

“You are my representatives. Please hear my voice.” – The benefits of interactive theatre
on the University of Colorado at Boulder campus: looking back, looking forward.

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Thesis directed by Professor Beth Osnes

The present study investigates the impact of interactive theatre on the University of Colorado at Boulder (UCB) community, using ITP (Interactive Theatre Project) – an UCB ensemble on campus from 1999 to 2015 – as a case study. Arranged to immerse the reader in a typical ITP week, the chapters of this thesis delineate my observations and experiences as an ensemble member and graduate student. This study explores the impact of ITP on the participants and ensemble members. From my narrative – coupled with previous knowledge about ITP and a strong applied theatre foundational framework – I defend that interactive theatre is beneficial to the University campus by fostering collaboration, democratic participation, and a sense of belonging within the ensemble, as well as by addressing social issues that invite critical dialogue from audience and community members. I make recommendations to establish an interdisciplinary, research-informed, interactive theatre group on our campus.

To my mother, Francisca
de quem terei sempre saudades.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When I joined Lisbon's *Clube da Estefânia* in 2007, the director had assembled a seemingly random group of people from all walks of life to create a workshop-based ensemble. Acting in *Clube da Estefânia* was challenging, demanding, and exhausting – and I loved it. I loved the thrill of experimenting, learning to interact with others, and tackling stereotypes in my own society through theatre. I loved how unpolished – and poignant – our work was. Once, we daringly started a performance without a blackout, as the audience watched us warm up on stage, dancing to Rosana's *A fuego lento* before the play – which we had collaboratively authored – began. This apparent lack of finesse and fearless transparency was captivating; the ability to communicate and to experience the raw potential of my body and my words on stage in a mundane way far surpassed the geometry of the proscenium arch and the spectacle of the costumes. I became more interested in theatre as an unornamented force of nature that drew its power from within me rather than from a masking disguise that forced me to be away from myself. My experiences in theatre and television as a young woman growing up in the Lisbon area have since fostered a passion for the way theatre allows me to understand my own self and others, and the way I relate to others, as I meet or play them. It was this same passion and curiosity that brought me here, to Colorado, where I joined the Interactive Theatre Project (ITP) on our University of Colorado at Boulder (UCB) campus. As I near my tenure at the university, I leave knowing that my experiences on our campus have culminated in this thesis and that my words chisel out a central question: *How does interactive theatre benefit the UCB community?*

ITP: BRIEF HISTORY

Following “racially charged incidents” on the campus in the Spring of 1998 (Simpson 146), the administration’s “newly-declared commitment to diversity” gave way for Rebecca Brown Adelman and Trent Norman to create ITP as a means to promote dialogue in the community (Simpson and Brown Adelman 84). From its establishment in 1999 until its closing in 2015, Brown Adelman and Norman co-directed an ensemble comprised of fifteen paid student-actors and two to five paid graduate students working as assistant-directors. During that time, ITP devised and provided professionally-scripted and improvisational performances addressing difficult issues that impacted the UCB community including (but not limited to) anti-Semitism, homophobia, suicide, identities, privilege, racism, sexism, and socio-economic status (Scriggins 3).

Throughout the years, the group worked to address difficult conversations around these topics, as it operated at two different levels on campus: within the ensemble as well as in university spaces outside the ensemble meetings (classrooms, events, trainings). The ensemble met for two hours (5pm to 7pm) every Tuesday, from 2001 until 2015; Brown Adelman recalls never having cancelled an ensemble meeting during that time. During these Tuesday meetings, the ensemble worked on deepening their physicality and creativity through theatre exercises. In addition to these regular meetings, ensemble members met in small groups during the week for rehearsals. For the most part, the scripts – stemming from students’ stories shared during ensemble meetings – became part of a repertoire ITP used whenever a campus member (such as staff or faculty) requested an ITP performance come to their class or event. These performances were typically comprised of a warm-up, a scene, and a discussion period. ITP’s mission statement highlighted the use of performance as “a springboard for dialogue between the

audience, characters, and facilitators [to] provide a unique opportunity for groups to explore complex issues while developing greater community strength, creativity, and cultural competence” (Saypol 40-41). The group also aimed to

[1] provide forums for participants to discuss difficult issues; [2] provide means to explore becoming a better, more effective ally for target groups; [3] raise awareness about diversity issues; [4] open doors for collaboration, discussion and problem solving between students, faculty and staff; [5] give voice and visibility to marginalized groups on college and university campuses; [6] introduce theatre as a medium for education and social change. (Scriggins 5)

However, despite its innovative work and acclaimed success, ITP lost its residence on the UCB campus.

Benjamin Saypol, an ITP alum and a graduate from the Ph.D. program in this department, wrote at length about interactive theatre – including ITP – in his dissertation and is, therefore, an important piece of work to read alongside this study. His work – addressing the research question “how should one go about establishing a viable Interactive Theatre ensemble that can provide quality programming to communities on university campuses?” – focused most strongly on the operational aspects associated with running interactive theatre programs on college campuses, thus strongly differing from my approach in this manuscript. Saypol reflected on the uniqueness of ITP while comparing it to other interactive theatre programs on U.S. university campuses; ITP stood out as the only program in the nation of its kind, differing from others given its emphasis on co-facilitation, consistent ensemble meetings, and paid student-actors. Saypol demonstrated ITP’s model also lent itself to reaching the highest number of community members on a university campus in comparison to other interactive theatre programs. Saypol suggested that,

across the board, the issue pertained to the financial stability of these interactive theatre programs, including ITP. In one of his final chapters, “Recent Events,” Saypol elaborates on the UCB Student Government’s decision to pass the “ITP Responsibility Act” (Annex B), which greatly contributed to defunding ITP. Writing in 2011 – when the student government passed a bill that eventually led to the end of ITP – Saypol narrated the decision of the student government to eliminate the group. Learning about this decision is crucial to establishing the context in which my study surfaces.

CONTEXT: DEFUNDING ITP

ITP was not created *by* the University but rather *within* the University. ITP was created by Brown Adelman and Norman, who were already employees at the institution before 1999 and who had, through their work (and given the campus climate at the time), gathered support from the institution – financial and otherwise – to create ITP. Inevitably, this context would eventually amount to some uncertainty regarding the bodies responsible for the group; in other words, while the University was supportive of ITP’s work, the group fell under uncertain jurisdiction, financial and otherwise. In April of 2008 (almost ten years after it had been created), as the group grew in number of performances and visibility on campus, Brown Adelman and Norman reached out to Causey Consulting with the intent to strategize possibilities to take ITP from being a student group to becoming an independent body within the University, thereby “more administratively and programmatically sustainable” (CUITP). Causey Consulting suggested an aggressive approach to fundraising: should ITP wish to become an independent body, they would need an operational budget of \$5M. The report from the consulting firm also suggested hiring a full-time staff member to assist with fundraising efforts towards that amount.

In the Summer of 2008, a Finance Board hearing took place; the Board unanimously passed a motion to transfer ITP funding from the Wardenburg Health Center (WHC) to the Housing and Dining Services (HDS) for the fiscal year 2008/2009. After this bill passed, the Division of Student Affairs demanded the agreement only go forward if ITP funding was secured. This appeared to be “an effort to ensure ITP would have sustained funding, and would be able to continue its performances while seeking additional sources of funding” (personal communication). After this discussion, the passed bill stated that “[it was] intended to remedy the administrative and programmatic challenges ITP . . . faces, while guaranteeing funding over the course of its five-year strategic plan.” The bill showed that

the agreement established is intended to continue support of ITP in the short term, during its transition toward self-sustainability. After the five-year bill period, the target goal is for ITP to be fully funded from other sources (reference ITP strategic plan) [by Causey Consulting]; if this is not the case and the goal is not fully reached, ITP can work to have a new bill passed if supported by UCSU at the time. (CUITP)

Conceivably, this initial bill did not withdraw the student-fee support from the program; rather, it aimed at finding a structure that would ensure ITP did not lose its funding and allowed the group to explore the possibility of becoming an independent body. Indeed, and as Saypol suggests, “the program intended to hire a full-time fundraising person, but the downturn in the economy prevented the group from hiring and also drastically reduced potential donors’ ability to give” (228). In the meantime, ITP applied for grants but, as Brown Adelman recalls, several of the proposals were rejected because ITP was not an independent body and was, instead, part of a university system (personal communication).

In March 2010, unexpectedly, the Vice President of the Student Government Legislative Council (VPSGLC) emailed ITP to discuss moving the group's funding from the Student Organization Funding Office (SOFO) to the Student Group Funding Board (SGFB) in order to increase "student oversight" (VPSGLC personal communication). A member of the Tri-Executive body argued that while it would be appropriate for ITP to "work through the UCSU [University of Colorado Student Union, now also known as Student Government]," SGFB would not be the most appropriate body to fund and supervise the group. During this conversation – which occurred over the span of a few days – the VPSGLC argued student oversight take precedent when thinking of fiscal oversight. Six days after the initial email, the VPSGLC requested an ITP representative be present at the UCSU Legislative Council meeting, where he was proposing this change in funding structure the following day. At 1am that night, ITP presented before UCSU (personal communication). At the meeting, ITP's funding source and role on campus was supported by the Head of the Finance Board, a Tri-Executive member, the Student Affairs student liaison, among others; the VPSGLC proposal was challenged and the issue brought forth was ultimately tabled for later discussion. This situation hinted at the uncertainty of ITP's place within the University.

Nearly a year later, a bill concerning ITP was introduced by another student, Gregory Carlson. At the time, Carlson was a UCB junior student who had run with the Empower conservative ticket, elected to lead the student government in the 2010/2011 school year; Carlson was also the student government legislative council treasurer and College of Arts and Sciences senator (Auran, "CUSG passes controversial pre-budget legislative bills"). The "ITP Responsibility Act", sponsored and authored by Carlson, proposed that "many of the tasks and

services provided by ITP are being or could be performed by other departments and organizations on campus¹” (Annex A). Further, Carlson argued that

the bill, 70LCB08, which obligated the Student Organization Funding Office (SOFO) to fund ITP for five years, stated that its purpose was ‘to continue support of ITP in the short term, during its transition toward self-sustainability’ . . . after the five-year bill period, the target goal is for ITP to be fully funded from other sources. (Annex B)

Carlson interpreted the Causey Consulting report and the consulting report as institutional directives to mean that ITP’s survival was singularly dependent upon raising \$5M in the following five years, dismissing the context of this report. Admittedly, in the original bill there is an understanding that fundraising \$5M would be tied into turning ITP into a self-sufficient body per Causey Consulting suggestions; however, this was not an institution-driven directive. The latter part of the bill – “if this is not the case *and* the goal is not fully reached” – may have been, therefore, taken out of context by assuming that the \$5M target was a University-imposed goal.

The bill² passed shortly after that in the Student Government Legislative Council on a second reading (12-4-1) and was then taken to the Executive Presidents, who took action on the bill. As the current CUB Student Government Legislative Council President explained to me, the executive presidents can choose to sign the bill into law (so long as 2/3 sign), veto it (which must be documented with adequate reasoning) or choose to not take an action (personal communication). In the case of the ITP bill, two vice presidents declined signing the bill; however, because they did not veto it, the bill was passed with only two signatures. ITP’s overall

¹ This sentence was present in the originally proposed bill but not in the approved bill.

² See Annex B.

annual budget of \$101,061 in 2010-2011 was effectively cut to \$0 in 2011-2012 (see page 113). The bill asked for three main points to be established: for the 2008 bill to be repealed and dissolved, for the student government to be relieved from any financial obligations towards ITP, and for this decision to impede “any reincarnations of the program that are formed over the next two years.” Notwithstanding the student hearings and protests, as well as objections from University leadership personnel (such as the Vice Chancellor for Health and Wellness and Director of Wardenburg Health Center, and the Executive Director of Student Affairs), the decision moved forward rapidly (Saypol 227).

With this context in mind, my question *How does interactive theatre benefit the UCB community?* is intentionally phrased in the present tense so as to represent two specific aims: first, to look back on my experience as an ITP ensemble member and second, to advocate that an interactive theatre program be restored to the campus, this time housed in the Department of Theatre & Dance³ in order to provide such an interactive theatre group with a strong body of support and scholarship. Lastly, this phrasing also reflects the ongoing presence of interactive theatre on campus, even after ITP came to an end in the Spring of 2015; one example is the

³ Such a program, Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative (TCEI), was recently proposed for a SEED grant (Annex E) and ultimately rejected. The deciding committee observed that the proposal was “well-intentioned” and that it “would create an empirically-driven and practice-based ensemble ... to engage community in dialogues about difficult yet necessary social issues. In terms of intellectual merit, the reviewers defended that this would be a much stronger proposal if it partnered with another department like Education or Sociology (of note, Sociology faculty were listed in the proposal). The committee saw the proposal lacked research depth, but that it showed a strong pedagogical approach. One of the reviewers added, “The ‘ensemble’ methodology is compelling and *I’m frankly eager to poach* from this project in terms of thinking about ways to cross-fertilize genuinely collaborative research and pedagogy” (my emphasis). In terms of data management, the committee asked to see a specific plan about how the PI would “share data with the public.” Lastly, the committee suggest the proposal be “rethought and resubmitted” in an upcoming year given it was a “timely, visionary proposal with ramifications for campus life in general” (Coleman personal communication). I expand on TCEI later in the final chapter of this thesis.

presence of an interactive theatre group in the UCB 2016 and 2017 Diversity Summits, thus denoting both a presence and a demand for such performance work in our community. This question also highlights the different aspects of community (rather than campus, *per se*): the ensemble community (the students who make up the ensemble), the campus community (those who participate in performances, including staff, students, and faculty), and the academic community (namely students and faculty interested in the various disciplines pertaining to practice-as-research and participatory action research). It is my argument throughout this thesis that interactive theatre reaches and concerns all three.

I also arrive at this study motivated by a different question (this one unrelated to interactive theatre or ITP) posed by theatre director Michael Boyd of the Royal Shakespeare Company in the context of understanding the potential of an ensemble: “Can an ensemble . . . act in some sense as a . . . better version of the real world on an achievable scale which celebrates the virtues of collaboration?” (Neelands 176). My question, in a sense, builds on Boyd’s. In conjunction, these two questions – Boyd’s and my own – have prompted me to consider the impact of interactive theatre on the UCB community at large, as well as the power of an interactive theatre ensemble to serve as a microcosm of the larger society; a collaborative, active, and critical community. Implied in this question is also a desire to investigate how interactive theatre is beneficial to campus communities, both at UCB and elsewhere. In the space between these two questions, I place myself as a student, practitioner, ensemble member, and researcher. As a writer, I highlight my personal testimony to address these questions – as both a member of the ITP ensemble (as actress and facilitator) and a member of the UCB community (as a graduate student).

ORGANIZATION

From this perspective, my research stands on a three-tiered approach: firstly, I argue that interactive theatre benefits the community by drawing from the scholarly works of U.S. philosopher Martha Nussbaum, Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal, and U.S.-based theatre practitioner and scholar Michael Rohd. Secondly, I defend the presence of an ensemble-based interactive theatre group on the UCB community by revisiting previous data that describe the impact of ITP. Thirdly, I use my personal account as an ITP ensemble member to recount my participation in this work and suggest the positive impact of interactive theatre on our community (Chapters 2 through 7). Through this three-tiered approach, I defend that interactive theatre has an important role on our campus – one concerning collaboration, democratic participation, and a sense of belonging; one concerned with addressing social issues that invite critical dialogue from our campus community members.

I have arranged my narrative like a typical ITP week in order to provide the reader with an immersive experience: Chapter Two explores my introduction to ITP and describes the check-in ritual of the group; Chapter Three expands on the exercises and games taking place during weekly ensemble meetings; Chapter Four illustrates the intricacy of a deep ensemble exercise, Privilege Line, when teaching privilege on the university campus. Chapters Five through Seven introduce, describe, and explore the impact of three different ITP scenes: *Why Are You Like This?*, a scene investigating the process of character development in ITP; *Let Me Out!*, addressing gender, sexuality, and privacy on campus through post-performance Question and Answer (Q&A) and “hot seat;” and *The Pant Suit*, a scene exploring ITP’s unique Empty Chair Technique to address bystander behavior in the context of gender and race/ethnic microaggressions. Chapter Eight ends my narrative by describing the close-out ritual with which

every ITP ensemble meeting ended, and revisiting the last ITP ensemble meeting on campus. The last chapter, Chapter Nine, concludes this study and offers future directions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ITP's work was deeply rooted in applied theatre practice and, particularly, interactive theatre.

Applied theatre, as Professor Helen Nicholson suggests, is an umbrella term describing “forms of dramatic activity that primarily exist outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, and which are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies” (2). Scholars Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston add that applied theatre can be defined as

a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional, mainstream theatre into the realm of a theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and priorities. The work often, but not always, happens in informal spaces, in non-theatre venues in a variety of geographical and social settings: schools, day centers, the street, prisons, village halls... (9)

These definitions, however, seem to de-emphasize the pedagogical, social, and academic role of applied theatre within university campuses, which may arguably be included in “conventional mainstream theatre institutions.” To this effect, I add onto these definitions by borrowing scholars Kelly Freebody and Michael Finneran's note:

the idea of applied drama and theatre being in a continuum of aesthetic and pedagogical activities with shifting forms and shapes, as opposed to a fixed, more canonical idea of drama. (31)

Interactive theatre inhabits this continuum. Saypol has offered a definition of interactive theatre that guides the present study:

a theatrical form in which the audience participates, in varying degrees, in the creation of the drama on stage and in real time, resulting in a combination of scripted and improvisational performance, with the goal of fostering critical dialogue designed to challenge attitudes and behaviors around a variety of social issues. (9)

Established these definitions, I have used four main works to build the present study upon a sound framework built upon the writings of philosopher Martha Nussbaum and of theatre practitioners Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd. Nussbaum's work helps situate this study within philosophical constructs pertaining to education and democracy. Not only does Nussbaum argue that "critical thinking and reflection" are crucial to life in democracy, she also posits that an effective education "prepares young people for life in a form of social and political organization" (9-10). Highlighting the distinction between "producing economic growth" and "producing democracy" (15), Nussbaum argues that

If a nation wants to promote this type of humane, people-sensitive democracy dedicated to promoting opportunities for "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to each and every person [education must foster]

- The ability to think well about political issues affecting the nation, to examine, reflect, argue, and debate, deferring to neither tradition nor authority;
- The ability to recognize fellow citizens as people with equal rights, even though they may be different in race, religion, gender, and sexuality: to look at them with respect, as ends, not just as tools to be manipulated for one's own

profit;

- The ability to imagine well a variety of complex issues affecting the story of a human life as it unfolds. (25)

Here, Nussbaum's framework of education recognizes these abilities as vital to raising and educating young people – and here I would highlight university students – for democracy. To educate for democracy, Nussbaum explains, is to foster a sense of acknowledgement of various viewpoints, a sense of vulnerability (as a source of strength), cooperation and concern for others, and a focus on the importance of personal narrative (45). While Nussbaum does not discredit disciplines in the sciences, she advocates for an emphasis and revalidation of the role of the humanities in education as they allow the student to grow and develop the tenets outlined above. If – as Saypol suggests – interactive theatre is to foster “critical dialogue designed to challenge attitudes and behaviors around a variety of social issues,” it must, therefore, support these tokens of education Nussbaum puts forward.

The ability to imagine and critically think about complex sociopolitical issues is at the center of the works of both Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd. Within the context of oppression in the Americas, Augusto Boal – highly influenced by Paulo Freire's pedagogy – investigated the relationship between theatre and revolution. In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal's historical perspective on the purpose and power of theatre emphasizes the need for making the means of production of theatre accessible to all participants, to actively understand one's own place in the political sphere (98). For Boal, “knowing the body” and “making the body expressive” are conditional to seeing theatre as both “language” and “discourse” (102-103). His hallmark methodology, Forum Theatre – “a reflection on reality and a rehearsal for future action,” – best illustrates the idea that critical dialogue through theatre has the potential to let participants

become aware of oppressive systems (8). Later in his work, Boal expanded on his view of theatre as a tool to address internalized oppression, namely through his work with “The Cop in the Head:”

“The Cop in the Head,” part of a more general concept within the framework of the theatre of the oppressed, concerns those oppressions that have been internalized . . . The cops are in their heads, but the headquarters of these cops are in the external reality. It is necessary to locate both the cops and their headquarters. In this instance, we are at the border of psychology, but always on the side of theatre (“The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses” 35).

Here, Boal uses the image of “the cop” to personify the authority that polices thought and action at a personal level, thereby reducing the individual’s agency. This internalization of oppression is, as Psychology scholars E. J. R. David and Annie O. Derthick argue, “the turning upon ourselves, upon our families, and upon our own people the distress patterns that result from the . . . oppression of the (dominant) society” (9). For Boal, becoming aware of “the cop in the head” is a step toward actualizing on stage what is typically only experienced within:

the total and simultaneous adherence to two different and autonomous worlds. The aesthetic transubstantiation belongs to the two autonomous worlds: reality and the image of reality that has been created by this process. (“The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses” 39)

But while Boal’s turn to oppression at the individual level is important to this study, it is Boal’s *Legislative Theatre* that is mostly concerned with change in a practical sense.

Legislative Theatre captures the importance of participation towards implementing change (namely through bills or laws) in what Boal termed “theatre as transitive democracy”

(18). Believing that “the legislator should not be the person who makes the law, but the person through whom the law is made” (8), Boal – as a city councilman, or *vereador* in Rio de Janeiro – used theatre to understand communities’ needs through their own voices – from demanding hospitals had geriatric specialists to passing a law protecting witnesses of crimes (81-82).

When using theatre to effect change at the legislative and institutional level, Boal suggested five crucial elements be considered: 1) “certainty about the question [...] we are going to ask;” 2) “the presence of a legislative assessor who is completely au fait with the legal aspects of the matter to be debated;” 3) “the distribution of written material;” 4) “the return visit;” and 5) “documentation” (71-72). In addition, Boal also suggested an “interactive mailing list,” that “solicits opinions” and makes participants “feel more personally involved and less excluded” (74) in the legislative process. Established this framework, Boal emphasizes the importance of “nuclei” and “links” as inherent aspects of democratic participation in legislative theatre:

A link is a group of people from the same community, which communicates periodically with the mandate, setting out its opinions, desires, and needs [...] A nucleus is a link which is constituted as a Theatre of the Oppressed group and actively collaborates with the mandate in a more systematic way. (32)

“Nuclei” and “links” hint at the importance of de-centralized participation, both in theatre and in society, affirming the importance of hearing people’s voices outside the leadership core. Moreover, these notions focus on the importance of establishing community partners that bring forth issues that the theatre can explore within a collaborative, creative setting. It is the “inter-nuclei dialogue” that allows for a “network of solidarity,” therefore engaging different groups and different perspectives in dialogue (70). The following passage illustrates the extent to which

theatre sessions informed Boal's own actions as a community leader at the legislative level in Brazil:

My opinion as President of the Commission for the Defense of Human Rights took into account all the details and suggestions which arose in the Chamber in the Square sessions . . . we have observed that the more theatricalized and the better prepared the session of the Chamber, the more pains the participants take to set out their thoughts and suggestions with care and precision. The theatricality of the scene stimulates creativity, reflection, and comprehension. (73)

Compared to his earlier work *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal's view of revolution seems to shift. In *Theatre of the Oppressed* there is an urgency to view this theatre as a stepping stone towards the revolution of the proletariat. However, later, in *Legislative Theatre*, Boal – working as a city councilman in Rio de Janeiro – begins to understand the role of theatre in aiding revolution at a smaller scale, shifting his view to the small victories as a community leader. It is from this perspective – that of theatre having a role in achieving incremental goals in the social sphere, – parallel to *Legislative Theatre*, that I craft my study. My focus is similar to that of *Legislative Theatre*: a focus on the participant's ability, as citizen and actor, to have a primary role as decision-maker in the social landscape.

Michael Rohd's work – particularly his highly influential *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue* – is also concerned with using theatre to foster dialogue and empower communities. Coming from a health education perspective and working during the height of the U.S. AIDS epidemic, Rohd's work built on Boalian thought, namely when considering who participates in interactive theatre:

virtually anyone can participate in this kind of theatre . . . what is required is a desire to engage in dialogue about the oppressions in our lives and to use theatre as a tool to effect that engagement. (xi)

Rohd's disinterest for theatre as exclusive to professional actors mirrors Boal's views, as both support a democratization of the means of production in theatre. In that vein, Rohd's work, much like Boal's, is one that

...does *not* offer answers
 ... does not declare right or wrong
 ... does not seek single solutions
 ... seeks discussion, trust, and
 a step forward in each person's ability to take care of themselves and
 to look at their world with compassion. (xviii)

By focusing on creating dialogue, rather than promoting a particular (didactic) message, Rohd finds in personal experiences the basis for dialogue. As seen in the above mission statement, Rohd does not want to find "single solutions" or "offer answers." Boal had previously defended a similar stance on the importance of resting with ease in unknown and complex territory when he asked "do we arrive at a solution or not?" – to which he answered,

It is more important to achieve a good debate than a good solution because . . . the thing which incites the spect-actors⁴ into entering into the game is the discussion and not the solution which may or may not be found. Even if one does reach a solution, it may be good for the person who has proposed it, or good within the

⁴ In Boalian terms, a spect-actor is the person who plays a dual role: the active observer and the participant of a performance, allowing for a rehearsal that mirrors real life instances.

confines of the debate, but not necessarily useful or applicable for all the participants in the forum. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* 259)

In addition to this idea of dialogue as plurality of difference, Rohd's work focused on two additional key elements that I find important to consider in my study: activating scenes and facilitation.

Activating scenes – scenes, not “skits” – ask “what can be done” through a purposeful question, rather than “what to do,” thereby avoiding potential didactic agendas (97-101). For Rohd, an activating scene must be rooted in strong structures, such as personal narrative, unscripted performance, “a moment of decision” and a clear conflict, an identifiable protagonist, and “antagonist(s) or “villain(s)” that are believable. In addition, an activating scene should emphasize the protagonist's motivation and a “clear sense that the protagonist [has] inner voices, or desires, that reinforce [an] ability to succeed” (102-103). This last aspect of the activating scene takes me to Rohd's second chief element, facilitation.

For Rohd, dialogue pertains not only to the political sphere but also to “the human psyche” and, as such, facilitation must welcome – and be aware of – personal experience. This does not mean that Rohd's theatre is therapy, but instead, that the work can be therapeutic:

intense feelings and responses will sometimes arise as you do this work with youths and adults. The issues being explored will inevitably touch the life experience of someone in the room. The key is to remember this work steers away from being psychodrama specific to any one individual because you are not trying to use a group to work through one person's problems . . . This work is group problem solving, exploration and dialogue . . . Keep it safe but not always “comfortable” . . . don't be overprotective . . . be aware of boundaries. (71)

To this extent, Norman, Brown Adelman, and I have also previously written about facilitation in interactive theatre, particularly highlighting the therapeutic – and rather necessary – notion of “holding space” in work that deals with identities on the university campus (Norman, Brown Adelman, Batista Silverman 4).

PREVIOUS ITP ASSESSMENTS

With this framework in mind, I now consider data and previous literature concerning the impact of ITP on the UCB campus; namely, I would like to consider three pieces of evidence, arranged chronologically: Licensed Clinical Social Worker Lee Scriggins’ 2007 evaluation of ITP (also referenced in Saypol’s work), a 2011 assessment report from ITP’s performance *Just Another Party* during the 2011 Fall orientation, an external review of ITP from 2012, and archival data pertaining to feedback surveys received between 2013 and 2015⁵. These data sets provide an additional perspective on the impact ITP had on our campus, not only ensemble members but also community members watching and participating in different performances.

Lee Scriggins’s program evaluation assessed the impact of ITP on ensemble members through a series of in-person and online interviews (18 hours of interviews and 4 web-based surveys). To study the students’ experience in the ensemble, Scriggins evaluated six domains of student development: intellectual development; lifelong learning and career development; beliefs, values and ethics; belonging and a developing sense of connectedness; multicultural awareness; identity, and the role of independence and interdependence. This extensive report showed that ITP “clearly [met] the goal promoting student development” and that

⁵ Per discussion with the UCB IRB, a protocol was not necessary to share this information, as I am not generalizing findings or generating new research, but instead reporting on already-existing data.

students are growing simultaneously on multiple dimensions and integrating this progress into a sense of who they are and what they want to do. This degree of interpenetration suggests that these changes are unlikely to erode, but are solid developmental achievements likely to provide a foundation for lifelong growth.

(39)

Further recommendations included, for example, “focusing on stabilization and sustainability,” “making expectations clear,” and “making sure both support and structure are offered” to ensemble members (39).

A second piece of evidence worth mentioning is a 2011 assessment of ITP’s *Just Another Party* which, for several years, was part of student orientation (Annex C). In this assessment, conducted by scholars in the Department of Sociology, 812 responses were gathered. According to the report, the majority of the respondents (86%) believed this performance “prepared them for college,” while less than 5% of respondents noted “the performance’s purpose was to scare them away . . . from alcohol and sex” (1). When asked whether *Just Another Party* was “not useful as a way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important issues for the campus community,” 59% of respondents disagreed with the statement. Moreover, 51% agreed that they felt sexual assault and gender violence were more important to them after watching *Just Another Party*; 54% of the respondents agreed that after watching the performance, they felt “more personally responsible to end gender violence and sexual assault” (2-3). From the 812 respondents, 66% agreed that the ITP performance was “a good way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important issues for the campus community” (4). Overall, most students “found the performance to be effective in deepening their awareness of issues around gender violence and sexual assault; useful in representing various compromising situations in

which they might find themselves as college students; and informative insofar as many respondents reported feeling better equipped to handle such situations should they arise” (1). This data set suggests a positive influence of interactive theatre on incoming students on the UCB campus.

In addition to these two sets of data, an external assessment was conducted in 2012 by a group of scholars and administrators in the field: David McKelfresh (Executive Director of Assessment and Research at Colorado State University), Michael Rohd (Assistant Professor, Theatre and Interpretation Center at Northwestern University), Jamie Washington (President and Founder Washington Consulting Group), and Tanya Williams (Associate Dean of Students for Inclusion and Diversity, Mount Holyoke College). Upon this review, “the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs’ commitment to the success of ITP was clear to the review team;” the reviewers added that “funding for ITP [is] her number one priority ... she is interested in helping the group develop a road map to move forward” (3). The evaluation report addressed five chief questions: 1) Are ITP’s philosophy, works, practices and foundations true representations of exemplary social justice educational practices?; 2) Do ITP’s theatrical vision, operations, foundations, formats and teaching lead to the best application of the material?; 3) Is ITP operating in a manner which can be considered as appropriate to a unit within the division of Student Affairs at a large research university?; 4) Is the current budgeting model adequate to meet the needs of the program? Does the budget solution provide adequate stability to sustain the program over time?; 5) Is the structure of the program adequate to the goals and function? Does the institutional organization “make sense” for the program’s goals and function?

In addressing these questions, the evaluators made several recommendations. Namely, the group recommended ensemble members ought to have “readings each week that [they] can

come to rehearsal prepared to respond to,” while highlighting the need for ITP to “show how this methodology/pedagogy is different from the traditional pedagogies – and share the behavioral impact on students who participate – research that shows the value” (4-5). The group further suggested it was to the benefit of ITP to create a “parent resource/advisory council that becomes familiar with your work and can advocate for your contributions to their children’s education” and to “articulate your work as performance as research” (6). The group made another particular recommendation, also crucial to the present study:

Help the Theatre department see the economic and scholarly advantages to broadening their notions of what performance is. They are open to this; attend faculty meetings. Write blog postings. Represent them at conferences. Be proactive not just about a potential partnership for business purposes, but about how student recruitment can be aided today by departments with service and innovation at the heart of their programs . . . Discontinue a reliance on funding from the Associated Students [because it is] unreliable and unpredictable. (6-8)

The reviewers also highlighted the successes ITP was accomplishing on campus:

- A genuine sense of pride on the part of undergraduate and graduate student ensemble members in their work educating community members ...
- Qualitative and Quantitative assessments of ITP are generally positive.
- ITP is viewed by faculty and staff who are aware of the program as having an important role in educating community about social justice issues. (3-4)

The reviewers also observed that ITP was

doing exceptional work on campus, challenging students, staff, and faculty to think through the dynamics and outcomes of oppression, explore the intricacies of

identity, and developing skills of dialogue through their performances ... ITP stimulates conversation and thought that the larger campus might not want to focus on ... It is clear that ITP successfully uses theatre practice as an invitation across campus for a continuum of expression on a variety of challenging topics and issues. Over and over, the review team heard staff, administration, faculty, and students say they were given rare and important space to reflect, to speak, to be heard, to watch and to think critically. Students at UCB say that on a campus as diverse as theirs, they need these conversations. These experiences are not found anywhere else because of the unique participatory arts based pedagogy at the heart of ITP events. (3-6)

The last data set pertains to surveys ITP received from 2013 to 2015, the last years of ITP on campus (Annex D). In this descriptive statistical analysis, only surveys from performances on campus (vs. off campus) and whose requestors were identified (by department) were included. These surveys had been gathered by ITP graduate students and stored in the ITP archives. A total of 28 evaluations was received including responses from staff and faculty in Linguistics, Geology, Sociology, Theatre, Human Resources, and the Women's Resource Center. From those, 75% of the requestors identified as female, while 18% identified as male and 7%, other/unknown; 64% of the requestors were staff or faculty at the University, 25% were graduate students, and 11%, other members of the community (e.g. undergraduate students). The surveys showed that, upon an ITP visit, 59% of respondents believed their class or group participated more than usual (59%); 33% believed their group participated the same as in their class/group (without ITP) and 7% responded their class participated less than usual. Regarding level of engagement, most respondents stated their class or group were engaged at a deeper level than

usual (82%), whereas 7% responded their class or group engaged at the same level, 4% responded their group did not engage at a deeper level, and 7% of the respondents were unsure of the level of engagement in their class during the ITP visit. Lastly, 96% of the respondents believed the ITP performance supported the objectives of their class. This data set, alongside the others I outlined above, contributes to a larger understanding of the impact of ITP on the UCB campus.

METHODOLOGY

In *The Usefulness of Mess: Artistry, Improvisation and Decomposition*, Jenny Hughes, Jenny Kidd, and Catherine McNamara reflect on the intricacy of evaluating the impact of applied theatre. They suggest it is important to consider the parts that make up the practice but that it would be “a mistake if we assume those parts added together come to the sum of the whole” (208). This idea hints at the complexity of capturing the dimensions of applied theatre, both for the researcher and for the participants. Indeed, what may be an effective method in one applied theatre encounter may not capture the essence of another. The authors suggest, instead of a rigid methodology for all applied theatre interventions, a particular focus on “the principle of decomposition” (207), a process in which “rather than asking participants if they ‘learnt anything,’ we asked them about moments of surprise, understanding, engagement, and interaction” (198).

To that effect, in the reflexive process of capturing my own experience with ITP – as a student and participant – I looked for moments I could underline and decompose. Identified those moments, I used narrative inquiry to recount my observations and experiences as an ITP ensemble member. According to sociologist Catherine Riessman, narrative inquiry

is founded in the study of the particular and it is case-centered;
 is cross-disciplinary;
 can refer to texts at several levels that overlap: stories told by research
 participants (which are themselves interpretive), interpretive accounts developed
 by an investigator based on interviews and fieldwork observation (a story about
 stories), and even the narrative a reader constructs after engaging with the
 participant's and investigator's narratives. (6)

To dive into my “interpretive account,” an inherent part of my study, I must – first and foremost – acknowledge the “stories about stories” that have brought me here and which have, thus far, created the lens through which I share my narrative with you.

Drama therapy⁶ and applied theatre scholar Nisha Sajnani, when thinking of the researcher as an interpreter in her dissertation, highlights the “necessity of situating oneself in relation to social stratifications of power in order to remain cognizant of the positive and negative biases that accompany an inter-subjective inquiry” (Sajnani 52). My work – acknowledging process and product as an interwoven and necessary relationship in scholarly inquiry (Armstrong and Juhl 11) – places me on the border between artist-researcher and research-interpreter. Inherent to this dual role is a primary limitation of this study: that I *am* both the subject and the researcher in this context. In my interpretation, I ought to acknowledge my own bias. And so, I must recognize who I am, as both artist-researcher and research-interpreter.

I identify as an able-bodied, ethnically Iberian, Portuguese woman born in Portugal to Portuguese parents. I am a permanent resident of the United States of America. I am the

⁶ Drama Therapy is described as “the intentional use of drama/therapy processes to achieve the therapeutic goal of symptom relief, emotional and physical integration and personal growth” (Landy 62).

youngest of two daughters. I was raised in a lower-middle class, Catholic, Portuguese-speaking environment. I am a first-generation college graduate and the first in my family to study beyond a bachelor's degree. I was raised in a military school, where I lived from ages nine to sixteen. Growing up, my father worked as a navy sergeant and my mother, a cleaner (a profession she maintains today); I have the tremendous privilege to be the daughter of my mother. I benefit from the immense privilege of having access to higher education and the privilege of having lived in several countries before coming to the United States: Portugal, Canada, Venezuela, and Scotland. I have had the opportunity to travel to different parts of the world, in Europe, North America, South America, and Asia. I have the privilege of speaking more than one language, including English. I have the privilege of having my race classified as White in this country. I have the privilege of being a student in the arts and in the sciences, which provides me great access to different types of research methodology, scholarly work, and pedagogical approaches. All these different variables have not only contoured my identity but also shaped the way through which I interpret my experiences in ITP throughout this study.

CHAPTER TWO

...AND I'M CHECKED IN!

I first reached out to ITP as part of my “experiential learning” block at Quest University Canada. At Quest, students have to write an undergraduate thesis (called Keystone) and they must do at least two experiential learning blocks, which complement the students’ research with praxis. Those blocks give the students more hands-on experience when answering their Question⁷; my question was *What Is Normal?*. I stumbled upon ITP early on in my program, around 2011, when I was looking for a group with whom to do my experiential learning block. However, it was only after graduating in the Summer of 2013 that I emailed ITP for the first time (because before then it would not have been financially possible to leave my job to come to Boulder). I felt like the opportunity to work with ITP was still worth pursuing – even after graduating. In that first email, I introduced myself and explained that I had been accepted to the Applied Theatre: Drama in Educational, Community & Social Contexts M.A. program at Goldsmiths, University of London; I asked whether it would be possible to “volunteer or get involved” with ITP before moving to London. Looking back, it seems that I clearly knew about ITP, but didn’t necessarily know much about what it was (like one could “volunteer” with ITP!).

I met the two directors in the Fall of 2013, during a trip to Boulder to visit my boyfriend at the time, whom I had met at Quest in 2010. During that first meeting I recall remarking “I’m not an actress, I am just really passionate!” We talked about ITP’s work, my work with other ensemble projects, and my experience co-leading an interactive theatre group in a women’s shelter in Squamish, Canada; it didn’t take long to realize I wanted to be a part of ITP and this campus

⁷ At Quest University Canada, there are no majors; students design a Research Question (“Question”) which they address.

community. But before I tell you about becoming part of ITP, I pause to let you know about (something of) a plot twist which took place before that fall. At the end of the summer, I decided to accept a fellowship from the Government of Singapore, which seemed to be a step in the right direction in my neuroscience training. I was moving to Asia to work in a neurogenetics laboratory, where I would be studying *drosophila* (fruit flies). The plan was to spend four months there, return to Canada to work, and then move to London, as the program had graciously allowed me to defer my admission for one year.

My time in Singapore was brief and tumultuous. In this new context, I encountered several difficulties. I quickly found myself intermittently pacing between self-loathing and catatonia, wondering what the fuck I was doing and how soon I could get out of it. My daily dose of crying in the lab bathroom – my mouth open to let out a silenced scream, biting on my sleeve so as not to be heard across the bathroom stalls – needed to end. I left quite abruptly, cutting my four-month stay down to a couple of weeks. I left and I had no plan, no idea what to do next. I was depleted of all emotion and volition; yet, I felt a sense of peace and empowerment after I walked out of the laboratory building for the last time. My head was throbbing; I felt a blended sense of cowardice and euphoria as I walked back to the house where I was staying. A few days later, I packed my backpack and got on a train through Singapore and Malaysia until I hit Bangkok, Thailand. Later, nearly two weeks after leaving Singapore, I got on a flight back to the United States, where my partner was living. Several letters later, we decided to spend some time together in Boulder, where we could affordably live with his mother for a while. It was time to be receptive to the support we could give one another.

So: back to the Fall. My time meeting the faculty in the Department of Theatre & Dance and ITP ensemble members in the Fall of 2013 (and then becoming a part of ITP in 2014) was

key to applying to – and later accepting an offer from – the UCB’s Theatre MA program.

Needless to say, I ended up declining the offer from Goldsmiths. I still wonder what it would have been like to study there instead; it appeared to me, however, that coming to Boulder was the right decision. And so, as a visitor of Boulder and UCB, I was first welcomed to the ITP ensemble on January 14th, 2014 – the first Tuesday of the 2014 Spring semester. I did not participate in public performances and I only participated in ensemble meetings during that time.

There were around twenty people in the room; most of them looked my age. This was the first day back to campus after the winter holidays and the atmosphere in the room was contagious. They all seemed to know each other well: laughing, sharing jokes, and hugging, like siblings welcoming each other on Christmas eve. As for me, I quietly enjoyed the view. Sitting in the back, I waited to be seen and become invisible at the same time, waiting to see a familiar face. Everyone gathered as Trent Norman sat on a piece of furniture flush to the wall at the back of the room; Brown Adelman gestured as to call people in. Slowly, everyone gathered and began sitting in a circle, in no apparent order. I sprinted from what seemed to be the heaviest chair on the planet straight onto the floor. No in-betweens: point A to point B. I’m terrified to say the least: “I’m an intruder,” I think to myself, “Will they think I’m an outsider? I’m not a student here. Does it matter that I don’t even have my theatre MA yet? They all seem so confidence and knowledgeable! I can’t do this, why did I even come?”

I observe there is a system in place. One by one, each person in the circle gives a one to two sentence “check-in:” how they were feeling, something they learned, their holidays. Something simple and concise. I noticed some folks talked beyond two sentences. Meanwhile, I sat down awaiting a cloak of invisibility to fall right onto me, leaving a cute little space between the person to my left and the person to my right. And eventually, as it happened for me during

the first weeks in ITP, I was the last one to check in. I wondered if I was seen as an attention-grabbing, manipulating idiot: always pretending to be too good to speak first. But really, I just wanted to enjoy the warmth of my invisibility; then, everyone could disregard I was even there. Just. Move. On. It's okay, I can just sit on the sidelines and watch! Right? Observation can also be participation! Argh, what if what I had to say wasn't cool enough? Or relevant enough? Or exciting enough? Or – I don't know – socially-aware enough?

I check in. One sentence. Succinct. Simple. Not complicated: “Hi, I’m Lígia, I’m from Portugal and I’ve been living in Canada for the past few years. I was recently in Singapore but left my job and came here.” I smile. “Argh,” I think, “what a ball of sadness, Lígia. Could you be any more depressing?” There’s my check-in – now leave me alone. I treated my check-ins like a Facebook status or a Tweet, typed and erased repeatedly: preparing for a better phrase to say, in detriment of something less important, something like *I was in bed all day*, or *I’m fine*, or *This day is awesome*. I wanted my check-in to go by unnoticed, less than a hundred and forty characters long. I didn’t want to be seen as an outsider. Two minutes of me? It seemed like an eternity. No thank you.

Despite how uncomfortable I was at first, I never felt unimportant. In hindsight, I admit that initially, I awaited some nodding, some “hmmm” in agreement. For instance, “I am struggling with adapting to living in Colorado” followed by “hmmm” from a few others would mean I had won at check-in that day; someone heard me and agreed with me. I felt validated. If that statement had been followed by silence, however, I would take that as a loss, like I had shared something that didn’t quite matter to anyone else. Knowing that someone was listening meant that I wasn’t alone. As the weeks went by, I craved check-ins. I wanted to sit next to someone else. And with time, this idea of winning and losing at check-in became obsolete

because, as I learned, that was not the point. The point was to speak to be listened, not to speak to wait for a response. It was a new feeling for me: being heard began to feel all right, less daunting. I made a conscious effort to let go of all the thoughts about how others saw my check-ins, and I began speaking more freely. And even when I had bad days and may not have wanted to leave the house, I always looked forward to those Tuesday, 5pm check-ins.

My first check-in as a graduate student at UCB, in January 2015, was not the most heartfelt, but it was certainly my most personal check-in. Vulnerably, I confessed I was having a horrible time at the University. People I met asked me – often condescendingly – where my accent was from, where I was from. Strangers called me “exotic” and “ethnic.” From those questions, I often inferred – rightly or not – another statement: you don’t belong here. I didn’t feel like I was assimilating well enough. I also felt unwelcomed in my department. I felt that my grading standards were different and often a source of conflict between one of my instructors and I, and my way of interjecting in discussion was seen as too abrasive. I concluded, after my first week here, that coming to Boulder was a terrible decision and that I had to accept I wasn’t qualified enough, or filtered enough, or whatever else enough to be here. This was the first time I remember fully trusting the group. What have I done? Help me, please, I think I made a terrible mistake! Unapologetically, I was as honest as I could be. I didn’t even care for the absence of nods or hmmms.

When I was done talking, Mary (let’s call her Mary) checked in. She was holding a little dark-colored heart-shaped stone, which she rubbed in her fingers, looking serenely at the stone, then at the group, then at the stone again. She extended her arm towards me: “Here, it’s for you.” She was passing it on to me, she said, because she understood what I was going through. She

was herself a graduate student; she even had a name for what I was feeling: impostor syndrome. I took the heart and nodded in agreement: that would be correct, I do feel like an impostor.

The ITP heart, as I came to know it, had been introduced in memory of an ITP member who had taken her own life not long before I joined ITP, in 2013. This story was, and still is to this day, very vivid in everyone's hearts, both in ITP and in the Department of Theatre & Dance. Her life certainly continued to be present within ITP; I can only imagine how hard it must have been for the ensemble to endure such an experience together. It was explained to me that the heart was to be given to someone in the group – someone who needed extra support on a given week – and that the bearer ought to pass it on to someone else, someone whom they thought could use it too. The heart was to always be in motion, passing from hand to hand. In a way, it represented the ITP spirit: all the insightful check-ins, all the difficult and vain and bubbly two-line check-ins, all the students, all the experiences on campus, all the hurt, and all the understanding – all of it. The heart was such an important, valuable symbol of courage and trust – and I had received it. I wanted to be humbled but I felt pathetic in comparison to why the heart had been created in the first place. It took me a little while to understand why I was worthy of the heart and why the responsibility to pass it on to someone else was so great. That day, I felt part of the ensemble – fully and undeniably.

The experiences I share with you – in the check-in process and in receiving the ITP heart – illustrate the importance of group rituals to foster prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is a concept in social psychology and pedagogy concerned with acting “to benefit other people,” as psychologists David A. Schroeder and William Graziano assert (3); “the glue that holds the social fabric together” (4). One of the aspects necessary to recognize the importance of

benefitting other people lies in acknowledging a shared identity, as Psychology scholars Jack Dovidio and Jillian C. Banfield defend:

Emphasizing a common group identity facilitates more cooperative and socially responsible behavior . . . When people conceive of others as ingroup members with a common identity, the processes that produce cognitive, affective, and evaluative benefits for ingroup members become extended to those who were previously viewed as members of a different group. (567)

What is more, a sense of belonging through group membership is aided by group rituals – which, as Psychology scholars Rachel Watson-Jones and Cristine Legare propose, contribute towards cooperation and trust, and foster social group cohesion (42-43).

Looking back on my experience becoming part of ITP, I would posit that the systematic ritual of checking-in contributed to a sense of shared membership, nurturing trust among ensemble members. The receiving of the heart – and the story it carried – and the ability to feel at ease when speaking about myself and listening to others created a strong bond, from me to the group and vice-versa. If Michael Boyd was right – that in some sense, an ensemble can act as a microcosm of the real world – it is perhaps the case that establishing rituals that foster group cohesion contributes to a sense of collaboration within the ensemble. And, I would posit, that feeling of cohesion and trust within the ensemble bleeds out onto relationships between ensemble members and others outside the ensemble.

...and I'm checked in⁸.

⁸ The phrase that marked each ITP ensemble member's "check in."

CHAPTER THREE

GAMES AND EXERCISES

Every Tuesday, from 5 to 7pm, we worked. As the weeks went by, I noticed myself getting more and more comfortable in my own skin; unafraid. After the check-ins, we discussed the performances we had taken to various parts of the campus during the previous week. Then, Brown Adelman and Norman directed games and exercises; typically, we started with a warm-up and then moved towards deeper exercises. Sometimes, before circling out, at around 7pm, we workshopped a performance or gave space to an ensemble member to practice facilitating a scene; this way, we could prepare potential questions, discuss themes in the scene, and support fellow ensemble members.

Most of the deeper exercises in which I participated were strongly influenced by Playback Theatre and drama therapy exercises, such as active listening exercises, as well as improv exercises; by and large, the bulk of the exercises were strongly influenced by Michael Rohd's *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue – The Hope Is Vital Training Manual* and Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. During these ensemble meetings, we worked towards – as Boal suggests – “knowing the body” and “making the body expressive” (*Theatre of the Oppressed* 102): from crawling on the floor to breathing exercises, from imaging narratives to dramatizing our own, from improv to image theatre, from group work to individual work. The exercises prepared the ensemble for scripted scenes by allowing us to know our body, what it could do, what it did when being observed, and how it talked to others. The exercises also helped prepare ensemble members to develop a character, acknowledging a certain metamorphosis from non-actor to actor, to non-actor; what Boal called “theatre within” (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* 17). I

fondly recall two exercises: the first was the warm-up game Zip-Zap and the second (which I am unsure was sourced from a particular book), an exploration of the concept of silence.

Zip-Zap (also known as Zip-Zap-Zop, Zip-Zap-Zoom, or Zip-Zap-Boing) is a common warm-up game; Rohd includes this game in *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue*. The game consists in having a group standing in a circle, facing inward, as each person passes on a “bolt of energy” to the next person. The person does so by establishing eye contact with another person in the circle and using movement (body, hands) to “send” this bolt of energy to the next person; this is called “passing the zip.” After the group has mastered the rhythm of the “zip” a “zap” can be introduced; a “zip” follows a “zap,” that follows a “zip,” and so on. Different variations of this game add different words, like Zop or Zoom. Typically, a “zop” or “zoom” bounces the movement back: imagine person A passes a zap to person B, who responds “zoom” or “boing,” which turns the zap back to person A (who can then pass it on to another person). This game develops concentration and allows the group to find a rhythm in passing the “bolt of energy” around the circle.

Zip!, the game begins. There are over ten of us in the circle. A few minutes into playing, the game is interrupted: “It’s just not working. Well, maybe it’s working for some people, sure, but not all of us,” someone adds. Indeed, this game relies heavily on establishing eye contact with someone else in the circle. It may seem easy to overlook that putting my hands together, saying *zip*, and “passing” onto someone else’s direction requires the ability to hear the sound and see the movement. As we stop the game we realize: there are two people in the group who are blind. Two of the members of the ensemble were visually impaired. There is a momentary, heavy awkwardness in the air.

We stay in that awkward space for a few moments. There is a graspable – yet quiet – sense of shame for not thinking of the impact this exercise would have on the whole group; there is also a perceptible eagerness to move forward productively. “How can we adapt this exercise so that everyone feels included?” Brown Adelman asked. Together, we take some time to brainstorm. Ideas are shared aloud until a consensus is reached: What if we say the name of the person we are zapping beforehand? We agree. We restart. We try it out.

**

If memory does not fail me, Norman was absent on that particular day. After check-in, Brown Adelman spoke about silence: what lies within silence, how loud silence can be, how often silence is present, and how often we don’t hear it. That became the only prompt: silence. What moments encompass silence, and how can a short scene embody the loudness of that silence? “Get in pairs,” she asked. I was paired with Dave – let’s call him Dave. Not surprisingly, I felt that we were running out of time and hadn’t reached a concrete idea by the third-or-so minute. I anxiously observed other groups trying out movements and getting on their feet, laughing; Dave and I sat on the floor, somewhat awkwardly. Eventually I said something: “When I think of silence, I think of falling in love.” He agreed. As we began to talk about falling in love and moments of silence – hands unexpectedly touching, a look.

Time was up; it was time to show our work. We were the last group. Before us, I remember a group devising a piece about baking a birthday cake. One woman gestured baking a cake in an imaginary oven; tiptoeing, another woman walked from the corner of the room towards the oven. They laughed in silence; loudly, but in silence. They baked in silence. They were now taking the cake out of the performance area, in silence. After a first run of the scene, Brown Adelman challenged the group to move from a “silent movie” idea to a moment within that scene when

silence prevailed; the laughter did not have to silent, but where did silence live in that scene? The idea was that the subject, not the object, was silence. The group workshopped the scene and presented it again, after all other groups presented the scene once. The two women began creating nuances to their movements, shortening the scene, emphasizing the thoughts and emotions taking the place of words. The exercise could have stopped after the first round, but the thought that a first performance draft could be critiqued, developed, furthered, and more intricate prevailed. Playing became a way of knowing, a way of learning.

Dave and I were the last group to perform. I held on to my algebra notebooks, Dave put his cap on, and we walked towards the table where we sat. The performance was short. Sitting on the table, as I looked down onto the graph paper, I felt Dave's presence. The blood rushed to my face; my cheeks, hot pink. I looked up to the ceiling and the ceiling tiles were the sky, clustered with bright stars. I focus on the Big Dipper. I feel Dave's leg close to mine – not rubbing, not on mine, just there. I bit my lip and rub my fingers, which I always do when I'm nervous. Dave looked at the stars as well and appeared to be equally nervous. My upper lip looked downward. I'm half giggling, half panicking; my eyes look around in despair and silliness, equal parts. Dave pointed to a star – which I can clearly see up on one of the ceiling tiles in that classroom – and kissed me on the cheek. My face was so warm I could no longer feel where my chest began and my forehead ended. I placed my hand on Dave's hand, in silence. There, we sat for a few more seconds.

Thinking of the “principle of decomposition” I mentioned earlier, these two examples – this exercise and Zip-Zap – come to mind as “moments of surprise, understanding, engagement, and interaction.” In the first moment, the group struggled to identify an issue in the game Zip-Zap and cooperated to overcome issues of inclusivity. When Martha Nussbaum asks “What lessons does [my] analysis suggest as we ask what schools can and should do to produce citizens

in and for a healthy democracy?,” she arrives at several points, including this one: “each real and true things about other groups (racial, religious, and sexual minorities; people with disabilities, so as to counter stereotypes and the disgust that often goes with them” (45). While Zip-Zap may appear to be a simple game, this moment in the ITP ensemble meeting illustrates the depth with which ensemble members engaged with issues at hand, namely issues of inclusion, disability, and identity. The second example is a worthwhile one as it not only explores ensemble work in the context of performing a concept, but also the vital role of the facilitator.

In *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal asserts: silence is also action (231). By devising short scenes, the ensemble members explored the concept of silence also as an action, a subject. This exercise on silence brings the inaudible to life, the action forth. Each group’s work is observed, re-visited, critiqued and discussed. This collaboration around devising work from an abstract concept heavily informed scenes I later performed outside ensemble meetings; I share some of those scenes in this document. By paying attention to how much my voice and body could speak in silence, I felt more confident to linger in the unknown, to face difficult questions; to tackle unpredictable interventions. Every week, the exercises led the group somewhere different, somewhere unexpected, somewhere new. They allowed the group to get irritated, to get warmed up, to get familiar with each other.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRIVILEGE LINE

This chapter describes my experience participating in the exercise “privilege line” in the Spring of 2015, a few weeks before ITP ended its residency on the UCB campus. While the purpose of this chapter is not to discuss privilege per se, I hope to share the way this exercise impacted me as a community member.

Widely used in classroom settings, “privilege line” (sometimes also known as “privilege walk”) is an exercise adapted from Peggy McIntosh’s 1988 essay “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming To See Correspondences through Work in Women’s Studies.” McIntosh’s essay, primarily focusing on male and white privilege in the U.S., investigated the relationship between privilege and systems of oppression from a feminist perspective. These complex and interwoven notions of privilege⁹ and oppression provide a foundation for “privilege line,” which asks participants (in this case, students) to actively explore their awareness of privilege. A description of the exercise by University of Wisconsin Professor Markie Blumer and colleagues accurately mirrors my experience participating in privilege line:

The students start out in a straight line standing shoulder to shoulder. I prefer that participants hold hands so they experience letting go of each other when their different degrees of privilege become too great. The instructor asks students to refrain from talking during the walk . . . After the walk, students are encouraged to note the location of classmates in relation to each other. (157)

⁹ As Peggy McIntosh writes in “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” privileges pertain to “unearned power conferred systematically.”

During this exercise, the educator or facilitator reads a series of statements related to social topics highlighting the concept of privilege, to which participants respond by stepping forward or remaining still (or stepping backwards in some variations of the exercise) according to the statement; for example: “If you were born in the United States take one step forward.” In this case, a participant like myself would remain still (or step backwards, depending on the version of the exercise).

On this particular day, the ensemble met in a room different than usual – a small classroom across the hall where we crammed over fifteen people – as our usual room was being used for a university function of sorts. After checking in, we stacked the chairs and moved them to the back of the room, to create a performance space. Parallel to the back wall of the classroom, we stood side by side, shoulder to shoulder, and held hands. I wasn’t really sure what was expected of me during the exercise – this was my first time participating in privilege line. Norman and Brown Adelman stood by the door and asked us not to think about the sentences too much, to react to what we heard instead of formulating an intellectual response to each sentence read aloud. I later understood this request might have mimicked the snap judgments we make of each other, every day, all the time. Some of the sentences read during the activity included:

- If you are a white male take one step forward;
- If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was no food in the house take one step back;
- If you have visible or invisible disabilities take one step back;
- If your family had health insurance take one step forward;
- If English is your first language take one step forward;
- If you have been divorced or impacted by divorce take one step back.

As we stepped, we stretched to keep holding hands with people next to us, or as Blumer and colleagues suggest, to have the “experience of letting go of each other.” Eventually, most of us had to let go of someone else’s hand in response to prompts. I remember taking this seriously, stretching hard to make sure my whole body could stay in touch with the person next to me.

The exercise took up most of our time together that Tuesday. And honestly, I didn’t feel much during the exercise; sentences were read aloud and I proceeded accordingly. It appeared to be a simple exercise: I heard the prompt, I walked. I didn’t assign much meaning to my steps or the direction of my steps. I remember thinking this was “an exclusively U.S.” exercise because, for instance, when answering the prompt “If your family had health insurance, take one step forward,” there was no space to discuss how other countries hadn’t required me to purchase health insurance; the idea of privilege associated to accessing health care seemed obsolete (but of course, I was quick to challenge my own assumptions because, certainly, even in my own country of origin access to health care can be expedited by a heavy wallet). I did feel emotional at times but I fought it back, trying to keep my emotions limited to the prompt and my steps; nothing more, nothing less. But, when I had to make a decision about the impact my parents’ divorce had on me, I cringed: did it have an impact? I struggled to step either forward or back spontaneously, but how could I – without thinking back to that part of my story? A statement about assault and violence prompted a similar hesitation. What if I step forward? What if I don’t?

At the end of the exercise, Ava, Sheya, and I stood at the very back, behind everyone else. I still didn’t feel much. I didn’t feel a deep sadness. I didn’t experience a profound, life-changing revelation – at least not right then and there. If nothing else, I felt happy I was in the back, because I could see everyone else ahead of me; the ones at the front didn’t have the same luck because they could only see the wall ahead of them. For the most part, I felt protective

toward Ava and Sheya, but I didn't feel a whole lot about myself. I later learnt that part of that protective attitude towards my friends and fellow ensemble members may have come from "witnessing."

"Witnessing" in the performance space, as Julie Salverson suggests, "is to be exposed, vulnerable, to have something at stake" (146). This notion, as Jacques Lecoq and Boal have also suggested and Salverson recalls, "is the willingness to offer ourselves [...] including our skills and our vulnerability to the encounter with others" (155). In the context of drama therapy, scholar Phil Jones has further defended that "witnessing" is an active form of participation (rather than passive observation) and that in the dramatic process, a person may take on "different role functions within the work, but a key one is the role of witness . . . an active witness" (188). Jones argues that the participant "can become a witness to others' work" and "become a witness to themselves" (101-102). This process, Jones argues, can be therapeutic and "take place briefly" (102). While privilege line is not an improvisation exercise, as in Jones' examples of active witnessing, there is an implicit level of "improvisation" in privilege line, in the sense that there is a high degree of trust and a high degree of unpredictability in each participant's movement (i.e. stepping forward or back). As such, my experience feeling protective towards Ava and Sheya may have arisen from active witnessing. Not only did I care for them by witnessing their work, but I was also witnessing my own work, as all three of us remained in the back of the room. As the exercise came to an end, I did find myself extremely frustrated. Once privilege line ended, we sat in a circle and reflected on it together.

At the time of this exercise, I had been living in the U.S. for a few months and I had now heard the expression "white privilege" and "privilege" more than in my entire life. Not in Canada, not in Portugal, not in Singapore, not in Scotland, not in Venezuela – nowhere else had I

been bombarded with the word privilege. Oppression, discrimination – surely, but not *privilege* or *privilegio*. I was beginning to feel frustrated. In fact, the day before this exercise, in a graduate-level theatre class, a fellow classmate demanded I “checked my privilege at the door” before talking about oppression. I resented her for a whole month: How dare she? What the hell did she know about me? On the day of the exercise, I didn’t want to be resentful, so I listened carefully to my fellow ensemble members’ observations. I understood their words and I was compassionate toward them; their insights crafted a wide dialogue that highlighted the nuances of each statement read out loud. For instance, with regards to a statement on whether “your parents have a college degree,” an ensemble member elaborated on the fact that she stepped forward despite knowing that her parent only received a college degree later in life, as an older adult. Becoming aware of these nuances emphasized the complexity of these types of statements and assumptions.

As for me: at this point in the conversation, I had a lot to say but I wasn’t quite sure how to say it. I didn’t think I have the vocabulary to say it. How could I participate in this conversation, as a guest of this country? How could I add any nuance to such an (apparently) insightful conversation, when all I could feel was frustration? Do you want to know how I feel? “This is bullshit, it’s such bullshit,” I began. “Privilege? I don’t understand! I don’t understand why privilege is such a buzzword, why everyone is privilege-ing left and right. Go do something! Talk about class struggle, talk about racism, talk about oppression, but stop it with the privilege already!” I added that for me privilege meant honor. In my language, “to have the privilege to meet someone,” for example, means “to experience a unique honor meeting someone;” alternatively, I thought, I know the word as contrasting to a right (e.g. is education a right or a privilege?). Now you’re telling me that after all I’ve struggled through, I am

privileged?! While I find myself at the end of the line I still – nevertheless – feel honored for all the things that made me step back. Do you not see that? A gasp: *why does this even matter?*

Ok. Anyone: shut me up.

I continued: “No, you know what? Where I grew up, I was never asked what my “race” was. Never – *never* – have I ever ticked a box to select my race. Not for a school application nor a job interview did I ever state: here is my race. Never. What does that even mean? I’ve never heard the word Caucasian in relation to my “race.” At most I have been asked about my nationality.” I didn’t stop there: “being in the back of the line does not make me ‘less privileged’ than you, can’t you see? Can’t you see? I’ve fought so hard. Who cares if I’m in the back, behind all of you? When you look at someone and deemed them ‘privileged,’ like the girl who told me to ‘check my privilege at the door,’ you are disregarding their whole history – where are they from? who are they? at what cost did they earn a university degree? are their parents scrubbing toilets on a daily basis? And so what, they’re in the back of the line, maybe they’re still better off than so many other people! Ever since I moved here, people look at me and conclude: well, here’s a pile of fucking privilege, have at it! And now I’m at the back of the line! What? I can’t even...” I conclude my frustration-fueled statement by saying that even the title of this exercise is stupid: “it should be “life line” instead of “privilege line,” because you are born into this life and that’s the hand you were dealt!”

Ok, I’m done.

Nobody was rude, nobody argued back. I even waited for a hmmm but it never came. I waited for disagreement, or equally triggering frustration, but it never came. I waited for a critical question that showed me otherwise, but it never came. We all continued to share our experiences and observations as we went around the circle and the facilitation allowed for a

productive conversation. I remember not understanding why I was in the back of the room, or why it mattered at all. I wish someone had challenged me; instead, I was left to my own devices to challenge myself. Indeed it took me some time to understand two main points of this exercise – two points that would perhaps explain my frustration.

The first – indissociable from the second – was a high degree of ignorance. The word privilege (as I knew it in my vocabulary) meant something different. I wasn't brought up "privileged" – or so I thought. I had luck, I worked hard, but I didn't have this 'privilege' everyone made me feel guilty about having, especially here. Or did I? This exercise made me consider this term, privilege, in a much larger scale; that perhaps I understood the notion – I had certainly felt it –, but had failed to acquire the vocabulary thus far. Maybe I also had had the privilege to not have to think about the word. I slowly began to understand that even in my 'non-privilege,' in Portugal, I was privileged in various ways: I had the privilege to attend military school, I had the privilege of being Portuguese, I had the privilege of being able-bodied, I had the privilege of being brought up after the collapse of a fascist dictatorship, and I had the tremendous privilege to have left my country now over a decade ago. In other areas, too, though, I stood at the back of the line. I understood the fluidity of this concept: that positions of privilege are not stagnant but being aware of them in different contexts is crucial for the way in which I relate to others and even understand myself.

My reaction, as I think back on that day, is not surprising. As Professors Michael Kimmel and Abby Ferber discuss in *Privilege: A Reader*, becoming aware of privilege warrants heightened consciousness, not guilt per se:

Realizing that you do have privileges – no matter who you are – does not mean feeling miserable or guilty for the rest of your life, just conscious: of both the

advantages and disadvantages that every one of us has because of the statuses we occupy, some by birth and some by choice . . . but feeling conscious is an ongoing process, not a state of being.

This realization is indeed a process, an ongoing questioning of identity and power in different contexts; as Kimmel asserts, “neither bad nor good,” privilege just *is*. If at first I felt ashamed for not quite fully grasping this concept – privilege – I later became empowered to discuss it further and explain how my upbringing, elsewhere, never begged me to examine this word. But now, I had to ask myself to look at my context, in the U.S. and elsewhere, knowing that sometimes I would be in the back of the line and, other times, at the very front.

The second point concerned a contextual challenge. All my social justice work had been shaped by my experiences, none of which had taken place in the U.S. up to that point. Most of my views of oppression were concerned with one colossal notion: class. When I came to the U.S., I evidently had a lot to learn about my new social, historical, and political context. Not that – as I said before – this concept only existed here, but that now I had to come to terms with my own privilege and read it through the lens of my life here. My reaction is also similar to other students from the U.S.. Scholar Nancy Dessommes recalls a similar instance, as privilege line led to a discussion on “whiteness . . . as a requirement for voting rights in 1807” and prompted students to consider “the origins and meanings of whiteness” (5). A fellow ITP ensemble member also shared:

Once we did “step forward step back” and the 5 Black people in the troupe were in the back. Together. [At the end] and we all came from different backgrounds, all of us did. It sucks because we always have to talk about it after. It’s a good thing but it makes you realize that there are certain things we are born into that we

don't want to accept... As much as you try to control or change it, it's still there... And you see it, and you see it together. (Scriggins 27)

For me, after participating in privilege line, something clicked: my frustration stemmed from a clash of identity and ignorance. I realized I had to become aware of the history of this country to understand the role of race, privilege, and oppression, here and within me. Up until that day, most of the historical context I had about this country concerned its foreign economic policies towards countries in Latin America and my own. Because of this exercise – and because I acknowledged my ignorance on the social history of the U.S. – I had to realize the cultural weight of *this* word in *this* country. I share with you another narrative account from a fellow ITP member, which resonates with my own experience:

I'm Muslim, I'm Arab, I didn't live all my life here, I'm not filthy rich, but I'm not extremely poor either. I realize there are some things about me that make me a target, and to deal with those is tough. But what's even more difficult is to talk about things where you have privilege. I feel really guilty sometimes... but this is who I am... I can't do anything about it. How do you empathize without demeaning someone? How do you say "I know exactly what it feels like to be broke, when you really don't." My biggest worry is sometimes that I have to study for a test, but for someone else it may be "How am I going to pay my rent, how am I going to feed myself?" These are things I don't have to deal with and I'm grateful for it but at the same time how do I empathize with someone who does have to deal with it, without insulting them, without babying them. Because they're not babies, they don't want charity. That's really the hardest part. Seeing my privilege. . . Your initial reaction is to be defensive, but then, ok, stop lying to

yourself. You need to figure out a way to use your privilege for good without insulting others. (Scriggins 20)

This exercise, however, is not always well received. Dave Huber, assistant editor at *The College Fix*, provides a perspective different from my own. Huber describes the exercise as “nonsense” and “silliness,” and defends that the point of the exercise is not about “privilege” but about “smart, frugal planning and determination” instead. He recalls,

I’ll never forget the brief conversation I had with a co-worker (an African-American woman) on the way to participate in this nonsense many years ago:

Co-worker: “Mr. H, my brother — don’t we get along just fine?”

Me: “Yes, absolutely. I certainly think so!”

Co-worker: “Me too. So what the hell are we doing this for?? (Huber, “The 'Privilege Walk': a ridiculously subjective exercise to show whose position in life is 'boosted'”)

Reading his account, I wonder the same thing. I wonder about the circumstances around Huber’s participation. Were Huber and his co-worker asked to go or did they *have to* go? Also, because I was initially in a similarly frustrated place, I wonder if the discussion that (I hope) followed Huber’s experience shed light on the historical context of the exercise. I also wonder if there was a discussion about the juxtaposition of historical oppression and “getting along just fine.”

Comparing Huber’s response and my own draws me to a few points about this exercise in the context of ITP’s work on campus. First, it is worth considering the impact of the work within the ensemble. The exercise can only be effective if participation is voluntary. If the participants (students) are unaware of the purpose or goal of this exercise, they may be left feeling frustrated, angry, or confused, as I was myself. While not knowing what awaited me that day may have

heightened my response, I probably would have felt more educated had I had a chance to read about some of these concepts. As the external reviewers (as mentioned in Chapter One) suggested, it would also be encouraging to support this type of exercise with readings or allowing the student to have the knowledge necessary to experience the exercise fully. I do believe, as well, that good facilitation – fostering a rich discussion and emphasizing critical thinking – is crucial after students engage in privilege line. I wonder if leaving with a sense of frustration and anger has an effect that is opposite to the intention of the exercise – to allow students to become conscious of privilege. Penn State Professor Samuel Tanner’s words mirror a similar preoccupation when thinking about the role of facilitation in privilege line:

There was very little discussion about the deeply emotional response their students were having. It was assumed that the educators had seen the error of their ways and this led to a [sic] “bouts of silence, tears, and quiet reflection.” This reflection wasn’t guided, the emotion wasn’t explored, and the conversation was left there. (49)

Lastly, my experience with ITP prompts me to suggest this exercise ought to take place in a trusting environment, one that allows for students to be uncomfortable together. I strongly believe that my learning stemmed from how uncomfortable I felt and how the ensemble validated my feelings and pushed me to continue questioning myself – in that discomfort. These two variables, along with the trust felt in the room among all ensemble members, allowed for a productive dialogue. Without these factors, as Tanner predicts, my reflection wouldn’t have been guided, my emotions wouldn’t have been explored, and the conversation would have come to a halt.

This exercise has great potential at the level of the UCB community, beyond the ensemble. Because the ITP ensemble lives within the college campus universe, I would hypothesize the ensemble members would continue the dialogue outside the boundaries of the meeting. As a graduate student and Teaching Assistant (TA), this exercise was a stepping stone to feeling confident in having difficult conversations with my students – because I, myself, knew what it felt to thread uncharted territory around these issues. These conversations allow for students to become conscious of their places of privilege and systems of oppression which impact them – at the individual, institutional, and social level. As an international student at UCB in 2015, this exercise was crucial to my understanding of life on campus and a larger political context of my social sphere. Conversely, I was able to discuss this concept in the context of my life outside the U.S., thereby sharing my experiences with others around me within the college campus setting.

I leave you with a final note. I repeated this exercise with a different group in the capacity of co-facilitator, alongside my advisor Beth Osnes and fellow graduate student Alia Goldfarb, at a later date. Facilitating this exercise made me value the importance of participating in privilege line in ITP. In the ensemble, I was *within* and *without* – witnessing others as much as myself – whereas in the second group – in a diversity-themed community workshop – I was only without. I did not know much about the group's dynamics, their history, how much they trusted each other – or even how much they trusted me. The ensemble provided me with a context particular to each person's story – each ensemble member, each friend's story. With the ensemble, I was without because I cared for others, and within because I was cared for. By virtue of being in the ensemble, the conversation did not stop at 7pm when our Tuesday meeting came to an end. During the subsequent weeks, we checked with each other about the impact of this exercise and

we continued the dialogue. We had coffee together. We called each other. We thought about each other. We wanted to know more about each stepping back and each stepping forward. In the end, I would ask myself the same question Huber posed: “what the hell are we doing this for?” And my answer would always be: to learn from each other.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLAYING A CHARACTER

Why Are You Like This?©

2 Females version

Characters: **Tiffany** – Lígia **Naomi** – Sheya

Setting: A Café

Tiffany: (reading online) Okay, this might be the one. It's a two bedroom, two bath house with a garage in North Boulder.

Naomi: How much?

Tiffany: \$1400.00 a month.

Naomi: Are you kidding me? \$700.00 each?!?! Jesus.

Tiffany: (Still looking) Well, I mean.... unless we wanted to live in one of the “L” towns...

Naomi: The what?

Tiffany: You know.... Louisville, Lafayette, Longmont...

Naomi: I guess that's an option, I'm just not sure I want to do that... I mean, commuting...

Tiffany: Ok good, because I don't want to live there either. There aren't many other options in Boulder at this point. Can't we at least go check this place out?

Naomi Ok...alright, fine. (Under her breath) Rent in this town is crazy.

Tiffany: The price you pay for living in a beautiful place. When I lived in San Francisco, the rents there were outrageous.

Naomi: They're outrageous here.

Tiffany: Yeah, I should have gotten in the market when the going was good. My dad always said that he wanted to buy. Would make this renting shit so much easier.

Naomi: (looking at her) Yeah....

Tiffany: Paying rent is basically throwing money down the drain. We might as well light our money on fire.

Naomi: Well, renting for me right now is the only option.

Tiffany: You know maybe I SHOULD just buy something... One of my dad's friends is a realtor. I could call him and start looking at properties. I would love something in the West Pearl area. The places there are dope. Oh, and if I got something you could live there, and we would still be roommates. It could be a win-win situation for both of us.

Naomi: Yeah, I don't know. You wouldn't be my roommate. You'd be my landlord.

Tiffany: So?

Naomi: I'm just not sure how I feel about that.

Tiffany: Okay, then let's not go there right now.

Naomi: I have to find a place to live, I cannot put this off too much longer.

Tiffany: Naomi, don't stress. This will all figure itself out.

(Silence)

Tiffany: Oh hey. Check this out. Sam Smith is playing at Red Rocks. We should go.

Naomi: Really? Oh man. I would love to see him live!

Tiffany: Let's get tickets! (starts purchasing tickets online)

Naomi: I don't know. I may have to work that night. (looks at calendar) Shit.
Yeah. They put me on.

Tiffany: You should try and get it off.

Naomi: I don't think I can....

Tiffany: That's a drag.

Naomi: Yeah.

(Tiffany is on her phone)

Tiffany: Look I got to go. I have a meeting.

Naomi: I should go too.

Tiffany: So I'll call this property manager and we can look at the place? Does tomorrow work?

Naomi: Ok. Yeah. Sure.

Tiffany: I'll call you with the time.

Naomi: Ok... actually shoot me an email.

Tiffany: Email?

Naomi: My phone's not working right now.

Tiffany: You got to upgrade that shit.

Naomi: Right.

Tiffany: Ok, so you're cool with this? I mean it's already March and there isn't a lot to choose from and I don't want to live in a shit hole.

Naomi: Ok.

(This next part should go rather quickly. The check in on the table. Tiffany picks it up)

Tiffany: Here, I have cash. Let me get this.

Naomi: It's ok.

Tiffany: Don't worry about it.

Naomi: It's ok.

Tiffany: I don't mind.

Naomi: Tiffany, I said it is fine!

Tiffany: I got it.

Naomi: Fuck girl, it's not like I'm a charity case!

Tiffany: I never said you were. I'm just trying to help you out.

Naomi: I just don't need you to pay. (beat) Contrary to popular belief this is a really expensive place to live. I'm working to cover tuition, rent, food, ...

Tiffany: You are not the only one with expenses.

Naomi: Well, I don't seem to have the support of my family like you do.

Tiffany: I can't help that my parents are successful.

Naomi: Ok... whatever. Look, I'm not saying it is your fault. It's just kind of hard to hear you talk about buying property and stuff when...(I can barely afford to buy food.)

Tiffany: Look, if you're going to have issues maybe we need to rethink being roommates.

Naomi: It's a little late in the game for that, don't you think?

Tiffany: I'll call you. Oh right. I can't!

CONTEXT

I was part of this performance on three separate occasions, all of which took place on the UCB campus. First, I was part of this performance as an audience member in the Spring of 2015. At the time, I worked as a TA for an introductory Theatre class and invited ITP to the classroom, so students could experience applied theatre. There were over 100 students in the audience. In that version of the scene, two male students portrayed the characters (Ian and Stuart instead of Tiffany and Naomi). Later, I was part of *Why Are You Like This?* as Tiffany, when the scene was presented to an undergraduate theatre class of around thirty students. Lastly, I performed this scene a second time as Naomi. The piece was presented in a Resident Advisor (RA) training workshop on campus and around twenty people attended this performance. For the purposes of this chapter, I am focusing on the process of developing my character, Tiffany, in an ITP performance. To that effect, I will first briefly note Augusto Boal's "The Cop in the Head" process and then reflect on the development of characters in an ITP scene.

CREATING CHARACTERS

ITP ensemble members are not professional actors and one of the few requirements to be a part of ITP is an eagerness to participate in dialogues that foster understanding in the UCB community. So how do ITP ensemble members prepare to play a character and what is the impact of that process in their life at UCB? To answer this question, I revisit Augusto Boal's "The Cop in the Head" to explore my process in developing my character in the scene above, Tiffany.

Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed concept "the cop in the head," as I wrote about in Chapter 1, explores internalized oppression as a product of the social sphere; the focus on revolution shifts slightly from social to personal. The concept is part of his later work, when Boal

tried to practice at the border of psychotherapy and theatre. And while a critique to his later work is not included in the scope of my study, I borrow some of his ideas to delineate how “the cop in the head” aids the development of a character in the work of ITP. Because most of character building takes place in small-group rehearsals, I also refrain from detailing the various acting games and image theatre exercises that took place during Tuesday ensemble meetings¹⁰ alongside rehearsals. Instead, I am focusing on one of the hypotheses Boal puts forth in his essay “The Cop in the Head: Three Hypotheses:” metaxis¹¹.

The concept of metaxis, in which the spect-actor becomes sympathetic of another, helps understand the process through which a character is created in an ITP scene. Considering this second hypothesis, metaxis, Boal asserts,

When the oppressed-artist creates the images of her oppressive reality, she belongs to both the real and aesthetic world in an active rather than vicarious way. In this instance, we have the metaxis phenomenon: the total and simultaneous adherence to two different and autonomous worlds. The aesthetic transubstantiation belongs to the two autonomous worlds: reality and the image of reality that has been created by this process . . . The transubstantiation process must be accomplished by the oppressed-artist herself. She is the one who has to create the image on which participants will work . . . This hypothesis calls for a precision in categorizing images and differentiating between the concepts of person, personality, character, and mask . . . The character is “the other.” It is the

¹⁰ Most of ITP exercises were adapted from Michael Rohd and Augusto Boal’s work. Their book references are outlined in the Works Cited section of this thesis.

¹¹ Boal puts forth three hypotheses in “The Cop in the Head:” “osmosis between macrocosm and microcosm,” “metaxis,” and “analogical induction.”

other echoing within ourselves. If the character exists within ourselves, we can play it even if it is completely different from our personality. (38-40)

While Boal's words warrant a deeper exploration of psychology concepts – such as empathy, sympathy, and personality – I want to stick to exploring his ideas from a theatrical and conceptual perspective for now. Here, I highlight the notion of the “two autonomous worlds” the spect-actor creates, as well as the possibility for the character, “the other,” to exist within ourselves. These two concepts are useful in understanding the creation and development of characters.

Sitting in a small study room in the Center for Community building, Sonya (the director), Sheya, and I read the scene aloud once. After this first reading, Sheya and I share experiences that speak to the conflict in this scene, as Sonya mediates, challenges, and adds to the conversation. Sonya also shares her own experience. While I could think of several personal experiences that resembled the interaction between Tiffany and Naomi in this scene, I recalled and shared a specific episode from my undergraduate years. Having been elected as the first RA to the then most recently-constructed residence building on my undergraduate campus, I was faced with a small problem: while previous RAs had been compensated by having their own room, this gig only gave me the privilege of working as an RA and I was not entitled to having my own room. Living in this new residence was quite costly and, I imagine, it would have been a loss for the university to ensure the payment of a room in this building. At the time, I was attending university due to generosity of my sponsors, who paid for my room and board, and I considered myself extremely fortunate for having the opportunity to be elected by the student body and work as an RA on campus. It did not seem appropriate to approach my sponsors or the university about a main concern: I could not afford to live in the residence where I was supposed

to work. This meant not only bringing up the subject with my four future roommates but also finding a fifth roommate. The issue was resolved quite awkwardly: two people – two very well-off students – paid more than everyone else; one, the last to join the group, would have her own room and the other would share the largest room with a third person. I paid the least amount, less than the fifth roommate, which meant we would both share a bunk bed in the smallest of three rooms. I had a wonderful relationship with this roommate, so sharing a bunkbed in this small space seemed plausible. At the time, I was just content for having a place to sleep. Before we moved in together, I struggled with the terms of this arrangement but the ease with which my experiences were diminished (by comments that made me feel even poorer and dumber) made me move forward without much argument. Certainly, the arguments came later, as the poisonous dynamics in the household spilled onto our hands, in a fine dance between passive-aggressiveness and resentment. So: considering my previous experiences and the script at hand, I could easily identify with Naomi while I found Tiffany to be nothing but snobbish, obnoxious, and spoiled. Sonya and Sheya also shared narratives that expanded our repertoire of Tiffanys and Naomis.

Once we identified the relevance of the scene to our own personal experiences, we searched for the backstory of our characters. This is a re-writing process: the actors have a chance to adapt and construct their characters each time they perform; for example, the characterization of Tiffany and Naomi changed a lot between the two times I performed this scene. This change is also tied into the identities of the actors in ITP itself: for example, the actor playing Naomi in the first performance identified as a female person of color living with a disability (visual impairment). In the second performance, I played Naomi and the person playing Tiffany identified as a female, Asian woman. In re-writing the characters, we take into

account the identities the actors themselves bring to that story and ask ourselves how those identities relate to, and impact, the reading of the scene. The first – perhaps most important – question that is usually tackled when preparing for a scene is: How do these characters – here, Naomi and Tiffany – know each other? This question becomes poignant in this scene as we try to understand how two people who hold such different identities find common ground in this situation.

The answer to this question rests on both creativity – imagining someone else’s reality – and on personal experience – acknowledging our lived realities. As ensemble members work to create characters, they have to acknowledge their own biases and internalized oppression while also understanding that they may fall into the trap of building a stereotypical character. Take, for instance, the way in which our narratives informed Tiffany’s story in the first performance. We begin by asking simple questions that enable us to paint Tiffany in broad strokes: Where is she from? What do her parents do? Does she have any siblings? Given our experiences on and off campus, we imagine Tiffany’s story: Tiffany had an international background, having been brought up in Switzerland due to her father’s position as a CEO in a multinational company. Her mother – a stay-at-home mom – is heavily involved in philanthropic endeavors when not caring for Tiffany’s younger brothers, aged 8 and 10. On campus, Tiffany is part of a leadership program and the ski club. Here, it is important to acknowledge that the building of this character is biased by Sonya’s, Sheya’s, and my experiences, as we all identify more closely with Naomi in our own lives. So we try to bring in other narratives that we have encountered within the ensemble: how do we interact with fellow ensemble members who would identify with Tiffany more closely? In that vein, we begin crafting more nuanced questions: would Tiffany behave differently in this interaction had she been an only child, or, had her father been a stay-at-home

dad while her mother worked as a CEO? While we work to build a strong, believable picture informed by our personal experiences, we try to stay away from turning Tiffany into a dangerously cartoonish character.

Once established the general lines of the character, the group continues finding nuances that confer multidimensionality to Tiffany. Based on our lived realities, Sheya, Sonya, and I agree that Tiffany is majoring in business. From our discussion, we imagine – and make an assumption about – the character’s desire to continue walking on her father’s footsteps as well as her wish to learn about the way business can create a positive impact in the poorer communities she has visited throughout her worldly upbringing. During the rehearsal, we try out different questions to our characters, including this one:

Sonya: So, Tiffany, what is your major?

Tiffany: I am majoring in business.

Sonya looks pensive. With her fingertips concave onto the table, she poses: what if she *has to* major in business? I look puzzled. She re-states: what if – *what if* – she *has to* major in business? I begin to see the subtleties arising from Sonya’s question. Whereas initially the emphasis is on the active verb *to major*, in the subsequent question, there is an underlying message emphasized by the active verb *to have*. This emphasis hints at the passiveness of Tiffany’s decision; in other words, not only does the decision appear to not be exclusively hers, but it also highlights the pressure Tiffany may experience when coming to terms with that decision. We become acquainted with exploring Tiffany’s internalized oppression:

Sonya: So, Tiffany, what is your major?

Tiffany: I have to major in business.

Sonya: What do you mean, you have to?

Tiffany: Well (pause) I have to work in our family's business.

Sonya: So if you had your way, what would you study?

I laugh: theatre or art history – how cliché! I try giving Tiffany the same uncertainly I have about her answer:

Sonya: What do you mean, you have to?

Tiffany: Well (pause) I have to work in our family's business.

Sonya: So if you had your way, what would you study?

Tiffany: I don't know, I don't think about it too much.

Here, as we collaboratively draw Tiffany's features, we try out different answers and imagine different angles from which to read the character. While I begin the process thinking Tiffany and I have little in common, I start to find the two autonomous worlds Boal speaks about – the one where my reality rests and the dramatic reality I create by portraying "the other." This idea is further explored as we understand the relationship between Tiffany and Naomi, prompted by Sonya's question: where did you meet?

Sheya and I discuss meeting Tiffany in our own lives and try to imagine how those personal narratives inform our characters: perhaps we happened to live in the same dorm our first year on campus, perhaps we met while volunteering or working in the same place, perhaps we have mutual friends. We explore the possibilities of the two characters working in the same place, but from our experience, Tiffany would probably not *have to* work. Well, we conclude, maybe she didn't have to, but that was her way of asserting herself and earning a wage. We arrive at another possibility: Naomi and Tiffany work together at the psych services center on campus; they have a passion for mental health in common. We continue this process until all

discrepancies are resolved by consensus, although we always leave room for imaging a different reality or challenging our own assumption.

Martha Nussbaum writes at length of the importance of imagining others' realities and the benefit to living in democracy arising therein. In *Not-For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Nussbaum recalls Rabindranath Tagore's approach to education in India:

Tagore used role-playing throughout the school day, as intellectual positions were explored by asking children to take up unfamiliar postures of thought. This role-playing, we can now add, was no mere logical game. *It was a way of cultivating sympathy hand in hand with the cultivation of logical faculties.* He also used role-playing to explore the difficult area of religious difference, as students were urged to celebrate the rituals and ceremonies of religions not their own, *understanding the unfamiliar through imaginative participation.* Above all, though, Tagore used elaborate theatrical productions, mingling drama, music, and dance, to get children to explore different roles with the full participation of their bodies, taking up unfamiliar stances and gestures. (my emphasis, 104)

While it cannot be extrapolated from the passage above that this is also the case in the process of character-building for ITP scenes, a parallel can be drawn. The importance of "understanding the unfamiliar through imaginative participation" lies on, as Nussbaum later suggests, the potential for the arts to "address particular cultural blind spots" (108). This ability to imagine reality is, certainly, at the crux of the arduous task of developing a character that is seemingly opposite to my self. What blind spots did I bring to the table? Could I, though this process, begin to understand what was unfamiliar to me?

While the process I describe contributes towards studying and – in Boal’s terms – *sympathizing* with the character thereby establishing a connection with “the other,” I wonder whether the process of building this character could have been better systematized or formulated before I even began tackling this task. For example, in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal offers a panoply of exercises pertaining to creating a character (165-170). One of the games is “The opposite of myself:”

The participants write their names on a piece of paper, along with a characteristic they would like to possess, which must be completely different from their actual persona. (168)

Another game is “The fighting cocks:”

A game to develop facility of improvisation. In pairs, one person accuses the other of having done something wrong. The other person has to defend himself and justify his action, in the process creating a character. (170)

Both games help establish a boundary between what Boal terms the “persona” and the “character.” In the situation I described above, the process of creating the character seems to borrow from exercises like “the opposite of myself” and “the fighting cock;” however, it is not a systematic development but a somewhat organic one, arising from within. Of course, the ensemble members incorporated character building exercises; nevertheless, the exercises during those meetings did not pertain directly to a specific character in a scene. This poses an interesting question around the blurred boundaries between the “persona” and the “character.” On the one hand, there is possible danger in creating a character too close to the self; on the other hand, there is a potential success in adhering to another’s narrative.

Nevertheless, while my encounter with ‘the other,’ Tiffany, allowed me to explore the opportunities of meeting and becoming this character as I looked to my personal narratives, this imagined reality of ‘the other’ can be problematic at times, as two ITP ensemble members recall:

[Ensemble Member A] When you get certain roles that are a stereotype, that’s hard. Being asked to embody a stereotype – that’s not like me. One time I was asked to do something [that felt demeaning, or stereotypical in an unproductive way] and I told myself I wouldn’t do something I didn’t agree with.

[Ensemble Member B] Sometimes I feel like in the troupe being a Christian is hard . . . people have ideas about my religion. Maybe I’d like to write a scene about it.

[Ensemble Member C] Recently I’ve been playing a lot of similar characters. The Asian victim. I feel frustrated. I’d like to play more different kinds of characters.

(Scriggins 10-20)

These passages hint at the ongoing struggle to create believable characters, that are not static, while avoiding the risk of falling into stereotypes. These passages also emphasize the openness with which the ensemble members address their concerns within the ensemble, one person by feeling empowered to not do something with which they disagreed and the other, by writing a scene and exploring an issue in the performance space. Both points highlight the importance of dialogue and action in the face of disagreement.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Bearing all this in mind, I cannot end this chapter before considering the relationship between the way ITP creates a scene (and, thereby, its characters) and Michael Rohd's requirements for an "Activating Scene." Two of those are:

- A protagonist that the audience cared about and with whom they could identify
- An antagonist(s) or "villain(s)" that wasn't evil or cartoony but was credible, strong, and had certain ambiguities around his actions that made him human (102-103)

However, as it became clear in that scene, the audiences are able to relate and identify with both Tiffany and Naomi. One is not the clear protagonist in detriment of the other, the "villain." In fact, the first time we performed this scene, the overwhelming majority of the audience said to identify more easily with Naomi. However, when the scene was performed a second time, the audience was split as several participants identified with Tiffany. As such, ITP scenes appear to be guided by a question (for example, what is the role of socioeconomic status between two campus students when deciding whether to live together?) but not necessarily guided by a clear protagonist and a clear antagonist.

I find this choice particularly important in the setting of the university campus, where students are becoming aware of their identities and becoming active participants of both their campus and their societies. This leads me to the second question I had initially posed: what is the impact of the process of developing a character in students' lives at UCB? I suggest the impact lies on becoming aware of others' viewpoints and identities as a means to understand others' (and our) sociopolitical contexts. The multidimensionality of characters parallels real-life

situations; the impact of exploring the many dimensions of a single scene is important for students' who work towards understanding "the other," as fellow ensemble members have suggested:

[Ensemble Member A] There's one character I've play who I really disagree with her views – so question and answer can be hard. They really tell us "don't judge your character" and that helps you sympathize with their thought process.

[Ensemble Member B] You have to put aside your own thoughts, beliefs and biases... and just be true to that character. And it's hard when you disagree with that character... I can't believe they think that way but I see why. (Scriggins 6-7)

If Boal is right and "the character is 'the other'" – if the character is "the other echoing within ourselves" – interactive theatre on the university campus acknowledges all characters as all "the others" who make up the community, whose narratives are worthy of being shared and heard.

CHAPTER SIX

PLAYING THE OTHER: DIFFICULT DIALOGUES

Let Me Out!®

Emma – Lígia

Sara – Carolina

Kent – John

Caroline – Elsa

Randy – Paul

Sara sits on stage reading a book. To her left, a woman is sitting reading a magazine. They are at the UMC fountain area, or something similar. Emma enters and, at the same time, Kent enters going to greet the woman reading the magazine. Caroline greets Kent with a big hug and kiss, Emma goes to Sara.

Emma: Surprise!

Sara: Hey, what are you doing here?

Emma: I am stalking you.

Sara: You are SO strange.

(Emma concedes)

Emma: What? Are you studying?

Sara: Lucky me. (Sarcasm)

Emma: Are you hungry?

Sara: Yes! I'm so starved!

Emma: Well, you're in luck. I just happened to be in a cooking mood and whipped something up! (Pulls 2 sack lunches out of his bag) Turkey or Veggie?

Sara: Cooking mood?!? (Overlapping beat) Turkey

Emma: Okay, here's one Veggie Sandwich for you... It's nothing spectacular. I

ran out of spicy mustard, I'm sorry.

Sara: That's okay, it is fantastic. Any food is good food right? (Beat) Your food is better (reaches for Cheetos)

Emma: Careful, you know I poisoned that one.

(Sara reaches for more)

Emma: Stop it! This is mine! (Points) THIS is yours! So typical, you think you can just get whatever you want, whenever you want?

Sara: No. Yes. (reaches for another, the two share a moment – Sara returns to studying, Emma looks around, taking time to watch Kent & Caroline who are laughing quietly, pressing foreheads together then have a long kiss through Sara's next line)

Emma: Oh, look, they're in love.

Sara: (Looks) Lust is more like it.

Emma: It's spring...

Sara: What?

Emma: Spring? I always thought the spring would be a perfect time to fall in love. Everything is in bloom...the weather is not too hot, not too cold. Everything is so peaceful. Spring is the perfect time to fall in love.

Sara: It is a beautiful time of year...

Emma: ...and you can't say that's not cute.

(Kent picks Caroline up and spins her around and tries to blow in her ear/lick her cheek or something similar, Caroline lets out a yelp)

Sara: (Looks for a moment, reflectively) Yeah.

Emma: All you have to do is wait locked in your ivory tower waiting for that right man to come along.

Sara: What?

Emma: You know the knight in shining armor, on the white horse, to sweep you off of your dainty little feet.

Sara: Yes, I forgot I'm supposed to be a damsel in distress, waiting to be rescued.

Emma: Oh you are funny. (Beat) So, what are you studying?

Sara: Well, I have this chapter to read for my American Justice class.

Emma: Oh really? What's new in American Justice?

Sara: (beats, they exchange looks) Do you really want to hear this?

Emma: Absolutely. (Beat) Yes. (Beat) Sure I do. (Beat) I absolutely live for American Justice.

Sara: You do not!

Emma: Come on.

Sara: (Beat) Alright. Here is the idea, we're all equal in "the eyes of the law." AND, we are also responsible for that equality for those around us. So it's our responsibility to not only "be" equal, but to make sure that everyone else is treated equally too.

Emma: Sounds... complicated.

Sara: Complicated? Maybe. It just means inequality is the responsibility of the people to fix.

Emma: Huh?

Sara: Yeah, you know, “We the People.”

(Sara moves closer, getting closer the whole time)

Emma: What people? You people or me people?

Sara: We people.

Emma: (See’s Kent and Caroline again, gestures to them as reference. Randy enters and greets Caroline & Kent) But don’t the differences between “We the People...” get in the way?

Sara: They’re not big differences. They’re small, trivial.

Emma: Sometimes they don’t seem so trivial.

Sara: Well... the differences are not that big.

Emma: You think so?

Sara: Yeah... and, we’re here. That’s what really matters to me right now.
(Sara and Emma have their first public kiss. Kent and Caroline get up and walk by. Kent takes a picture with his cell, Caroline drags him away embarrassed.)

Emma: (looks at them) What? (Pause) Yes, we were kissing, it didn’t bother me when you two were dry humping over there. Go away before I kick your...!

Sara: Whoa! What just happened here?

Emma: That.... What he did with his phone. I am just sick of it. It’s that look. Men and their sicko fantasies...

Sara: Yeah...

Emma: Why can't I just be...I don't know. I am sick of being like this (mimics being in a straight jacket) around you. I can't look at you too long; I can't talk about you too much. I just want to be free...

Sara: We are free to do those things, it's not like these people have any bearing on what it means to be us. (Coaxing her back into the intimacy)

Emma: I don't know... we all live here. So I have to think about them. I have to watch them watch us...it makes me love differently.

Sara: Just let it go. You are not responsible for the whole world... not alone anyway.

Emma: I just don't get why no one else seems to care... We the people indeed...

Sara: Em, stop please... (Attempting to get her back to the seat)

Emma: Hey, I gotta go... (Walks to opposite side of stage looks where the couple had been sitting) I love you.

(Emma exits)

Sara: I love you too.

CONTEXT AND PREPARATION

This piece was performed in April 2015 at the Higher Education Diversity Summit, at the University of Colorado at Denver, Auraria Campus. Five ITP ensemble members participated in this scene, directed by Trent Norman. Both Norman and Brown Adelman facilitated the warm-up, performance, and post-performance Q&A and discussion. An audience of approximately fifteen people attended the performance.

Our first rehearsal for this piece took place on the fourth floor of the Center for Community building on the UCB campus, a few weeks before our performance in Denver. Sprinting from the other side of the campus after a few hours of work, I finally arrive: exhausted, not even off book. After a few warm-up exercises, we start running lines – again, and again, and again. I notice my head isn’t quite in it: my thoughts aren’t sharp, my mind isn’t clear enough. Each repetition is meaningless and I can’t remember what I just said five seconds ago. Maybe I’m uncomfortable. Of course I’m not uncomfortable! Listen: did you know my first kiss was with a girl? The first time I read the script, it sounds mechanical. Am I missing something? I must be missing something. What am I missing?

I trip on words – what do you mean, “damsel in distress”?

I give up. I open a bag of chips and sit on the table, bumping against other tables in that small classroom: what – ever, I’m done with this day. My head is racing with random daily lists and thoughts and questions and oh-I-haven’t-finished-this-or-that and I can’t focus – can we take a breather please? I run to the bathroom, my equivalent of a meditative space. My hands comfort my temples, as I rock back and forth on the toilet seat: *we the people, we the people of the United States*, I repeat to myself. We the people of the United States.

Of course I'm uncomfortable – I come to realize I have no idea what I'm doing. How could I? There is no way I can. I can try to imagine – and even then, I remain miles away from the prospect of a faint reality of knowing what it feels like to be Emma or Sara. So far, I am used to playing the foreigner, the girl who comes from an impoverished background, the girl with an accent, the girl who looks white but keeps checking the “other” race box. I don't know what it feels like to come out. I don't know what it feels like to be out. I don't know what it feels like to have a stranger invade my privacy because I am kissing my girlfriend. I think of my other characters in ITP pieces: I seemed to have no point of connection here. I can't trespass on someone else's experience. What I assume to be similar experiences – those from which I can draw graspable connections – aren't. Shit. I'm such an idiot: could I ever understand what it's like to be Emma? What do I do? I wiped my tears and got up from my friend, the toilet, and looked at my face in the mirror, the sides of my forehead slightly red from the pressure of my hands. Whatever I can do, I think to myself, it might be easier not to do it alone. Back to the classroom, I proclaim: “Trent, I just don't know what my character is going through.”

After the rehearsal, during which we discussed my difficulty playing this character, I found a message from Norman in my e-mail inbox, offering resources on different perspectives, realities, and experiences of coming out. Typically, when building characters, I try to get to know them – where do Emma and I meet? How much of Emma is me? In this case, I assume we have nothing in common; that I ought to go back to square one, go back to creating someone else. I took all the resources I had been given and studied them to the nth degree. I pretended I was preparing to defend years of research. I dove into articles – scholarly and otherwise – and read until I fell asleep. I discussed my character with my boyfriend, a white, straight, cisgender male. I spent most of that time reading hate mail and websites that dehumanized queer, lesbian,

and gay people. Not only did I anticipate some of that discourse in post-performance questions and discussion, but I also wanted to feel what Emmas and Saras feel. I was slowly getting to know Emma.

During rehearsals, I felt a subtle awkwardness when Carolina and I kissed for the first time. How could I morally and intellectually become Emma, and physically embody her? This task proved to be the most challenging and meaningful role up to that point. I began writing more and allowing my character to fall in love with Sara. This is the girl I love, I thought, the girl I love and can't kiss in public, can't show affection for, can't be comfortable with. She was the girl I loved but wasn't allowed to love. When had I experienced anything similar? Probably never. It was heartbreaking. So don't make this kiss go by so fast, I wrote. Linger for a little second, just a little longer – just so I can feel that loving you isn't that hard. This kiss, sitting on a park bench, is all Emma has been waiting for. My lines become smoother, more naturally delivered. The inbetweenness from the dialogue to the conflict with the strangers in the scene becomes ephemeral. Almost like an aspirin dissolving in the water. I wanted to protect this inbetweenness – this moment when I hit the water and our love hasn't yet dissolved.

As Humanities Professor Susan Verducci defends acting often invokes empathic and moral stances, as the actor engages in the process of developing a character; while her assertion pertains to Method acting, I find it to be a pertinent concept to this study as well. A similar process took place as I became acquainted with Emma: I noticed, analyzed, and created behavior – mine and hers. Verducci elaborates on the relationship between the “caring empathizer” and the “dramatic empathizer.” Whereas the first pertains to empathy one finds in caring for someone else, the latter emphasizes the duality of the actor's work – both empathizing for a character (performed) and empathizing for the personality or person the character represents off stage. The

actor has the potential, therefore, to empathize with “actual others and with imagined others;” in turn, Verducci explores, the actor may also develop the potential to “respond as the other” (Verducci 96). Getting to know Emma made me see these two perspectives, as the “caring” and the “dramatic” empathizer became essential to my work in this piece. As a “dramatic empathizer,” I learned to empathize with Emma (the character performed) and I also learnt to empathize with the person Emma represents, off stage. By playing Emma, I felt I could understand her better, as I became familiar with my character and the way I related to her, both on and off stage.

In addition to challenging my identity and my character’s, rehearsing this scene with fellow ensemble members allowed the group to struggle through this challenge together. ITP heavily relies on what Boal termed “simultaneous dramaturgy”– the third stage of Boal’s plan to “transform the spectator into actor” which implies that “the spectators ‘write’ simultaneously with the acting of the actors” (102). It is an inherent part of the rehearsal process part for most ITP scenes, as all ensemble members imagine and devise responses, observations, and questions to incorporate several perspectives into the script. During this period, ensemble members blur their own boundaries and position themselves to assume viewpoints contrary to their own. It was at the end of one of these series of imagined interventions that we concluded it was more “socially acceptable” to see two women kissing than two men kissing. We observed that our society often fetishizes the idea of two women kissing, finding it stimulating, arousing, and sexy – whereas two men kissing is often regarded as disgusting and unnatural. We challenged ourselves by asserting we probably wouldn’t feel any differently, seeing two women or two men kissing. So, we swapped roles and tried it out.

This time, the three women stood to the side of the couple, now portrayed by two young men, one identifying as White and the other as Latino. The women whispered to each other in mockery, standing in the corner, while one of them took out her phone to photograph the two young men kissing and share it on social media. Did it feel differently – to see two men instead of two women kissing? What role do identities play in this scene, namely gender and ethnicity? In comparison, what was the impact of seeing a White and an Asian women kissing? Would it make a difference in the audience's perception if the two women identified as White? Are we perpetuating the sexualized Asian woman stereotype in our scene? Ensemble members and the director witnessed the varying levels of comfort and discomfort present in the room – and, together, we proposed answers. We continued to ask questions. There were no sides to take and no response or solution to be formulated into a descriptive agenda. I would argue that it was trust – not only acting skill or technique alone – that allowed us to be comfortable and argumentative and uncertain and inquisitive with each other, together, during and beyond rehearsals.

PERFORMANCE

As in most ITP performances, the facilitators began the session by warming up the participants in the room. After briefly explaining the format of the session – that these were actors playing characters – the scene takes place. For this particular scene, audience members participated in Q&A and a discussion period. As I sit down in front of the audience for Q&A, after the scene, I observe the crowd is not homogenous, in terms of identities and ages. As I sit, I pause and come to my senses: to be frank, for the most part, I remember little from the performance itself. I typically experience a sort of stage amnesia when performing – perhaps what psychologists have

termed flow¹² – and it is hard to recall the performance itself. I remember my anger towards the character taking a picture of Sara and I vividly, however. I remember yelling and chasing after him, stage right, with all the strength I had in me. I remember ceasing to be me and allowing myself to fully be somebody else. I remember feeling confident, courageous, and strong. But what I remember the most about this performance is the interaction with audience members on two particular instances.

The first instance took me aback. An older white gentleman in the audience remarked: I see that you were upset because those folks were taking a picture of you. But don't you think that using a louder voice and storming towards them is also a violent response? The question pertained to this moment in the scene:

(Sara and Emma have their first public kiss. Kent and Caroline get up and walk by. Kent takes a picture with his cell, Caroline drags him away embarrassed.)

Emma: (looks at them) What? (Pause) Yes, we were kissing, it didn't bother me when you two were dry humping over there. Go away before I kick your...!

I hesitated in what, in my mind, seemed like a long half hour. I wondered how I could best answer this question; but most of all, I wondered how Emma would answer this question. What is the right answer? What is the most inclusive, most thoughtful answer? I consider different possibilities in what was effectively, at most, half a minute. In previous discussions around this and other topics, I have encountered similar questions often pre-ambled by “let me play devil's advocate.” The question also hinted at a “what if” scenario, which facilitation of these scenes

¹² Hungarian Psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi describes the concept of flow as “the way people describe their state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake. In reviewing some of the activities that consistently produce flow – such as sports, games, art, and hobbies – it becomes easier to understand what makes people happy” (6).

tries to stay away from: the most important aspect of understanding the scene is to understand it for what it is and not to try to find solutions to change the scene as it happened. His question, certainly, was a complex one; however, not having an hour to talk to him further, I focused on one aspect of his question: the meaning of violence.

I can understand the question: Sara and Emma share their first public kiss, a moment interrupted by a straight couple and another male. What is more, the moment is interrupted by this group of three strangers taking a photo of Sara and Emma. They were not loud and did not scream. In the audience member's question, too, a more subliminal question is asked: why were you aggressive when those who took the photo weren't? Emotionally, Emma thinks the question is ludicrous. I rationalize the question: I could see how this gentleman would equate violence to yelling but that he would not think of disrespecting someone's privacy as a violent act. I disagreed with him. Emotionally and intellectually, Emma and I agree. The question begs a further exploration of what aggression and violence entail. Is a violation of privacy – by taking someone else's photo without permission (consent) – aggression, violence? Is it invasive and violent? Yes. Can aggression be torturous when someone is silenced, or deprived, or humiliated, or belittled? Certainly. Emma responded to the audience member: "This situation demanded action! Did you not see what happened? I had to protect Sara! Why would you think that my loud voice is more violent or aggressive than someone taking a photograph of an intimate moment we shared? Trust me, I would do it all over again!" The gentleman remained silent (and behind him, my boyfriend's face, who was at the performance, appeared in awe of this other person inhabiting my body, having had the guts to challenge the authority of an older gentleman). I wish time had allowed for the role swap we had explored in rehearsal to also take

place in this performance space. I wonder if that would have been a productive way to continue this dialogue; an hour can seem too short of a time slot to delve into these conversations.

The gentleman's question had prompted a response from another audience member. One of the facilitators saw a hand up and called upon the participant, who self-identified as a gay man living in Denver. Recently, he told the room, he was on his way to the movies with his partner; they were holding hands as they made their way to the theater. Suddenly, a car with four men stopped near them and began yelling homophobic slurs and beating them down to the ground. "In Denver! Here, in Denver!," he cried. He concluded by saying that because these are not isolated instances, he now teaches self-defense to other gay men. For him, to watch this scene was therapeutic and transformative. Becoming very emotional as he spoke, he remarked he wished this type of work had existed when he was in school. I thought of the therapeutic and transformative power of this scene for those who are in school at UCB – here, in Boulder! After all, this scene had stemmed from an ensemble member's experience on our campus.

This audience member's response highlights the therapeutic power of this work, an idea I have recalled from Michael Rohd's work earlier in this manuscript. Namely, Rohd hints at the ability for an activating scene like *Let Me Out!* to be therapeutic for participants:

The issues being explored will inevitably touch the life experience of someone in the room. The meaning for them, possibly for the whole group, may take on greater significance or emotional charge in these moments. That's OK . . . You are using a group to explore a social problem compressed into a specific, fictional interaction that is culled from the collective consciousness of the participants you are working with . . . Your responsibility is to safely allow them, or ask them to let someone else play. Unless you are trained to do so, this work is not about

group therapy through role play. That is a different use for this type of theatre process. This work is group problem solving, exploration, and dialogue. (71)

In this scene, all participants – both the cast and the audience – became aware of the complex issues at hand and worked together to explore them. Even when disagreements and different viewpoints arose, the facilitation and the actors’ training allowed for the group to linger in a place of discomfort, and – most crucially – for personal experiences to be shared.

FINAL THOUGHTS

My experience working on this scene highlighted the role of the arts in supporting active and humane participation in democracy through critical dialogue, as Martha Nussbaum suggests. Namely, going back to childhood experiences, Nussbaum revisits the concept of “disgust” associated with “primitive shame,” for instance towards “one’s own bodily waste products” (31-32). “Society,” Nussbaum argues, “has a lot of room to influence the direction it takes,” later adding that this emotion, disgust (“it”), becomes dangerous when

in connection with the basic narcissism of human children. One effective way to distance oneself thoroughly from one’s own animality is to project the properties of animality onto some group of people ... Meanwhile, children learn from the adult societies around them, which typically direct this “projective disgust” onto one or more concrete subordinate groups – African Americans, Jews, women, homosexuals, poor people... (33)

Concluding her argument, Nussbaum defends that to raise “citizens in and for a healthy democracy,” we must “teach real and true things about other groups, so as to counter stereotypes and the disgust that often goes with them” (45). Considering this, scenes like *Let Me Out!* are

able to “teach real and true things about other groups” in a nonjudgmental setting, where each participants’ experience can be shared as a building block towards a larger dialogue about the issue at hand.

Let Me Out! also adds to a body of research that points to the effectiveness of interactive theatre in engaging others in conversations about LGBT issues. In a recent article, for instance, Anne Hughes and colleagues described using interactive theatre to depict issues older LGBT adults face when accessing health services, namely “limited legal rights of partners, limited family support, and fear of being mistreated as a result of homophobia” (292-293). The Michigan-based team concluded that their work was effective in engaging people “in sensitive discussions that can lead to increased awareness, reduced bias and practice change” (293). While Hughes and colleagues’ conclusions cannot be extrapolated directly to my experience in *Let Me Out!*, previous ITP ensemble members convey a comparable outcome. Take, for example, this testimony from a male ensemble member who participated in Scriggins’ 2007 program assessment:

Scenes with sexual orientation helped me understand my own sexual orientation better. There have been scenes when I played both the homophobic person and the gay/bi/queer questioning identified person and having to understand the confusion that goes along with being homophobic and how in our society there’s a lot of confusion about what sexual orientation is. (30)

Another ensemble member also adds:

The bond that you have with the troupe members, people you can talk to about anything – people may not have the same views, but we have an open mind. You

become aware of ways you have of being like homophobic or things I need to work on. People admit to things they thought. (22)

This last testimony, particularly, brings forth the importance of the ensemble in discussing gender and sexuality, namely the trust among ensemble members that allows for fruitful discussion during rehearsals and ensemble meetings.

My participation in *Let Me Out!* underscores the value of the ensemble as a trusting and supporting group of diverse members, themselves part of the university community, in the process of understanding and exploring different viewpoints. British drama therapist Steve Mitchell recalls Peter Brook's assertion that "the actors' craft was to communicate to an audience, but before this could happen they must first learn to communicate with one another" (Mitchell). Certainly, this idea mirrors students' ability to model difficult dialogues within the ensemble, before exploring those conversations and stories with other participants in the UCB community. After all, what is the ensemble but an inherent part of the campus community landscape?

CHAPTER SEVEN

PLAYING THE SELF: EMPTY CHAIR AND IDENTITIES

The Pant Suit Empty Chair[®]

Gláucia: Lígia

Sean: John

Gláucia sits at a table working. She is dressed nicely and professionally. Sean is talking with another person who is the 3rd T.A. for their class (empty chair).

Sean: Hey Gláucia! Look at you!

Gláucia: Oh hey, how's it going?

Sean: Great. Hungry. Hey, you look nice. Do you have an interview or something?

Gláucia: No, just teaching class.

Sean: In a pant-suit? Is this a Hillary thing?

Gláucia: He's being funny. No, I have to put on armor today.

Sean: Really? Huh. Well, where shall we go?

Gláucia: What?

Sean: To lunch. Remember?

Gláucia: No. Sorry, you guys. I totally forgot, I'm sorry. I've been so distracted recently. I'm trying to do some extra preparation for class.

Sean: "Extra preparation?" Come on, it's not like it's your first time teaching.

Gláucia: I know, but they are not taking me seriously Sean and I've got to do something.

Sean: So that's why you're dressed for Wall Street?

(Gláucia makes a gesture about her clothing indicating yes)

I guess I'd never really thought about what I wear to class. Huh.

Gláucia: I've got to do something, this is my last resort. (Beat) I thought last year was bad. This year seems far worse.

Sean: Really?

Gláucia: Yes, I don't know why, but this year, the students seem be extra rude. Does this happen to you? They seem to hate me for no reason.

Sean: Well, you can't be loved by everyone.

Gláucia: Clearly, in the evals from our last semester someone said, "The class was decent, but Ms da Silva's teaching seemed like elementary school" and then there was (reciting from what had been written) "I didn't think I would come to college and pay money only to be smarter than the Professor, seriously can't we get T.A.s who speaks English?"

Sean: Wow, kinda arrogant!

Gláucia: And then there was this; "Miss de Silva is not ready to teach. She has a sexy accent and she's kinda hot though."

Sean: Hey! They think you're hot. They didn't say I was hot.

Gláucia: And they have never questioned your intelligence either. Am I right?
Beat

Sean: Well, not in class, no, they haven't....

Gláucia: And yet they feel free to do that with me. I wonder why that is?

Sean: But, you know, I made sure to get the material covered and go over my expectations in the beginning...

- Gláucia:** I did the same thing!
- Sean:** Well, maybe it is the way you are saying it...
- Gláucia:** Are you seriously questioning my teaching abilities?
- Sean:** Whoa... no. Don't get all sensitive on me. No. I'm just trying to help....
- Gláucia:** I thought last semester went ok and then some of these evals just floored me. I mean, who says that kind of crap?
- Sean:** Yeah, I don't know. I never get that kind of feedback.
- Gláucia:** And this year it is turning out be worse, there is the group in the back of class, they have had an issue with me from the moment class began.
- Sean:** How do you know that?
- Gláucia:** It's their attitude, I could feel it. They sit in the back of the room, with their feet up. They never participate and are always talking to the with each other. Their work is not that good and the way they're going they're not going to pass, and I know they will think it is my fault. (Beat)
- When I lecture, there is definitely a vibe, especially from the men in class. Their behavior is incredibly disrespectful.
- Sean:** Maybe it's a classroom management issue?
- Gláucia:** I know how to manage a classroom, it's not about that.
- Sean:** Are you sure? I mean I never have these issues with them.
- Gláucia:** Exactly!
- Sean:** Remember we're the ones in charge. We're the ones with the power. We are the ones grading them.

- Gláucia:** I know that too! I thought I would love teaching. I was so excited to get in front of a classroom. And, now, it just gives me a big pit in my stomach. I knew it wouldn't be easy but I never imagined I'd be dealing with this.
- Sean:** You gotta take this stuff with a grain of salt. If you get worked up by the behavior of a few students you'll start to question everything.
- Gláucia:** I am. I am questioning everything. Whether I should be teaching. Whether I should be here. What am I doing here? Why should I have to put up with this crap?
- Sean:** I know what you should be doing now.
- Gláucia:** Really? What's that?
- Sean:** Going to lunch with us! C'mon, we're starving!
- Gláucia:** This is all just a big joke to you, isn't it?
- Sean:** No... It just seems you're making things harder than they need to be.
Maybe (you just need a few more classes under your belt)
- Gláucia:** (Cutting him off) Maybe... it's about our students having issues with a woman who is teaching, let alone a woman who is a foreigner.
- Sean:** I'm not sure that has anything to do with it, and there are plenty of female faculty here.
- Gláucia:** Right, and have you ever talked to some of them about their experiences here?
- Sean:** Well not specifically, no...
- Gláucia:** Maybe you should. It's not just me, there is a pattern of behavior here.

Sean: Ok. (Beat) You know what? You seem kind of in a mood right now and I think we should grab some lunch. (starts to leave) You coming?

Gláucia: No. I gotta work.

CONTEXT AND PREPARATON

This Empty Chair scene was performed in August 2015 as part of the Graduate Teacher Program Training at UCB. While Trent Norman and Rebecca Brown Adelman directed the scene, only Brown Adelman facilitated the performance (which is uncommon; typically, most performances are co-facilitated). An audience of around fifteen Graduate Teacher Program students attended the performance. I have decided to include this chapter in my manuscript to emphasize the role of ITP's unique Empty Chair Technique.

My character is Gláucia da Silva, a Brazilian graduate student at the university. We are around the same age and, like me, she is working as a graduate TA on campus. Truthfully, getting to know her is rather uncomplicated. We have a lot in common, maybe too much. In a way, I am playing my own self: it is difficult to know where I end and Gláucia begins. Earlier that semester, in fact, I had had a similarly difficult interaction with a student. At the time, I was working as a TA for an undergraduate theatre class and on one particular day – as the clock nearly hit nine o'clock making the students believe the Professor was late – one of the students told me: "I hope [the Professor] never has to miss class, so you don't have to teach us, you know, with your accent and all" (memory fails me and I can't quite precisely remember if this was also the same interaction when a student in the same class said: "You're not a native English speaker. Why are you grading my essay?"). Seconds before the Professor walked in, I only had time to mutter: "My English was good enough to be in grad school." Around the same time, another student – in a different class – offered for me to come over at night in exchange for a better grade. That time, I couldn't even bring myself to say anything back. At the end of that semester, I felt utterly defeated. Preparing to play Gláucia forced me – as much as it allowed me – to draw from my own experiences as a graduate student and TA on the UCB campus.

In addition to the dynamics of being an international graduate student on the campus at the time, I was also working with a group of Latina women in the community as one of Boulder-based Motus Theatre's associate directors and later, project manager and assistant director. I struggled to conciliate my roles and identities on and off campus. I struggled with being so privileged in one group and longing for that privilege in the other. I was always in this grey area, never quite sure which identity to perform. What was happening to me? On top of that, I was now performing Gláucia, a Brazilian woman – yet another layer in the quest to understand the ethics of representation of “the other,” this time as I attempted to dive into the performance of my own culture and history. These were important considerations for me, as I knew the choices I made to portray this character would most likely impact students' and campus community members' perceptions of (and assumptions about) Gláucia. I struggled to learn my place on campus and on stage.

Contrary to my experience in *Let Me Out!*, this character hit too close to home, which – I decided – could go both ways: to my detriment, I could dip a little deeper and succumb to my real-life experiences, feeling defeated as a female, international, graduate student and TA; or to my advantage, I had the chance to actively live through my character and find some relief, perhaps some strength – theoretically, that is. I made a conscious effort to learn about Gláucia and develop a way through which to maintain myself yet I adhere to her self. As I became more engaged in the process, more and more distant from myself, closer and closer to the character, more and more questions led my study of this character: how have my experiences as a female, international, graduate student, shaped my presence on campus? Have others felt the need to “put on armor” when they teach? What if Sean were a female character on this scene – would we be

asking the same questions? It became an empowering experience for me: to be able to be myself, in all my vulnerability, and be allowed to not be myself, in all my strength.

PAUSE: EMPTY CHAIR IN ITP

ITP has, throughout the years, created and devised an approach to performance, a modified version of the Empty Chair Technique often used in psychodrama and drama therapy. Because this ITP approach has not yet been described in the literature, I pause to provide a brief description, while acknowledging the difficulty in doing so without being exhaustive; that, certainly, would be a manuscript of its own.

Originally, the empty chair technique – first coined by the father of psychodrama¹³ Jacob Levy Moreno – became widely used in Gestalt Therapy, a therapy modality developed by German-born psychiatrist Fritz Perls in the 1940-50s (Garcia and Buchanan 393). In a therapeutic context, the empty chair is used to establish dialogue with someone else (at times, someone who is not physically present) or even with a part of the self, as psychodramatist Eva Leveton suggested:

The empty chair can be used ... when someone who is absent or no longer alive takes on emotional importance. An empty chair can be used to represent that person ... With this strategy the director can take up unfinished grief situations – situations in which death or departure came suddenly, where remaining members inhibited their feelings. The empty chair is a bridge to the completion of

¹³ As practitioners Antonina Garcia and Dale Richard Buchanan recall in *Current Approaches in Drama Therapy*, “psychodrama is a deep action method developed by Jacob Levy Moreno (1889-1974), in which people enact scenes from their lives, dreams or fantasies in an effort to express unexpressed feelings, gain new insights and understandings, and practice new and more satisfying behaviors” (393).

unfinished emotional work, the investigation of metaphor and to direct emotional experience, for anyone that uses active techniques. (91-92)

The person is, therefore, speaking directly to an empty chair; imagine a therapist's office, where the therapist sits on one chair, the person on another chair, and a third chair (empty chair) is also in the space. The chair can, therefore, embody a person (e.g. mother), a feeling (e.g. anger), or a concept (e.g. bipolar disorder).

The empty chair technique is also part of the repertoire of drama therapy practices. Explaining the "integrative five phase model of drama therapy," drama therapy scholar and practitioner Renée Emunah narrates a participant's experience with the empty chair:

One of Shawn's *culminating scenes* in Phase Four was about saying good-bye to herself. In the scene, she played herself expressing a multitude of intense feelings toward her mother, including rage and love and disappointment, all of which she could now tolerate ... "I don't understand why you never lives," Shawn said, gazing toward the empty chair. "You've been dying for as long as I knew you" ... the tone of sadness transformed to anger ... now the sadness again, embedded in rage and hurt. (61)

In the passage above, the participant devises a scene where in the empty chair represents her mother and explores the feelings associated with that encounter. It is not surprising that the ITP directors were familiar with this technique, particularly as Brown Adelman holds a Master's degree in Drama Therapy from NYU. The approach to the empty chair technique in an ITP scene, however, is quite different.

The ITP Empty Chair Technique stemmed from the directors' work in Forum Theatre and, arguably, the emotional work the original empty chair technique addresses in psychodrama

and drama therapy resonates through the role of the bystander in a situation of conflict. Brown Adelman recalls encountering interesting challenges with Forum Theatre on the UCB campus:

In one particular performance we conducted around race, participants took the role of the oppressed person in the scene, in this case, a man of color, and tried to respond to the situation. Although the responses were effective, it was important to acknowledge that many of the interventions came from people who identified as white. As facilitators, we were faced with trying to unpack not only the interventions but also the complexity of a white person instructing a person of color on how to deal with a racist situation. (“Why we created the Empty Chair Technique” 1)

It became clear that ITP’s use of Forum Theatre could benefit from a perspective that could highlight the complexity of identity and representation in a context of conflict. Fundamentally, over the years, Brown Adelman and Norman asked themselves how interactive theatre might be able to include a myriad of identities in a scenario that involved a bystander in the scene – someone who does not respond in a problem behavior situation and is, as Canadian theatre practitioner David Diamond suggests, a “powerless or passive observer” (Linds). The directors developed a technique that both privileged participants’ identities and tackled the complex role of the bystander:

The best way to have this be effective theatrically was to have the empty chair be the role of a bystander and as a witness to an act of bias. Then we could start by asking participants to imagine themselves in the empty chair. By doing this, we create a shared experience with the audience and find a means for participants to identify with the bystander and also imagine themselves in that situation. Thus,

we have a community working together towards solutions [while] identities are examined. (“Why we created the Empty Chair Technique” 2)

In this approach, an activating scene is written thinking of an additional (imaginary) character who would have been present as the scene unfolds. In this scene this would mean that instead of two chairs – one for Gláucia, one for Sean – there would be three chairs in the performance space; the third chair is an empty chair. The dialogue is crafted in a way that the speakers (here, Gláucia and Sean) acknowledge the empty chair; often, they do so by using rhetorical questions or gestures (e.g. “Don’t you think?” or “Right?”) Visually, in this particular scene, the chair was placed in between Gláucia and Sean. This empty chair stands for a person who is supposed to have been present throughout the conversation and who did not intervene in the dialogue in any way. After the scene is performed once, a brief discussion ensues. Typically, the facilitator asks questions such as “What would you say if you were in that situation with Sean and Gláucia?” As the audience offers suggestions, the facilitator opens the scene for the spectators to take the empty chair. Several audience members take the empty chair, one at a time, offering different actions that interact with the scripted dialogue. Ultimately, ITP uses the emptiness of the chair to encompass a dual role: that of a bystander in a situation of conflict as well as that of the multitude of identities that bystander adopts.

PERFORMANCE

The performance took place in a small lecture hall; a stationary metal table at the front of the room and three flimsy chairs made up the performance area. An empty chair was placed between Sean and Gláucia. After we performed the scene once, Brown Adelman asked the audience about what they saw in the scene and how they felt about the performance, and motivated the viewers

to think about how they would have acted, had they been sitting on that empty chair on stage. As participants offered different opinions, Brown Adelman informed them we would repeat the scene from the beginning so they could yell “stop!” and take the empty chair on stage. The empty chair, representing the bystander, was about to become an embodied opportunity for the viewers to act out their discussion points and action steps. Below, I share two significant interventions I observed and experienced during this performance.

The first is a reaction by a spect-actor who identified as female – let’s call her Amanda. Rebecca suggested Amanda stop the scene when she felt the time was right and subsequently take the empty chair. We activated the scene and continued until she urged us to stop:

Sean: Well, maybe it is the way you are saying it...

Gláucia: Are you seriously questioning my teaching abilities?

Sean: Whoa... no. Don’t get all sensitive on me. No. I’m just trying to help...

Amanda: Stop!

The scene froze. While we expected Amanda to come to the front of the room and take the empty chair, she stood up from her seat in the auditorium and cried instead:

Amanda: SHUT UP, SHUT UP, SHUT UP! SHUT. UP. SHUT. UP!

Silence.

I ordered myself to remain in character, as a tear crept down my eye. In a sigh of relief, she sat down: That’s it, she smiled politely, that’s all I wanted to say.

I had prepared for a lot of interventions and questions from participants but not this one. Perhaps only in my head had I played and re-played this scenario. This moment impeccably

illustrated Boal's view of the spect-actor in forum theatre, which is certainly the basis for this empty chair technique:

The truth of the matter is that the spectator-actor practices a real act even though he does it in a fictional manner ... Within its fictitious limits, the experience is a concrete one. Forum theatre ... instead of taking something away from the spectator, evokes in him a desire to practice in reality the act he [sic] has rehearsed in the theatre. The practice of these theatrical forms creates a sort of uneasy sense of incompleteness that seeks fulfilment through real action. (119-120)

Amanda's actions stemmed from finding herself – and Gláucia – in an oppressive, albeit extremely familiar, scenario. Perhaps, in the future, Amanda would be able to actualize this feeling of liberation by speaking up in real life as well, to transform an “uneasy sense of incompleteness” to “real action.”

During the discussion period, Amanda highlighted the freedom she had to safely act as she wanted, in contrast to the way she must act in a social context. I, myself, experienced a similar feeling, both while playing Gláucia and while observing Amanda's intervention. For me, this empowering moment surged from the layers of my role on campus (as a female, international, graduate student and TA), my role on stage (as Gláucia), and my role as a participant of this performance, as I actively observed Amanda. As she said that's it, that's all I wanted to say, I too experienced an overwhelming sense of communion and empowerment. For the remainder of our time with the group, the crowd proposed several other scenarios. Many of the interventions entailed narratives of women who had experienced similar situations to

Gláucia's, namely in having "to put on armor" or experience remarks like those Gláucia recalled: "she is not ready to teach. She has a sexy accent and she's kinda hot though."

While most of the interventions in this performance came from women, one White male-identifying student (let's call him Alvin) also offered a possible action as a bystander in this interaction between Gláucia and Sean. Contrary to other actions that primarily sympathized with Gláucia, this spect-actor approached the scene from Sean's perspective, which resulted in the character's willingness to listen rather than becoming defensive towards Gláucia. In this scenario, Alvin told Sean he had also heard stories similar to Gláucia's from other graduate students, thereby highlighting that Gláucia's situation was not unique to her. As Alvin validated Sean's surprise in hearing this was not a unique story exclusive to his female peer, this intervention noted that Sean was unfamiliar with such narratives because they were not part of his experience as a graduate student on the campus. Alvin suggested Sean "grabbed some lunch" if he was hungry and that he would stay behind with Gláucia, who was frustrated with both Sean's and her students' comments.

These two sources of conflict – Sean's remarks and remarks made by Gláucia's students – affect the characters almost imperceptibly; they are microaggressions. Psychologist Derald W. Sue defines microaggressions as

the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group. (5)

In this scene, gender – as well as racial/ethnic – microaggressions come to prominence as the dialogue unfolds. Examples of these microaggressions are emphasized as Gláucia recalls

students' comments: "I didn't think I would come to college and pay money only to be smarter than the Professor, seriously can't we get T.A.s who speaks English?" or "Miss de Silva is not ready to teach. She has a sexy accent and she's kinda hot though." In addition, the script and theatricality of the scene illustrates microaggressions, as Sean both hints at Gláucia's "sensitivity" and seeks to relentlessly find a reasonable rational explanation for Gláucia's experiences:

- Gláucia:** And yet they feel free to do that with me. I wonder why that is?
- Sean:** But, you know, I made sure to get the material covered and go over my expectations in the beginning...
- Gláucia:** I did the same thing!
- Sean:** Well, maybe it is the way you are saying it...
- Gláucia:** Are you seriously questioning my teaching abilities?
- Sean:** Whoa... no. Don't get all sensitive on me. No. I'm just trying to help...

This preoccupation with rationalizing others' experiences, oftentimes present in situations of microaggressions, has been described in previous literature (Sue et al. 275). It both prevents dialogue – because at least one of the parties will become defensive – and denies the target individual the ability to feel their experience. This is not to say that Sean, in this situation, is a villain character, but that the situation is complex and all parties bring their own (different) experiences to the situation. Indeed, Sue himself, in the context of racial microaggressions, asserts that "microaggressions operate to create psychological dilemmas" (277), hinting at the complexity of biases and interactions between these two characters.

Lastly, Alvin's intervention in this scene not only aimed to support Gláucia but also stressed the important role a male bystander plays in this situation. Certainly, this does not mean only a male would be able to address this situation, but that Alvin's perspective allows Sean to be more prone to help his female counterpart. This is not surprising: research has hinted at the efficacy of bystander intervention training for men by men, thereby underlining the role of a shared identity in fostering action towards discriminatory situations (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. 745). Another study about gendered violence (this one specifically about intimate partner violence) by Social Work and Women's and Gender Studies scholars Sarah McMahon and Alexandria Dick also suggested that "conceptualizations of gender, namely masculinity¹⁴, are closely related to men's willingness to intervene" (5) and some of the surveyed men "discussed feeling reinforced by 'being in a room of like-minded men' where they experienced a sense of solidarity" (12). A similar theory of action may be in place here. Alvin's intervention both validates Gláucia's experience and is potentially able to address microaggressions by a male counterpart from a place of shared identity.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It's not that when I told myself that playing this character could go both ways ("to my detriment, I could dip a little deeper and succumb to my real-life experiences, feeling defeated as a female, international, graduate student and TA; or to my advantage, I had the chance to actively live through my character and find some relief, perhaps some strength"), the decision was set in stone. No, I went back and forth: it would be so much easier to put on a mask instead of

¹⁴ Here the authors acknowledge "there are multiple forms of masculinity;" however, here, they are referring to the "dominant, or hegemonic, masculinity in our culture . . . characterized by heterosexuality, strength, and sexual prowess."

developing a character, particularly one so close to my own self. But allowing me (my person) to get to know the character – rather close to my personality – created a sense of imbalance and later, accomplishment. Perhaps I didn't really have a choice to not actively live through my character because the nature of the scene – using the Empty Chair Technique – forced me to consider any interventions that could have come on to the stage. The ability to know my character so well as to improvise in response to any of those interventions made me confident in Gláucia and myself.

I strove to find that imbalance within myself before finding it in my character. It was heartbreaking at times but it was only from seeing that break that I could build myself – and her – up. I made sure to pose to others the same question Gláucia posed:

Gláucia: I am. I am questioning everything. Whether I should be teaching.
Whether I should be here. What am I doing here? Why should I
have to put up with this crap?

I asked people whom I didn't know, my husband, my friends, my ensemble members. Why should I be here? Why should I have to put up with this crap? And often I got responses that resembled Sean's ("You seem kind of in a mood right now"). But through this critical lens through which I saw myself, I became able to respect and see others, and articulate my thoughts, emotions, and questions. In my case, playing Gláucia gave me the strength to engage in conversation with my students: what were the assumptions the student was making about my background, my ethnicity, my accent, and my academic preparation? What were assumptions they made about themselves? This is certainly not an easy task but being allowed to explore these questions through Gláucia, particularly in the setting of Empty Chair – where I had to

prepare for any intervention – enabled me to develop a toolbox of skills I can continue to use and improve.

The second intervention particularly emphasized another skill I have kept in this mental toolbox and which is vital to a person's education: personal narrative. In that intervention, Sean did go to lunch and Alvin stayed behind. His first and only question was: do you want to talk about what is going on? As Gláucia talked, Alvin listened, only asking about what he could do to support me. This ability to be aware of a personal narrative, attempting to remove ourselves from the filter through which we listen, is a crucial aspect of relating to the world around us, as Martha Nussbaum asserts:

Citizens cannot relate well to the complex world around them by factual knowledge and logic alone . . . This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that person so placed might have. The cultivation of sympathy has been a key part of the best modern ideas of democratic education, in both Western and non-Western nations. Much of this cultivation must take place in the family, but schools, and even colleges and universities, also play an important role. If they are to play it well, they must give a central role in the curriculum to the humanities and the arts, cultivating a participatory type of education that activates and refines the capacity to see the world through another person's eyes. (95-96)

I agree with Feldhendler in that it is a sense of imbalance that provokes action. In this scene, I experienced a sense of imbalance from developing this character while trying to understand where it overlapped with my own personality. Not only that, but I experienced a sense of

imbalance from the unexpected interventions that sat on the empty chair. In response, I challenged myself and was challenged. I listened to the importance of the identities that shaped the empty chair, and I questioned my own perception of my and others' identities. And just like in real life, I will never know when that chair will be empty or who will take that seat. But at least, there may be some imbalances that force me to be flexible enough not to fall.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CIRCLE OUT: I WILL NEVER LET YOU GO

ITP came to an end twice for me: first in the spring of 2014 and, then, in the spring of 2015. I prepared heavily for that first ending by “putting on armor,” much like Gláucia. My armor was a safe zone, my safety “two meters” as I called them: if I were just quiet enough, just invisible enough, dressed confidently enough, I wouldn’t let myself be bothered by anything or anyone. I had told the directors this was my last rehearsal and prepared my two safety meters. It’s a clean cut: I go in, do the ensemble thing; I get out. It’s surgical. I remember spending that Tuesday evening trying to outdo myself. I wanted to leave feeling like I had accomplished something, like I had made a good impression. I tried to use my body more and express myself more. And I felt awkward. I remember doing a “machine” exercise – where everyone joins in to make a sound or gesture or both – and the only thing I could do was to march. I marched around people and I just kept marching; my chin was up and I was invincible. When the clock neared 7pm, we circled. Rebecca handed me a packet, my goodbye gift. In it, I found farewell messages but something else caught my eye: my name, spelled correctly, with an accent: Lígia. This was a new feeling. They had completely ignored my safety two meters.

**

When I joined ITP I was unaware that ITP was coming to an end. In fact, I only learned ITP was coming to an end at the end of my first semester at UCB; of course, when I did learn about it, I was very sad. Once the date of the last ITP ensemble was made public, current ensemble members and alumni began brainstorming about what to do on that day, through email,

phone calls, and social media. A few senior alumni organized the last ITP ensemble, leaving Brown Adelman and Norman out of the plans while reaching out to all alumni via phone, email, in person, and through social media. The idea was to have a final ensemble meeting with all of those who could make it to Boulder, to do what the group did best: do theatre. Nearly fifty ITPers came to Boulder from everywhere: from California to New York City.

It was a double-edge sword: we were happy to be together but crushed by the possibility the home that had welcomed so many of students would soon be gone. I remember looking around and realizing I was the most recent member of the ensemble. I couldn't shake the feeling off and I couldn't image what this day felt like for others. I really didn't know most people; yet somehow, I felt at home, at ease. Everyone in that room shared common ground, a common identity: we were UCB students and alumni, and were also ITP. Whenever we acted together or warmed-up together – or even when we sat in silence – there was an unspeakable bond that made us all so different and got us all so close. I looked around to see the large, heterogeneous group of people sitting in the circle. I thought of moments when I had been annoyed and upset and distraught and frustrated with so many people in that circle; and the good ones, of course. I thought of these moments and I understood that it was only through them and through the bonds created in the ensemble that I had been able to continue recognizing my own voice, my own body, my thoughts, my boundaries, my scholarship. What joy – I thought – to struggle through life on this campus and know that someone else respects your perspective. What determination and courage must I have to stand up, show up in all my vulnerability, and stake my stance: here I am.

After ITP came to an end, I struggled to put into words how I felt. While writing this manuscript – as I looked back on the data sets and program evaluations pertaining to ITP – I was

reassured that my experience with the group was not only my own. I went back to the narrative evaluations from professors and staff members who repeatedly requested ITP performances. And I went back to several of the ITP scripts; a particular one, *What Happens Next*, written after the tragic events of 9/11 – before I came to this University – stood out to me. In the scene, two characters, Mark and Julia, have a very uncomfortable conversation about the event, which had taken place a few days beforehand. As they walk on campus, they come across some writing in spray paint on the ground. Julia, the female character, has a strong emotional response to this writing; at the time, Brown Adelman reflected that “this may not have been the most popular view or politically correct perspective, but it seemed important in creating the character of Julia that the fact that she had an emotional connection to September 11 be voiced” (Simpson and Brown Adelman 93). Part of the dialogue, set in 2011, went like this:

Mark: This is going to be hard for them to get rid of.

Julia: Well maybe they shouldn’t get rid of it. You can’t pretend things didn’t happen. The World Trade Centers are a freaking pile of rubble, and we have to look at that. This is nothing.

Mark: I don’t think leaving it is really the answer.

Julia: Well, I do. (Under her breath) I think we should bomb the shit out of them.

The characters were built in a way that highlighted their complexity and focused on different perspectives. During character building, in fact, it had been established that Julia’s older brother worked at the World Trade Center and happened to be later to work because his son need to see a doctor; at the time of the incident, Julia couldn’t reach him. For several reasons including this

one, Julia felt sad, angered, and hurt. This emotional component was one that Brown Adelman, as a native New Yorker, wanted to highlight:

This was one of the first times we used Interactive Theatre as a method of response. The actual incident portrayed in this scene occurred on our campus. The feelings and struggles around the incident were shared by many. It was clear that we needed a venue for these opposing views to be vented and explored ... People do get offended. In real life, people get offended, but then they usually storm off, get in a fight, or stop talking. Here when people get offended, that's the beginning of the conversation, not the end ... Part of what we work to do is really get across the idea that neither of these opposing perspectives is right or wrong. People walk away seeing that the issue is more complex and complicated and much can be learned about ourselves and others when we delve into the conflict rather than avoiding it. (91-97)

Recently, I have encountered versions of this scene on our campus; the work ITP did is perhaps as necessary today as it was in 2011. Conversations like the one between Mark and Julia highlight the need for critical thought that opens a door for emotional response; dialogue. In this case, the audience was faced with very difficult questions, namely around the characters' emotional responses, their gender, their political ideology, and even their closeness to the events. This scene, which did take place on campus, was then reflected back to the community; community members were asked to listen to one another, even if they disagreed, even if they vented, even when they were utterly uncomfortable. Ultimately, this script brings forth the idea that the ITP scenes were made *with* and *by* the community, *about* the community. ITP was far more than its ensemble; it *was* the community.

Martha Nussbaum writes that

Every modern democracy is also a society in which people differ greatly along many parameters, including religion, ethnicity, wealth and class, physical impairment, gender, and sexuality, and in which all voters are making choices that have a major impact on the lives of people who differ from themselves. One way of assessing any educational scheme is to ask how well it prepares young people for life in a form of social and political organization that has these features.

Without support from suitably educated citizens, no democracy can remain stable.

(9-10)

While Nussbaum was thinking of the U.S. educational system in particular and democratic societies in general, I cannot help but to parallel our campus community to her words. Could it be that a model similar to ITP's might be able to contribute towards – as the UCB mission proposes – shaping tomorrow's leaders?

Could it be that as ensemble members, despite our differences, we had found a way to recognize others in their humanity, actualizing and imagining their viewpoints; to respect them? We profusely disagreed with each other and took pride in getting on our feet to explore each other's arguments; we rehearsed perspectives and shared them with the audience and, in turn, the audience gave us their perspectives, their emotions, their thoughts, and their actions. So, to Michael Boyd's question, "Can an ensemble act in some sense as a better version of the real world on an achievable scale which celebrates the virtues of collaboration?" my answer is yes.

...And I will never let you go!



Fig. 1 – Final ITP ensemble meeting, April 2015.

CHAPTER NINE

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Over one hundred students spoke up against the elimination of ITP before the bill was ultimately passed. Several students “lined up in front of the microphone and repeated the phrase I support the use of student fees to fund ITP. You are my representatives. Please hear my voice” (Saypol 229). At the time, leadership personnel from the University spoke up against the student bill; the then Executive Director of Student Affairs and supervisor of ITP, Gardiner Tucker, insisted that “together we can make something happen” (Auran, “CUSG passes controversial pre-budget legislative bills”). Nevertheless, ignoring the protests, the student heading the bill argued that “overall for the campus, it is the correct decision” (Auran, “CUSG passes controversial pre-budget legislative bills”). But it is hard to understand whether this decision represented or benefitted the campus community; arguably, this was not only a fiscally conservative decision but also a politically conservative one, motivated by “resentment to the program’s liberal social justice oriented agenda” (Saypol 228). In any case – and given what I have shared so far – I would like to, first, revisit the impact of ITP through the theoretical framework I laid out initially and, second, propose a restructuring and reinstatement of an interactive theatre program on campus – temporarily termed the Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative (TCEI) – under the jurisdiction of the Department of Theatre & Dance.

INTERACTIVE THEATRE AS A MODEL FOR DIALOGUE ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS

Throughout this manuscript, I have interwoven my own narrative and scholarly observations with different data sets and seminal readings to suggest that interactive theatre is beneficial to

campus communities; I have made that claim using by looking specifically at our UCB campus. I have highlighted that ITP's model was a strong asset to both the ensemble members and the audiences (students, staff, faculty) around campus. My narrative account focused on highlighting the acknowledgement of my own identity (namely through thoughtful exercises like privilege line and playing Gláucia) and developing an ability to see the world from another's perspective (namely as I observed my journey with the character Tiffany and Emma). Many threads are intertwined to my narrative, several of which were corroborated in interviews to fellow ensemble members in 2007, the 2012 external assessment, and data collected from audience members in several years. These common threads include: to take ownership of a viewpoint through scripted acting, exercises, and improvisation; to see situations on a systematic level and not just one position; to develop critical thinking across disciplines; and to feel supported in developing beliefs, values, and ethics to participate actively in society, as a responsible citizen.

In addition to these, ITP stood out as a unique program – both on our campus and at the national level, not only given its approach but given its emphasis on co-facilitation and paid student-actors. The second point is important and I will discuss it briefly before I expand on the first. Being paid for their interactive theatre work was important to students: it created a sense of belonging and commitment, and allowed them to earn a wage while being engaged in a meaningful task. That was certainly the case for me as well as two fellow ensemble members:

[Ensemble member A] In many ways ITP doesn't feel like a job. I've had construction jobs and that's completely different! It's harder in that it pays much less. But in other ways it affects my life more than other jobs I've had. When I'm doing construction jobs at the end of the day I'm done with it... whereas this is an

ongoing thing. But this is good work, and it feels like there's progress being made.

[Ensemble member B] It's easier [than other jobs] in that you are with people you like, but it's harder because, like, I'm a server and when I go home I'm not thinking "serving, there's so much there to think about." But when I do a scene about racism I do go home and think about it and it's hard because it really never leaves you. (Scriggins 15)

In addition to this aspect, ITP was (until its closing in 2015) and continues to be (to the best of my knowledge) the only program to insist heavily on co-facilitating as a very first step to mirror collaboration and discussion. In previous conversations with the directors, they have reflected on the importance of working together, including due to their different identities, namely in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. An asset to their collaboration was also their training in psychology (Norman holds a Master's degree in Psychology and Brown Adelman, in Drama Therapy); while interactive theatre is not therapy, their preparation and knowledge of psychology and drama therapy may have contributed to "hold space" when the work became therapeutic. And while co-facilitation continues to be outside the norm, several scholarly works have hinted at the importance of this practice:

the potential for role modeling, stimulating group dynamics, group management, professional development, and mutual support . . . co-leadership can provide in vivo examples for learning, shared responsibility, and mutual support for group facilitators . . . ability to handle conflict . . . joint preparation, and attention to evaluation in enhancing the attainment of group goals. (Cohen and DeLois 22)

This ability to mirror positive behavior – even in the presence of hardship – is paramount to Brown Adelman and Norman’s practice: if they could struggle together and grow together, then they could be better prepared to understand conflict among ensemble and campus community members more closely, and engage in dialogue more wholeheartedly and honestly.

WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

From 1999 until 2015, ITP proved to be a strong asset to the community, as I have illustrated through ensemble member testimonials as well as evaluations and assessments of the program throughout my study. Both the external review assessment in 2012 and the ensemble assessment in 2007 emphasized the exceptional work ITP was doing on our campus,

challenging students, staff, and faculty to think through the dynamics and outcomes of oppression, explore the intricacies of identity, and developing skills of dialogue through their performances . . . ITP stimulates conversation and thought that the larger campus might not want to focus on. (4)

Nevertheless, both reviews made recommendations ITP ought to include in their practice. As I have underscored the positive aspects of the group before, I will now focus on what ITP failed to do.

The external reviewers commented on improvements to the process of ensemble training that were not implemented. They suggested ITP created “a semester long or eight-week training on social justice dynamics for the student performers,” offered the group have “recommended readings each week that students can come to rehearsal prepared to respond to,” and emphasized the importance to share with the wider campus community why “this methodology/pedagogy is different from traditional pedagogy” (5). The group also highlighted the need for ITP to connect

with other departments on campus, namely psychology and sociology. Similar recommendations were made in the 2007 assessment, which suggested ITP “make expectations clear for all and follow through” and “make sure both support and structure are offered” to ensemble members. What is more, the external reviewers suggested ITP “put energy into developing a parent resource/advisory council that becomes familiar with your work and can advocate for your contributions to their children’s education” (6). This would ensure ITP was recognized and supported by different leadership teams.

But one of the biggest pitfalls of the program – which ultimately led to its closing – was the financial and operational instability of the program. In 2012, the external review report had acknowledged that the approximately \$117,000 from Housing and Dining Funds and \$101,000 from the Student Government did not come from sustainable funding sources; they suggested ITP “discontinue a reliance on funding from the Associated Students,” “determine a sustainable funding source,” and “revisit ... fundraising goals” (8-9). This instability associated with funding from the student government is further complicated by the constant change within student government itself; when priorities or ideologies shift, funding will inherently shift as well. After the student government defunded the program, the Division of Student Affairs continued to fund ITP “through a variety of non-permanent funding sources;” in 2015, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students explained to me that the

[Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT)] conducted a thorough analysis of all programs for effectiveness and efficiencies. Based on that analysis, it was concluded that ITP was a relatively inefficient program with a high cost to run. SALT considered the analysis of ITP and other programs, and concluded that the

proposed elimination of ITP would allow the Division to meet its budget demands, while also decreasing inefficiencies. (personal communication)

Not only was ITP deemed financially inefficient, but it also lacked academic jurisdiction and a home on campus. Upon its creation, Brown Adelman was located in the Wardenburg Health Center whereas Norman, in Hallett Hall. Subsequently, in 2004, both moved to Willard Hall and in 2010, to Kittredge Hall. In 2011, the group was moved to the Center For Community (also known as C4C) building. Arguably, the group would have had enjoyed a more stable residence in the Department of Theatre & Dance. Indeed, the external reviewers suggested ITP consider conversations with the Department of Theatre & Dance, in order to report to both Student Affairs and a university department – where it would not only benefit from a sustainable residence but also strong scholarly support. One of the strongest benefits arising from a partnership with the Department of Theatre & Dance was described as follows:

Articulate your work as ‘performance as research,’ a growing cross-sector area of scholarship and practice noted for its innovation and flexibility. At a research university, claim your uniqueness and excellence in the area of embodied, actualized, community visible research action. (6)

At present, there is an increasing demand on the UCB campus for programs that support performance as research as well as programs that foster dialogue, programs that allow students to speak and be heard and their experiences, seen. In the Department of Theatre & Dance alone, last year, an estimated 70% of the Ph.D. applicants to our department came from applied performance backgrounds – a trend we have continued to see this year as well. In addition, the newly created *PARTake: The Journal of Performance as Research* (<http://scholar.colorado.edu/partake/>), spearheaded by Ph.D. student William Lewis, emphasizes

the need to continue expanding our understanding of theatre and performance. Outside Theatre & Dance, programs like INVST Community Studies and CU Engage continue to offer programs, fellowships, and workshops that support a line of work that privileges service and innovation within a community context.

Interestingly, even after ITP ended, interactive theatre continued to be active on campus. After the Spring of 2015, Brown Adelman, Norman, and ITP kept working as an independent group, Affinity Arts Consulting (www.affinityartsconsulting.com). I mention this because Affinity Arts continues to work on several university campuses across Colorado, including the UCB campus, suggesting there is a place and a need for interactive theatre work. For that reason, I conclude my study with several recommendations about moving forward productively, in a way that is practical and has the potential to reach our campus community. As such, alongside recommendations, I have imagined and described what a program might look like, by adapting a previous proposal: I advocate for the establishment of an interactive theatre and performance group, the Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative (TCEI), housed in the Department of Theatre & Dance.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

The TCEI, as previously proposed by Professor Bud Coleman and colleagues (myself included), was designed as an interdisciplinary program using a practice-as-research model to explore a prosocial pedagogy on our campus, as well as interactive performance and facilitation to educate college students for democratic participation. I believe this is a program worth revisiting; I advocate for this program to be proposed and instated. This program should be housed in the Department of Theatre & Dance, where strong community leaders and faculty members – who

have a breath and wealth of knowledge associated with community participation and rigorous performance scholarship – are able to support it from theoretical and practical standpoints; this location would allow TCEI the ability to have a rehearsal room and large spaces for public and semi-public/public performances, infrastructures that ITP did not necessarily have. Collaborating with this department also means increasing exposure to our community outside the UCB campus, liaising the UCB community with the Boulder community in public performances and post-performance discussions. Joining forces with local groups (what Boal termed “links”) such as square product theatre – which frequently holds community conversations about difficult social issues – could also lead to a more widespread conversation and use of performance to address community topics both within and outside the UCB community.

In addition to its residency in Theatre & Dance, I suggest TCEI maintains its interdisciplinary focus by collaborating with other departments. For instance, sociology and psychology scholars and graduate students might strengthen efforts to disseminate data about the outcomes of the program as well as scholarship around group cohesion, identity, or self-esteem; such interdisciplinary research efforts will also ensure data about TCEI is reliable and documented in a systematic manner. Because sociology faculty supported the original TCEI proposal, I have reason to believe an interdisciplinary approach is possible and viable. Access to interdisciplinary research would certainly signify stronger scholarly work.

Research plays a crucial aspect in this endeavor. Because there hasn’t been a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative study on the benefits of interactive theatre on U.S. university campus communities, UCB would remain at the forefront of research in this area and such an endeavor must be designed resting on a strong research component, so that it both guides the program and assesses the program. Because ITP was so unique, it is hard to find an

analogous group whose model we can use; however, I do believe that research plays an important component in addressing outcomes of a program like ITP or TCEI. I suggest a research plan be in place before the program starts in order for a data plan to be effective over the course of the first years of the program. It is important to Further, I believe that the questions initially posed by the external reviewers to ITP – as well as the questions posed by the 2007 Scriggins assessment – must guide such a research plan: 1) Are the program's philosophy, works, practices and foundations true representations of exemplary social justice educational practices¹⁵?, 2) Do the program's theatrical vision, operations, foundations, formats and teaching lead to the best application of the material?, 3) Does the program operate in a manner which can be considered as appropriate within a large research university?, 4) Does the budgeting model adequately meet the needs of the program?, 5) Is the structure of the program adequate to the goals and function?, 6) In what way is the program impacting ensemble-members and otherwise participants (viewers/audience) of a given performance?

Another important aspect would be keeping ITP's model of co-facilitation and ensemble. Even if this means that facilitators work less than full-time, it is important that two facilitators collaborate to develop and direct this program. Further, I recommend considering TCEI ensemble members be part of a class housed by the Department of Theatre & Dance, so the students can benefit from academic and scholarly rigor as well as in-depth training. This class would run systematically, every semester, and would be open and encouraged to students from all campus departments. TCEI should make an effort to reach as a diverse group of students on campus as possible – both demographically and academically. Of course, this approach would

¹⁵ Here, it is important to strongly delineate, in the initial stages of the project, the nature of such a program (drama therapy, performance, applied theatre).

sacrifice the salaried student-actor aspect which was present in ITP, as students cannot be paid for classwork; however, this sacrifice could mean that the program benefits from a more stable financial situation. As in the original TCEI proposal, the Department of Theatre & Dance could be able to, in theory, support two co-facilitators (from class tuition fees), as I have outlined in Fig. 4 (alternatives should be sought if the Department of Theatre & Dance are no longer able to partially support the directors' time). One last crucial – and innovative – aspect of this proposed program is the establishment of a full-time (0.9 FTE, 36 hours/week) staff member, able to support this program with research documentation, fundraising efforts, and communication. This person should have a strong background in applied theatre and social justice, as well as experience with research methodology. This person would be an asset in fundraising efforts and management of mailing lists (as Boal himself suggested in *Legislative Theatre*) that strengthen the program's support base. I recommend this person not be a student, so as to ensure sustainability of the position and full dedication to the work.

Thinking of financial sustainability – evidently, the biggest concern for such a project – I suggest it be supported in a way that is conducive to self-sufficiency and that the financial standing of the program be incorporated into a five-year plan. In the 2012 external review, the authors recommended ITP make the Department of Theatre & Dance see the “economic and scholarly advantages of broadening their notions of what performance is;” I believe TCEI must follow this recommendation and focus on this same idea. The notion that ITP was “financially inefficient” is also an important one to consider when imagining TCEI; namely, is a program of this nature deemed “financially inefficient” because it does not generate capital or because outcomes measures of the program do not appear to justify the cost employed in running it? To address the latter, undoubtedly, a strong methodology must explore the benefits of this program

to the campus community – those who will participate as ensemble members and audience members, and those who will participate by providing scholarly support and expertise. Moreover, I recommend the previous 2015-2016 SEED grant be revisited and re-submitted in the next application cycle (February 2018), in order for this program to gather start-up funds. As I mentioned earlier, the reviewers of the original 2015-2016 SEED grant encouraged the authors to revise and re-submit in the following year, acknowledging the merit of the proposed program and the need for research methodology to be improved.

Another recommendation that I strongly put forth is to approach the University leadership and revisit the UCB Arts and Cultural Enrichment Fee (approved by the administration and Board of Regents in June 1995) which has maintained its value of \$10 since, at least, 2008; I propose raising this value from \$10 to \$12.50¹⁶ (“Mandatory Fees”). For reference, I have outlined below (Fig. 2) how mandatory fees are currently allocated for undergraduate students taking 7 or more credits in the Fall/Spring semester¹⁷ (“Mandatory Fees”). I suggest this conversation take place after interdisciplinary support has been gathered from the various members of the community who are interested in TCEI as a collaborative endeavor; once a proposal is solidified, it can be presented to the Board of Regents. Considering that in the Fall of 2016 the UCB campus had an enrollment of 31,861 students, this increase would represent a total estimated budget of \$79,652.50. Certainly, this budget could be malleable and change by negotiating contributions from other departments interested in this program as well as potential external funding bodies.

¹⁶ For perspective, the Career Services Fee has increased from \$9.00 to \$12.00 in the same period, from 2008/2009 to 2016/2017.

¹⁷ Graduate students taking a similar amount of credits pay an additional \$5.50; incoming students and international student fees also differ slightly.

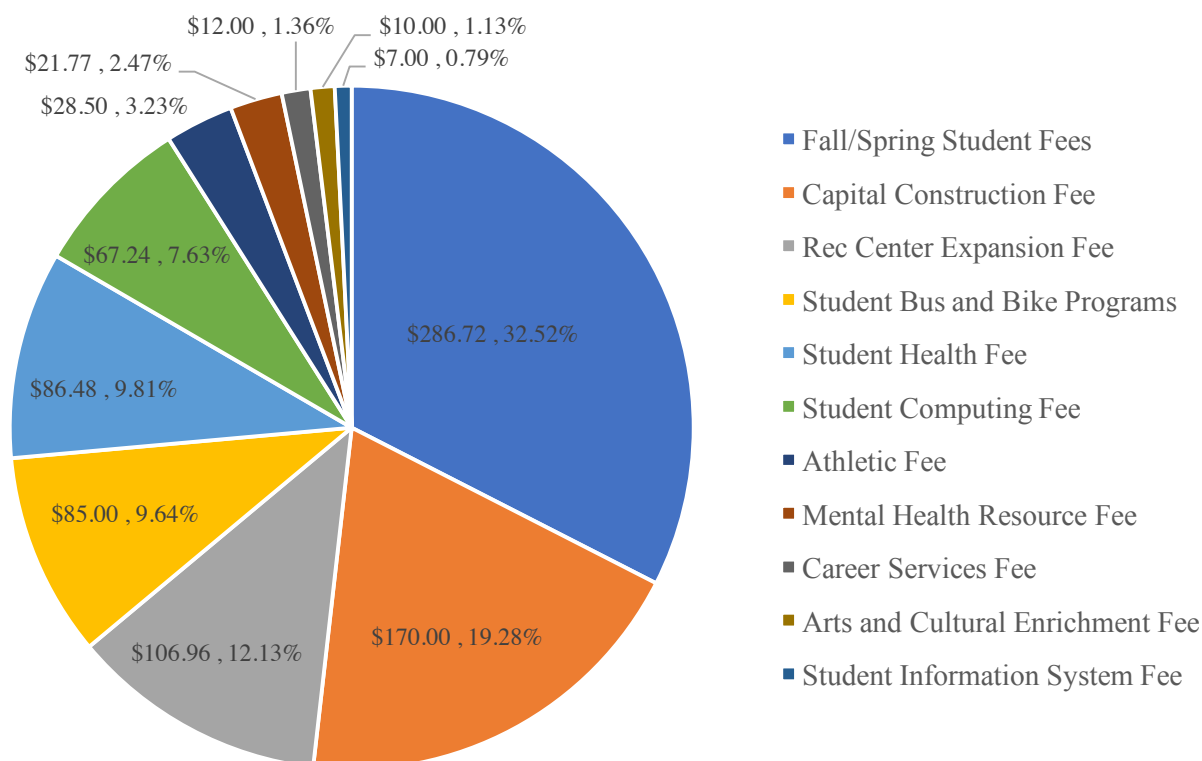


Fig. 2 – Allocation of Mandatory Undergraduate Fees (7+ credits) in the Fall/Spring semester 2016/2017; total mandatory fees of \$881.67/student.

As a starting point, I have drafted an initial budget breakdown that may aid initial conversations around financial feasibility – far from \$5M (Table 1). Should a SEED Grant be awarded and the Arts & Culture Fee be increased by \$2.50 through the Board of Regents, a theoretical five-year plan illustrates this program can be financially feasible; however, initial discussions must acknowledge this may not be the case and other funding sources must be pursued. While the maximum amount of a SEED grant is \$50,000.00, in 2015/2016 we had estimated a first-year budget expense of \$36,012.46 and projected the remainder of the funds to carry forward to the following year, as outlined in Annex E. As I mentioned, the gross income

from the Arts & Culture Fee Increase (\$2.50) is estimated to total \$79,652.50, if student enrollment were to remain at least the same as this year. I have also outlined the salaries (initially estimated to be \$9,000.00) which would be sponsored by the Department of Theatre & Dance, per previous TCEI proposal (estimated is based on a 3-credit course). I also estimated an initial minimum goal of \$5,000.00 for fundraising efforts to support the continuation of this program, increasing incrementally every year. Alternative funding could also be generated through summer workshops hosted by this program and open to non-UCB students as well as a yearly UCB Performance as Research conference. Lastly, I have outlined an estimated \$4,000.00 for public performances; these interactive public performances could be advertised by CU Presents for maximum publicity. The values outlined below are gross estimates, but I believe they may offer a solid foundation for initial conversations. I propose a 5-year plan be consolidated, so that the program is continually evaluated for its efficacy, academic rigor, and reach to the community.

All said, I strongly discourage this program to rely largely on student fees, given the instability of the funds allocated to different programs and the history of ITP, as well as the difficulty in knowing, in detail, how budgets are allocated each year. For example, in crafting this thesis, I posited whether the Cultural Events Board (which is student-fee supported and manages a budget of \$484,014.00 in the 2016-2017 fiscal year) could be an effective funding source to approach. Despite several attempts to understand how the Cultural Events Board total budget is broken down and spent yearly, I was unable to obtain this information from the group, making it hard to suggest possible shifts in fund allocation.

	YR1	YR2	YR3	YR4	YR5
SEED grant /carryover from previous year	\$50,000.00	\$33,812.50	\$30,790.60	\$28,283.10	\$33,766.40
Arts & Culture Fee Increase	\$79,652.50	\$79,652.50	\$79,652.50	\$79,652.50	\$79,652.50
Public Performances	\$4,000.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	\$6,000.00
Fundraising Efforts	\$5,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
UCB Performance as Research Conference	\$10,000.00	\$10,500.00	\$11,000.00	\$13,500.00	\$15,000.00
	<i>(estimated 50 participants, \$200 conf. registration)</i>	<i>(estimated 50 participants, \$210 conf. registration)</i>	<i>(estimated 50 participants, \$220 conf. registration)</i>	<i>(estimated 60 participants, \$225 conf. registration)</i>	<i>(estimated 60 participants, \$250 conf. registration)</i>
Department of Theatre & Dance Salaries	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Summer Workshop (4 weeks, 4 hours/wk)	\$-	\$10,000.00	\$12,500.00	\$18,750.00	\$22,500.00
		<i>(estimated 10 participants, \$1000 tuition)</i>	<i>(estimated 10 participants, \$1250 tuition)</i>	<i>(estimated 15 participants, \$1250 tuition)</i>	<i>(estimated 15 participants, \$1500 tuition)</i>
	\$157,652.50	\$155,965.00	\$155,943.10	\$162,185.60	\$173,418.90
Co-Facilitators Salary (combined)	\$86,400.00	\$87,360.00	\$88,816.00	\$89,107.20	\$89,908.00
<i>(40 hrs/week, 0.5FTE + 0.5FTE; based on \$60.00/hr for Fall/Spring, estimated 36 weeks)</i>				<i>*slight yearly increase summer salary included in YR2, YR3, YR4, YR5</i>	
Performance Research and Support Assistant Salary	\$37,440.00	\$37,814.40	\$38,844.00	\$39,312.00	\$39,499.20
<i>(36 hrs/week, \$20.00/hr starting salary, excluding benefits, estimated 52 weeks)</i>				<i>*slight yearly increase</i>	
	\$123,840.00	\$125,174.40	\$127,660.00	\$128,419.20	\$129,407.20
	\$33,812.50	\$30,790.60	\$28,283.10	\$33,766.40	\$44,011.70

Table 1 – Potential start-up budget breakdown, projecting financial stability and not including additional funding sources from other departments or University bodies.

It would be important to investigate whether a small percentage of student fees could be allocated to this program, as its campus engagement component far surpasses the ensemble members themselves. In addition to a breakdown of mandatory fees, I have listed below a

comparison between student-fee fund allocation in the fiscal years of 2010-2011, 2011-2012 (ITP transition years with regards to student funding), and 2016-2017 (Table 2); this information may be useful when establishing dialogue with different student groups and the University Administration. The funds below represent the allocation of the total student fees received from all students enrolled, which in Fig. 2 take up the largest area of the pie chart (in blue, \$286.72/student in the 2016/2017 year).

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2016-2017
University Memorial Center	\$5,989,079.00	\$5,729,823.00	\$6,547,058.00
Recreation Center / Recreation Services	\$4,950,627.00	\$4,773,794.00	\$10,759,266.00
Wardenburg Health Center	\$3,687,617.00	\$3,573,333.00	n/a
Volunteer Resource Center	\$163,279.00	\$165,040.00	\$276,418.00
Student Outreach and Retention Center for Equity	\$215,653.00	\$209,263.00	n/a
Center for Student Involvement	n/a	n/a	\$1,173,631.00
Cultural Events Board	\$453,705.00	\$431,940.00	\$484,014.00
Environmental Center	\$942,072.00	\$936,560.00	\$1,095,887.00
Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center	\$65,793.00	\$66,473.00	n/a
KVCU Radio 1190	\$150,438.00	\$144,215.00	\$143,669.00
Off Campus Student Services / Off Campus Housing and Neighborhood Relations	\$293,934.00	\$294,480.00	\$381,806.00
University of Colorado Student Government	\$582,798.00	\$518,796.00	\$608,171.00
Student Group Funding Board	\$533,854.00	\$300,000.00	n/a
Distinguished Speakers Board	\$130,988.00	\$123,855.00	\$130,945.00
Interactive Theatre Project	\$101,061.00	\$-	n/a
Women's Resource Center	\$276,671.00	\$267,371.00	n/a
Student Legal Services	\$263,916.00	\$262,938.00	\$308,620.00
Student Organization Funding Office / Student Organization Allocations Committee	\$409,935.00	\$397,637.00	\$225,806.00
Outdoor Recreation Program	\$692,351.00	\$692,351.00	\$659,558.00
Small Cost Center Capital Fund	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
Police Recharge	\$110,896.00	\$110,896.00	n/a
Uncollectibles	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
CU Colleges and Schools	\$163,610.00	\$155,933.00	\$187,180.00
	\$20,213,277.00	\$19,189,698.00	\$23,017,029.00

Table 2 – Breakdown of Student Fee Package for 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2016-2017.

Launching TCEI will require a strong level of commitment from all involved, particularly the initial interdisciplinary steering group. The first step will be to define the format of this program: would be best suited as a class, a University program, an institute, an interdisciplinary certificate? As I mentioned before, it is also important to define the nature of the program (applied theatre/ performance/ drama therapy/ interdisciplinary). After this initial discussion – particularly among faculty in the Department of Theatre & Dance –the main action points will be identifying faculty and staff members interested in this project; then, I suggest a presentation be created to share the project with the different stakeholders. In his article “The Cop in the Head,” Boal asserts that Theatre of Oppressed emphasizes theatre as a language that must be spoken, not a discourse that must be listened to” (35). Similarly, I would highlight the importance of involving these faculty and staff members in the process, in addition to a presentation. For example, in the context of interactive theatre, a presentation should follow an activating scene and facilitated discussion, in order to provide these community members with an active experience of the proposed project. I propose approaching faculty and staff in the Leeds School of Business, the Norlin Scholars group, Wardenburg Health Services, Institute of Behavioral Sciences, INVST community studies, CU Engage faculty, as well as Humanities departments whose faculty are interested in participatory, community, and artistic research, namely the Departments of Psychology, Political Science, Education, Communication, and Sociology. The next step will be to solidify a proposal to be submitted for a SEED grant in February 2018 as well as to be shared with the various members of the Administration of this University; in this conversation, a discussion with the Board of Regents about raising the amount of the Arts & Cultural Enrichment fee could take place.

Another important step will be to approach the University of Colorado Foundation. It is unclear whether the approximately \$6,000.00 raised by ITP a few years ago are still available or whether they were allocated to a different program or project. If the funds are still available in the ITP account, they could serve as seed money for this program; if the funds are no longer available, I suggest creating an account towards which fundraising efforts can be channeled, to help the program be self-sustaining (while I contacted the Foundation to obtain answers concerning this question, I did not obtain a response to this date). The final point in this timeline of events is the establishment of the program itself; a brief outline is depicted below (Fig.3).

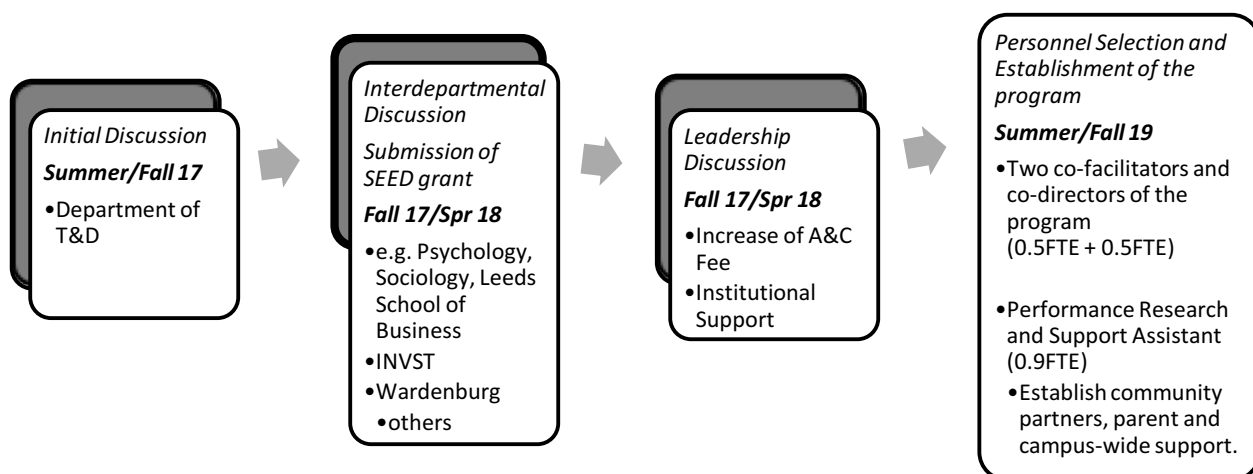


Fig. 3 – Possible timeline of events.

BUT WHY?

But why does this all matter, outside our department and even outside this campus? Interactive theatre and theatre of the oppressed have been suggested to decrease victim-blaming attitudes (Mitchell and Freitag), improve sexual health communication among culturally diverse young populations (Roberts, Lobo, and Sorenson), engage people in sensitive discussions, particularly

within the context of LGBT issues (Hughes et al.), improve faculty diversity training (Burgoyne et al.) and faculty training in the sciences (Camacho et al.), nurture an understanding of oppression in the classroom (Vierk), and foster communication in medicine (Singh, Khosla, and Sridhar; Gupta et al.). While the uses of applied theatre are well established, they are yet to be discussed within an ensemble context working regularly within a college campus community.

Parallel to these studies is the reality that continues to affect universities across the nation, like our own: the struggle with difficult social issues on college campuses. For instance, on our campus, the Fall 2015 UCB sexual misconduct survey showed that of the 13,009 students who responded, 15% reported experiencing sexual assault and 18% reported experiencing sexual harassment; 83% of those reports of sexual assault came from women, both graduate and undergraduate. Most recently, in late 2016, our campus also saw an increase in reported “bias-motivated harassment incidents” (Burness, “CU Boulder investigates wave of reported bias incidents on campus”). TCEI, as a program with a strong multifaceted potential and a strong focus on educating critical participants of our democratic society, may contribute to tackling some of these issues. Furthermore, as a public, top-tier research university, this endeavor will place us at the forefront of interdisciplinary, multimodal research. This program represents an opportunity to pioneer research that will directly benefit our community.

As campuses strive to find ways to address social issues among their communities, interactive theatre may continue to represent a solid asset in aiding universities that face the arduous task of establishing meaningful and critical dialogue on campus communities. As I think of the opportunity to establish a program that serves as a model for others and the role of interactive theatre in education beyond the university campus, I leave you with Martha Nussbaum’s words:

Every modern democracy is also a society in which people differ greatly along many parameters, including religion, ethnicity, wealth and class, physical impairment, gender, and sexuality, and in which all voters are making choices that have a major impact on the lives of people who differ from themselves. (9)

An ensemble can act as a version of the real world on an achievable scale, celebrating the virtues of collaboration; a group of scholars can imagine a program that educates citizens to engage in dialogue in their communities; the participants of each scene are able to engage with a performed narrative, explore their own, disagree, participate, voice their views. And so, I echo Gardiner Tucker's words: "together we can make something happen."

You are my representatives. Please hear my voice.

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ANNEX A

February 3, 2010¹
Act

74 LCB05- ITP Responsibility

Sponsored By:	Gregory Carlson	Arts and Sciences Senator
Authored By:	Gregory Carlson	Arts and Sciences Senator

Bill History

In April of 2008, under advisement by Causey Consulting, Interactive Theatre Project (ITP) completed a five-year strategic plan for growth and program development. At the conclusion of the advisement, it was understood that ITP must establish a direction for growth to ensure continued fulfillment of its mission. This strategic approach included an aggressive approach to fundraising, with a “realizable goal of operating under a budget of \$5 million.” At the time of the plan’s implementation, seed money for a fundraising position was guaranteed by Housing and Dining Services. The bill, 70LCB08, which obligated the Student Organization Funding Office (SOFO) to fund ITP for five years, stated that its purpose was to “continue support of ITP in the short term, during its transition toward self-sustainability” and “After the five-year bill period, the target goal is for ITP to be fully funded from other sources.” The bill also required ITP to provide quarterly financial updates on their fundraising progress, a requirement that has not been fulfilled until the last fiscal quarter.

Currently, nearly three years or roughly 60% of the allotted time into the strategic plan timeline, ITP has obtained approximately \$5 thousand, representing about 0.1% of their total monetary goal. With over half of their fundraising period depleted, the potential for ITP to reach their \$5 million is extremely bleak at best and most-likely an utter impossibility, particularly in light of the current national and state economic recessions. At the current rate, ITP would have to raise more than \$6,400 a day for the next 26 months in order to achieve its goal. Over the years, it has become increasingly apparent that many of the tasks and services provided by ITP are being or could be performed by other departments and organizations on campus. Last year and with the 2010-2011 allocation, ITP had 73 performances with a budget of \$219,230. At this rate, each performance, with an average length of one hour, has a cost of over \$3,000. 70LCB08 acknowledges the controversial and potentially undesired ramifications of funding ITP with its inclusion of Finance Board’s acknowledgement “that future Finance

¹ The original bill is dated 2010 (instead of 2011) but this is likely to be a typo.

Boards and Legislative Councils may not prioritize the appropriation of this money, and could easily cut the program from the student fee package.” This inclusion demonstrates that the bill’s sponsors had foresight into the questionable nature and undesirability of the student fee funding of the program.

Bill Summary

This bill repeals 70LCB08 and divorces CUSG from all fee obligations directly or indirectly related to Interactive Theatre Project, to the Student Organization Finance Office for the purpose of funding ITP, or to any other organization for the purpose of funding ITP or any immediate reincarnations of the program.

BE IT ENACTED by the Legislative Council of the University of Colorado Student Union, THAT:

Section 1: This bill repeals and dissolves 70LCB08.

Section 2: This bill relieves CUSG from any financial or monetary obligations and prevents any student fee dollars toward funding the Interactive Theatre Project, its affiliates, or any immediate reincarnations of the program.

Section 3: This bill forbids the allocation of any student fee dollars to Interactive Theatre Project during the next CUSG budget funding cycle. This bill does not affect funding already allocated for the current budgeting cycle.

Section 4: This bill takes effect upon final passage by Legislative Council and upon obtaining the signatures of the CUSG Legislative Council President and CUSG Executives.

Carly Robinson
Legislative Council President

William L. Taylor
Student Body President

Peter Swanson
V.P. of Internal Affairs

Allison Foley
V.P. of External Affairs

ANNEX B

**University of Colorado Student Government
Legislative Council**

February 17, 2011

74 LCB06- ITP Responsibility Act

Sponsored By:

Gregory Carlson	Arts and Sciences Senator
Thomas Benning	Engineering Senator
Tyler Goering	Representative
Rodrigo Gonzales	Representative
Danielle Green	Representative
Marc Herzberger	Business Senator
Sam John	Representative
Amy Johnson	Representative
Corey Parker	Arts and Sciences Senator
Gregory Kana	Engineering Senator
Will Taylor	Student Body President

Authored By:

Gregory Carlson	Arts and Sciences Senator
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Bill History

In April of 2008, under advisement by Causey Consulting, Interactive Theatre Project (ITP) completed a five-year strategic plan for growth and program development. At the conclusion of the advisement, it was understood that ITP must establish a direction for growth to ensure continued fulfillment of its mission. This strategic approach included an aggressive approach to fundraising, with a “realizable goal of operating under a budget of \$5 million.” At the time of the plan’s implementation, seed money for a fundraising position was guaranteed by Housing and Dining Services. The bill, 70LCB08, which obligated the Student Organization Funding Office (SOFO) to fund ITP for five years, stated that its purpose was to “continue support of ITP in the short term, during its transition toward self-sustainability” and “After the five-year bill period, the target goal is for ITP to be fully funded from other sources.” The bill also required ITP to provide quarterly financial updates on their fundraising progress, a requirement that has not been fulfilled until the last fiscal quarter.

Currently, nearly two years or roughly 40% after the completion of the five year strategic plan timeline, ITP has obtained approximately \$5 thousand, representing about 0.1% of their total monetary goal. With nearly half of their fundraising period depleted,

the potential for ITP to reach their \$5 million is extremely bleak at best and most-likely an utter impossibility, particularly in light of the current national and state economic recessions. At the current rate, ITP would have to raise more than about \$4,265 a day for the next 38 months in order to achieve its goal. Last year and with the 2010-2011 allocation, ITP had 73 performances with a budget of \$219,230. At this rate, each performance, with an average length of one hour, has a cost of over \$3,000. 70LCB08 acknowledges the controversial and potentially undesired ramifications of funding ITP with its inclusion of Finance Board's acknowledgement "that future Finance Boards and Legislative Councils may not prioritize the appropriation of this money, and could easily cut the program from the student fee package." This inclusion demonstrates that the bill's sponsors had foresight into the questionable nature and undesirability of the student fee funding of the program.

Bill Summary

This bill repeals 70LCB08 and divorces CUSG from all fee obligations directly or indirectly related to Interactive Theatre Project, to the Student Organization Finance Office for the purpose of funding ITP, or to any other organization for the purpose of funding ITP or any immediate reincarnations of the program for the next two years. This bill does not end the ITP program. Rather, it reduces the ITP budget by about 46%. ITP can void this bill by raising \$250,000 of non-student fee and non-tuition dollars by July 1st, 2011.

BE IT ENACTED by the Legislative Council of the University of Colorado Student Union, THAT:

Section 1: This bill repeals and dissolves 70LCB08.

Section 2: This bill relieves CUSG from any financial or monetary obligations and prevents any student fee dollars toward funding the Interactive Theatre Project its affiliates, or any reincarnations of the program that are formed over the next two years.

Section 3: This bill forbids the allocation of any student fee dollars to Interactive Theatre Project during the FY2011-2012 CUSG budget funding cycle. This bill does not affect funding already allocated for the current budgeting cycle.

Section 4: If ITP can raise \$100,000 as a permanent addition to their endowment by July 1st 2011, then sections 1 and 2 of this bill shall be considered void, and ITP will be eligible for student fee dollars in accordance with section 2 of 70LCB08, for FY2012-2013 and FY 2013-2014 and the 70LCB08 five year plan will be extended by one year to

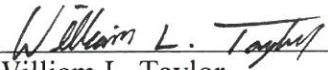
FY 2014-2015. ITP will utilize \$101,061 of the endowment to cover FY2011-2012. ITP will not be able to recoup student fees for FY2011-2012. None of the \$100,000 dollars may come from SOR, from student fees or from tuition dollars.

Section 5: This bill takes effect upon final passage by Legislative Council and upon obtaining the signatures of the CUSG Legislative Council President and CUSG Executives.

Vote Count

02/17/2011	Passed on 1st reading	13-1-2
02/24/2011	Amended to \$100,000	12-0-5
02/24/2011	Failed to amend to strike "tuition dollars"	5-9-3
02/24/2011	Passed on 2nd reading	12-4-1


 Carly Robinson
 Legislative Council President


 William L. Taylor
 Student Body President

Peter Swanson
 V.P. of Internal Affairs

declined signature - MP

Allison Foley
 V.P. of External Affairs

declined signature - MP

ANNEX C

January 12, 2011

To: T.N.

From: S.S.

RE: Just Another Party survey data analysis

Overview

After reviewing the data from the Just Another Party (JAP) survey responses, it appears that the majority of respondents found the performance to be effective in deepening their awareness of issues around gender violence and sexual assault; useful in representing various compromising situations in which they might find themselves as college students; and informative insofar as many respondents reported feeling better equipped to handle such situations should they arise. In the sections that follow, I will provide a brief synopsis of the findings for each survey item to provide further evidence for this claim.

Q75. What was the purpose of the performance of JAP? The most frequently coded response was “Preparation for college” (accounts for 86% of responses). The purpose or message that respondents are reporting having gleaned is overwhelmingly about the new realities they will face as college students at CU Boulder. They report understanding that this new reality will likely involve social situations (e.g., parties) where alcohol is in abundance and they will be faced with making serious choices regarding their safety as well as the safety of their friends and peers. Respondents reported that the performance allowed them to see how situations might unfold: how quickly parties or seemingly benign situations can turn “sticky” or even dangerous, and how they will be confronted with a need to think and act quickly. Many respondents reported that the performance helped open their eyes to alternative ways to act or react—how to act in a safe, responsible way. Respondents reported that the performance stressed the importance of sticking with their friends, and with choosing friends that will “have my back” so to speak, and of making plans ahead of time and sticking to them. While some respondents (< 5%) reported that the performance’s purpose was to scare them away or deter them from alcohol and sex, the overwhelming majority of responses reported understanding that the performance was attempting to demonstrate a real-life college scenario, the consequences that are involved with excessive drinking, and that it is ultimately the students’ choice to act—to “intervene,” as many respondents wrote—responsibly and to look out for their own well-being as well as the well-being of their friends.

Some respondents provided critiques or suggestions in this survey item. Examples are: 1) performance was too long/boring/students didn’t take it seriously enough (one respondent suggested the performance was not taken seriously enough because it was at the end of the day and students were more likely to start goofing off); and 2) performance began to feel repetitive as students generated the interventions.

Q76. What are the primary issues brought up in this performance? Of the 812 responses, the following “issues” were cited most frequently:

- Alcohol, drinking, alcohol abuse (e.g., binge drinking) appeared in 69% of responses
- Rape appeared in 28% of responses, sex/hooking up in 18%
- Making decisions, choices, or intervening appeared in 22% of responses
- Friends, relationships appeared in 20% of responses

Noteworthy: a few respondents (granted, only a percent or so, maybe 10-15 individuals) might have misinterpreted the question. For instance, one respondent described how there was too much “victim blaming” going on in the audience; another cited too many people in the room when the performance was going on. This might be an area for future attention.

Q77. Prior to this performance, what was your level of awareness of gender violence and sexual assault as a community concern? 76% of respondents self-identified as very/moderately¹ aware of gender violence and sexual assault as a community concern prior to JAP.

Q78. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - Prior to this performance, ending gender violence and sexual assault was very important to me. Only 3% of respondents strongly/disagreed² with this statement, suggesting that the seriousness of the issue of ending gender violence and sexual assault resonated with respondents prior to attending JAP. Further evidence to support above claim: 73% strongly/agreed with this statement. Interesting is that 24% of respondents chose neutral to respond to this item. Given the responses to Q77, this seems *not* to be because of lack of awareness of gender violence/sexual assault as community concerns prior to attending the performance. Perhaps the inclusion of the word “very” in this survey item accounts for this. For those respondents who considered ending gender violence a serious issue, but perhaps not an issue that was “very important” to them prior to the performance, neutral seems an appropriate response.

Q79. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - Prior to this performance, I would discuss gender violence and sexual assault with my friends. Responses here follow the normal curve. The category with the most respondents (32.5%) is neutral, 25% responded agree, 21% responded disagree.

In the remaining items, a pattern began to emerge, and the distribution remained fairly consistent across items: 50-66% respondents found the performance useful in helping them prepare for college life and for their role in preventing future gender violence/sexual assault. About 25-30% respondents replied neutral to these questions, leaving unclear the reasons why they felt compelled not to agree or disagree. A small percentage ranging from 10-12% found the performance not useful or did not take it seriously.

¹ Read as 76% of respondents reported being very aware or moderately aware of these issues prior to the performance.

² Read as 3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Q80. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This session at Orientation is not useful as a way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important issues for the campus community. 59% of respondents answered strongly/disagree to this statement, suggesting that the majority of participants found value in this session at Orientation. This confirms the findings in Q75, which suggested that the vast majority of participants were able to discern a positive message conveyed or lesson to be learned from the performance. The responses in Q75 show that participants interpreted the performance as bringing awareness to the compromising situations they may soon find themselves in as college students with active social lives. Because 86% of respondents noted this in their answers to Q75, in addition to speaking to the performance's effectiveness in showing them alternative ways to handle sticky situation and/or the importance of intervening and looking out for friends, it seems the responses here further confirm that the performance was a useful way to introduce these issues to the campus community. About 15% of respondents answered strongly/agree here. In future distributions of this survey, it might be helpful to ask respondents who answered "agree" or "strongly agree" to explain why or to suggest a way to make the session more useful.

Q81. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, prevention of sexual assault and gender violence are more important to me. 51% responded strongly/agreed to this question, which might be interpreted as lower than expected. Keeping in mind, though, that 73% strongly/agreed that ending gender violence was "very important to me" prior to coming to the performance, it might have been hard to move this group forward. In other words, if they already found gender violence an important issue, they might have been less likely to agree with this statement than someone who was neutral towards the issue prior to the performance. 12% of respondents strongly/disagreed with this statement.

Q82. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, I feel more personally responsible to end gender violence and sexual assault. 54% responded strongly/agree with this statement. These findings seem to match well with responses to Q75, as many responses about the purpose of JAP spoke to the importance of intervening, not being a bystander, looking out for each other, etc. Again, this item illustrates the pattern, as there's a small percentage (11%) of respondents who strongly/disagreed with this statement.

Q83. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - As a result of attending this ITP performance, I feel less responsibility to prevent gender violence at a party I am attending. 17% of respondents strongly/agreed with this statement. This seems to fit the emerging pattern, suggesting that roughly between 10-15% of participants either did not take the performance seriously or did not care for the message it intended to convey. On the flip side, 66% of respondents strongly/disagreed with this statement, which is encouraging!

Q84. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, I gained new skills on how to address gender violence and

sexual assault. 63% of respondents strongly/agreed with this statement; 27.5% responded with neutral.

Q85. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This performance and discussion has helped in my preparation for campus life. 53% of respondents strongly/agreed with this statement; 27.45% responded with neutral. 12% strongly/disagreed. Pattern confirmed.

Q86. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance, my personal responsibility towards ending gender violence and sexual assault has been lessened. 11% of respondents strongly/agreed with this statement; 64% strongly/disagreed. Pattern confirmed.

Q87. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - After this performance and discussion, I will talk to others in the CU community about some of the issues raised here. 31% strongly/agreed with this statement, suggesting that the performance was quite effective for about a third of the participants. 51% of respondents replied neutral here, which suggests that they are on the fence so to speak. Perhaps with more opportunities to engage in discussions around gender violence they might become more confident to speak out about this issue.

Q88. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - This session at Orientation is a good way to introduce gender violence and sexual assault as important issues for the campus community. 66% responded strongly/agree here. 26% neutral, and only 7% strongly/disagreed with this statement. These results closely match what was reported in Q80 (similar question), though the group that disagreed that the performance was a useful or effective way to introduce these issues to the campus community decreased by about 7.5%.

Q89. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: - As a result of attending this ITP performance, I feel a greater responsibility to prevent gender violence at a party I am attending. 65% responded strongly/agree here. 27% neutral. 8% strongly/disagree. This question most closely resembles Q82 and the distribution of responses is similar.

ANNEX D

Year	1. Class (Name and Course number) OR Organization and Event	2. What is your position at CU?	Other	3. Do you identify as:	4. What racial and/or ethnic group(s) are you a member of?
2014	Volunteer Resource Center	Other	Intern	Female	White/Caucasian
2014	University Libraries	Other	Faculty and Staff	Other/unknown	Other/Unknown
2014	Diversity Summit 2014 performance	Staff		Other/unknown	African-American
2015	Engineering	Staff		Female	Latino
2015	Writing and Rhetoric	Faculty		Male	White/Caucasian
2015	Writing and Rhetoric	Faculty		Male	White/Caucasian
2015	Linguistics	Faculty		Female	Latino
2015	Theatre	Graduate Student		Female	Other/Unknown
2015	Cultural Events Board	Other	Undergraduate Student	Female	Latino
2015	Theatre	Faculty		Male	White/Caucasian
2015	Education	Faculty		Female	White/Caucasian
2015	Sociology	Graduate Student		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	Sociology	Graduate Student		Female	Other/Unknown
2014	Women's Resource Center	Staff		Female	Asian American
2014	McNeill Academic Program SASC	Staff		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	McNeill Academic Program SASC	Staff		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	McNeill Academic Program SASC	Staff		Female	Native American
2014	McNeill Academic Program SASC	Staff		Female	African-American
2014	GTPI	Faculty		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	Sociology	Faculty		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	IT	Staff		Male	White/Caucasian
2014	Sociology	Graduate Student		Female	White/Caucasian
2014	Human Resources	Staff		Female	Latino
2014	GTPI	Faculty		Female	White/Caucasian
2013	School of Education	Graduate Student		Female	White/Caucasian
2013	Sociology	Graduate Student		Female	White/Caucasian

2013 Geological Sciences

Faculty

Male

Other/Unknown

2013 Sociology

Graduate Student

Female

Caucasian

5. Has ITP worked with you or your class/organization before?	6. What topic or social issues did the performance address?	7. Please evaluate the participation level of audience members compared to previous	8. Do you feel the audience members engaged with issues on a deeper level than usual?	9. Did ITP support the objectives for your class or event?
Yes, this semester	Poverty and Class	More participation than usual	Engaged at the same level	Yes
No	Class/Socioeconomic Status, Disability, In/a		Unsure	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Race, Gender/Sexual Orientation	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Race, Class/Socioeconomic Status	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Gender/Sexual Orientation	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Gender/Sexual Orientation	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Race, Language/accents discrimination	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Class/Socioeconomic Status	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Race	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Race	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Race	More participation than usual	Engaged at the same level	Yes
No	Double consciousness	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Victim Blaming/Sexism, Ableist Slurs	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Academic Success and Race	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	How it feels to be on a predominantly w	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester		Less participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Barriers to student success, experiences	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Office Hours	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Racism, White privilege, and race relatio	Same level of participation	Unsure	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Racial Justice	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Gendered Violence	Less participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Race relations in an office environment th	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
Yes, previous semester	Teaching inclusively	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
No	Sexual assault. Scene included two male	Same level of participation	No	No
No	Racism	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes

Yes, previous semester	Fracking	More participation than usual	Engaged more deeply	Yes
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Yes, previous semester	Race/Ethnicity – and being an ally	Same level of participation	Engaged more deeply	Yes
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10. Would you request another ITP visit?	11. We welcome any feedback you may have, positive or constructive, that may help us to improve our program.
Yes	Thank you for your amazing performance. As a staff, we learned so much. We look forward to working with ITP in the future!
	<p>Thank you so much, ITP! Rebecca, Trent, Roxy and Bill put on a stellar performance that exactly and gracefully met the task force's goal of creating a safe and inclusive space from which to begin talking about our climate issues.</p> <p>Regarding my responses on this survey--I'm happy to clarify or discuss further any of these items. For example, #8, there is no "than usual" situation from which to base a comparison. The task force was (ecstatically) surprised by the level of participation and engagement of the attendees. However, something like this has never been done before so I can't rate this level of participation.</p> <p>I will be away on leave until November 17th. I'm happy to meet with ITP to talk about #11 and/or any other questions you may have.</p> <p>Thank you again and endlessly!</p> <p>Best, [REDACTED]</p>
Yes	
	<p>Given the relatively short turn-around time that it took ITP to respond and prepare a presentation that was so subject appropriate and relevant to the overall theme of the Summit, I feel that the university would be well-served if there were even more opportunities for them to present. The facilitated dialogue was extremely important and valuable for the attendees. The conversation was rich and beneficial for all who participated. Well done!</p>
Yes	Thank you so much! This exceeded our expectations and helped to start a conversation that we hope to continue.
	<p>As I discussed with Rebecca afterward, this was perhaps the most successful ITP performance I have witnessed. The actors were outstanding, all three. The intensity and vulnerability brought my (normally somewhat reticent) class to life -- they participated far more than usual. This was also due to Rebecca's energetic and intuitive facilitating -- which, again, was in top form.</p>
Yes	Thank you, all! Wish we could do this every week, in every class.
Yes	Race relations in an office environment through the interaction of a staff member and manager.
	<p>ITP deals with topics and starts conversations that are uncomfortable yet necessary. Through art, ITP addresses issues in a social forum which could, otherwise, be seen as "inappropriate". In this particular class, it is sad to see the lack of interest from the majority of the students. They go to class and do the bare minimum to achieve the highest grade possible. When ITP came to this class, the students were simply asked to try. This challenge allowed students who rarely participate or engage in conversation to voice their opinions, in a forum where no question or answer are right or wrong. ITP challenged the students and the results were strongly suggestive of an audience who has opinions, concerns, and questions, but no medium to address them. Thank you ITP for brilliantly ask viewers to become active participants in an otherwise unheard dialogue.</p>
Yes	
	<p>[REDACTED] are a great facilitator! Everyone in the group really enjoyed all the games and activities. I liked that you waived in our board goals into the games.</p>
Yes	Thank you so much for your help!
Yes	I hope we get to work together again in the future.
Yes	Thank you for a fantastic event. My students really appreciated having a demonstration of the work of Boal presented in class.
Yes	It was an awesome evening... put out class into a deeper connected space. Thank you.
	<p>Overwhelmingly positive remarks. They thought the actors were skilled, felt it was interactive, liked the topics, and enjoyed learning what their peers would do in these situations. One person suggests adding one additional scenario so that it flows at a quicker speed. One person suggests trying to use a less gendered term than the word "guys" when talking to audience. We will definitely request another performance. Thank you.</p>
Yes	
Yes	
Yes	
	<p>It was hard to hear at times, but I know the acoustics can be difficult</p> <p>We appreciate your willingness to sit with our planning committee and listen to our needs. It was great to see the issues raised in this meeting addressed during the performance. The actors seemed enthusiastic and passionate about ITP and interacting with students in our program. Discussion facilitation was dynamic.</p>
Yes	
Yes	Your group continues to get better and better. Glad to have you as a resource on campus! Thanks!
	<p>After the performance, a student and I spent additional time discussing via e-mail his comments in class. He does not always speak up in class on an individual level (although he typically participates well in group work), so the performance was a great way to have him open up and talk on an individual level. Additionally, it sparked a discussion in the following class about microaggressions and differences between when people of color are frustrated/angry with whites versus when whites are frustrated/angry with people of color. Overall, I thought that the class really enjoyed the presentation. The student actors were great and the facilitators did a great job of getting the class involved in the discussion.</p>
Yes	
	<p>Thank you so much for the consistent communication with me. At times I had lots of information to share and I needed responses. The entire ITP team gave me replies quickly and promptly.</p>
Yes	
	<p>We did continue to discuss the ITP performance in the following weeks. They were quiet on that particular day since it's a tough topic, and it's usual for my students to be more silent than usual when introducing it. ITP always helps to break the ice though with these tough topics. I, as always, appreciate this organization on our campus -- thank you!</p>
Yes	
Yes	Thank you very much for providing our participants with this experience. It was a great discussion and very impactful. We are excited to continue our partnership with ITP again in the future!
	<p>This training lasted for one week so I have not seen the students again, thus the two questions above do not apply. Thanks for the great work you do!</p>
Yes	
	<p>I have appreciated working with ITP to arrange this performance and was disappointed by both the way the issue of sexual assault was taken up in the skit and afterwards in facilitation. I would very much like to have an opportunity to meet with members of ITP to discuss this, as I am concerned that when this skit is done in other classes it may yield similar results.</p>
No	
Yes	

Yes

Overall, I felt the performance was great. The students were all (or nearly all) engaged. This is definitely a highlight of the semester. It is hard as a natural sciences intro class to stimulate a class-wide discussion, but the ITP event achieved this. My only constructive criticism would be this: the audience might have been helped if the plan for the 50-minute period was described ahead of time. 1) performance (10 minutes), 2) actors stay in character, interact with class (15 minutes), 3) class discussion, facilitated by ITP staff. The reason why this might have helped is this – I think some of the students were confused (at least for a couple of minutes) during the transition from 1) to 2), and maybe again what was expected of them as we moved to 3).

Yes

I, of course, love ITP. The feedback that I would give is based off of the interaction after the performance. The one guy in the class who was a total asshole (off the record) – I wonder if that could have been stopped during the performance (the q&a). It felt abusive to the one actress, and to the space overall – and I just wonder if something could have been done to protect her and the space. Thank you so much, as always.

ANNEX E

Project Title:

Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative at the University of Colorado Boulder: Promoting Dialogue, Diversity, and Inclusive Excellence.

Principal Investigator and Project Contact:

Bud Coleman, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Theatre & Dance, Roe Green Professor of Theatre, 261 UCB, 303-492-5809, bud.coleman@colorado.edu.

Project Collaborators:

- **Rebecca Brown Adelman, M.A** [rebecca@affinityartsconsulting.com]
- **Trent Norman, M.S.** [trent@affinityartsconsulting.com]
- **Christina Sue, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, UCB Department of Sociology [Christina.Sue@colorado.edu]
- **A Queer Endeavor (Bethy Leonardi, Ph.D.**, Research Associate, UCB School of Education), [Bethy.Leonardi@colorado.edu]
- **Ligia Batista**, Graduate student, UCB Department of Theatre & Dance; Clinical Research Coordinator, Neuroscience Institute [ligia.batista@colorado.edu]

200 Word Abstract:

Theatre-based techniques are widely used on college campuses to foster dialogue. Towards this end, we support CU's goal of Inclusive Excellence as a set of responses to the recent Campus Climate Surveys, where 10% of graduate students report "experiencing some form of harassment" and "one-quarter of [undergraduates] do not feel a sense of belonging or of being welcome on campus [especially] within specific racial and ethnic groups." As such, the Department of Theatre & Dance proposes the creation of an empirically-driven and practice-based ensemble that uses applied theatre to engage community in dialogues about difficult yet necessary social issues: the Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative (TCEI). This initiative will foster knowledge by investigating through surveys and interviews its benefits for the ensemble members as well as for audience participants. Ultimately, this interdisciplinary project will be incorporated into our Theatre BA, BAMA, MA, and Ph.D. programs and become a self-supporting group. By bringing applied theatre for community participation back to CU, TCEI aims to understand the humanity behind one's choices and find ways through which – celebrating difference – people can live, study, and interactive with one another in a positive, constructive manner.

The Department of Theatre & Dance supports the goal of Inclusive Excellence as a set of responses to the recent Campus Climate Surveys. We are applying for this SEED Grant to **propose the creation** of an empirically-driven and practice-based ensemble: **the Theatre and Community Engagement Initiative (TCEI)**. The **aims** of this initiative are multifold: **(1)** to use applied theatre to engage our on-campus and off-campus communities in difficult (yet necessary) dialogues about social issues (such as race, gender, class, or sexuality), **(2)** to foster knowledge by investigating the program benefits for participants and audience members, and **(3)** to be part of an expanding academic field, by incorporating the study and research of Applied Theatre into the BA and MA/PhD tracks in the Department, as part of our long-term vision.

The **significance** of this proposal resides in its contribution towards the University's paramount efforts **to be inclusive of different perspectives and identities**. Through this project, we wish to implement educational theories on the need to integrate interpersonal dialogue in campus groups to investigate "commonalities and differences in group identities and experiences, working constructively with intergroup conflicts, and building collective identities as socially just people" (Gurin and Nagda, 2006). We believe we can do so creatively, using interactive and applied theatre methods (Prentki and Preston, 2010:128-129). This exchange of experience, building and **understanding of identity** is at the core of TCEI.

According to its very definition, applied theatre is **inclusive and accessible** to participants, making TCEI a strong option to further the University's mission regarding "diversity, equity and inclusive excellence" (University of Colorado, 2016). Applied theatre is "taken out of the conventional mainstream theatre house into various settings in communities where *many members have no real experience in theatre form*. The theatre becomes a medium for action, for reflection but, most important, for transformation" (Prentki and Preston, 2010:14). As such, this work has the power to offer a dynamic dialogue and, as Simpson and Brown Adelman argue, "a space in which the unreflective, continual, day-to-day performance of identity can be challenged" safely (2013). By inviting students, staff, faculty, and community members of various identities to engage in this program – either as audience or ensemble members – we ask them to meet others in their differences and vulnerability.

Discussing social issues and understanding the other in one's difference can sometimes be associated with a "left-wing [and] radical" agenda (Prentki and Preston, 2010:11). Indeed, we acknowledge that outside its field, applied theatre holds a reputation of defending a liberal agenda. Nevertheless, *any* theatre methodology may be servicing *any* ideology, be it left- or right-wing. In light of that, **we believe in the mission of TCEI**, one that is devoid of a political agenda: to understand the humanity behind choices and actions community members hold, as well as to promote constructive dialogues that support a multitude of perspectives and find ways through which, *within difference*, people can live, study, and interact with one another (Rohd, 1998).

Inherent to this project is the creation of a cohesive group that works as a microcosm of the larger community: an ensemble. As theatre scholar Jonathan Neelands poses, "the commitment to the idea of the ensemble, *rather than the individual* [. . .] corresponds to the idea of social, dialogical and equal engagement in a processual [sic] public sphere" (2007). While the ensemble builds bridges between different identities as a way to promote understanding, its inherent collaborative

structure becomes evident in **community dialogue**. Ensemble building, steeped in academic rigor and practice, is a key aspect of this program – fifteen to twenty ensemble members will work together every semester as part of a program that, through the years, will allow a rotating experience for students.

We propose a cyclical training methodology that is two-tiered. In the Fall of 2016, we will launch the inaugural class for the purposes of initial training of the ensemble – we will call this class a Level 1 TCEI class. Students can register for the class as per regular registration standards. Simultaneously, part of the ensemble will be comprised of Level 2 students – those who have taken our department class on Theatre for Social Justice or demonstrate valid, previous experience in Applied/Interactive Theatre. In the Spring of 2017 (and subsequent semesters) a similar model will ensue: new students can be trained as Level 1 students for the ensemble, and previous Level 1 students will then have the opportunity to audition as Level 2. This way, the ensemble will continuously work with an increasing number of students and therefore reach more members of our campus. Concomitantly, we will develop important skills that are necessary for the scholarly and practice-based knowledge in the field. In the summer, we propose to run three weeklong workshops that offer training on TCEI's methodology; these may be attended by any member of the community and will generate income for the program as well as facilitators and students working in it. As such, in addition to the academic benefits of this model, we hope to train professionals for future employment as well as grow an alumni-student mentorship network that fosters collaboration beyond students' on-campus experience. Lastly, it is noteworthy to highlight that students may take this class regardless of their program of studies, personal and academic backgrounds. As a result, we hope to promote a dialogue across disciplines both within and outside the ensemble.

Within the ensemble, members and facilitators will collectively create and devise scripts to be presented in public and classroom settings. This devising process includes character building, improvisation, investigation of social issues, scholarly research, and skill development through facilitation. Peer interaction within the ensemble will also work as a symbiotic, supportive relationship.

The benefits of the program, however, are not limited to the ensemble: performance becomes a participatory process wherein theatre is *for*, *with*, and *by* the community (Prentki and Preston, 2010:10). In addition to regular performances in classroom settings, we intend to have **four public performances per semester**, each addressing a different theme. On- and off-campus community members will be invited to attend the productions and a donation will be suggested, therefore allowing those from less affluent backgrounds to also engage in the conversation. While working with the audience, discussion, dissection of social dialogue, and facilitation become *participatory* and *inclusive*. **After the performance**, the audience has the opportunity to ask characters questions about their actions, statements, and attitudes; those questions, in turn, will lead to a facilitated discussion (Boal, 1979). The innovative methodology of the *empty chair* is also at the epicenter of this work: audience members become participants in a given scene, thus initiating a conversation around the different roles a bystander may acquire in a given social context (Holmwood, 2014). The novel methodology and the benefits of TCEI to our campus will place us in the vanguard of applied performance practice and community dialogue.

Moreover, this program will become a stepping-stone to – and an inherent part of – **a professional track for undergraduate and graduate students**. This year alone, 70% of the Ph.D. applicants to our department came from applied performance backgrounds. As such, the development of TCEI will not only continue the conversation on social issues but also **provide the infrastructure and resources** our community needs to expand and deepen the understanding of applied performance, social justice, and facilitation in conjunction with a rigorous scholarship. Ultimately, our goal is to create a competitive and innovative program at the national level.

The **uniqueness** of this program also lies in its potential to model change on other college campuses as an example of **practice-based research** (Leavy, 2015). College campuses using interactive theatre – for example, the SEEDS at the University of Miami, the CRTL at the University of Michigan, or the Cornell Interactive Theatre Ensemble – have a particular focus on faculty and staff trainings, and/or generally work only on a project basis. A closer model to what we propose to offer exists in the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS); however, the CIIS program is geared towards Drama Therapy graduate students, and operates on a project-only, volunteer basis. Conversely, our program aims to be groundbreaking in that it would financially remunerate the ensemble members as applied theatre professionals, as a practical way to address inclusion, diversity, and excellence.

According to the last CU-Boulder National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), from the pool of first-year student respondents, 23% worked part-time on campus and 25% worked part-time off campus; from the pool of senior student respondents, 36% worked part-time on campus whereas 47% worked part-time off-campus. Concomitantly, research suggests that student financial problems are an obstacle to finishing college education, particularly for those from disadvantaged social groups (Yorke and Thomas, 2003). Students seek out part-time employment, which in turn may “be a contributory factor in early withdrawal. In most of the institutional discussions, finance and related issues were raised as a significant barrier to retention” (Callender and Kemp, 2000). Creating a paid position that engages students in social change is a milestone **to increasing retention** and maintaining student part-time employment **on** campus. In addition, students will be involved in changing their own community, therefore demonstrating a strong commitment to further to the University’s mission.

In 1999, Brown Adelman and Norman created the Interactive Theatre Project (ITP), which operated until 2015 and was housed in Student Affairs. The program provided a valuable service but given that it was not associated with the Department of Theatre & Dance, it was difficult to find a sustainable place for it. Our department strongly supports Brown Adelman and Norman’s expertise and hopes to offer the home and infrastructure, as well as the academic rigor, this vital program requires. The success of ITP was grasped by a survey that also informs our decision to support this endeavor. 96.6% of respondents asserted that it was true or very true (rate of 4 or 5 in a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is very true) that the program enhanced their academic development. In addition, 93% of the respondents affirmed to have been given a sense of belonging at the University through their involvement with the program. Lastly, 96.6% of the respondents stated that working with the theatre ensemble improved their self-confidence (ITP, unpublished data). These values suggest that our model of operation will address and investigate how best to engage the community in a conversation

that promotes inclusion and cooperation, while learning more about individuals' academic development, sense of belonging, and self-confidence.

Measurable outcomes, **both qualitative and quantitative**, will comprise the **research methodology** to evaluate the success of TCEI. We will implement a modified survey investigating self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965), happiness (Hills and Argyle, 2002), interpersonal reactivity (Davis, 1980), academic success and student experiences (Pace and Kuh, 1998). Results to the survey will be compared before, during, and after ensemble members join the group. In addition, every month all ensemble members will be given a semi-structured interview (adapted from Cody, 2012) to assess personal responses to the program. We will also develop a survey to be distributed among audience members to evaluate the impact performances had on them. All data will be collected and analyzed by a research assistant (upon IRB acceptance) and later compiled into data to be shared. This thorough process, involving practice and research will place our program and the University at the forefront of academic innovation in the field.

Lastly, we present a **summarized timeline** for this program: **(1)** conception and development of the project (January 2016 – June 2016), **(2)** recruitment of a research assistant for the program (May – June 2016), **(3) class** enrolment, ensemble creation, and community outreach (August – September 2016), **(4)** data collection and interviews (September 2016 – April/May 2017), **(5)** data analysis (June – August 2017), **(6)** public performances (4 per semester), **(7)** first edition of summer courses for additional revenue (June – August 2017), and **(8)** presentation and publication of results to the CU community and the academic community.

The initial one-year period will shed light on the benefits of the program and its potential to benefit our campus at large, the University's mission, and the institution's goal to foster diversity and inclusive excellence. Our goal is to continue this open conversation to build community. We truly believe our Department will be suitable and sustainable home for TCEI – an exciting project that aims to promote understanding and academic rigor, and build bridges among varied identities in our community.

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Data Management Plan

Generated Data

This project is designed primarily as both an academic endeavor and a research project. We aim to provide a foundation for future research studies investigating audience participation and ensemble development. The research plan will be submitted for review, as appropriate, to the IRB at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Data will consist of survey responses from ensemble and audience members, and notes from semi-structured interviews. Surveys will be adapted from the following:

- Coopersmith (1967) and Rosenberg (1965) adapted self-esteem survey;
- Hills and Argyle's (2002) happiness survey;
- Davis' (1980) interpersonal reactivity survey;
- Pace and Kuh's (1998) academic success and student experiences.

Semi-structured interviews will include, but are not limited to, the following, initial set of questions (adapted from Cody, 2012):

- What were your expectations of college prior to arrival? How do your expectations compare to now?
- What is CU-Boulder social culture to you?
- Tell me a story of a true friendship at CU-Boulder.
- Tell me about a time when you did not feel heard at CU-Boulder.
- Do you ever feel alone at CU-Boulder?
- What is it like to be you on campus and in the Boulder community?
- If you could change anything about your experience here, what would it be?
- If you could say one thing that all students would hear, what would it be?

Audience surveys will be printed and handed out to the audience on the day of public performances. We will also generate an electronic survey and link it to a QR code to be accessed by those who have a smart phone and would like to use their device instead of the paper-based survey. Questions will include:

- On a scale of 0 to 5 (where 5 is very well/very much) please rate:
- Execution of the performance;

- Quality of the performance;
- Discussion and facilitation after the performance;
- Your level of comfort;
- The presence of different perspectives in the scene presented;
- The presence of different identities in the scene presented;
- The significance of this performance to our community.
- What was most impactful in this event – both positively and negatively?
- What would make this event a better experience?
- Did you learn new information today? If so, what did you learn?
- How do you identify?
- Are you a member of the CU-Boulder campus?

Survey questions will be created *de novo* via CU-Boulder Qualtrics software and semi-structured interview notes will be transcribed into standard Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel). Audience survey responses will be created using Microsoft Office (Word) or Cu-Boulder Qualtrics. For the purpose of wider, long-term access, primary documents will be converted at regular intervals into pdf documents. Only the PI and the research assistant of this study will have access to responses.

Data Management

Access and Sharing: The educational and research data resulting from this project will be made available for use by both educators and researchers after the first year of the program. Data will be reviewed every academic year.

Format: Submission: Primary data will all be created *de novo* via CU-Boulder Qualtrics or transcribed into standard Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) files. **Storage and Access:** Files will be stored and available both in original format and as pdf documents in a safe file in the Theatre Department or via password-protect Qualtrics software. In the case of answers to open-ended questions, data will be stored both in pdf and tab-delimited formats for the purpose of subsequent statistical analyses.

Ethics and Privacy: An informed consent process will include language to ensure that all participants understand that these data are being generated for the purpose of sharing with the research community. Data from this project are unlikely to pose a risk for disclosure; however, to further protect participants, data will be de-identified as per HIPPA standards.

Intellectual Property Rights: During the conduct of this project, all ownership rights rest with the institution (University of Colorado Boulder). The sharing of research results will be consistent with the University of Colorado Boulder policies governing

intellectual property, copyright and the dissemination of research products. On completion of the first year of the project, the intention is that all data and materials should be freely available for use by the research community.

Storage and Backup: To ensure ongoing and long-term security of the data generated by this project, a complete copy of materials will be generated and stored independently on primary and backup sources for both the PI and the research assistant (as data are generated).

Archiving and Preservation: On completion of the project, the PI and collaborators will identify which project materials are of probable long-term interest for archiving and preservation. Materials will be anonymized or de-identified as appropriate, converted to searchable pdf document format, stored locally on University of Colorado Boulder computers, copied and distributed to whom appropriate.

Budget Breakdown I: **Requested Amount**

TERM	ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Operational budgets - public rental venue, travel costs, advertising	\$4,000.00
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Salaries (at \$11/hr, based on 3hr/w, for 36 weeks/1 academic year; includes benefit rate of 1.1%)	\$14,012.46*
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Salaries (facilitators, based on 3-credit teaching, for 36 weeks)	\$22,000.00
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Total Estimated	\$40,012.46
FALL '17	Roll-over costs to cover partial Fall '17 expenses	\$9,987.54
FALL '16 – FALL '17	Total Estimated	\$50,000.00

Budget Breakdown II: **Amount Invested by Department of Theatre & Dance**

TERM	ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Salaries (facilitators-instructors, director remuneration, based on 3-credit teaching)	\$9,000.00
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Research Assistantship THDN RA, 10 hrs/week	\$8,954.00
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Total Estimated	\$17,954.00

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Budget Breakdown III: **Auxiliary Revenue**

TERM	ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
SUMMER '17	Estimated gross revenue from summer workshops (based on 3 workshops, min 10 people per workshop, \$600/workshop as per comparative pricing of similar workshops in the U.S.)	\$18,000.00
FALL '16/SPRING '17	Estimated gross revenue from public performances (based on \$10 suggested donation, 4 performances per semester, 50 attendees/performance)	\$4,000.00
FALL '16 – SUMMER '17	Total Estimated	\$22,000.00

Budget Justification

- **Ensemble Members**

- Research shows that retention rates in college students are positively correlated with holding a part-time job on campus (Astin, 1999). By being engaged in meaningful work on campus, students become more active and involved in their immediate community. Sense of involvement and sense of belonging are of particular importance for minority students (Hurtado and Carter, 1997). In our campus, as mentioned above, 23% of first year student 2013 NSSE respondents worked part-time on campus and 25% worked off campus; from the pool of senior student respondents, 36% worked part-time on campus whereas 47% worked off-campus. As per Austin's research, holding a part-time job on campus, particularly one centered on engaging directly with the campus community to address difficult issues, may increase student success, financial stability, and sense of belonging. Our salary estimate is based on a 2hour/ensemble per week, and an additional estimate of one hour per week for additional on-campus performances.

- *The value of the estimated salaries has been over-estimated for 15 performers. This number is expected to be, as the years progress, balanced between students joining the ensemble for credit and those joining the ensemble as professional, compensated members.

- **Research Assistant**

- The Research Assistant in this project will be responsible for (1) contacting ensemble members once a month for semi-structured interviews, (2) administer surveys, gather, and analyze data before students begin their work in the ensemble, (3) administer surveys, gather, and analyze data after the first semester students work in the ensemble, (4) administer surveys, gather, and analyze data after the second semester students work in the ensemble, (5) compile findings and present them to Coleman, and the program facilitators. The Research Assistant will be given a monthly stipend through the Department.

- **Operational Budget**

- The Operational Budget pertains to the allocation of funds to remunerate the facilitators of the program. As defended by Saypol (2011), an effective applied theatre model engages different identities and voices; as such, co-facilitation is preferred. Consistent with the current literature, we advocate for a program that is co-facilitated and whose facilitators hold different identities. The Operational Budget will cover the planning, implementation, and facilitation of the group, on an average of ten hours per week, including script devising and rehearsal. Because co-facilitation aims to be “non-hierarchical, collaborative, and empowering” it also serves as an ideal model of interpersonal relationship and communication for the ensemble members (Clifford and Hermann, 1999).

- **Note on Additional Revenue**

- This project aims to generate long-term, self-sufficient revenue through a business model including (1) public performances that generate ticket prices per seat and donations, (2) a summer school wherein this theatre project offers week-long workshops on facilitation and applied theatre methodology for those interested in the scholarship of our work, (3) fundraising and grant application efforts, namely through

the William T. Grant Foundation, Surdna Foundation *Artists Engaging in Social Change*, CU Performers Without Borders, Cultural Events Board, Daniels Fund Colorado Chapter, and UGGS. Lastly, in the long run, we would also consider hosting a national applied theatre conference at the University of Colorado Boulder that, if successful, could prove to be a viable source of profit as well.

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