘the hope and the wish of reviving once more the closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds’ (Smith, M. K. 2001). “In early modern thought community and society were virtually interchangeable: community designated the social domain of the ‘lifeworld’, the lived world of everyday life” (Delanty 2010, 2). In other words, this historic definition of community is where community and society meant the same thing, where community/society met the social, political, and economic needs of the time, and where community/society was made up of ‘civil bonds’. These civil bonds weren’t just a tradition or a practice, but they defined social relations. Everyone was ‘a part’ and ‘participated’ not only because it was necessary for survival, but also because it was the social domain of everyday life. There was a oneness and care for the whole community’s success for it defined one’s personal success, but it wasn’t until recently that community and society began being seen as different entities. There are often seen in opposition to each other.

In Key Concepts of Community Studies, Tony Blackshaw summarizes Zygmunt Bauman’s four stages of historical consciousness concerning the change from pre-modernity to ‘solid’ modernity to ‘liquid’ modernity as it refers to community. The first
stage is *Community Consciousness*, the period preceding modernity, or pre-modernity, where authenticity comes before identity, social life is built on necessity, and the church is the spiritual class. The second stage is *Class Consciousness*, modernity in its “solid” phase, where authenticity still comes before identity, society is based on production and capitalists and the industrialist entrepreneur is the spiritual class. The third stage is *Consciousness of classes*, where authenticity *still* comes before identity but an increasing number of people are able to imagine themselves in ways outside the class system, social hierarchies are increasingly defined by consumption and status criteria, and the legislators (doctors, professors etc.) are the spiritual class. The fourth stage, the stage we are in, is *Consciousness of communities*, modernity in it’s “liquid” phase, consumer-based sociality where social hierarchies are reflected in culture, individualization has emerged. Individualization is defined by a generalized demand for a better life, where society does not have the economic means for providing all social life and cultural groups the means to satisfy it. Authenticity for the first time comes after identity, and interpreters (*the cultural intermediaries* and the media) are the spiritual class (Blackshaw 2010, 12-14).

Along with the economic changes that affected the need for community, there are two other main changes from pre-modernity to the liquid modern phase of community: the option of community and the new spiritual class. These two mindset changes not only affect policies, infrastructure, and institutions, but also personal relationships and decision-making. Community has gone from being a necessity to being an option. Liquid moderns can now choose whether or not to engage in it based on how it benefits them. Community as an option is being used like any other commodity. Along with that, the spiritual class has gone from the church to the media or ‘cultural intermediaries’, which could be anything or anyone. Liquid moderns aren’t looking to God or the church much for their guidance and direction anymore, but to themselves and the media and cultural input they determine fit to guide their decision making to best suit them. Liquid moderns don’t need the historical definition of community to live a successful life. The consumer sociality and mentality brought about the empowering ideals of ‘the self-made man’ and “the American dream” which leads us to the last paradox of defining community.
Bauman’s Paradox in Defining Community

Though all four phases show some signs of consumption, business entrepreneurship, and social hierarchies, one thing that did remain the same with the first three phases was that authenticity still came before identity. In the liquid modern phase, identity comes before authenticity. Identity and “individualization rather than community sets the template” for lives today as community/society once did in the pre-modern phase of community (Blackshaw 2010, 33).

As Bauman points out ‘none of us, or almost none, believes (let alone declares) that they are pursuing their own interests’, but that is exactly what a life governed by individualization demands of each and everyone of us. Community is merely a conduit for our individualized hopes and fears, and it is the fact that men and women know that they are today truly alone that is what makes it so absorbing. Indeed, if community cannot help but be absent, modern men and women nonetheless miss it in their individuality, in the privatized style of independence which they value even more, and which they consider to be the supreme source of their happiness. It is this observation that holds the most important clue to the central meaning of community in liquid modernity. Liquid moderns only want community the way they want community: individually wrapped for individual consumption…liquid men and women are the point of their own orientation, their own landmarks.

(Bauman 2006, 114)

In this quote, Bauman points out four important points: community is a conduit; liquid moderns are truly alone; community cannot help but be absent; and individualization is a source of happiness. Community for the liquid modern has become a conduit, avenue, or method for meeting ones needs, hopes, and fears. As liquid moderns fear they won’t have their needs met, they hope that individualization will meet them and make them happy. However, at the intersection of their hopes and fears, liquid moderns know they are truly alone. This loneliness comes from a phase of life governed by
individualization rather than community (or society). But if community cannot help but be absent, liquid moderns have to be so absorbed in meeting their individual needs. They have no choice. Since pre-modern community doesn’t meet the social, political, and economic needs, a liquid modern must govern and meet their own needs, in their own way. Community is a conduit for individual happiness. As liquid moderns individually choose to govern and guide themselves to meet their own needs, though no one would admit it, liquid moderns engage in community to meet those needs. Moreover, liquid moderns have become simultaneously the promoters of commodities and the commodities they endorse”. (Blackshaw 2010, 33) Community has become a commodity.

However, “the starting point of Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modern community is the paradox that it was only when we were no longer sure of community’s existence that it became absolutely necessary to believe in it” (Blackshaw 2010, 33). This is the third paradox that illuminates why defining community is challenging. Bauman argues that community has become individualization and a commodity. ‘Community cannot help but be absent’ and if we are ‘no longer sure of community’s existence’ points beyond much more than Putnam’s decline language suggests. Modern sociologists such as Robert Nisbet, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Max Weber noted the decline of institutions, autonomy, and the rise of the modern centralized state led to the sense of the loss of community. This ‘loss’ language progressed to a ‘death’ language. The Future of Community: The Death of Community is Greatly Exaggerated is a collection of essays by Austin Williams, Dave Clements, Alastair Donald and more discussing how communities have fallen apart especially in public spaces, however, Alastair Donald in the conclusion declares the ‘death’ is greatly exaggerated and provides strategies for ‘revival’ which I will discuss later in this thesis.

Whether decline, loss, or death, a change in community is evident and according to Bauman, it is absolutely necessary to believe in community. Why is Bauman suggesting believing in community? There is a value in community for human beings. Though society is “succeeding” and individuals are finding their happiness in individualization, they are not only lonely but truly alone. Bauman’s use of the term ‘liquid’ comments on/in the uncertainty that liquid moderns find themselves. As economic, political, and social life transitioned from this ‘solid’ rooted and stable place to this ‘liquid’, uncertain, and insecure
place, liquid moderns are (also) longing for “some resemblance of belonging, rootedness
and respite in community (Bauman 2006, 34).” Liquid moderns are longing for community,
relationship, senses of belonging, and stability; however, don’t know where to find it. The
historical definition of community cannot exist in the age of individualism. So why does
Bauman suggest ‘believing’ in community? Believing that community does have value and
is ‘necessary’ for successful social life but also believing in such a way that causes action
thus making community present and not absent. The historic definition of community may
not be possible today, however, liquid moderns who believe can kindle a revival of civil
bonds, harmony, and respite.

The Liquid Modern University

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the institution known as the most
‘impervious to change’ had no choice but to change with the ever-changing world (Keer
1982, 115). The technological, political, social, and economic changes in society at large
completely affected America’s public higher education system causing higher education to
leave it’s own pre-modern phase and enter a liquid modern university phase of community.

In From Master Plan to No Plan: The Slow Death of Public Higher Education, Aaron
Bady and Mike Konczal give an overview of the change from higher education with the
master plan (the original purpose of higher education) to a plan they define as “no plan”.
They begin the article with the first major change that affected the entire funding structure
of public institutions. In the 1960s during Ronald Reagan’s governance of the state of
California, University of California at Berkley students began rioting the numerous amounts
of fees being taxed them as they got their education. The students began to exercise their
right of freedom of speech by rioting, skipping classes etc. to fight back against these
increasing fees. Reagan believed if students realized the privilege of their free education,
they would try trying to ruin it with their skipping class to riot. Though mainly to get the
students to stop protesting (which didn’t happen), Reagan cut funding for California’s
higher education system and shifted to a tuition based funding model. During his
presidency in the 1980s, Reagan continued putting forth less funding for public higher
education causing a major shift for all colleges and universities to the tuition based funding
model. Also in the 1960s, Freedom Summer\(^1\), the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study gave African Americans the right to ‘education for all’. In 1970, during the Vietnam War, four students at Kent State University in Ohio were killed by the Ohio National Guard troops during an anti-war protest. Because of anti-war protests and many other reasons, the government pulls a lot of funding for public higher education leaving institutions to restructure and reinvent themselves. Universities began catering to what the students want as far as services and curriculum, more ‘non traditional students’ like part-time, transfer, and older students began to be admitted. In 1980, the Mount Holyoke phenomenon was discovered: charging higher tuition leads to a greater number of applicants, also a higher quality of applicants, leading to more exclusion. To the college student and parent, higher price means higher prestige and thus higher pride. The combination of the need to restructure, reinvent, and the Mount Holyoke phenomenon really launched higher education into the new paradigm. In the 1990s, the Internet also caused another major transformational change to the educational system (and our world). Courses are now offered online and universities like Phoenix University, which are mainly online, become a reality. Students can now obtain a university degree without ever having to engage in community learning type atmospheres. Smart boards, smart phones, tablets, digital books, mobile learning, etc. are responses to the new world of technology but also to the desire of the students for these kinds of classroom techniques. In 2003, the Higher Education Act was amended and provided more funding for low and middle-income students, which allowed more working class students to get a greater chance at higher education, however, in 2008, the Great Recession caused another drastic shift in the trajectory of more tuition and debt to skyrocket for university students. Dr. Path’s statistics stated above have Americans questioning if going to college is even beneficial anymore.

Today “students are our customers, their tuition payments our revenue streams, their time-to-degree sometimes called thoughtput, a metic of success”(Keer 1994, 9). Public higher education has moved to becoming a business with ‘high performance culture.’ The University must compete and perform at top rate to continue to be competitive, succeed, and meet higher standards of ‘excellence’ that Bill Readings in The University in Ruins terms

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\(^1\) The summer of 1964, 1,000 white college students and black civil rights workers went to the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio (now a part of Miami University) for
as a potent performative. “Everyone wants excellence, implicitly, yet dare we ask: excellent at what?” (Reading 1996, 9). But also being excellent means being ‘attractive’ and universities are proving more and more that they are willing to give up good education for worldwide recognition. Universities are excellent at competing for the highest ranking on “U.S. News Best Colleges and Universities” list as instruction, preparation, and opportunity for students is becoming second. University prices continue to go up, a rationing of classes and funding for specific departments has begun, and more and more students are getting left behind. “Instead of committing to make room for all students, the state now educates only those it has room for” (Bady et all 2012, 14). Defeating the whole purpose for creating these public institutions, students leave with more debt, less job opportunities, perhaps more skills. Students go to college to have more opportunities to excel and succeed and yet have fewer opportunities but much more debt putting them perhaps far worse than had they not gone to college. There are more and more college dropouts and “do-it-yourself world of citizen researchers and entrepreneurs” than successful college graduates (Cole 2015, 8). However, parents and students choose to partake in higher education for they believe that a big name school will get them the best job for the best life they could possibly have. The students engage in the university in two different ways. Some students are choosing not to participate in university life if they can get their economical and social needs met better without a bachelors degree and some students are choosing to participate, though while accruing debt, believe a degree from a well renown university still holds weight in the competitive world of employment. Dr. Path believes that the yardstick that higher education should be measured against is if its students get jobs in their field of study upon graduation. He also suggests that students (and faculty) need to start demanding another paradigm shift back to where it was really about their good.

Above I described two characteristics that make the university a liquid modern university: individualism and financial performance. The third characteristic is what Nicholaus Mills The Corporatization of Higher Education calls the university: ‘elastic’ for it’s ability to change to meet its student customer needs. According to Bauman, the elastic or liquid university is now more than ever founded on uncertain - or even no ground as the article From Master Plan to No Plan suggests as the university continues to redefine and restructure its model. It is even stability in its instability. Moreover, to use Clark Keer’s
phrase, the university has become an ‘economic experience’ of elasticity, individualism, attractiveness, and high performance. It is now functioning as a big business university corporation instead of an institution of education, opportunity, and community. This model has directly affected all academic departments. However, in this thesis, I am focusing on the paradox of a theatre department between its liquid modern qualities and the collaborative, educational, and transforming qualities of theatre.

Paradoxes of the Liquid Theatre Department

In the 1920s, campus theatre was considered ‘amateur’, extracurricular, informal, education, for community engagement purposes, but also limited. Under the umbrella term of applied theatre, there is a form of theatre called community-based theatre. According to Jan Cohen Cruz in Local Acts, “community based-art is a field in which artists, collaborating with people whose lives directly inform the subject matter, express collective meaning” (Cohen-Cruz 2005, 1). Campus theatre brought forth educational, political, and community development through its collaborative and ritualistic form of art. Pageantry was a popular and critical form of local community arts that challenged the status quo by shifting access to power and identity politics. Pageants were a ‘reenactment’ allowing actors to play themselves as well as symbols of the community issues being discussed and expressed. Pageants were one form of community-based performance that took place on university campuses. Some pageants in the 1920s were used to increase women’s rights in American society. Pageants “relied on broad participation, heightened, simplified action, and highly public ‘stages’ for efficacy” (Cruz 2005, 19). But during the nineteenth century, a growing discourse between ‘amateur’ and ‘professionalism’ began to change university theatre as deeper interest in specialized instruction began to emerge. In the 1960s, growth in curricular and extra-curricular theatre activity turned into an equivalent of a theatre major and minor through community-based art was still happening on campuses. However, ‘theatre majors or minors’ weren’t hired because they weren’t experienced or trained enough through these theatre programs. Students began demanding university theatre programs to restructure and focus more on pre-professional training that would prepare students for the real world of theatre. This led to the formation of theatre departments in
universities worldwide. University theatre began the transition from a pre-modern phase to a liquid modern theatre discipline/program/department phase. University theatre transitioned from its pre-modern phase of focusing on “practical success in the community or on the campus and attempts to reflect important aspects of the world to that community” (Hobgood 1964, 157) and to a liquid modern phase of professionalism and individualism.

Theatre programs continued to transform with the introduction of performance studies in the 1980s. This ‘movement’ happened alongside movements of “feminism, multiculturalism, theory, cultural studies, as well as disciplinary critiques, canon wars, and a host of other concurrent debates” and this concept of “interdisciplinarity” (Jackson 2004, 23). Performance studies, the study of various types of performance, draws from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, theory, performing arts. Theatre departments began to encompass dance and performance studies as a part of their curriculum and culture. Performance studies have been challenged for its instability as an emerging discipline because it is difficult to understand, pin down, and define. Some refer to performance studies as ‘post discipline’. Shannon Jackson in Professing Performance borrows from Sigmund Freud and Sverre Sjolander to discuss the sameness/difference at the heart of interdisciplinarity. From Sjolander, Jackson discusses the “we are all alike model of cross-disciplinary interaction.” Different disciplines have similarities and benefits they can offer, however this ‘model’ has become “everyone is just like me.” And like Freud’s discourse on narcissism, Jackson discusses the “narcissism of minor sameness”. Interdisciplinary studies and performance studies have sameness/difference constructs that work at an institutional and intimate level in “identity formation” (Jackson 2004, 32). In other words, as performance studies caused theatre departments to become more interdisciplinary, it struggled with having its own identity, as the department as a whole but also for those individual theatre practitioners. As the study and art becomes all the same, nothing then is different. And if nothing being different, identities get confused. This is very interesting in that theatre artists engage in taking on other identities, however, only to understand a world of identities that assist them more in understanding themselves.

However, this isn’t the first time that the theatre discipline was lost or confused with other disciplines. As stated above, theatre hasn’t historically been it’s own ‘discipline’
let alone department. Theatre was traditionally been combined with the Speech discipline into one department. Harry Langdon surveyed American colleges to better understand the relationship between speech and theatre departments. In *Theatre's Relationship to Speech and Other Disciplines in Higher Education*, he documented that most institutions support speech and theatre as two separate disciplines yet some combine them for the reason of economy and efficiency calling it an “established practice” (Langdon 1975, 19). Sometimes speech was put into the English department whereas theatre was in the Fine Arts. Some institutions wanted bigger or smaller departments so that determined some of the combining or separating. Either way, it depends on the needs of that institution, though separation is the preferred response. Regardless of institutional need, Langdon uncovers the misunderstanding of the discipline that is all too apparent. “Too often speech in such situations becomes ‘oral English’ rather than a study of communication while drama is limited either to presenting readers’ theatre or illustrating the dramatic works studied in the literature courses” (Langdon 1975, 20). In other words, there is a difference between illustrating dramatic texts and the performative act of bringing those texts to life which theatre does. Though English, speech, and drama or theatre have similar qualities that could make them interdisciplinary, there are unique differences that need to displayed and developed for either discipline to truly thrive. For example, “drama derives from the Greek word dran (meaning ‘to make or do’) and theatre from theatron (meaning ‘viewing place’) (Taylor 2003. 37-42). Theatre has a viewing quality that drama or even English doesn’t necessarily have.

Along with these discourses about theatre as a discipline, department, and identity, budget cuts and theatre program closures in university programs in Canada sparked a conference asking the question “how can theatre and performance studies thrive in the corporatized or ‘big business’ university?” University programs hire consultants such as Robert Dickeson (1999), the author of *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance* (revised and updated in 2010) to help their institutions run better as businesses. Dickeson’s list of criteria and metrics of programing allocation measurement is applied to every program and department equally. This means that theatre programs are measured according to the same metrics as philosophy, engineering, and even parking services. Susan Bennett, scholar and speaker at
the conference, defines performance studies as “an economic proposition... to see performance studies as responsive to and invested in an experiential and transformative economy... for what else is a university education? We might improve our return by championing the performance studies brand” (Alvarez 2015, 75). Bennett argues using theatre and performance skills in this ‘perform or else’ culture of the big business imperatives required in universities today. Theatre allows for two of the most compelling educational theories: experiential learning and multiple intelligences such as linguistically, logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Gressler 2002, 88-89). Theatre is a wholly integrated art that doesn’t just create well-rounded artists, but well-rounded human beings supplying them with practical and interdisciplinary skills. This is why Thomas Gressler argues that theatre is the essential liberal art in the American University, as other practitioners at the ATHE (Association of Theatre in Higher Education) 2012 and 2013 conferences continue to discuss to this very day in the Theatre as an Liberal Art Panel. It is the skills taught and learned from this liberal art that Bennett suggests as the method of thriving in big business universities.

Academic departments must adhere to the pressures of the institutions as well as the intimate pressures of student and faculty demand. According to Bauman, they have no choice but to focus on high performance, individualism, and function like a business. By engaging in the department to meet their hopes of education and employment, faculty and students use departments as a commodity. Theatre, however, is about artistic performance but like performing in terms of business, theatre departments are full of the competitive ‘high performance culture’ of getting cast in the best role, designing the best set, or directing the best play. But what a theatre department has that is uniquely different than other liquid modern academic departments is the close intimate working relationships. These relationships reveal the constant tension between community and individualization. Students and faculty collaborate on productions, projects, research etc. Theatre student and faculty engage in professional and personal relationships as they collaborate and create theatre. There is without a doubt community that is created in long night rehearsals, grueling tech weekends, cast parties, and trying to get other work done while still being a functioning member of society. There is camaraderie, inside jokes, and beautiful art created among these productions. But as the curtain closes and striking (or breaking down the set)
ensues, does that community then get broken down and stored waiting around for the next production to come alive once more? What does community in the theatre department look like outside productions? Never do I ever want to suggest taking the theatre out of the theatre department, however, I do want to suggest that there is more citizenship we can offer each other along with our art. Theatre departments build community through making theatre and yet are full of individualized humans in a department inside a university where individualization is the basis of happiness. According to Bauman, community is still being experienced through individualism, however, this individualism eats at the very core of what theatre is and does. However, there is a lack of community that is experienced outside of the productions. As a department, the relationships always exist. Bennett says that theatre can thrive in big business universities if it utilizes it’s unique skills. If community is inherently a foundation of theatre, can a theatre department in liquid modernity start believing in community and not individualism? If so, what does that look like?

**Applied Theatre Builds Community**

In her article, *The Theatre and the University: Two “Last” (and Lasting) Human Venues*, Catherine Cole makes an interesting comparison between theatre and universities. Cole discusses how both theatre and universities are in danger of dying out, however, theatre has always managed to ‘resurrect’ itself. Alan Read says, that “theatre is the last human venue, unlike the irreparable world, has always been a place where you are given the chance to begin again, to recall how intimate an engagement could be and how truly political such recent acts could become” (Read 2008, 279). The performative and transformational experience of theatre allows for resurrection in the face of extinction, regeneration of lives and relationships, and a chance and chances to start over, begin again, and take changes. In other words, theatre has the unique ability to make something out of nothing, call things into being, create space, chances, options, and hope. This is how Susan Bennett sees theatre and performance studies disciplines thriving in the age of big business universities. Cole suggests that universities can learn from the field of theatre the ability of “performing its institutional self”. However the question is, what does the institution want to perform? What does the theatre want to perform? To the theatre, high performance
culture “is our ability to dream and to act at the same time, our ability to combine idealism with realism” (Cole 2015, 10). To finish Philip Taylor’s quote: “Drama derives from the Greek word dran (meaning ‘to make or do’) and theatre from theatron (meaning ‘viewing place’) which, when combined seem to indicate the process of action and reflection which lie at the heart of applied drama/theatre praxis” (Taylor 2003. 37-42). The specific field of applied theatre allows for a dream and act or reflection and action process that truly allows for an experience of community restoration.

Augusto Boal, one of the founding fathers of applied theatre would call the action and dreaming, transitive learning. “The notion of transitivity in Boal’s work is central to understanding how aesthetic space restores vitality to social practices. It’s an embodiment of human imagination brought out of abstraction. In that space, transitive learning, engaged citizens, and real transformation can take place” (Boal 2006, 126). Hans-Georg Gadamar in The Academic Community says, “Community is a conversational process, a ‘becoming’ that is never fully achieved, a process that we must choose and continuously commit to” and it is “useful in a process of community-building within an academic institution” (Hall 2007, 87-88). Borrowing from Cohen’s notion of symbolic community being constructed through deep engagement and forms of communication, Gadamar suggests that community, specifically in academia, is through conversation. In the liquid modern community, Bauman also argues that hermeneutic communities are the only possible communities. Hermeneutic originates from the Greek words hermeneuin and hermeneutikos which means ‘to interpret’ and ‘expert in interpretation’. In other words, community is a ‘hermeneutical exercise’ of interpretation (Blackshaw 2010, 27). Interpretation happens through deep engagement in community, conversation, forms of community, identity, action and reflection. Interpretation evokes feelings of nostalgia, recognition, ownership, meaning, and choices. Interpretation is individualization for the liquid modern. The liquid modern chooses to engage, converse, identify, act, and reflect which creates more meaning and community. It is this continual act of engagement in interpretation that according to Cohen, Gadamar, and Bauman is community in academia. Augusto Boal uses applied theatre techniques such as embodiment to create aesthetic spaces for transitive learning of any form.

As stated in the introduction, theatre is a subset of performance that strives to mirror, reflect, and respond to everyday life through providing a visual representation of
life on stage. In *The Future of Community: Reports on a Death Greatly Exaggerated*, Dave Clements discusses a ‘participatory paradigm’ of communication, ethos, and responsibility that is the approach to community building (Donald 2008, 183). However Clements argues much more than participation, but a need to reject of the new ‘managerial approach’ to community. He argues that it is not individualism that is the key problem to community but the community management and regulation that is. For regulated community doesn’t produce genuine feelings, relationship, and meaning. Communities need the space to choose for themselves what acting responsibly means (187). Clements argues for empowering individuals in the direction of community. In the next chapter, I will discuss how applied theatre empowers individuals, creates spaces, and builds community. Theatre makes dreams or beliefs into reality by artists coming together and creating their dreams out of nothing. By empowering artists in the direction of community, it is more than possible to hope in community in liquid modernity through applied theatre.
Chapter 2:  
Professional, Civic, and Personal:  
How Applied Theatre Builds Community

What is Applied Theatre?

“Interactive theatre” in communities for social and political means has been around long before terms such as applied drama, theatre, and performance were formed. As stated in the Introduction, Augusto Boal and Bertolt Brecht were pioneers in this field. But it wasn’t until the mid 1990s that Helen Nicholson, writer of Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre, first heard any of these terms mentioned above. Judith Ackoyrd (2000) was one of the first to point out that applied theatre was this umbrella term for theatre practices that are applied to ‘educational, institutional and community contexts’ (Nicholson 2011, 241). According to Dani Snyder-Young in Theatre of Good Intentions: Challenges and Hopes for Theatre and Social Change, applied theatre refers to “A wide range of practices in which participatory dramatic activities and/or theatre performances are used for a broad set of purposes including education, community building, rehabilitation, conflict resolution, and advocacy” (Snyder-Young 2013, 4). In other words, applied theatre is the use of applying theatre techniques such as warm up exercises, games, and activities like improvisation, role-playing, creative brainstorming, and storytelling that allows for participation, purpose, and sometimes performance on social topics. Other practices under the term applied theatre are “TIE (Theatre in Education), Popular Theatre, Theatre in Health Education, Theatre for Development, Prison Theatre, Museum Theatre and Reminiscence Theatre, Action Theatre, Bibliodrama, Engaged Theatre, Ethnodrama, Grassroots Theatre, Playback Theatre, and Sociodrama” (Landy 2012, 130). In non-traditional settings such as classrooms, prisons, and even street corners, applied theatre “engages with areas of social and cultural policy”. Moreover also provides different ways of therapeutic healing called Drama Therapy, community development, and facilitating difficult conversations and dialogues and the list goes on (Landy 2012, 130).
Robert Landy says that theatre has the power to “reveal more clearly the way the world is working” and to “address something beyond the form itself” (Landy 2012, 130). All fields help us understand more about our world and speak about the deeper things in life. Theatre’s unique ability comes from representing, exploring, and commenting about everyday life on stage right before your eyes and tapping into your personal world emotionally and mentally. But what makes applied theatre different than traditional theatre? Judith Ackoyd says that it is the focused intentional work with a goal. Applied theatre work centers on context and techniques as well. Artists adapt the techniques for their particular context and to achieve their specific goal. (It is also important to note again that the ‘product’ of applied theatre isn’t always a performance, but sometimes the goal and result can be dialogue, education and understanding, or relationship.) With the ability to be so specific, applied theatre artists can work with the world and in the world to address issues and accomplish their goal beyond the realms of the relationship and space of traditional theatre.

Since the emergence of these terms around 2000, undergraduate and masters programs called applied drama/theatre/performance also began to emerge. It was through the emergence of these terms (and university programs) that scholars, artists, and practitioners were alerted to the professional, theoretical, political, civic, and personally therapeutic values these practices provide. However, it isn’t just the emergence of these terms that is important, it is the timing, says Nicholson in her article “Applied Drama/Theatre/Performance”. These terms mark a “resurgence of community arts and educational theatre that sheds light on these principles of activism, social engagement, and a re-imagining, re-envisioning, and re-conceptualizing of the new millennium” (Nicholson 2011, 242). Bauman would argue that this resurgence is people beginning to believe in community again. Nicholson (along with other applied theatre practitioners) understands

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2 NYU Steinhardt, Pacific University, Trevecca Nazarene University offer majors and minors in applied theatre. University of North Carolina Wilmington offers applied performance classes under the B.A. degree in Theatre. Kennesaw State University offers a Theatre and Performance Studies B.A. Graduate: USC School of Dramatic Arts and City University in New York (CUNY) offer Master’s degree in Applied Theatre. Eastern Michigan offers both undergraduate and graduate programs in applied theatre. University of Texas at Austin offers an M.F.A. in Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities.
but doesn’t focus on choosing one word and definition for this kind of work, but rather positioning oneself in the discourse and personal context. For this the purpose of thesis, I will be using the term applied theatre to display the concept of applying theatre to community building, but as stated in Chapter 1, “community-based theatre or art” would be the most specific term for the type of applied theatre I will engage in Chapter 3.

**Applied Theatre: Opportunities and Limitations in Building Community**

Theatre is a live, public, felt, heard, shared, and momentary experience. Theatre is also collaborative problem solving and a community building experience. Helen Nicholson, in *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* said, “There is nonetheless a concern for social inclusivity and community building through the process of making theatre” (Nicholson 2005, 12). When discussing applied theatre, which has deep roots in community, building community through applied theatre shouldn’t be a challenge. Though there is scholarship on how applied theatre techniques have successfully ‘built community’, Snyder-Young in *Theatre of Good Intentions* questions if “theatre is indeed the intervention needed to make the change for which they fight” (Snyder-Young 2013, 17). Building community could imply a lack of community or building upon the community that is already there. Either way, to build community, a change in action must take place. Snyder-Young says change is hard to make. “Change is an ongoing, unstoppable process, coupled with a radial hope that the theatre can nudge the direction of this change just a little towards social justice, yet Baz Kershaw, an important applied theatre theorist, admits that twenty years of political theatre did not stop Thatcher rising to power” (Snyder-Young 2013, 10). If theatre artists believe theatre is the avenue for the change they want to create, Snyder-Young and Kershaw believe that artists need to think more strategically about what tactics will cause the ‘most effective opposition to the status quo’. Because according to Kershaw, just doing applied theatre doesn’t guarantee social change. Jonathan Neelands, another important applied theatre artist, says that actual change must ‘address the underpinning social and economic structures’ (Neelands 2007, 311). To build community, an artist must effectively think about the social and economic structures hindering community. This artist must then think of tactics that can really oppose those structures and decide if theatre is the way to
oppose those structures. Lastly, an artist must realize that it will be an ongoing process of opposition to create effective and lasting change.

In her book, Snyder-Young lays out limitations and challenges to creating change through theatre. Here are some of them: artists’ privilege and otherness, the uncertainty of participation, artists’ inability to respond quickly, and organizational rules and guidelines. Snyder-Young is very practical in describing personal and institutional challenges that limit change from happening. Two of the personal challenges involve the artist. Along with artist needing to think more strategically, they need to be aware of their own privileges and ‘otherness’. In working with groups of people, the artists are typically ‘outsiders’ coming on the ‘inside’ to come alongside this group of people. In *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond*, James Thompson says applied theatre artists are “only ever visitors within the disciplines which we apply our theatre” (Thompson 2003, 20). Applied theatre artists must work hard to be aware of their biases, preconceived notions, and experiences and realize it’s about joining their skills with the community to problem solve together. This first challenge is challenging artists to know who they are and how it affects whom they are working with. Along with knowing who they are, artists must be aware that applied theatre work is real life work and isn’t predictable. Certain techniques in certain contexts can cause difficult conversations that could result in dangerous consequences. If artists aren’t prepared, they may be caught off guard and then unable to react and respond quickly when uncomfortable situations arise. This brings us to the uncertainty of audience participation. This third personal challenge is more focused on the participants the artist is working with. People are unpredictable and thus participation is uncertain. Sometimes people are excited and willing and other times closed off and preoccupied. Sometimes social issues being discussed become reinforced rather than disrupted and changed during a discussion. Snyder-Young is right to use language such as challenge and limitation reminding artists to be aware and prepared but also gives hope that they can be overcome. The fourth challenge comes from the institution or organization upon the artist and their work. Applied theatre artists are usually funded by the organizations of the communities they are working with and must adhere to their rules and guidelines, which can limit the effectiveness of the work.

Applied theatre is an “in the moment” real life work that involves real people, real stories, and real problems. A humble, delicate, trained, and prepared artist aware of these
limitations and challenges must meet this ethical and challenging work. But what are the specific challenges and limitations but also opportunities to building community though theatre in a liquid modern university theatre department? There are many things at work in a liquid modern theatre department, however, I want to focus on three specific realms: the professional, the civic, and the personal. By professional, I am referring to the business side of a theatre department. By civic, I am referring to the civil bonds and relationships. By personal, I am referring to the individuals. The professional, civic, and personal realms do overlap and have their own challenges when it comes to community through the lens of liquid modernity. However, in this chapter, I will use three case studies describing how theatre is being used in professional, civic, and personal realms toward community building and social change.

**Professional: Friends Provident, Business, and Theatre**

Theatre is being used in business organizations worldwide for leadership and management development, better communication, facilitation and much more. Richard Feltham in “A Critical Stage for Learning? Efficiency and Efficacy in Workplace theatre-based leadership skill development” provides a case study from the company Friends Provident who, in the process of an organizational transition, has overlooked interpersonal skills and behaviors as they trained employees in technical knowledge. Changes in Friends Provident included financial structures (security of pension), modifications in operating structures, and the roles and numbers of staff members. This case study questions whether or not theatre and business can be combined with the “imperatives of efficiency” and the “tensions of organizational life”. It also questions if participatory theatre can open a space for dialogue and reflection that isn’t common among leadership training and these organizational tensions. In other words, Feltham is questioning whether theatre is the avenue for the change they’re trying to create and if it allows for a call and response of Cohen-Cruz’ engaging performance. Feltham suggests ‘matrix management’ to create this space for dialogue and reflection (Feltham 2013, 253). Matrix Management is a management technique that allows for adaptable structures of working or “more fluid operating structures” that allows for adaptability within the everyday changes in the
workplace. Friends Provident wants to create a space where their employees can talk about what work life is like, to talk about the transitions and changes, as well as leadership skills. In the face of many changes, Friends Provident isn’t looking to create another rigid business environment, however, one that is flexible, adaptable, and fluid in structure. Theatre-based learning not only creates space for dialogue and reflection, but it restructures and teaches Friends Provident how to be adaptable as they continue to deal with operating changes in their business. By adapting theatre exercises into their management structure, Friends Provident reveals their growth in emotional intelligence.

Daniel Goleman in *Working with Emotional Intelligence* says that the need for “emotional intelligence” has grown increasingly in corporate training and that drama “is a natural vehicle for the experiential learning of social and emotional skills” which is proving beneficial to overall company efficiency. This holistic look at workplace life is done through a theatre-based activity such as role-playing. Friends Provident brought in professional actors to role-play with employees over “typical problematic work-based conversations” (Gluck et al 2007, 130). This role-playing became a rehearsal process for the employees - for those in the scene and those watching from the audience. The actors facilitated these role-plays much like a joker in Augusto Boal’s Forum Theatre (in Theatre of the Oppressed). In the role-playing, there were two categories: role-playing in future situations and role-playing in past or historic situations. In the future situations, alternative approaches or “interventions” took place in the problematic conversations that became a rehearsal space for future dialogue. This rehearsal process allowed for “experiential learning” or learning by doing. In the past or historic situations, it is more similar to Augusto Boal’s Rainbow of Desire techniques (also in Theatre of the Oppressed), in that it is not a rehearsal for the future, but a healing process to overcome the personal trauma a previous situation caused. In both kinds of role-play, employees experienced “eureka moments” through the combination of skilled of the actors as well as the methods effectiveness that allowed for a ‘level of realism’ for the employees.

Constantin Stanislavski, famous for his method of realistic acting has three techniques that were used in Friends Provident’s role-playing leadership training: ‘as if’, ‘manipulated temporality’, and ‘the fourth wall’. The skilled actors simulate these scenarios ‘as if’ they were really happening. The actors ‘break’ the ‘fourth wall’ that would usually
close the actors off from the audience and allows the actors to facilitate interventions and dialogue about them. This duality between the ‘as if’ and the broken ‘fourth wall’ creates a ‘manipulated temporality’ “through stopping the progress of time, employees gain a meta perspective on the situation” that allows for reflective learning, or what D. A. Schon calls reflection-in action and reflection-on-action (Alraek et al 2005, 9). Reflection and action happen in immediate conversation with each other and interplay between each other. One can reflect on a decision and immediately act it out in this manipulated temporality. One can also act on another’s decision while another can act on their reflection. It’s in this interplay of reflection and action combined with the skills of the actors in facilitation and acting that provide the employees with a realistic experience that allows for emotional intelligence and experiential learning. This reflection and action can also be understood as dialogue and reflection. As the employees are discussing interventions, acting them out, and reflecting on them, they’re engaging in a call and response process of dialogue, reflection, and action. Moreover, they’re acting out and learning about leadership.

Friends Provident’s goal is to create a fluid space and structure to discuss and create leaders. There are many philosophies about leadership, however, the one Friends Provident uses is particularly controversial and yet strikingly helpful to the concept of community building. S. Tietze defines leadership as a “social influence and linguistic process” (Tietze 2003, 131). In other words, leadership is formed through community and language. Role-playing leads to a social embodiment of leadership where leadership becomes embodied knowledge and a performance of leadership. Employees embody and define what leadership is in these role-playing scenarios. Instead of just telling employees how to be leaders, like other leadership programs do, role-playing provides them with a space to try, act, and become leaders as they play leaders. These role-playing scenarios become a performance of epistemology. By exploring and doing what ‘leaders’ would do in tense situations, employees learn what leadership entails and how it functions in these problematic situations. They learned by doing, but they couldn't do it alone. Role-playing requires professional or trained actors and participants engaging in dialogue, reflection, and action. They rehearse together, define leadership together, and learn from each other. Based on Friends Providents’ example, a leadership experience that creates space for dialogue, reflection, and action and other benefits such as emotional intelligence and
experiential learning is a socially influenced experience. According to Tietze, leadership is built through an active community.

Tietze also said leadership is a linguistic process. Tietze also argues that few leadership theorists explore the function of language in the process of understanding leadership. Another leadership philosophy that isn’t widely accepted is that “whether in formal or informal positions in organizations, those who act as leaders are the meaning makers in organizations, framing the future and making it meaningful for others” (Tietze 2003, 143). One way meaning is made is through language (verbal or physical). The role-playing scenarios showed how leadership is a process. They created a language of leadership in how they modeled what leadership was through the process of role-playing. Along with that, there was a language that was acquired as they worked through how to handle complicated workplace situations and how a leader should respond. They all also became the meaning makers as they defined for themselves what it looked like to lead in the scenarios. This method of teaching leadership was effective according to employee N.H3 said:

I think my mind-set is a bit different now. I think I deal with conflict differently. And I think I deal with difficult conversations differently. It’s very hard to quantify them. It’s just – I think it’s imbedded within me – ‘cos (cause) conflicts you get everyday – not massive rows within a project – people dealing with people all the time – there are little conflicts – difficult conversations that have to happen. But I believe I am slightly different and improved.

(N. H., 258)

A social embodiment of leadership does actually teach employees how to lead in problematic situations and conversations in the workplace. A certain level of emotional intelligence, empathy, and changes in behavior and mindset was achieved through these role-playing scenarios. The social learning provided a civic community experience in this professional setting. For N.H.’s personal life to change, there had to be changes in the civic and professional realm and vice versa. A personal change took place that affected the civic

3 N.H. is the name given in the article. The participants were given anonymity.
and professional life of N.H. because the actors provide a “safe liminal space” (Feltham 2012, 259). Liminal, a performance studies term coined by Victor Turner cited by Richard Schechner can refer to that middle space of manipulated temporality that the role-playing evoked. The actors and the techniques work together to create a liminal space. This space is fluid, adaptable, and flexible and it only exists when the right elements are combined. Through N.H.’s experience of the liminal space, we see another piece of the heart of applied theatre. It “is meant to encourage a conscious link between social change and personal change” (Gluck et al 2007, 66).

To answer Feltham’s question, theatre is the avenue for creating a space for dialogue and reflection on topics such as leadership and the tensions of the organizational workplace. From experiential learning, emotional intelligence, personal healing, and collective embodied knowledge, the role-playing activities proved to be successful. The tensions of organizational life have burdened Friends Provident leaving them eager to find a solution for effective leadership training but also to increase morale and unite their employees during these major changes. Theatre is an inherently community building and collective problem-solving agent. Friends Provident was very smart in choosing theatre for their need.

Civic: Michael Rohd, Civic Practice, and Relationships

In the work with Friends Provident, there was one specific role that influenced and allowed for a fluid structure and space for dialogue to be created and that was of the artist. The next two case studies are of two artists in the field of applied theatre whose work has heavily influenced and will continue to influence my work. The first is Michael Rohd. I will begin by giving some background on Rohd, define civic practice, and explore why his work is so effective in building community. Michael Rohd is a very significant figure in the field of theatre and community dialogue. Over the last 20 years, Michael Rohd has been the founding artistic director of Hope is Vital, Sojourn Theatre, and the Center for Performance and Civic Practice (CPCP) and is currently a faculty member at Northwestern University. He’s also the author of *Theater for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue: The Hope Is Vital Training Manual*, which is now being used as an international textbook of community-
based work. What is it about his work in these programs/companies that have widely spoken of the effectiveness of applied theatre?

It was in 1992 when Rohd was leading a theatre workshop in Washington, DC with homeless men and women living with HIV/AIDS that he began consciously working in less traditional approaches for he realized these young people weren’t “given space to have conversations about HIV” (Rohd 2013, 26). He created a program that allowed for a dialogue about the health education policy between education and political leaders in the DC district through theatre activities and interactive performance. This program successfully allowed for the change of the health education process in DC schools. *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual* is the book explaining the techniques he used in these workshops. It has warm up exercises that work on energy, focus, and trust, the bridgework such as completing the image from Augusto Boal’s Image Theatre (also from Theatre of The Oppressed). After warm ups, it leads to improvisation and then to the activating material such as monologues, sculpting, and small groups. It is important to start by warming up the mind, body, and spirit to the space and the other bodies in the space. Warm ups transition people out of their everyday lives into this the safe liminal space that the participants and artist create together. Bridging work transitions the body and space to the topics being discussed. It is important not to skip the bridging work, especially when discussing very sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS. The activating material generally leads to performance material, however also can lead to material for a continued process of warm ups, bridging work, and activating material. These techniques lead those young men and women participants through a participatory workshop that created space to have dialogue about HIV and health education policy. These techniques aren’t different from other applied theatre techniques however the success of these techniques comes with the artist’s knowledge of the context (participant community and limitations and challenges facing their world). For Rohd, one more thing becomes important and that is relationships.

Rohd’s Hope Is Vital work led to a theatre organization that promotes civic dialogue and civic practice, which means “an activity where a theatre artist employs the assets of his/her craft in response to the needs of the non-arts partners as determined through ongoing, relationship-based dialogue (Rohd 2012)”. In the article, “The New Work of
Building Civic Practice”, Rohd recounts a conversation with his father in which he explains this new kind of relationship where the arts partner effectively listens, the non-arts partner brings the need, and both partner to create and converse together “producing new work”. Rohd describes the theatre artist’s tools/assets such as ability to design, lead collaborative activities, execute events effectively, problem-solve, articulate, and communicate clearly. The new work happens with successful intersection of artist’s tools and the non-arts partners need. What makes civic practice so unique is that this new work is founded on relationship. Relationship provides the foundation for arts and non-arts partners share their tools and needs and for creating space for civic dialogue and community building. Through Hope Is Vital, Rohd experienced theatre as a “connective public activity” which changed his perceptions of traditional theatre. Applied theatre became the true, meaningful community building activity he wanted to continue doing as his career. Rohd became very interested in the possibility of connection through participation and how process and event or (performance) link and allow new opportunities and relationships for/through his devising work.

After Hope Is Vital, Rohd and other fellow students from his MFA went on to start Sojourn Theatre in Portland Oregon in 1999. It is a company where he continues civic practice and dialogue: a combination of creative practice, community building, and community activism. Sojourn’s work began in Lima, Ohio which taught Rohd all the more how civic and theatre working together has a more powerful effect on community than either could do alone. Lima was dealing with differences in race and class issues between city and country members of Allen County. Dialogue consultant Patricia Romney and Rohd and Sojourn theatre were brought in by the Arts Council of Greater Lima to engage both city and county residents and leaders in dialogue about “issues of trust among leaders and respecting differences”(Wood 2001, 1). They trained local people in dialogue facilitation, interviewing locals and other research strategies to create a “poetic documentary” play called Passing Glances: Mirrors and Window in Allen County with post-performance discussion and conferences attended by residents and leaders, action teams, and the media. Though spaces were created for relationship and dialogue, it was the sustainability aspect that became an issue. Council for the Arts of Greater Lima’s (CFA), Martie MacDonnell, leader and insider partner says that it’s human and financial resources that are what stops
this kind of work, however, greater understanding, participation, personal impact, creation of Action Teams, and appreciation for the arts was created through this Common Threads initiative. Though sustainability proves to be an issue, the combination of civic and theatre working together made possible a dialogue leading to action discussing deep-rooted race issues that allowed for personal and social change in Lima, Ohio.

Sojourn’s work continued by creating a play containing performance-based town hall meetings in Witness Our Schools (2003-2005) that discussed the American public education system and a board game that allowed for a collaborate way for community members to make choices about the physical make up of their community in Built in 2008, which was easily transferrable and facilitated in other counties in Virginia and other states. “The game’s most useful quality is the space it creates for diverse perspectives while retaining a playful, collaborative atmosphere” (Rohd 2013, 29). Sojourn’s work has proven to create space for relationships, dialogue, and change and has been called the “best practice model” for arts-based civic dialogue.

The Center for Performance and Civic Practice (CPCP) also demonstrates this best practice model of arts-based civic dialogue. CPCP is “a field-building resource that aims to make visible the power of the arts to demonstrably increase civic capacity4”. In other words, CPCP aims to become a space and resource to support and show how powerful and influential the arts are in creating civic relationships, change, and interest. Arts and non-arts partners come together and create these “frameworks for innovative engagement and cross-sector partnership activity with a focus on field-to-field translation, collaboration and co-design skills.” In other words, CPCP is continually focused on finding new ways to create more cross-sector partnerships. CPCP is about making meaning, providing advocacy, and building capacity through collaboration. In the civic practice work, Rohd focuses on relationship-based partnerships that co-create by the relationship of the artists’ tools and non-arts partners need. These relationships allow for civic engagement and community building. However, this center brings arts and non-arts partners to a level of greater

leadership as they come together to create innovative and engaging ways for others to continue doing this work in so showing why art in civic work is so powerful. It functions as a civic practice process on a higher level. CPCP creates a civic community of leaders.

Rohd’s work uses applied theatre to create change in communities by facilitating dialogue about civic issues and as a result builds community. However, what makes Rohd’s work so successful is the new work of relationships where the arts partners’ tools meet the non-arts partners’ need insuring a successful foundation. Once that relationship is formed and clear goals lead the way, it’s his tailored use of the techniques and knowledge of the context that allows for a successful process. This past summer, I had the privilege of attending the Sojourn Theatre: Summer Institute workshop facilitated by Michael Rohd. The workshop took place in Chicago IL at the Vittum Theatre July 14th-18th. It was a 5-day (9am-4pm) civic practice workshop with about 30 other master students, teaching artists, artistic directors, and other aspiring artistically inclined and community motivated people.

Rohd gave us a brief but dense history of the progression of these workshops. Over this 5-day workshop, he would show us how he facilitates these techniques. After understanding the workshops a little more, we began with getting to know Michael Rohd, each other, and then he explained civic practice. After Day 1, each day had a specific topic, but I would have to say that Day 2: Invitation influenced my work the most. The concept of the “Invitation” is what makes civic practice and the new work of relationships what it is. The idea of “Invitation” is this: if civic practice is about building encounters, how do we “invite” others into an encounter? It all first starts with listening to and understanding the non-arts partners “self-defined” need. It is from listening and understanding their need that the artist can offer skills that best fit that need. Quality invitations allow for encounters, relationships, and partnerships. However, it is the invitation that has interest applied arts people such as ourselves most hesitant and weary. As CPCP is trying to make visible the power the arts has to increase civic capacity, applied theatre artists strive to make that possible every time they’re trying to explain or try and do this work. However, we learned that we didn’t have the right language or mindset, which hindered possible encounters and made us weary. Rohd was very understanding of our fears and explained that the concept of the “Invitation” would help us regain confidence to invite again.
We then got into a big circle and shared scenarios, stories, and statements that showed a fear and “reality” of non-arts partners not validating or seeing the credibility of the work that arts can bring into social situations. Some participants have felt the confusion and timidity in partnering for lack of clarity on how to explain, “what exactly it is that we do and can do”. As a group, we did some role-playing on how to enter into those “invitations” and first-time encounters. Some scenes were people begging for the opportunity, being pushy about their abilities, being insulted because people don’t understand, and just plain confused on how to handle it at all. Being a part of this kind of “rehearsal theatre” allowed us less-trained practitioners to realize our hesitations and the challenges of the invitation. We thankfully got to rehearse with Michael Rohd himself. Similar to the Friends Provident role-playing, Rohd facilitated us in an experimental learning and social sharing and embodiment of invitations. After the scenarios were shared, Rohd told us to keep “expectations, assumptions, relationships, perceptions, context, and the actual invitation” in mind. He then had us create performances based on an invitation scenario that we felt was “interesting and complicated in a way that felt rich and complex”. Through these scenes, we watched our expectations, assumptions, and perceptions played out before us. After watching the scenes, Rohd did not give us the “guide to invitations” (which I’m sure all of us were looking for). However, he led us in a dialogue about our own expectations, assumptions, perceptions about relationships, context, and invitations. He wanted us to be aware of our biases towards non-arts partners that they ‘cannot’ understand what we do and why its beneficial and seeing our need for a new language and mindset. He also wanted us to learn how to think through these biases ourselves. He was training us to be self-sufficient facilitators and not Michael Rohd copies. In being aware of those biases as well as how challenging it is to understand what civic practice or applied theatre is, we can come to our non-arts partners with humility and ears to listen and understand their need and how our skills are, or aren’t fit to meet that need. And that second part was the key: successful civic practice work comes from our tools meeting their needs not through eager artists trying to make something work that doesn’t fit. Rohd walked us through Snyder-Young’s first limit and challenge of creating change: privilege and otherness. We are not inviting people into a business transaction, but a relationship. Understanding our role as the artist but also as the other half of the
relationship made us look at our role-playing scenes with new eyes. Most of our hesitation came from past experiences but also from not empathizing with our non-arts partners. It really is about creating space and inviting others (and ourselves) into a relationship.

Day 2 continued to be an influential day for me. After lunch, we played the game “I know” that I used in two of my three research groups. “I know” is where the whole group stands in a circle, one person enters the circle and says a statement beginning with the phrase “I know”, then finishing the sentence based on what the prompt is. Fast forward to Day 4, the hesitant workshop participants and I were able to facilitate a workshop with the Goodman Theatre’s summer student program that led to a generative performance. We were quickly reminded that we were working with theatre students who loved theatre and were already working in these techniques in this program. Though we were working with arts partners and our hesitation is with inviting non-arts partners into a relationship, this facilitation wasn’t about the invitation. Rohd made the invitation with the Goodman before we signed up for the workshop. However, as most of us were first time facilitators, this opportunity gave us a confidence in each other, the techniques, the students, and ourselves because we watched the potential of the work in action.

Personal: Dale Savidge, Theatre, and Spiritual Therapy

As quoted by Gluck at the end of the Friends Provident case study, at the heart of applied theatre encourages a conscious link between social change and personal change. Friends Provident employee N.H. and Rohd’s hesitant workshop artists reveal an understanding of self that is necessary for any professional or civic change to even be possible. Most of the challenges and limitations to creating change from through theatre from Snyder-Young come from an understanding of thy personal privilege, otherness, and ability or pulling from Rohd’s new work of relationship, tools. A community (professional or civic) is made up of individual persons. These persons are responsible for what happens or doesn’t happen in community. Social change cannot happen without personal change. Social change is when multiple individuals experience personal change in the same direction. For N.H., seeing and partaking in these scenes and interventions while collectively defining and becoming leaders had a real life effect on how he began to think
about how to handle difficult conversations. Whether he made a conscious decision or not, those role-playing scenarios deeply changed him. The other way Friends Provident used theatre-based learning was in the scenes that focused on overcoming past traumas. Often times, personal change happens through a therapeutic process of action and reflection. Sometimes it can be called spiritual healing. I also had the pleasure this summer of attending a second workshop facilitated by an up and coming artist in applied theatre. Dr. Dale Savidge uses Drama Therapy and Playback Theatre techniques specifically for spiritual and therapeutic means. As with Rohd, I will discuss Savidge’s background and explore what is so unique about Savidge’s spiritual therapy work. But before I do that, I want to make it clear that I do not engage in spiritual therapy in this thesis research. In my Epilogue, I describe how spiritual therapy is important to my future research goals.

Personal change is key in social change. Moreover, during Savidge’s workshops, a huge takeaway was how personal change was only possible through the presence and action of community.

Dr. Dale Savidge is the Executive Director of the Applied Theatre Center (ATC) in Greenville, South Carolina. The ATC “is a bridge between organizations offering programs which meet the needs of individuals and communities and theatre artists trained in a variety of applied theatre techniques”. Though different in tactics and techniques, ATC is similar to CPCP in that it connects artists and communities through the relationship of artists’ tools and community needs. ATC offers three programs, one of which is called “Living Memories!” “Living Memories!” is a 10-week workshop offering seniors a space to share, explore, create, and engage with their stories, others stories, and engage an audience with their lives and experiences. The two other programs are the Playback Café and Drama Therapy, which I will focus on in this section. Savidge is also the Executive Director of Christians in Theatre Arts (CITA), which was founded 30 years ago to support and encourage Christians worldwide interested in pursuing careers in the theatre arts “to impact the world and further the Kingdom of God”. CITA was founded on a God-given desire for Christian artists to be in relationship and community with each other, regardless of geographical boundaries and distances. “Theatre, unlike most of the other art forms, is

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b birthed through relationships and regardless of how Christians define their art...CITA is now, more than ever, focused on the people who do theatre” (Savidge 2006, 38-39). In other words, theatre comes from relationships and CITA is focused on creating space for those relationships and the people who are doing theatre. Savidge is also the chair of theatre at North Greenville University, coauthored Performing the Sacred: Theology and Theatre in Dialogue, and is a registered drama therapist. I will now define Drama Therapy and Playback Theatre, and how Savidge utilizes the two to create space for spiritual therapy and community building.

The North American Drama Therapy Association defines drama therapy as “the intentional use of drama and/or theatre processes to achieve therapeutic goals”. The best-known source of Drama Therapy is Psychodrama by J. L. Moreno (1920s Europe) and his wife Zerka Toeman Moreno. Psychodrama is the use of role-playing, improvisation, and spontaneous dramatization to better understand the inner world of an individual. Many drama therapists integrate psychodrama and playback theatre into their work. Playback Theatre, developed by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas in the 1970s, is where the conductor (another name for facilitator) asks an audience member to share a personal story and then a team of actors and a musician will playback their story for the audience. Following the spontaneous performance, the storyteller gets to respond to what they saw. Playback Theatre is a theatre of immediacy that highlights and illuminates the personal experience. Playback Theatre also grew out of psychodrama and oral tradition. Fox wanted to “preserve memory, hold the tribe together, recapture ceremonial enactment, where there is no distinction between art and healing, embody transformational ritual, and be a source of hope” (Fox et al 1999, 14). Playback empowers audiences to share, reflect, and can be a vehicle for social change. Both Playback Theatre and Drama Therapy are based upon the telling and re-telling (or enacting) stories.

7 North American Drama Therapy Association. Last modified 2015. “North American Drama Therapy Association” www.nadta.org/what-is-drama-therapy.html. Friends Provident’s role-playing exercise is an example of drama therapy, specifically the historic past situations. However, it wasn’t expressed as a therapy session and was used more for a collective learning experience. But as stated before, techniques are adjusted based on the context, purpose, and goals of the project.
Drama Therapy and Playback Theatre can be seen as a mixture of applied theatre, clinical psychology, and creative arts or expressive arts therapy. Playback Theatre is a subset of Drama Therapy and Drama Therapy is a subset of Psychodrama. Since Drama Therapy has roots in psychology, one must be licensed to practice drama therapy. In drama therapy, the therapists are called facilitators (in playback they are called conductors and in psychodrama they’re called directors). Applied theatre, in the umbrella term sense, is usually more concerned with social change and educational purposes while Drama Therapy and even Playback Theatre is usually more concerned with psychological and emotional change. However, it is clear that there is a conscious link being made between social change and personal change. In the workshop I attended this summer, Savidge facilitated us in some Drama Therapy and Playback Theatre. I will now discuss two moments that really displayed the link between social and personal change, how community is necessary for personal change, and how personal change builds community.

The workshop was “Spiritual Formations and Christian Worship” and took place on the Trevecca Nazarene University campus in Nashville TN from July 24th -26th with at least 15 other masters and undergraduate students, teaching artists, teachers, playwrights, and executive directors of theatre companies. The purpose of this workshop was to teach the techniques but more so to be a rejuvenating weekend in which we were led into the presence of God. The first moment was during a bibliodramatic scene. Bibliodrama is a form of role-playing or improvising theatre using Bible stories. In this scene, we enacted the story of Abraham when God called him to leave his family and land in Canaan and go to a land, the Promised Land, which God would show him. One participant had expressed severe personal issues and with his permission, Savidge chose this gentleman to play Abraham. The image was just the gentleman walking from one side of the room to the other. One by one, other participants joined in and added other characters to the story. Some were other people like Abraham’s wife, children, and nephew Lot. Some were more metaphorical things like his fear, sadness of leaving, and excitement for what was to come. Some became spiritual characters like the devil, the Holy Spirit, and God Himself. As more and more characters were added to the story, the story not only began to unfold and deepen, but became more personal. This one participant got very emotional from this activity. For him, it wasn’t a story about Abraham anymore, but a realization of all the
factors at work in and around his life that he wasn’t aware of. This realization gave him such hope in this desperate time in his life. But it was not only powerful for him. Every single one of us experienced this journey with him not only artistically, but also personally and spiritually. Watching and being a part of that dramatic experience created this out of body experience that united us all together in that moment. It built a bridge for deeper conversation, sharing of very personal stories, and great transformation.

As we watched and reflected on the bible story and the gentlemen’s personal story, we all had the option to take action and become a part of that story. Afterwards, we were able to sit and discuss how this exercise affected us but also hear how it affected the man playing Abraham. Collective embodied knowledge came out of our action and reflection. As he walked from one side of the room to the other, we all watched and participated in a transformational ritual of journey, healing, and hope. Savidge created a liminal space that allowed a safety to the gentlemen to share and embody his story. That space also gave the rest of the participants the freedom and security to partake in his story and assist in his healing. This gentlemen wouldn’t have had the same experience or have this transformational journey had all who joined not participate. It was seeing all the other characters illuminate the story that made it come to life and cause a truthful realization. It is safe to say that his personal change was not possible without the help of community. And had he not been vulnerable and courageous, we would not have been able to be his community or experience something so moving. Though not specifically a form of Drama Therapy, this activity surely was of therapeutic value.

The second moment was made possible because of this first experience. People were more eager and more willing to share deeper and participate harder. The second activity was prayer enactment, which was a form of Playback Theatre. Savidge explained how we could share a story that ended with a prayer request and then anyone could volunteer to enact the prayer story physically while someone prayed verbally. A woman shared about her granddaughter having a serious illness and needing surgery and her daughter, the little girl’s mother, is having financial troubles and how this woman was just so distraught and distressed. While sharing the story, she even broke down in tears. I began to tear up too and immediately volunteered to be the little girl. As I crouched on the floor under the other lady who volunteered to be my mother, we all prayed silently as another
woman prayed aloud. As the prayer continued, we enacted what we were praying for: peace for the grandmother, money for the mother, and healing for the daughter. By the end of the prayer, I was standing with the 2 other women crying and feeling such joy. There wasn’t a dry eye in the room.

Just like the first activity, through our participation, multiple things occurred. A simple prayer request and prayer turned into a transformative ritual of healing, hope, and community. The woman whose prayer request it was watched us enact her deepest desires as she watched and heard us pray. Afterwards as we reflected, she shared how indescribable it was to see and hear people so passionately praying for her and her family especially people she had just met. We didn’t just pray for her though; we walked through life with her. We were all affected. Moreover, this prayer story wasn’t just hers anymore. It was all of ours. The hope she felt wouldn’t have been possible without a community of believers rallying around a sister in need. Everyone in that was changed in some way and carries those moments with them daily. Both activities reveal how crucial community is for personal change, but also for social change.

Conclusion

“Theatre, because of its direct contact with an audience and its imitation of real life, has tremendous power to make the imaginative real” (Savidge 2006, 40). Friends Provident’s role-playing methods allowed for an embodied collective knowledge that empowered employees to define, become, and practice leadership. Rohd’s civic practice methods allowed for relationships to be built between unlikely partners that make for a more holistic and effective problem solving and relationship building experience. Civic practice allows for both artists and community members to be empowered through the knowledge and importance of their skills, needs, and experience. Savidge’s spiritual and personal methods allowed for individual and collective journeys of transformation. The personal individual is the basis for the civic and professional aspects of life. In each case study, the individual is empowered through the relationships around them to go on a journey of healing, learning, knowledge, and change. In these case studies, theatre interacts with real life and imagined relationships and communities are made real through the deep
engagement with the techniques. With the help and support of people physically and spiritually around you, individuals are encouraged and empowered to make bold steps into a transformative process. Friends Provident, Rohd, and Savidge use applied theatre to create a liminal safe space for relationships where participants can partake in collective embodied knowledge, experiential learning, and shared transformation.

In other words, professional, civic, and personal aspects of everyday life rest on relationships. I would argue that for Friends Provident, Rohd, and Savidge, the civic and the personal are almost interchangeable. Like the historic definition of community and society, civic/personal relationships allow for individual's economic, social, and political needs to be met. However, the distinction between the community and society led to individualism. A disconnect between ownership and responsibility has formed with the separation of civic and personal. Every professional, civic, and personal realm deals with the repercussions. Along with their focus on relationships, the artists used the techniques to create a liminal space that allowed for change and transformation. Though civic and personal function differently in today's society, they were able to dance together again in this liminal space. A unique advantage a theatre department has in this respect is actors in training that can utilize the ‘as if’, ‘manipulated temporality’, and ‘fourth wall’ role-playing techniques, the Invitation, and Playback Theatre to facilitate collective embodied knowledge, experiential learning, emotional intelligence, personal and community healing and transformation and much more. I found the Friends Provident source after my personal workshops. Though I wasn't able to facilitate role-playing exercises, I did create a similar space for dialogue and collective embodied knowledge.
Chapter 3:
Conversations:
Case Study of Community Building in the Miami University Theatre Department

Introduction

Established in 1809, Miami University started as a student-centered public university. According to the Miami website (June 2008), Miami University focuses on empowering students, faculty, and staff to “become engaged citizens who use their knowledge and skills with integrity and compassion to improve the future of our global society”. Written below as the “Miami 2020 Plan” Miami, considering the shifts in higher education, as a result has developed a new vision to offer the “best undergraduate experience in the nation, enhanced by superior select graduate programs”. Miami University is now currently “Ohio’s Public Ivy” and ranked 1st for the best Undergraduate Teaching. Miami University is the home of over 16,000 undergraduates, over 2,000 graduate students, with 11% of that population being international. Miami is known for it’s 8th best in the nation business program, and business school, The Farmers School of Business. Miami University is performing well and nestled under all those accolades of this liquid modern big business university is the Miami Theatre department.

According to the Miami University Theatre website, the Miami University Theatre Department (MUTD) was founded in 1905 as “one of the oldest educational theatre programs in the United States”. Though originally combined with the speech department, in 1984, the independent department of theatre was created. In 1975, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Theatre was established, in 1985 a Bachelors of Fine Arts (BFA) was offered alongside the BA until 2001, and in 1998, a Master of Arts in Theatre (MA) was established. Currently having 80 undergrads, 9 grads, and a faculty and staff of 17 this past school year has been, the department continues to change every year with new faculty, curriculum, and students. Like other academic departments, MUTD must balance meeting the needs of the students as well as the overall departments needs, and Miami’s institutional needs to function, perform, and excel. Under the course description of a B.A. in Theatre under the
academic programs tabs on the Miami University website, the is the phrase “you can have your degree your way” or the tagline “Your degree, Your way” is also now printed on promotional flyers and posters. Though Miami Theatre is not a BFA program anymore, to meet the professional aspirational needs of the students, it still has a wide assortment of classes and 2 new minors to choose from such as a Music Theatre Minor and now a Dance Minor. There are options that will cater to any kind of student and more than that; students can even create their own senior capstone projects. When you leave Miami University with a degree in Theatre, it will speak of you.

“How do we get more students to be ushers?” A simple question from Miami’s Theatre department chair, Julia Guichard, to me her new graduate assistant in charge of Front of House coordination but this was no simple question at all. This question meant more than just increasing or widening participation, but encouraging ownership, leadership, and community for it spoke to a deeper rooted issue. The MUTD is a liquid modern community living inside the paradox of community’s absence and the need to believe in it, tension of individualism and community, and the social, cultural, and even artistic pressures to ‘perform’. Students are more concerned with their professional aspirations being met or community the way they want it instead the wellbeing of the department. Students have become almost unable to see how the success of the department benefits their professional aspirations and their personal ones. Since students have no choice but to see their own happiness as their means of community, strife, pressure, and frustration emerges as students (and faculty) continue to strive their individual needs in a department where everyone’s individual needs cannot be met at the same time or all the time. It is an impossible task that individuals are putting on themselves and the individuals and institutions around them. What can applied theatre do to address,

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8 My focus study (which isn’t available anymore) was ‘starting a traveling theatre company that spreads the gospel’. I had the opportunity to choose theatre and entrepreneurship classes that counted towards my major and minor that also fulfilled the focus study. During my first year of my graduate studies, I was technically still and undergrad. I was able to force add into an undergraduate level entrepreneurship class working with my advisor and that teacher to make it graduate level and count for my ‘outside class’ credit. As far as senior capstone projects, most students just partake in the capstone classes. However I know a few of my classmates who elected to write, cast, direct, and premiere a short film as their capstone.
acknowledge, and understand these issues in dialogue and empower a theatre department in the direction of change and community?

Borrowing from Gadamar, this chapter contains detailed case studies of the workshops I facilitated to have ‘conversations’ about building community in our theatre department. These conversations reflect the conscious link between personal and social change, professional, civic, and personal realms, and both theatre and non-theatre students in departmental community. I chose three groups that were necessary to engage in conversation: Theatre 107 (introductory major theatre class), the Advisory Board (theatre student liaison board to faculty), and Theatre 191 (introductory non-major theatre class). Because context in applied theatre is important, each group had tailored and specific techniques that created a space for conversation, relationship, and change for that group.

With Theatre 107, I focused mainly on Rohd’s ‘Invitation” techniques to give the students a chance to ‘respond’ and represent their interpretation of community through creating a performance. However with the Advisory Board, I focused mainly on Tom Borrup’s Creative Community Builder’s Handbook: How to Transform Communities Using Local Assets, Arts, and Culture and Dave Gray’s Game Storming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers (creative brainstorming for the workplace) to empower these students to see themselves as leaders, collaborators, and developers of their community that functions like a business. And with Theatre 191, I focused mainly on creating an engaging lecture about the role of the audience in performance and equating that to theatre and non-theatre students’ personal roles in community at Miami.

In each workshop, a few things happen. Friends Provident, Rohd, and Savidge used the techniques to create a safe liminal space for collective embodied knowledge, relationships, and personal transformation. This safe space I created with my participants allowed the aforementioned concepts but also for conversation between and through the professional, civic, and personal realms of a theatre department. These conversations were just the beginning of the longer process of change, however, this chapter case study provides examples of how inviting, collaborating, and communication, gave these students the space to decide for themselves how they engage, participate, and what responsibility is to them. In having these conversations, people began to see community as ‘absent’ yet
necessary and were not only encouraged but empowered to do something about it, even if it was just starting to talk about it.

From Invitation to Performance: Starting the Conversation with THE 107

The workshop with THE 107 students was made possible because of a partnership with the lead teacher, Gion DeFrancesco, very early in the year. DeFrancesco was interested in the students having an opportunity to devise or create a performance that also discussed and built community. Like Rohd’s ‘new work of relationships’; my skills were able to meet his needs allowing DeFrancesco to structure my workshop as a part of the class curriculum. The class was broken up into groups of 5 with an upperclassman student as a “home group leader9”. As a result of this partnership, I became a part of the class as a home group leader and was not only able to facilitate a workshop but also build personal relationships and expose the students to the field of applied theatre. The performance we would create together was performed at a new event called Coffeehouse, where upperclassman students and faculty came to see the THE 107 students show off their talent(s) (Defrancesco 2014, 3).

The workshop10 was 1 hour and 15 minutes. The physical warm up exercises allowed them to explore the space and their bodies in space. One exercise gave them the opportunity to feel each other’s bodies in space. Like a silent Simon says, one person at random could choose to either stop walking, start walking, crouch down, stand up, fall to the group, and get back up whenever they wanted. When that one person chooses to move, everyone else in the room had to move in the same way too. Anyone had the opportunity to take on the leadership role and direct the room. Whoever decided to take that leadership role, then had the responsibility over the room. This exercise not only got their bodies physically ready for the images we would create, but unknowingly to them got their minds ready for a conversation about leadership, responsibility, ownership, and community. After

9 An upperclassman mentor for 5-6 of the THE 107 students. They come to class, take attendance, build relationships, answer any questions, and help them with their final group project. Also in the THE 107 Syllabus Fall 2014.
10 See Appendix A for lesson plan.
some physical warm up exercises that would be later used as transitions, I asked them to make a circle and explained the game “I know”. They had both the phrases “I know leadership is...” and “I know community is” to complete. From there, I adjusted “I know” to be a time where the students could share a moment or a phrase where they felt community was present and when community was absent. From these moments, the students chose a moment of presence or absence to create their first image. From this image, the students were then asked to create a flipbook of images: creating the two images that precedes the one they created and two images that follow it. After each group created their 5 images called a ‘flipbook’, they performed them for each other. Together, we found a storyline between them all. In choosing transitional movement as a class from the beginning warm up exercises, we combined the 5-flipbook stories into a complete performance. The performance was a representation of their interpretation of community that we shared with other members of our department. These stories lead to a performance that told the story of a theatre major’s journey from starting college to finding community.

I chose I Know and Michael Rohd’s concept of Invitation because I wanted to get to know what their personal interpretations of community and leadership while allowing them the opportunity to learn and grow from each other’s interpretations. I brought in the topic of leadership for two reasons: because leadership is important to community health, as Friends Provident shows and also through that case study, leadership is socially constructed and leaders are those who make meaning. Empowering first year students that they can be leaders in this ongoing department is crucial to the health of the next four years of that department. They have as much stake, if not more, than the upperclassman students. During I Know leadership and community is, the students responded very positive with generally believed concepts of leadership and community. Some responses to I Know leadership are: “leadership is important, hard, delegation, not for everyone, a lot of responsibility, necessary, and takes work”. However, one response led me to the idea of the “First Follower 11”. One student said that leadership is following respectfully. In a community-based leadership class I took taught by Dr. Kate. Rousimaniere, we watched the video “First Follower: Leadership Lessons from Dancing Guy”. In this video, one man began

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dancing alone in a field. Everyone looked confused and starred as they watched this man dance his heart out. But one man stopped starring and joined him. This first follower now made what this man was doing “something” and gave others the permission to join in. One by one, people join in and by the end of the video, almost everyone is dancing. If it wasn’t for someone to support the vision and come alongside, then the vision dies. Both the leader and first follower are critically important to accomplishing a vision and building community. As for their responses I Know community is, they started off with very general responses: “community is family, hard, inclusive, supportive, togetherness, towards a goal, team, and that this is a community”. Some responses were a little deeper: “community can change your perspective, can be created anywhere, different ideas, different for everyone, togetherness, family and friends, takes work”.

During the next activity, the students began to feel more comfortable and started sharing personal moments where they experienced community and moments where they didn’t. We started with the moments of community presence through It Made Me Think, another Rohd workshop exercise. The students were asked to tell a time of a community present or absent situation or story and end the story with “...and it made me think”. Responses started out like “meeting new people, a part of a technical crew, a compliment from a stranger, however, the students began to bond over going through hard things together like the Studio 88 flooding during the production of Rent this past semester, or collective failing in classes and coming together to make art. Through making small agreeing comments, a call and response began as other students shared similar moments they’ve experienced which heightened as we discussed community absent moments. Some responses were “competition in theatre, bad roommates, the “no make up stares” girls get from other girls on campus when they aren’t wearing make-up to their classes, the feeling that you’re the only one who cares, and the obnoxious etiquette of walking around campus where students get bumped into and people don’t acknowledge you or say sorry”. The call and response moved from verbal “yeps, laughing, so true’s and I hate that’s” to high fives, side conversations about their personal experience with the moment that was shared, and people jumping at the bit to get inside the circle and now ‘riff off’ their peers story. It was very apparent that they realized they weren’t alone and discussing the absence of community, they felt community. What was all the more apparent was that the students
experience community in theatre and their community absent moments discuss their relationship with the Miami community as a whole.

The climax of the community absent moments can with the response: “Oh, you’re a ‘theatre person’? And the judgment that follows a confident yes”. Needless to say, the students were riled up after a call such as this. After the moments, I instructed the students to choose one moment from both community present and absent stories to use as the subject of their image. Four groups ended up doing community present moments and one chose community absence. After combining the 5 flipbooks together, the story went like this: students sadly leaving home/old theatre community for college, entering a new theatre community, feeling alienated from the Miami community, being in a show, and eating together with theatre majors. Their story compares and contrasts the community they feel inside the theatre department or with theatre students and the alienation they feel when they go out of the theatre walls. Being looked down upon for not wearing make up to class, not being acknowledged as a person on the side walk, to being judged for their passion not only drives them to find community in theatre all the more, but to also disdain the Miami community. The students’ performance was a response to the Miami community, a representation of what a typical theatre or art major may experience on a campus and in a world that highly promotes other academic disciplines and career practices. If community cannot help but be absent, liquid moderns have no choice but to seek their own happiness and use community as a commodity. In making a clear distinction between theatre and the Miami community, these students revealed their use of theatre, discipline and department, as their means of finding community. When feeling alienated in one community, the students strive all the more to find home, togetherness, and happiness where they feel accepted and free. It makes sense for human beings to cling to things that make them feel at home and meet their individual needs, however, this performance represented their fears of not finding community, pain in not being accepted in the Miami community, finding their hopes for community in theatre. This representation also defined community through theatre and against Miami culture. The students’ definition of community, however, creates more exclusion. Communities inherently have boundaries, but it’s when they are used to exclude that community becomes an exclusionary act or even weapon, instead of an inclusive act or power. In their performance, the students alienated themselves from
outside community making the distinction between theatre and Miami community even greater. Moreover, the students’ performance perpetuated the cycle of exclusion. If the students don’t want to go out, what would make Miami want to come in?

Though the innocent sharing of stories created a call and response, the students’ performance brought a greater level of awareness to deeper truths. The students essentially engaged in a collective embodied epistemology of the dynamics of communities inside other communities. In creating this distinction, the students’ performance also revealed that the Miami University Theatre Department and Miami University as a whole are similar and have a relationship. As a department inside the university, there is a level of representation, dependence, and influence both have on each other because they are a part of each other. Institutionally, both the department and University represent certain aspects of each other as well as are dependent on each other to thrive. Both play a role in their collective success. This is just a larger scaled representation of the department and an individual student or faculty member. Both the department and the student must work together to build a positive relationship and representation. Looking back, I realized I missed an opportunity to engage this contrast between theatre and Miami after the performance was over. I would’ve facilitated a talkback after the Coffeehouse to continue the conversation with those who watched the performance to see what themes and connections they saw, felt, and made specifically as it relates to theatre and Miami community. However, from analyzing their performance alone, the students’ interpretation brought about this important fact of community in higher education: the departmental community and the university community, which the next two case studies engage.

From Assets to Relationships: Continuing the Conversation with the Advisory Board

The series of workshops with the Advisory Board were made possible because of an assistantship/partnership with Julia Guichard, the theatre departmental chair. From having conversations about ushers as her graduate assistant and sharing my research interests, Guichard offered this specific opportunity to with the Advisory Board, herself, and the whole department about community. The Advisory Board (AB) is a combination of appointed and volunteered students from freshman to graduate student. The Advisory
Board is the liaison between the students and the faculty. One of their jobs is to bring comments and concerns from the students to Guichard. At the beginning of the semester, the AB had each class represented as well as international, commuter, and transfer student equaling 8 students including myself. The workshops were 1 hour, once a week on Friday afternoons for 4 weeks. Borrowing from Tom Borrup’s asset-based community building methods and Dave Gray’s business brain storming techniques, I prepared a 4 workshop series: Listening, Collaborating, Mobilizing, and Maintaining. Each day we started with warm up exercises that prepared us for the topic at hand and built on the previous day.

On the Listening day, I entered the room with 5 questions written on big sheets of paper. I gave the students sticky notes and sharpies to answer the questions. The questions were: What does the department value? What should the department value? What are the assets of the department? What’s the role of the department in the University? And what is the relationship of parts of the department to the whole department? We then organized the sticky notes to create a storyline through their answers. On the Collaborating day, we used Image Theatre (a subset of Theatre of the Oppressed) to physically represent the ‘real’ image of our department and the ‘ideal’ image of our department. We then verbally discussed what it would take to take us from the real to the ideal, which led us to 3 major areas in our community. We also brought back the questions from the previous day and discussed how the images and areas we came up with related to those questions. On the Mobilizing day, we focused on those 3 areas in two different ways: by doing an Empathy Map from Dave Gray’s Game Storming: A Playbook for Innovators, Rulebreakers, and Changemakers (creative brainstorming for the workplace) from the faculty’s perspective on these three areas and then our thoughts on these three areas which were “Healthy Communication, Mutually Beneficial Relationships, and Inclusive Traditions”. Finally, the Maintaining day was when we presented our work to Guichard and discussed bringing an area to the department through a Town Hall Meeting. These Town Hall meetings happen maybe twice a semester and are usually used to share big news and squash rumors. These meetings are already civic spaces for community, which were enhanced and deepened through the conversations.

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12 See Appendix B for lesson plan
During the first Town Hall, I shared with those in attendance the work that the Advisory Board and I accomplished over the 4-week process. The area we chose to bring before the department was “Traditions” because it was the most tangible aspect of community of the three. We passed out a handout that listed traditions the department holds and asked simple questions such as should we keep it, should we change it, and will you put forth energy to it? We then asked two questions: what builds community and what breaks it down? During the second Town Hall opportunity, I had students answer 4 questions on big sheets of paper. They were questions like: What is the department? What does it mean to be a part of this department? And whose responsibility is it (to do anything for or in the department)? The last Town Hall encompassed ideas from the first two, the workshop series, and a personal meeting between Guichard, the board, and myself. We passed out another handout. It was called the “End of the Year Survey”. Section 1 was about two new traditions Guichard and I started this year through my assistantship in the hopes of building community: more creative and fun opening night receptions and Adopt-A-Show. This is where the previous show ‘adopts‘ the show that is about to open and will help usher, shop for treats for the long technical rehearsals before the opening, and set up and tear down the reception party. Section 2 was about the Town Halls. We asked them how they liked, didn't like, and what they would like more of. Section 3 was a group brainstorming session about a tangible community building idea to implement for next school year. Borrup and Gray's tools allowed for conversation to begin, however, as Guichard and the students were given the space and opportunity to converse and lead, they took it, ran with it, and began believing a little more.

My focus with the Advisory Board, like the Friends Provident case study, was to create a space where the students began to see themselves as leaders in their department. The combination of community development and theatre in business environments displays the unique layout of a liquid modern theatre department. Through these techniques, I was able to focus more on participation, engagement, and action when it comes to the concepts of community and leadership rather than just conversation, representation, and performance. As stated above, the THE 107 performance revealed deeper insights about community in higher education by revealing the relationship between the theatre department and Miami as an institution. In a relationship and
community, there are two (or more) that work at their roles to keep the bond alive. As discussed above, the theatre department and Miami play a part in the construction of community in academia. One cannot exist without the other and whether the students like it or not, one informs the other. This case study focuses on the theatre department understanding who they are as a department and their personal challenges with community inside themselves, but it also points to how those challenges complicate their ability to have community outside of the department and in the university. Something that is also important is that unlike the THE 107 work with mostly first year theatre majors, the Advisory Board was mostly upperclassman. They have an understanding of the department that first years do not. In inviting the first years to perform and respond to community and leadership, they were empowered in one sense as their interpretations were asked, heard, felt, and shared. The Advisory Board was another level of empowerment where the students became leaders that took action steps in the direction of community.

To briefly summarize the data gathered from the workshop series: the students had a hard time knowing what the assets of the department are. They also had a hard time coming up with real and ideal images of the department. Once they determined their three images (which lead to the three areas), they revealed that they knew what they want but just don’t know how to get it. The students desire better communication between all members of the department: student-to-student, student and faculty, and faculty-to-faculty. They desire relationships that are mutually beneficial and long to create traditions that include all members of the department but also the Miami community. The students revealed a desire for community inside the theatre department and between them and the Miami community. The performance by the THE 107 first years revealed the beginning of a rocky relationship with Miami whereas the vocalized desire from the upperclassman Advisory Board revealed a more mature desire for healthy relationship. Though the students had a hard time in the beginning pin pointing what the assets of the department are, during their expression of their desires, they realized that the relationships of the department are one major asset, both in the department and with the university. Friends Provident, Rohd, and Savidge created liminal spaces through the techniques for relationships to provide professional, civic, and personal change. The workshops and the
Town Halls created that space, however, people have to enter the space and engage in relationship for it to be effective.

In both the workshops and Town Halls, I never had full attendance. Out of 8 Advisory Board members, I would have at least 3-4 at every session. At the second Town Hall meeting, I had less than 10 people, which is 10% of our department. What does it mean when Advisory Board members, who represent the department as a whole, don’t come to community building workshops or when students don’t come to Town Hall’s geared towards their needs, concerns, and community? Liquid moderns want community the way they want community, which includes, when, how, where, how long, with whom etc. This also reveals a paradox about the liquid modern theatre student. Though the lack of attendance was from prior commitments, class conflicts, emergencies etc., the majority of students were consistently not present. Though the desires for communication, relationship, and inclusive traditions were expressed through the Advisory Board, they’re real priorities or desires are reflected in their engagement and commitment. How then can community be present or built if as Cohen-Cruz says community requires deep engagement for it to be realized? There may be two things simultaneously happening here. Students (and faculty) desire community and yet aren’t willing or aren’t able to put forth the necessary work to obtain it. Both students and faculty have lives outside of the theatre department, other commitments and organizations they are a part of, other classes and research, and social lives and families. It takes time to deeply engage in community. It takes effort and patience to continually engage in conversation, reflection and action, and relationships. It also takes humility and personal change for real communal change. These truths along with other commitments and priorities create obstacles to community being present and built. However for 4 weeks, 1 hour on Friday afternoons, those Advisory Board members and I entered a space that allowed us to engage in community. The same goes for the 30 minutes to an hour for the three Town Hall meetings. In making the effort and taking the time and patience, the department was able to slow down and dedicate these specific moments to having a conversation about our community. Students (and faculty) were able to share their opinions, voice concerns, and brainstorm together. They got a chance to communicate, interpret, and engage each other and the topic of community together. In the face paced world of big business, these few moments were a privilege that can be continued
regularly. However, the question remains, how do we overcome the obstacles of other priorities and commitments? We can’t force people to engage, but we can encourage them to see the need for community and empower them with tools to make strong commitments and prioritize community. Change is hard to make and requires patience and persistence. The first step is creating a space for them to engage, be encouraged, and empowered.

From the *Maintaining* day of the workshop with Guichard, we choose ‘traditions’ as the most tangible topic to present to the department at the Town Hall. When people entered the Town Hall, they were given a different sheet of paper at random and were broken up into the 4 colors. I didn’t plan it but each group ended up with at least one faculty member. They were then to fill out the paper alone, discuss as a group, and then share as a room. Though the topic was traditions, the entire room discussion was completely based around communication and relationships. I didn’t expect that the second section about building and breaking down community would lead the discussion. The desire was to leave this first meeting with a better understanding about our theatre traditions; however, the way the discussion went revealed what’s beneath a tradition. According to Cohen, traditions are one of the symbols (and performance) of community. Examples of traditions can also be the way people communicate and relate to each other. “This is how we’ve always communicated and this is how our relationship has always been”. Communication and relationship is the basis of any other tradition for a tradition expresses who we are and what is important to us. The students’ desire healthy communication and mutually beneficial relationships. What the students mean by healthy communication and mutually beneficial relationships can be seen by their responses at the Town Hall. To the question: what breaks down community, there were overwhelming responses like “opinions not heard, ignored, or valued and artistic work outside the department not supported.” One student said “It doesn’t seem like the faculty actually want us to come talk to them.” The students want to be heard and valued not only by faculty members but also by other students. Rumors, gossip, bitterness grows from relationships that aren’t transparent and mutual but are hesitant and half-hearted. However, the complication comes when those same students prioritize other commitments over community and relationship in the theatre department. They desire others to communicate and relate well with them without acknowledging the same work is required of them. The
biggest obstacle to change is empowering individuals to see themselves as responsible and that the change must begin with them.

Among these challenges, a paradox to communication and relationship in a theatre department are the professional and relationship relationships between faculty and students. Both are necessary for success, however, at times the professional conflicts with the relational. Moreover, some faculty members have been here long enough to know completely different departments and communities, which sets a precedent for communication and relationship traditions. Whether for good or bad, requirements and history precedes opinions and suggestions. However, during the first and third Town Hall meetings, faculty members and students were in discussion groups and brainstormed ideas together. The techniques created a liminal space allowing students and faculty to both be heard and valued and collaborate in a relational way about their professional and relational futures. In this space, faculty and students were on the same level as they discuss their community. Students did share their fear of being completely honest about community with faculty members because of the professional power they have in artistic and educational realms. Both students and faculty need to be aware of both kinds of relationships and understanding their roles in those relationships.

Another insight about the relationships between faculty and students was brought up in the second Town Hall. I asked 4 questions on big sheets of paper and one was “whose responsibility is it?” Is it to do what, you ask? Anything: whose responsibility is it to do anything in our theatre department. One response was “the department and the students” which expressed a mindset that the students believe the department is the faculty and not them. We must now ask what is a department and what does it mean to be a part of the theatre department? Like the THE 107 representation, we represent what we feel ‘a part’ of, define as, and experience whether consciously or unconsciously. If students feel the ‘department’ is the faculty, then do students feel a part of the department? Do they then feel or know that they have just as much a stakeholder in the department as the faculty? Students don’t feel ‘a part’ or owners of the department and thus will continue to not be ushers after they’ve ‘paid their dues’ (one student said). The students don’t feel a part because they don’t feel heard and valued. However, with attempts to hear and value them, students still aren’t owners. Ownership comes from taking responsibility and action that
comes from an empowered individual. The asset-based community building method chosen to develop civic community focused on the assets rather than the weaknesses of a community. The students in the workshop struggled to identify their assets. Ownership, identification, and senses of belonging come from identity. The department must define for themselves what a department is. They must define their collective identity and within that, define their specific roles that contribute to the department. Collective identity, from Benedict Anderson, empowers a community in the faces of uncertainty and change. In the Friends Provident case study, collective embodied knowledge came through role-playing scenarios. Though I found that source after my workshops, I do suggest these role-playing scenarios. There are stages of change and processes of theatre interventions. As conversations about community continue, these role-playing scenarios can be used to define department, community, and responsibility, embody healthy communication, relationships, and leadership, and if facilitated correctly, address tense situations and experience healing. A theatre department should utilize its creative and interactive skills in creating spaces for civic conversation that provide understanding of identity and roles.

For further conversation about community building in Miami’s theatre department, I suggested more frequent Town Hall meetings (at least one at the beginning and end of the semester to set the stage for the year) and these meetings should keep the interactive framework allowing for professional, civic, and personal conversation. A good next question would be: what is your role in building community? This question came from getting to the specific thing the students (or faculty) are talking about. It’s usually helpful to synthesize it to one word. This first question is also more open-ended and provokes thought, dialogue, and understanding. The second question focuses more on a specific action such as: what specific thing can you do this year to fulfill your role in the community? These two questions allow for another interactive Town Hall meeting that will lead to other questions, thoughts, and actions in the direction of community. These kinds of questions probe the students also in the direction of responsibility. From the End of the Year Survey Town Hall meeting, students were concerned that after I graduated that ‘my work’ would leave with me. However, I encouraged them that this is their department. It isn’t “Jaime’s legacy” that must live on, as one student shared, it is community being engaged by anyone who will take responsibility for it. Responsibility comes from knowing
your role in the whole. The distinction between community and society made responsibility and ownership blurry concepts. However, through conversation and personal reflection, they are becoming clearer again. But as the members of the department have a part to play in the whole, the theatre department has a part to play in the University.

From Seat to Stage: Broadening the Conversation with THE 191

As it is important for the theatre students to know their role in the department as responsible owners that can make change any time they want, non-theatre students need to know their role in community with the theatre department. Both theatre and non-theatre students, to engage in community, need to know or at least be aware of the role of the theatre department in Miami University. According to the Miami Theatre Department website, the current goals of the theatre department is to “engage students in creative discovery, deeper understanding of self and others, promote full range of human understanding and experience, and celebrate the expression of the human spirit.” And the mission is to situate itself within a strong liberal arts tradition, develop passionate and creative thinkers, critically, artistically, and globally, and finally to provide them with tools to realize their potential, strengths, and scholarly/artistic passions. There is no outright goal or mission to educate and engage the student body, however, it isn’t necessarily devoid of it either. Theatre departments and companies use audience development and engagement techniques to keep abreast on the customer or consumer’s needs and finding ways of keeping them interested/returning customers. Examples of these techniques are pre or post show surveys, discussions, talk backs etc. Doug Borwick in “Audience Development ‘vs.’ Community Engagement” creates a side-by-side contrasting chart of the difference between the two. Audience development is more short term marketing, looking at who is and isn’t coming, focused on increasing numbers, internally focused, involving mainly staff members, with an unchanging, predictable, and conservative approach. Whereas community engagement is more long term, looking at what matters to the community, focused on developing relationships, externally focused, involving all

stakeholders (staff and community members alike), with a transforming vision that is risky and depends on the community. In Audience development, ‘a consultant can complete the bulk of the work’, whereas in community engagement, ‘a consultant can facilitate and guide the initial conversations and summarize the collective input from community participants’ (Borwick. Artsjournal.com). Quoting Richard Owen Geer, scholar and artist in the field of community performance, community engagement is of the audience, for the audience, and about the audience.

Audience engagement was only one of the topics and strategies I used in my lecture with this last but equally important group of people. Theatre 191, formerly called Theatre Appreciation, now called Experiencing Theatre “introduces non-majors to all aspects of theatre art, both in a large group setting and in small group break outs. This course will help students appreciate the theatre as future audience members by engaging them in a hand’s on look at how theatre is made. Students will also both see what live theatre is and create live theatre.” As a Miami Plan, or general art education requirement class, this class meets the global liberal education framework that strives to “broaden choices, transform culture, and create better global citizens.” Miami University doesn’t require departments to create Miami Plan courses. The theatre department itself created this course to engage the student body in what appreciating and experiencing theatre is like. The heart behind the class was and is community engagement. It has also been going through structure and curriculum changes based on student feedback, technological changes, and changing lead instructors to better serve and educate the students.

This final opportunity was also made possible through a partnership with the lead teacher. As a graduate student, I was a breakout instructor for THE 191 both semesters of my second year and were encouraged and allowed to assist in planning and teaching lectures. There was one day the teacher didn’t have accounted for and I took that opportunity to create what I would like to call a theatrical lecture made possible by engagement. All three ‘workshop’ experiences have had different purposes and used the

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techniques accordingly. With THE 191, I focused more on the ethics behind applied theatre in class content and how I structured my lecture/used discussion and free writes to engage and collect feedback. The class period\textsuperscript{16} was an hour and 30 minutes. I began the class time by re-introducing myself, my research interests, and the agenda for the day. I started the content with the importance of the audience. I asked them why they believed the audience was important and from course material, students responded that it isn't theatre or performance without an audience. If the audience is so crucial to the definition of theatre/performance, then we must understand what the integral role the audience plays. I then briefly touched on two examples describing the history of the audience as well as two roles the audience has played in performance. The first example was in the Astor Place Riot in 1849 when an American audience was not happy with a British actor coming to play Hamlet at the Astor Opera House in Manhattan, New York City. 25 people were killed and more than 120 were injured. This was an example of an unruly, dangerous, but engaged audience. However, overtime, audiences have gone from unruly and engaged to passive and even absent. I used this quote during the lecture to briefly touch on one reason the audiences’ ‘role’ has shifted.

> The darkened auditorium has completely separated the players from their patrons and overt public displays of emotion in the theatre [by the audience] are no longer commonplace. Human emotions have not changed, but theatrical tradition regarding audience behavior and dramatic presentation has. Although most practitioners are undoubtedly pleased that today’s audiences are usually quiet and polite, the theatre is in danger of becoming culturally exclusive...I am certainly not advocating a return to the earlier master/servant relationship between patron and player, to pelting or rioting, but I do, nevertheless, regret the loss of proactive and uninvited audience participation.

(Fisher 2003, 66)

\textsuperscript{16} See Appendix C for Lead Sheet
Though on one extreme hand audience participation has drastically decreased, experiences such as Rocky Horror Picture Show reveal how participation can still be achieved. The Rocky Horror Picture Show Phenomenon is where actors perform alongside the movie as the audience shouts, dances, and sings along with this filmed and live performance experience. This was the second example I chose, an example of a participatory audience. Borrowing from Richard Schechner’s terms integral and accidental audience members, for clarity and understanding sake (knowing this would be a question on the final exam), I chose to use the terms participant for integral and spectator for accidental.

An accidental audience is a group of people who, individually or in small clusters, go to the theatre- the performances are publically advertised and open to all. On opening nights of commercial shows, the attendance of the critics and friends constitutes an integral rather than an accidental audience. An integral audience is one where people come because they have to or because the event is of special significance to them. Integral audiences include the relatives of the bride and groom at a wedding, the tribe assembled for initiation rites, ignites on a podium for an inauguration.

(Schechner 2002, 220).

Integral (or participant) audiences are “necessary to accomplish the show”, whereas accidental (or spectator) audiences neither diminish nor enhance the performance. Though at the beginning of the lecture we discussed that an audience’s presence is crucial to the definition of a performance as a performance, the audience must be and do more than be present. Audiences, like invitees to a wedding ceremony, are much more than guests who watch, but family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors etc. who make the ceremony what it is. Their presence, or not, has an effect because they are essentially a part of the ceremony. Through clapping, taking pictures, crying, and forming lasting memories, an integral or participatory audience ‘makes’ the wedding or performance. This is true in a positive and negative way. Though engaged, the Astor Place Riot audience was a part of a national massacre while Rocky Horror audiences are a part of a national cult following. Either way,
disengaged audiences is a relatively new phenomenon for performers and art makers today.

The beginning half of the lecture was the foundational material that created the space for the conversation that then happened. The course description says that students are required to attend live performances. This semester, the students were required to attend Avenue Q and write a live performance review about what they believed the goal of the production was. Throughout the lecture, I asked the students questions about their role as an audience member in Avenue Q: Were they participant or spectator audience members? Students responded that they were participant audience members because they were required to go because of class but also because of the nature of the show. Avenue Q is a hilarious and provocative spin off of Sesame Street that follows the journey of one puppet character named Princeton and his quest to find his purpose. On the way he falls in love, but mainly realizes the challenges of life after college. Avenue Q is a musical with puppets and is most commonly described by two phrases: “everyone is a little bit racist and puppet sex”. Needless to say at a college campus, the students believed this production was highly received. The students believed they were participant audience members because the actors broke the fourth wall, spoke directly to them, even came off the stage into the audience. Through their laughing, actively turning, moving, and watching, but also through reading the script prior to seeing the performance, the students were participant audience members.

As we continued to discuss participant audiences and Avenue Q, the class began to get really engaged. We talked and laughed about funny moments in the show. We also had breakout instructors get really involved and passionate about discussion. One of the breakout instructors was also the director of Avenue Q. We then began talking about “Audience Engagement”. I asked the students how they would like to be engaged by the theatre department. Most suggested funny musicals like Avenue Q and interaction before the show begins like the ushers with hand puppets in character and actors coming into the audience and singing in your ear. Though I explained that Avenue Q was a special production, students continued to give feedback similar to the environment of this show. However, because of that something equally as special happened. One student said he would like to be invited on stage. The entire class listened as this student and I discussed if

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he would do anything if asked on stage, he said it would depend on the moment, and in that moment I asked him on stage. He pretended to come up, everyone laughed, and he sat back down. But I was serious. He then came on stage with me. Once he got on stage, his heart began to pound looking out at the 350 people starring at him. He explained how his armpits began to sweat and how intimidating it really is. In that moment, the metaphorical 4th wall between teacher and student was broken. Some students and instructors leaned in a little more because the wall broke. Though the students saw a live performance and created some theatre in their breakout sessions, this moment encompassed what live performance but also applied theatre is all about. In this moment, this student and I (and the class) engaged on a different and deeper level. This was like a moment of civic practice. I saw an opportunity to invite this student into a new relationship. Because of our work, the class was brought into a new relationship that would not of typically happened, especially in a class this size.

What’s different and exciting about this ‘theatrical lecture made possible by engagement’ is not only did the students learn in a new way and experience live performance for themselves; but that it was only made possible through the engagement of the students and instructors. Along with the techniques, they created the space for new ways of relating. Without them, I was just giving a lecture. They, the audience, made it a performance. It not only supports the content of the lecture but also Cohen’s definition of community. It was a risk for the student to actually get out of his seat and join me on stage, but it allowed for a transformative learning moment. This is the power of live performance. If one doesn’t play their role, they miss the opportunity but also change the performance. But if one does play their role, that magical, indescribable, transformative power of theatre where all things come together for one moment right before your eyes. Through this one students’ engagement, the entire class entered into a collective knowledge moment of the audience and theatre. The 191 students left that class period more aware that their roles as participant audience members can change their experience to a deeply engaged one.

However, awareness of their roles in our department as engaged audience members is only half of it. During the free-write, I asked the students to write down what they believe the role of the theatre department is in the University. The overwhelming majority responded: “to put on plays or to entertain and educate”. Learning more about the art of
asking questions, I should’ve asked, “What is the theatre departments unique value to the university?” for it seemed their responses were highly linked to their experience seeing *Avenue Q*. With that being said, some students still answered that question though I didn’t ask it. Students touched on the unique value of uniting theatre and non-theatre students together through the theatre department. Other students responded that the theatre department: “gives culture, expands experiences, shows people a whole new side of learning, provides space for social dialogue and gives a rounded education”. Others said it allows for: “expression, interaction, dialogue, talent, different perspectives, and communication of real world issues”. But one student put it perfectly: the role of the theatre department in Miami University is “to act as a space for students (major and non-major) to engage with stories, themselves, and others”. This answer defines the theatre department’s unique role or ability as being a space for engagement among all university students. It is in this space that all the aforementioned take place, but theatre’s unique ability is to create spaces for engaging stories and people. However, most students believe the role is to educate and entertain possibly for two reasons: because that’s all the department does or that’s all students assume it does. THE 191 was created to break assumptions and educate theatre appreciators. But what does the department believe their role is in the university? Defining what the department is first is critical to understanding the identity, however, defining the role of the department is the next step. Perceptions are based off of representations. What is the department representing to the university about who they are? This reflection can lead to action steps that allow for inclusive traditions, engaged non-major audience members, and theatre students who are no longer afraid. This case study focused more on communicating the importance of their role in our departmental community and learning their perceptions of our departmental community. The suggestions above are for further conversations of community building between the department and university.

With all that being said, it is still important to remember that these non-theatre students are still liquid moderns that want community the way *they* want it. A common misconception about THE 191 is that it is an ‘easy A’. Students have admitted to breakout instructors over the years that that is why they have taken the class. Students are then surprised by the amount of work, in class acting, or hard exams. Like every other student,
they are concerned about good grades ultimately leading to a good job. Liquid moderns care about what’s best for meeting their individualized needs and sometimes to the point where it negatively affects others. There is a culture of THE 191 that has been very disrespectful at theatre performances, to teachers, and the coursework. One of my personal students shared how members of my breakout believe “the class takes itself too seriously” as the instructors rant and rave about how amazing theatre is while ‘making’ the tests so hard. However, this is an assumption on theatre as a discipline. Though theatre can be engaging and incite participation, according to Snyder-Young, it is limited in that you don’t know how people will respond and if the issues that are being discussed are reinforced rather than changed. And though encouraging liquid moderns to be leaders and that there is more to happiness than individualism may seem impossible, those challenges cannot stop work towards community or further interventions of change making.

Conclusion

In her book, Getting a Grip 2: Clarity, Creativity and Courage for the World We Really Want, Frances Moore Lappé describes the difference between thin democracy and living democracy. Thin democracy is a set system where only higher officials decide what happens and live public lives whereas living democracy is always evolving; citizens use their voices and values to shape public choices and all citizens have public lives. Living democracy is learned and requires the practice of the ‘Ten arts of democracy’: active listening, creative conflict, meditation, negotiation, political imagination, public dialogue, public judgment, celebration, evaluation and reflection, and mentoring (Lappé 2010, 132). Lappé uses public lives like Schechner uses performance. The concept that we all have public lives is that all our actions are performed and seen through education, religious life, media, recreation, civic life, health care, and economic life or in other words, professional, civic, and personal areas of public life.

Judge William Hastie said, “Democracy is a process, not a static condition...it can be easily lost, but is never fully won”. Gadamar said community is a conversational process, a ‘becoming’ that is never fully achieved, and a process that we must choose and continuously commit to. Democracy and community are dynamic, continuous, but also
learned processes requiring engagement and empowerment. Lappé’s *Spiral of Empowerment* starts with the potential to meet real needs and the awareness of possibility ending with confidence gained from making sound decisions together that create healthy communities. Democracy and community are processes of action and reflection (or Lappé’s art of evaluation and reflection). They both also require citizens that are learning how to do democracy and community while sharing power not controlling it. According to Lappé, it is humans own knowledge that our “well-being depends on healthy communities and that only in public engagement can we fulfill our need to connect with others in common purpose, to make a difference, to express our values and to fully respect ourselves. Engagement is a part of the good life” (Lappé 2010, 60). This understanding motivates people to engage. However, for liquid moderns their knowledge that they are truly alone motivates them to engage in individualism rather than public engagement. Clements in, *The Future of Community*, also encourages empowering individuals in the direction of community. Clements says it’s more than just participation but empowering citizens to create a new system together. As people are empowered to see that they can meet real needs and get confidence from making sound decisions together, liquid moderns can realize that public engagement fulfills personal and community needs much more than individualism can on its own. This is the world we really want, Lappé says, and has hope that we can get there.

To get there we need: forms of engagement, reflection and action, processes, conversation, learning, and performing that are fulfilling and transformative. We need the art forms of community and democracy. We need humility, awareness, patience, persistence, and each other. In today’s culture of liquid moderns and public higher education, it may seem impossible to build community. One might think we just have to let go of the idea of community altogether. But that idea still brings us back to Bauman, the idea that it is absolutely necessary to believe in community. Though the university is functioning more like a business than a democracy, we cannot continue doing business as usual. It isn’t possible to create a space that is perfect for everyone, but we can create a “space that works most of the time” (Sherrington, 2015). There is hope that through engagement and empowerment community can be built in a liquid modern society, university, and department. But does theatre just allow for connection through the
techniques or can it actually change the liquid modern? Unlike other forms of media, theatre has the transforming power to resurrect and restore absent and individualistic communities into healthy and living ones. According to the Transtheoretical Model (Stages of Change) developed by Prochaska and DiClemente in the late 1970s, there are 6 stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation/determination, action/willpower, maintenance, and relapse. These case studies began the contemplation and preparation stages of change. Change is hard to make, but it can be done with time, multiple interventions, and stages of change. According to Nicholson, citizenship is an “act and set of social practices, which are completed and embodied” (Nicholson 2005, 2). To empower the liquid modern to student-citizen, it requires actions, practices, and embodiment. It requires a deep engagement of continual behaviors. Applied theatre creates spaces for such behaviors that take individuals through the stages of change. Though there are limitations, it is difficult, and requires consistent work, that is in essence community building.
Epilogue: Where Civic and Spiritual Meet?

After 21 years, my first time returning to St. Thomas Virgin Islands was this past summer. I had always dreamed of returning ‘home’ after I had finished college and before continuing the rest of my life. It is always thought of that once you know yourself or where you come from then can you fully step into your destiny. Before I left, a friend reminded me however to “travel not to find yourself, but to remember who you’ve been all along”. I got the opportunity to see where I come from, but was reminded who I am/I’ve been.

My thesis work with the Miami theatre department is a picture of God’s wonderful providence and grace. During my time at Miami, I really began to understand who Jesus Christ is and walking in relationship with Him. I had always been a theatre major but one day in the shower my freshman year, I remember God clearly saying start a traveling theatre company that spreads the gospel of Jesus Christ. I still had premature and unrealistic goals of being on Broadway so I knew this was Him (and not me). From that moment, I pursued an Entrepreneurship minor and took specific classes in entrepreneurship, theatre, and Miami plan courses that would prepare me for this company. It was during a Town Hall meeting my junior year that the former theatre chair Dr. Elizabeth Reitz Mullinex announced the ‘4+1 program’ or the combined masters and bachelors program. I knew that other graduate students had the opportunity to direct in or out of the production season and that fact made me think I could start my company and get a masters at the same time. Needless to say, I prayed, applied, and found myself pursuing a Masters in Theatre. I had been talking about sharing the gospel through theatre in a personal and untraditional way that goes into the community and talks it through with them rather than just presenting or preaching it to them. Little did I know I already had a heart for applied theatre. Through another series of events, I found myself placed in the perfect position. I became the assistant to the theatre chair who was also interested in building community. Then participating in both Rohd and Savidge’s workshops gave me the activities and techniques I needed to engage in a civic practice relationship with the theatre
chair (and other teacher teachers) and create workshops designed to discuss, study, and build community.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve my department while learning how to use the techniques, engage in the new work of relationships, and see what can come from this kind of work. However, for me, community and building community has another layer. I believe we were created to live in community and one reason Jesus created us was for community. The imbalance of education, access, busyness, technology, power, and often times the people themselves are all causes to the challenge of community. However, the root cause is sin, which has marred and messed up how community was supposed to work for public and positive good. Community can only exist and succeed when individuals understand themselves, their role in community, and unite around a shared goal. Jesus Christ helps us understand who we are, our role, and what shared goal we should have that can actually succeed and cause us to thrive individually and communally. I believe that with the help and understanding that Jesus gives us about life, we can attain this ideal of unity, action, and reform in our communities today.

In Chapter 2, I stated that both Rohd and Savidge’s work influenced my thesis research but also influence my future company. Rohd’s new work of relationships, the “Invitation”, and understanding that civic and theatre together is more powerful than alone combined with Savidge’s use of therapeutic and spiritual (biblical) techniques that build community through personal and community change, describe where my heart in applied theatre rests...or ‘where civic and spiritual meet’.

While in St. Thomas, The Charleston Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church massacre happened. My grandmother came into my room early in the morning calling me to come see the news. A 21-year-old white male went into this historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina Wednesday June 17th, sat down during their bible study, and after which opened fire killing 9 of the 12 people present. The details, however, of this horrible tragedy are what send it over the edge. The shooter spared one woman’s life

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17 CBS News. Last modified 2015. “Charleston Shooting- Nine killed in South Carolina Church”. www.cbsnews.com Provides a full storyline of all reports made from the first to the most recent of the alleged shooter Dylann Roof’s indictment charges.
telling her that he “wanted her to stay alive so she could tell the story” while 2 others remained alive by playing dead. Among the dead was the pastor, Reverend Clementa Pinckney, who was also a U.S. senator. Emanuel AME church is the oldest and most historical black church as one of the main headquarters for the civil rights movement. The alleged shooter, from North Carolina, “wanted to do something crazy and start a race war. He almost didn’t go through with it, but while yelling racial slurs, he told the victims he just “had to do it”. The outright racial, political, and religious attacks shook my world. At the beginning of August, I was to move to Charleston as I was planning on getting married. As I write now, I have moved, gotten married, and have paid my respects to ‘Mother Emanuel’ as they call it.

As a black Christian woman, this massacre hits home, but as a black Christian artist with a heart for civic community building and spiritual healing, I am excited that this is my new home. With Dale Savidge’s Applied Theatre Center is in Greenville, South Carolina, about 3 hours away from Charleston and a young woman I met that now works at ATC, I have hopes of working with her here in Charleston. Though her heart is specifically for applied theatre work focusing on racial reconciliation in the church, we’re both interested in openings to discuss, heal, and brainstorm with community members about race, Christianity, and social change initiatives in the south but also America today. However, these interests find themselves situated in many fields and discourses about civic, religious, and social change kinds of work.

The Ford Foundation, established in 1936, is a global organization committed to funding social change initiatives that "strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, and advance human knowledge creativity and achievement". Similar to the Ford Foundation in social change initiatives, Animating Democracy is an organization that fosters civic engagement through arts and culture through research, resources, and opportunities. As far as religion in theatre, theatre began as a form of worship to the gods in ancient Greece. The Journal of Religion and Theatre covers the relationships between spiritualties of world cultures and all disciplines of theatre and performance studies. From medieval passion plays about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to Peter Brooks’ transformation of the Indian religious text ‘Mahabhrata’, theatre continues to display and perform the sacred as well as today beginning to perform the everyday religious public life.
Religion is as much of a part of who we are as humans as the need for community. Most find community in their religious affiliations. But the link between religion (and spirituality) and theatre is that both go beyond itself and transcends everyday life. There are also applied theatre artists engaging the religious and spiritual realms of social lives. From 2001-2005, Cornerstone Theatre Company toured a Faith-Based Cycle engaging the question of how faith unites and divides us. Some projects engaged single congregations, interfaith or multiple congregations, as well as non-active members in any faith community. With such great scholarship and practice with theatre, spirituality, and religion, *Performing the Sacred*, the book Dale Savidge co-authored, goes to another level. It is the first full length both that explores the intersection between theatre and theology saying that theologically, theatre reflects Christian truths such as incarnation, community, and presence among other levels of engagement and everyday life. Savidge is also the leading artists in applied theatre workshops with not only a religious and spiritual vision, but with a Christian framework.

There is also discourse about the phrase civic meeting the spiritual. Spirituality is an important basis for civic engagement. The pre-modern stage of historical community is community/society and the spiritual leader is the church. It wasn’t just a meeting of the civic and spiritual, but the civic was the spiritual and vice versa. As community and society have grown to mean different things, so has the civic and the spiritual. The University of Puget Sound has the SLICE (Spiritual Life and Civic Engagement) center, which offers options for those seeking deeper connection with self and the community. However, the “for some, or for others” language just speaks of a center where the spiritual and civic have the opportunity to meet but the choice whether to or not. In her article, “Giving thanks for my ‘church’, where the civic meets the spiritual”, Jill Filipovic uses the word church to mean any place that “cultivates our communities and nourish our spirits”, showing how the media can now be a spiritual leader as Bauman says. Putnam’s research showed a decline in church membership, but Filipovic builds on that by saying that society has benefited from religion not being the ‘only game in town’. Regardless of through the church, media, or college centers, a need for community, civic, and spiritual elementals in our society are still relevant, apparent, and necessary.
When I think about possible work in Charleston, at least 3 ‘conversations’ come to mind: one with civic workers, spiritual leaders, and community members. But how does the civic practically meet the spiritual? Is it just by having all involved in a conversation together? Is it a combination of civic and spiritual aspects where moments are more focused on one over another? That’s what the civic ‘meeting’ the spiritual sounds like to me. But looking at my heart, I don’t just want the civic and spiritual to meet. I believe that having political leaders, church leaders, and community members in a room about this massacre would prove beneficial. I believe aspects of civic practice and drama therapy would also be successful applied theatre practice in Charleston. However, just mere ‘meeting’ of civic engagement and religious talk or exploration isn’t what I’m forwarding. Applied theatre goes beyond itself, revealing how the world works, and has proven its ability to be transformative in civic and spiritual situations. Seeing how applied theatre practices can empower action, confidence, relationships, personal healing, and community, applied theatres transformative nature lends itself to highlighting, illuminating, and revealing all the more how transformative the love of Jesus is.

While in St. Thomas, I did learn who I was all along. I learned that I do know who I am, I am daily growing into that person, and I don’t have to do what I’ve always done. I believe that rings true for civic and spiritual work. Both have proven to work effectively separately and then tap into or ‘meet’ the other. But like students can become empowered citizens in the age of individualism, civic engagement and spirituality specifically Christianity (a relationship with Jesus Christ) can, like community, ‘resurrect’ in today’s society. It may not be like how it used to be, and that’s good because now it can be better.

Pulling from practitioners excellent work in civic engagement, religious scholarship, and spiritual practice, I have many ‘founding fathers’ that provide entry points and foundational knowledge not only possible Charleston workshops but for the work of my theatre company. I’m not sure what it’ll look like, but in this moment it’s about the creative process and exciting journey awaiting me.
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Appendix A:

THE 107 Workshop Lesson Plan
Workshop October 22nd, 2014
Starting at 4pm ending at 5:20pm

THE 107 Workshop Guiding Questions:

1. What does it mean for you to “hone your craft”?
2. What does community mean to you?
3. Why is it important to have a community?
4. What would an ideal theatre community look like?
5. What do you contribute to community?
6. What does it mean to enter a new community?

Lesson Plan:

1. 5 minutes: Break students into their home groups. We will be starting today with a physical warm up called Diamonds. Anyone ever heard of it? Arrange yourselves in a diamond. Someone will have to stand in the middle. Whoever is in front is the one who is “leading”. Do movements in your direction but this is a game/warm up not only about leading but also giving leadership, so do movements that have to change directions and therefore give leadership. Do movements of stretching and get yourself ready for the day.
2. 7 minutes: Stop, drop, side. Here’s another leadership giving game. Walk around the room. Be aware of everyone around you. Someone can then take the leadership and choose to stop. When one person stops, everyone stops. Someone else can then take the leadership and begin walking again. Let’s do this for a moment. Now, someone has the choice to drop to the floor, you can either go slow or fast. But when someone drops, everyone drops. And then someone chooses to get back up and then everyone follows. Let’s do this as well as stopping for a moment. And yes you can go from stop to drop. Now you can also slide to the ground on your side. And then of course get back up. You have stop, drop, and side as options to lead and follow. Now let’s play with all three for a moment.
3. 5 minutes: We’re going to do this pretty quickly, we are going to discuss 2 different concepts in 5 minutes so I need you all with me. This activity is called I Know. You will come into the center of the circle and say “I know blank is...blah blah blah”. I think this is good because we will get what’s right on the top of your brains when you hear these words. So the first one is “I know community is...” (circle up and jump into the center of the circle with a truth about what you know community to be). So here’s a minute and a half, only one person in the circle at a time. Now “I know leadership is...“  
4. 5 minutes: Reflection about the “I know” exercise and the concepts of leadership and community.
5. 5 minutes: Now we are going to play a game called “It made me think”. This is similar to “I know”, but different in the sense that you are telling a story about community that made you think. We will do two rounds for community. The first being a story that’s positive about community where you were experiencing community and one that is a little less positive where community was absent. Does that make sense? And to end your story, you say “and it made me think”. For example, sometimes people talk about how they want community but not when it comes to the expense of loving those in their community that are hard to love and it makes me think. Got it? Now you’re turn. We’re going to do this in 5 minutes. Go!

6. 5 minutes: Reflection about “It made me think” exercise and the concept of community:
   - What stuck out to you?
   - What were similarities?
   - How was this round different or similar to the last game?

7. 1 minute: As a home group choose two stories: one positive and one less positive story. Take a minute to do this. And then we will come back as a group and share what each group chose. SHARE. After sharing 3 groups will choose their positive story and 3 groups will choose their less positive story to continue the workshop. (write down which group has which story).

8. 5 minutes: Based on those the one story you have, individually, make an image with your body that speaks that story. Go! Show your group members your image. Now as a group, create a collective image based on your story. You could build off someone’s image you like or someone’s image could’ve given you another idea. Either way create one 5 person group image. Does this make sense? You have a minute. Go! Now let’s share those images with the rest of the class.

9. 1 minute: Reflection: Just shout out how creating individual and communal images was for you? What was it like sharing it? What did you see? What spoke to you? What was it like seeing your classmates’ group images? Just shout it out.

10. 5 minutes: Now let’s get back in your home groups: With the image you just created, we are going to use to create a flipbook of 5 images but this image you created is image number 3. So smack dab in the middle. As a group create two images before and two after the image you just created. I will give you 5 minutes to do this.

11. 10 minutes: Now recall stop, drop, side. Use stop, drop, side as in and out movement as what transitions you from image-to-image. You also have the chance to add words, or music made from your own bodies and voices please, integrate the “I know” or “It made me think” phrases. Yeah? You will have 10 minutes for this part. But work fast. Make sure these works are 2 minutes and under.

12. 10 minutes: Now let’s share our works with the class.

13. 3 minutes: Reflection: Talk as a home group about one thing that is extremely important you need to share as we reflect on the works we just saw. Take 1 minute to do this. Choose one person to share that one thing. We will do this in 2 minutes to share.
14. 10 minutes: Now our job is to combine all of these flipbooks into one collective performance. This is what we will share at the coffeehouse on November the 2\textsuperscript{nd}. I think it’s important for the department to hear from you and see from you what you’re thinking about community and leadership. I hope you enjoyed creating your own work today because that’s exactly what you all did. Give yourselves a round of applause. Everything was beautiful! NOW put on your curator/director hat, how do we combine these 5 flipbooks and tell our story as THE 107?

- order of stories?
- overlap?
- transitions between scenes?

- Get out your notebooks and pens: write down your groups story and what you need to remember to do this in 2 weeks. I would really like us to have a rehearsal. Today we will document how we will combine but at that rehearsal, we will physically combine and what not.
Appendix B:

ADVISORY BOARD Workshops Lesson Plan

Workshops Oct 30, Nov 6, Nov 13, Nov 20
Starting 10 am and ending at 11am

THE Advisory Board Guiding Questions:

1. What does our department value?
2. What should our department value?
3. What are the assets of the department?
4. What is the role of our department in the university?
5. How can we better understand the relationships between parts of the department and the department as a whole?
6. As a transfer, international, commuter, or first through 4th year, how do you experience community?
7. What could we do to help us keep with our values, vision, and assets?

Lesson Plan:

Listening: Oct 3rd, 2014

1. 5 minute: Warm Up: Blind Handshakes (p18). Everyone find a partner, someone you don’t know THAT well. face your partner and shake hands. Now freeze in that position and close your eyes. This is an ALL eyes-closed game. No one will mess with you and you are fully in control of your participation. On “go” release hands but keep your arm in the frozen handshake position. Now slowly walk backwards. Then I will say freeze, now find you partner. Remember your eyes are closed. Walk slowly. If you bump into someone just stop, and adjust. (When everyone has gotten somewhere) open your eyes. Switch partners and let’s do it again. 1 minute: Intro-Overview of the project and what this day will be. “For my thesis, I am studying community and how to build it specifically in an academic theatre environment specifically with theatre and creative practices and then also how to create structures for maintaining and sustaining that community. Today is the listening day. I have some activities that I think will help us utilize our time the best”.
2. 12 minute: Wagon Wheel: Share a time when you experienced community. Keep in mind that you all have different characteristics from each other like transfer, commuter, international, freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior... so think about those characteristics about you. Now make an outer circle and an inner circle. The outer circle will move around while the inner circle stays the same. First, the inner circle person will share then the outer circle person. You have 45 seconds each to
share how you experience community. After a minute I will say switch and the outer circle with move to the left.

3. 3 minute: Reflection on times when you experienced community. What was it like? What did you see? Any similarities or differences? What did blind handshakes do, if anything? What’s you see or learn?

4. 1 minute: This next part will be a chance for you to think about your responses to these questions. There are big questions and you will have a good amount of time for all of them, but I want some words and phrases for you to be familiar with: values, assets, role, and relationship. We will work on the 3 questions to the left first for 12 minutes. Then the 2 questions on the right for 12 minutes. Depending on how things like I’ll be flexible with time.

5. 12 minutes: Ask questions (1-3) with verbal answers as phrases or words. These phrases or words will be written on sticky notes.

6. 12 minutes: Ask questions (4-5) sticky notes?

7. 5 minutes: Reflection

Activities from: Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue by Michael Rohd
Things Needed: post its and markers

Collaborating: Nov 6th, 2014

1. 1 minute: Intro to what we did last week and what we will do today. “Last week was our listening day. We will go over the 5 posters of questions and categorized answers today, for today is the collaborating day. We heard a lot from last week and I thank you so much for writing so freely. Today we are going to work together and figure out how to handle these things, but first lets warm up.”

2. 5 minute: Warm Up: Machine (p 26)-Everyone stand in a circle. I need a volunteer to start this game. It’s called Machine. Begin a clear motion and rhythm that can be repeated and make sure it stays the same. Now one by one, add a movement and rhythm to this machine. This game is silent. (30 seconds) person number 1 pick a new movement and rhythm, now everyone else find a new pace together. Freeze. (pause) relax. Shake it out. Who wants to start this time? Repeat a second time.

3. 5 minutes: Let’s look over the 5 questions and answers from last week. I would really like to spend some time looking at the assets again, really think about what our assets. Think of assets like strengths.

4. 20 minutes: Imagining Utopia: Let’s continue working physically for a moment. Have you ever heard of image theatre? If I were to tell you make an image with you body that represents sadness what would you do? That’s image theatre. Sometimes words can’t express things and sometimes, physical representations also help us understand relationship and what’s going on a lot more and a lot faster. For example, we would talk about oppression all day but when we see an image of oppression, everything changes for the most part right? Okay. I want us to go as far with this as possible okay? What would an ideal department image look like? Represent the utopian department. If you need to make an image with more than one person, ask them for
help and then make the image. I will take a picture and then once I do that, you are free to continue making images.

5. 5 minutes: Brainstorm: Based on the images you created, what do you need the department to be to be a utopia? And what do you desire? Now, what are some obstacles to the utopian department?

6. 7 minutes: From those needs, desires, and obstacles: let’s pick three things we want to focus on. Let’s not focus on adding more things into our lives, let’s focus on our strengths, assets even, and what we could do better that could get us closer to this utopian department (hopefully topics centered around relationship, if not, figure out the underlying relationship?). Now let’s look back over the 5 questions, categories and meanings we made from answers that we created last week. Which sticky notes fit under each other those topics?

7. 5 minutes: Based on those three topics we’ve chosen, I’d like you to split in three groups with the topic that resonates with you the most. Now with you group, create an image. Create an image of what it looks like now. Now create an image of the utopian image. So we are creating the real and the ideal image of these 3 topics. How do we get from the real to the ideal?

8. 8 minutes: Now let’s redo the real and ideal images. Do they change? Why and how? How do we get from the real to the ideal?

Activities from: Theatre from Community, Conflict, and Dialogue by Michael Rhod, and Game Storming by Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, and James Macanufo.

Things Needed: large sheets of paper, sticky notes, markers

**Mobilizing: Nov 13th, 2014**

1. 3 minute: Intro to what we will do today. “Today is the mobilizing day. Last week was a great time to work together and decided on 3 main things we want to focus on and work on making better. But to make those things even remotely a possibility, we need people who will stand in the gap and take initiative or the lead. Recap for those who haven’t been there what we’ve done and where we’ve been.

2. 5 minutes: Diamonds for a physical warm up (game about giving and taking leadership).

3. 7 minutes: Let’s circle up. We will play a game called “I know”. I know community is... One person will come into the center of the circle and came in and say “I know community is blank”. We will play this for about 5 minutes. It can be one word or it can be a phrase. You choose. Go! Then I know LEADERSHIP is... Realize that by being on this board you are leaders in this department.

4. 10 minutes: Empathy Map (p 65): Okay now let’s move less physically but thinking deeper on these 3 topics we’ve chosen, HOW are we going to focus on them and work on these things? They are things we already do and posses but could do and posses better yeah? There are two areas of understanding I want us to cover that will help us focus and work on those things. To build on our strengths to overcome our weaknesses. Right? The first area is faculty. They may seem like the enemy sometimes, but really they are our allies. This activity is specifically for customer
understanding in business but I think it can work if we use it to understand the perspective of our faculty members and how they are allies in this process of community building. So let’s use the faculty as the “person” in this activity. Let’s do the hearing, feeling, seeing, saying, and doing from their perspective. Putting yourself in their shoes and thinking of what they think, hear, see, feel, say, and do that can help us towards our goal of community. How can we work together to accomplish our goals?

5. Break people into our 3 things: Communication, Relationships, and Traditions

6. 10 minutes: Problem Solving Activity: Determine your problem objectives, ask questions, state ideas, gather facts, identify obstacles (context) to your objectives, inventory your resources (assets), generate ideas for reaching your objectives, make decisions, take action). Here we will have specific ideas to give Julia next week.

Activities from: Game Storming by Dave Gray, Sunni Brown, and James Macanufo.
Things Needed: large sheets of paper, sticky notes, markers

**Maintaining: Nov 20th, 2014**

Today is the day we talk with Julia. We shared with her what we did in the last 3 workshops together and then presented our 3 things to her. In this meeting, we decided to share what we did with the Department at the next Town Hall meeting (November 24th) and specifically focusing on Traditions (the most tangible of the three). We created a lesson plan and survey and I then facilitated it.
Appendix C:

THE 191 Lead Sheet
Theatrical Lecture April 29th
Starting 1130 am and ending at 1245pm

Introduction

On April 29th, I will reintroduce myself to the students and inform them about this thesis work that I am doing. I will say, "Hi again, I am Jaime Coaker. I am a second year theatre masters student and I am currently working on my thesis in building community in the theatre department here at Miami University. I am interested in how we can use theatre techniques to explore everyday life, encourage and facilitate dialogue, and even create change. A key portion of understanding community in our theatre department is how those "outside" our community experience our community and that's where you come in. As Theatre 191 students, you have the best outside perspective of our theatre department. Starting next Tuesday, I would like to conduct some gatherings of your perspectives of what it means to be an audience member, what the role of the theatre department is in the University, what it was like going to see Avenue Q (not about the show itself but about the experience), and what kind of audience member you'd like to be. When or if you participate is completely up to you. It is important that I am clear with you about this consent statement. Participating in my thesis does not affect your grade in this class. Let me say that again, participating in my thesis does NOT affect your grade in this class. If you choose to participate, it will be anonymous, and there is a strong chance that I may use something you write or say in my thesis. So if you choose to participate, please be respectful but completely honest. If you choose not to participate, there will be no penalty. Our department is very eager to learn how we can better create community within the greater community of Miami, how to encourage more student participation, and honestly how we are viewed by the rest of the university. There will be a freewrite activity about your feelings about the experience of being in the theatre space, department, and community. During the lecture, I will have one of my fellow graduate students writing down quotes and statements from class discussion. Any questions?"

Purpose
Remind them that participation DOES NOT affect your grade and there is NO penalty for not participating. The choice to participate is ANONYMOUS and will be used in my thesis. Be respectful and honest!

Importance of the Audience
Write down their responses to why the audience is important, their ideas of what the roles and purpose of the audience are, and why is the audience so important in live performance?

The History of The Audience
- Astor Place Riot- Play YouTube Clip- Astor Place Riot v2- uploaded May 7th, 2008.

- “The darkened auditorium has completely separated the players from their patrons and overt public displays of emotion in the theatre [by the audience] are no longer commonplace. Human emotions have not changed, but theatrical tradition regarding audience behavior and dramatic presentation has. Although most practitioners are undoubtedly pleased that today's audiences are usually quiet and polite, the theatre is in danger of becoming culturally exclusive...I am certainly not advocating a return to the earlier master/servant relationship between patron and player, to pelting or rioting, but I do, nevertheless, regret the loss of proactive and uninvited audience participation” (Fisher, 66) 2003

---The changes in tradition of the theatre changed the audience's role and participation.

JUST A THOUGHT: Avenue Q plays with both the current tradition of the theatre as well as engaging the audience---what does that mean? How did that affect you as an audience member?

Roles of the Audience

- “An accidental audience comes 'to see the show' while the integral audience is 'necessary to accomplish the work of the show’” (Schechner, 220).

---Being an effective and educated accidental audience member means gaining an understanding and experience of both types of spectatorship-accidental and integral-where one kind can inform and enrich the other, and can even begin to happen contemporaneously in performance. (Schechner, 2003).

In the class, I will use spectator as accidental and participant as integral.

What was the Astor Place Riot and Rocky Horror's audience member type? What kind of audience members were you in Avenue Q? What's special about a participant audience?

Audience Engagement and Participation

In an effort to create engaged and participation from audiences again, theatre artists, companies, and even our department is looking for ways to engage their audience. Write down their comments.

(20 minutes) Free Write
(5 minutes) Preperformance- think about this for the next time you see a play
(15 minutes) Performance and Post performance- think about your experience in Avenue Q.