I've Never Seen a Map Depict a Life: Actualizing the Intimacy Inherent to Therapeutic Planning

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This study is a rooted plunge into the work of Juno, and their community-based theater; through which they have created, cultivated, and shaped performative community dialogues. The implications of their work, which includes the recognition of pain, trauma, and love, helps to sensitize, personalize, and develop Therapeutic Planning's current theorizations. The central argument is that such a cultivated space of dialogue is simultaneously an action and intervention, which thus provides generative opportunity for co-produced, multi-dimensional cultural change on a deeply personal and intimate level. A central premise to this work is that urban planning is a cultural praxis, not a professional one. Juno's story is herein captured, after an ethnographic and embodied dive into their theater's performance cycle. The engaged performative research has intensified, and attempted at focalizing, the dialogic and relational components of Therapeutic Planning's theorization of cultural change and planning praxes with emphases on knowledge translation and intimate embodied engagement.

Introduction

Community Member: I loved it all except for that California girl singing our song about [Mountain County]. She has no right to sing that song. She is not one of us. I could not stand her proper voice singing that song. Why didn't you get one of your country hicks to sing it?

Juno: Excuse me? — Ma'am (she didn't deserve that title of respect) I'm not sure what you're talking about.

Community Member: You know that first song that young girl sung. That one about Staying in [Mountain County].

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> Juno: We do not discriminate against people in [Appalachian Theater].
> We're all one. Also, she wrote that song. That is her song. She has every
> right to sing it wherever and whenever she wants (I am surprised at the
> calmness in my voice).
> Community Member: She did? How long has she lived here?
>
> Juno: She has lived here eight years. She has earned the right to sing that
> song about her home! (I turn and leave her standing. She has said
> enough).
>
> (Juno Journal Excerpt)

The song in question, and at the center of the conflict, was written and sang by
a trio of young women at multiple previous Appalachian Theater performances
and has been sung subsequently at later performances – this performance in-
cluded. The young women come from abroad and from Mountain County, but
each call Mountain County their home. They have gone through grade school
while participating in Appalachian Theater; some come back from college to
help act and sing the opening song during vacations and semester breaks. The
core message of the song is returning home to Mountain County. Juno came
directly to me after this conversation, as the public was still socializing after the
performance in the high school auditorium, to decompress and refocus.

Mountain County loses residents each year for a variety of reasons – gen-
erally reasons based in hardship (the county has less than 21,000 people now
and a poverty rate of approximately 40%). Their 'hearts will always stay in
[Mountain County]' is the central repeated chorus line – a lyric that will clearly
rub shoulders when presented to those that have a sense of territorial posses-
siveness for Mountain County. I have learned that theater, specifically commu-
nity-based theater, brings issues *and* opportunities to the surface, because the act
of performing real stories leaves little place to hide. It is a performative conjuring
to go beyond the normal; it is in fact a praxis of questioning the normal. The
contentious community member from Juno's journal excerpt personally called
Juno's cell phone later that Saturday night and tearfully apologized.

Appalachian Theater is a local effort to transform and culturally reconsti-
tute the centuries-old, internalized shame held in the county. The pain of being
either considered a hillbilly or, paradoxically, not hillbilly enough is a constant
source of strife within the county. During the high school theater's annual trip
to the state performance competition, the high school theater was told by the
judges, after losing, that their accents were too *clean*!

> When we actually got to see what the effect of the gathering of the stories
> on people, then I became a believer in that. I started to see that it wasn't
> about getting lots of people to come into your city and watch the show,
> and as a tourist draw, and get recognition, etc. I started to see it as a thing
> that helped people, a cathartic sort of experience for people. Like I said a

way of putting people on the same level. (Appalachian Theater Co-Founder, personal communication).

Society at large often has a projective idea of what being Appalachian means, and there are destructive consequences to this idea (Hayes, 2017).

Mountain County's history is a story of bloodshed and predation by the powerful on land and people. Historically, multinational industries dating well before 1850 have extracted labor, slavery, forestry, coal, and salt; all while the lifeblood of family subsistence farms came to an end (Billings & Blee, 2000). Presently, if one were to drive along one of the many twisty and scenic two-lane roads one might think little of the county besides seeing another poor and beautiful Appalachian county. It would appear to be just another bit of countryside to pass through to reach I-75. Little has been done to actively make whole the ravaged population, economy, and land, even as those like Juno and her troupe are willing to take the risk to try themselves.

Mountain County's main downtown would seem to offer little more than the nostalgic knickknack, antique, burger and fries, or perusal through a proud historic society. There is also a small, mainly volunteer fire department – and an almost unnoticeable, restaurant-sized local government building all within a stone's throw. Just down the main road from the local government and volunteer fire department is the county's elementary school, middle school, and high school where an entire generation of young Appalachians may pass through with the same commute. Through that commute one would see the very many churches that dot the rocky and wooded landscape where any Christian sect may be found. However, if one stopped for a minute or two in the aforementioned local government building, they would find a very curious room, one that is full of costumes. Within these costumes, one can find a plethora of imaginative possibility, culture, history, and narrative freedom.

It is here that Appalachian Theater plants its proverbial flag. Amongst the rot of historical neglect and abuse, and amongst the blame which Mountain County has internalized, Appalachian Theater does more than provide hope; it provides a means for survival. "People don't want to watch the news and see Appalachian people living middle class lives or even maybe a little upper-class lives because you know they aren't used to that. They want to see the worst" (Appalachian Theater Co-Founder, personal communication). Those that love Mountain County are more than just 'hillbillies' plucking the proverbial banjo while their ancestors lay in the family grave just up the holler. The model of Appalachian Theater is the performance of real-life stories from the county that are improvised and enacted for the local audience by local community members, and shame can only stay if people stay silent.

The following sections will help connect the interdependencies between therapeutic planning and community-based theater (utilizing Juno's theater as the backdrop); what are they and how can they speak to one another? After the

examination of these fields there is a section on Juno's theater, and an exploration of some of the important scenes from the performance to really 'get at' what is going on here. Lastly, the discussion section is a theorization of what it would take to be an embodied planner, why it deeply matters, and how Juno here is conceptualized as an example of an embodied community planner.

The Interdependencies between Therapeutic Planning and Community-Based Theater (CBT)

Therapeutic Planning – Time to Get Creative

Planners must develop a praxis of intimacy and touch to help generate opportunities with the aid and direction of local leadership (Lyles & Swearingen White, 2019; Baum, 2015). To do anything else, in the face of violent histories, structures, and conditions, in local and national contexts *is* violence (Freire, 2018). This thesis, this central argument for vulnerable and courageous disceptation between planners and their communities, has been long standing for over fifty years in planning literature (Arnstein, 1969). In support of therapeutic planning's direction, this work is positioned to help focalize and intensify the interpersonal dynamics being called for. It is here that community-based theater, as led by Juno, helps provide the grounding atmosphere to contextualize what this interpersonal domain looks like, the methodologies therein, and how this work translates the experiential and personal into the actionable for constructive change. A perception of interdependent exchange between planning and the public that delves deep within emotion, behavioral adaptation, learning across multiple knowledges, cultures, and behavioral modalities is *vital* at this point in planning's evolution (Innes & Booher, 2010; Forester, 1999; Lyles & Swearingen White, 2019; Sandercock, 1998; Scott, 1998; Throgmorton, 2003; Lyles, White, & Lavelle, 2018; Agyeman & Erickson, 2012; Arnstein, 1969).

Therapeutic planning is challenging the planning field to provide a richer incorporation of oppressed voices, experiences, and histories of oppressed bodies through creative methodologies (videography, forum-based facilitated discourses, conscious love-based action for racial equality) for equitable and just outcomes (Sandercock, 2003; Erfan, 2017; Sandercock & Attili, 2014; Porter et al., 2012; Schweitzer, 2016). Thus, physicalizing description and experiential and embodied research practices are necessary in progressing planning theory and practice to more fully understand the vulnerability needed to open doors to intimate communication across the boundaries of planning professionals, contexts, epistemologies, methods, and oppressed communities.

Therapeutic planning is posing notable ethical questions to planning. First, how is planning dealing with its own colonial history, as well as the vicious and violent inequalities that the neoliberal state produces and recycles? Second, how are planning institutions realizing, or failing to realize, greater progression to

cultural competency, humility, and inclusion of diverse people and groups? Third, what methods can planners and institutions use to initiate and sustain critical cultural dialogue with historically oppressed (race, class, gender, sexuality, indigeneity, etc.), communities for ethical and lasting impact? These questions are highly intertwined, far reaching, and enormously complex when taken together. However, there is one overarching theme that cuts across them all; the powerful epistemically rational, instrumental, and abstract systems that planning relies upon have failed to integrate the realities of oppressed populations - thoughts, emotions, interpersonal embodied behavior/communication, experiences, culture(s), identity, knowledges, and history – for constructive meaning, recognition, reconciliation, understanding, and equity (Baum, 2015; Scott, 1998; Davidoff, 1965; Fainstein, 2010; Forester, 1999; Sandercock, 1998; Friedmann, 1987; Healey, 1997; Innes & Booher, 2010; Sandercock, 1998; Erfan, 2017).

Juno's 'methods of intervention,' are similar to the methods posed by therapeutic planning authors (Sandercock & Atilli, 2014; Erfan, 2017), are done through learning with and through their community members, supporting them with *permission*, challenging volunteers to *lead*, and thus confronting the exceedingly durable historical predation and consequences of extractive industries in Middle Appalachia. Planning's and community development's habits of reductionism, abstraction, idealism, and the methodological distancing of professionals and the 'public' in language, practice, and theory has overwhelmingly excluded, dismantled, and tarnished the value of lived experiences, history, and the collaborative potential with vulnerable populations (Agyeman & Erickson, 2012; Sweet, 2018). Therapeutic planning has thus charged normative planning to structurally change the epistemologies and methods (rational policy analysis, expertise without understanding, spatial analytics that erase and omit, etc.) that reenact the disconnects between institutions and that thus reify and reconstitute planning's colonial roots and structural societal inequality (Manzo, 2015; Sandercock, 2004).

Planning theory and practice has continually reinforced and *prioritized* a prescriptive utilitarianism/instrumentalism that often speaks over the needed behavioral improvisation and critical socio-cultural discourse between planning institutions and the public (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; Sweet, 2018; Throgmorton, 2003; Hoch, 2006). Planning, relying on much of its hierarchical knowledge (Grosfoguel, 2012), has wreaked havoc on people throughout the world, especially those most marginalized and vulnerable (Sweet, 2018; Ugarte, 2014; Fainstein, 2010). There has been increasing attention paid to the prospects of therapeutic planning as a field of planning interventions to address new and longstanding conflicts, often due to the colonial history and underpinnings of Western government through creative interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary methodologies (Erfan, 2017; Sandercock, 2003).

Just as Sandercock and Atilli (2014) endeavored to showcase the lives of the Ts'il Kaz Koh Nation, pain and hope, ethically and responsibly, should not

be left at the door (Forester, 1999). This core of human existence, the base of spines and skulls, the sounding boards of memory, emotion, history, observation, and ways of life is the basis for the foundational communication that breaks open and exposes the trappings of the Enlightenment (Sandoval, 2013; Innes & Booher, 2010, Tzu and Bannerman, 2017; Gill & Niens, 2014; Forester, 1988). The Enlightenment excluded and shunned any condition or interaction with the 'body of other,' and this structural illusion has thus systematically dismantled the argumentative capacities of women, LGBTQ+ populations, Black and Brown populations, Indigenous nations, Jews, the poor, and more through an authoritative ideology of enforced deviance and dominance upon those deemed bodyless (Oyěwùmí, 2005). Thus, to extend upon therapeutic planning, and further challenge planning's role in reconstituting actors, epistemologies, and methods, embodiment as a domain (as will be described in later sections) can become a housing conduit for such a change.

*Community-Based Theater – Remembering the Public Square*

Community-based theater (CBT), as a social and cultural intervention, is always interwoven and inseparable from its housing community. CBT is fundamentally based on the inseparability of the theater and society at large, which thus provides narrative pathways for performative enactments between the theater and the community. CBT's "functions have no value in isolation to society" (Diang'a, Kebaya, & Mwai, 2015, p. 108). The purpose, fundamentally, of CBT is to raise consciousness "towards social transformation," and to do so through action, articulation, and experiential performative praxes that present and actualize this awareness and discursive interpretation (Diang'a, et al., 2015, p. 108). CBT, as Cohen-Cruz (1999) stated, "is a popular mode allied with identity politics and targeting underrepresented groups in the quest for collective expression" (p. 115). CBT fundamentally acts as a *confrontation* with "the governing systems of values, symbols and beliefs in the community" (Diang'a, et al., 2015, p. 109). The highly participatory and inclusive practice of CBT is a site specific, context dependent method that seeks to address issues in communities through co-constructed experiences and re-creative performance narratives (Lange, 2020; Johansson, 2011; Sandercock 2003; Pratt, 2000; Pratt, & Johnston, 2007).

Table 1: Appalachian Theater Performance Process
Acquiring Performance Locations through Cultivated Relationships
Each production is at a different location within the county (Appalachian Theater does not own a stage).
Cultivated local relationships with other community leaders increase resource access for such things as stages, lighting, props, marketing, labor, etc.
Each location contains and transmits different meanings and experiences (historical park vs auditorium), and each performance is tailored to the location.
Stories/Participants are Actively Recruited from the County
Appalachian Theater holds public meetings regularly in such places as the local library, local non-profit coffee shop, churches, and other culturally integrated public spaces.
Juno and other Appalachian Theater leaders are well known, and thus are often reaching out and being reached by email and phone.
Word of mouth, due to the socially tight knit community, is exceptionally powerful.
Participants themselves range in class, age, religion/faith, race, gender, and sexuality.
Informal and Improvisational Performative Style
Two full rehearsals prior to weekend performances
Prior to full rehearsals the scenes are partitioned for small scale practice to be flexible with schedules.
Leadership establishes clear boundaries and expectations of respect, safety, and consideration.
The episodic stories that are gathered are generally ordered for the performance themes and are connected via a culturally salient spine story.
The leadership helps to coach and be supportive for the performance creation/enactment, but they are not directorial.
Participants choose their own role whether its acting, stage management, off stage, etc. They are expected for bring their 'full self' into the role.
Every performance construction and enactment are built upon shared responsibility and interdependency.
Reconstituting History and Interpersonal Behavior at the Communal Scale
Increased relational capacity and complexity amongst participants and audiences (strangers become friends).
Greater forms of and commitment towards community projects as well as collaborations with partnered community leaders and non-profits.
There are regular increases to self-expression, self-efficacy, and active expressions of social support.
Increased knowledge and practice of experiential learning.
Increased public engagement, local involvement, and community solidarity.

As a form of intervention and method for communal relations; CBT helps draw out stories and the lives of those around us from the 'background'. These real stories *are* multifaceted knowledges displayed and shared along emotional, behavioral, social, economic, cultural, political, historical, and environmental domains. Stories that are performed in Appalachian Theater are of people's lives depicting systemic challenges such as the legacies of feudal violence, death at the bottom of a coal mine, political predation, slavery, and more (Prentki, & Preston, 2009; Conquergood, 2002). The complexity and difficulty of living daily life amid oppressive structures are on full display. Storytelling and CBT can be an impetus for cultural change as a discursive performative praxis (Lange, 2020b). Boal "envisions community-based theater as a catalyst of social change…to support those who are socially marginalized in challenging the 'bourgeois' system, considering that 'art' is imminent to all men and women, and not only a select few" (Ares, 2015, p. 533). This form of amateur art (Brecht, 2014) is an entry point and conduit for the exposing of isolating fractals of structural alienation that ensnare lives, and makes history come alive in front of us.

Appalachian Theater's process seeks to affirm their participants sense and connection to place through co-constructed theater performances (Lange, 2020ab). Though, this sense of place is contingent upon active processes of vulnerable communication between strangers, theater space, and theater architecture (See Figure 1). This is the Freirean (2018) approach to experiential pedagogy that utilizes collaboration and mutual learning to not only make sense and meaning of lived experiences (the stories and people themselves), but to learn to transcend boundaries and shift borders of oppressive systems and conditions to enact physical change through behavioral change. The performances themselves are simultaneously forms of experiential collaborative learning as well as manifestations of actions that transcend boundaries – there is not one without the other. Appalachian Theater adjoins performative studies and exemplify therapeutic planning's efforts through actively confronting an important question posed by Conquergood (2002), "For *whom* is the border a friction-free zone of entitled access, a frontier of possibility" (p. 145)? Should the reductive label of hillbilly, or being born in Appalachian poverty, be solidified in perpetual shame?

Figure 1 – Individuation and Emergence in Community-Based Theater (Lange, 2020b)
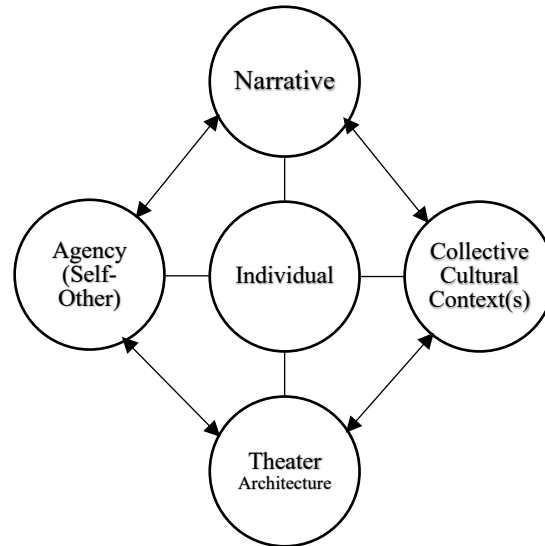
Constructivist Embodiment Methodology – Being with Self and Other Across Space and Time

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

This pivot to constructivist embodiment allowed an opening and expansion into understanding more deeply the multiple dimensions of Juno, Appalachian Theater, Mountain County, and the researched performances. Here, embodiment took the form of deep relationality and ethical intimacy with the leaders and participants of Appalachian Theater. Sensitivity must be attended to in the context of reconstituting behaviors of people and groups as an examination of place and constructed moments (Van Manen & Li, 2002; Ross, 2010; Spry,

2011). Relationality, and the construction of interdependent relationships, further provided understanding of the narrative constructions of the theater, the cultural interpretations (aesthetics) and saliency of the performances, the affective experiences of participants and audiences, and thus greater understandings of the context and doings of Juno as the proverbial conductor.

I utilized Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg's (2011) perspectives of critical pedagogy and qualitative research based within the conceptual bricoleur to uncover artifacts of culture, power, and complexity. As noted in Table 2, embodiment within deeply entangled performative socio-cultural contexts produced a grounded meta-discussion, as well as a set of multifaceted dialectics between methods, the interdependent facets of the case, and me (identity, positionality, intent, experiences, perceptions, relationships, etc). Through a concerted, and continually practiced conscientization of myself, position, and identity, a fully interactive process based within the field converged transparently with my training, position, and relevant planning and performance literatures. As such, this complex pedagogical process of relationality and experiential learning joined with multiple environments, performances and their construction, forms of power and culture(s), identity, and knowledges. The resultant methodological process fostered engagement with the messy, chaotic, everchanging, and behavioral, and not a reduction or abstracted synthesis of the multiplicity that is inherently part of the socio-cultural and performative.

More concretely, the responsibilities I performed were an ethical and integral necessity that provided deeper entrance into the socially entangled environments; however, they were also a way of reciprocally giving back to the opportunities provided to me. At Appalachian Theater I assisted in scene ordering and the thematic creation of the performance with the leadership of the theater before I was a participant-observer of the rehearsals and performances. Further, I provided a place of grounding and support for Juno.

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

However, I did not act nor stage manage during the performance. These opportunities were rightly reserved for those from the county.

After relationships, familiarity, and trust was established and deepened at Appalachian Theater I performed 16 semi-structured interviews. These interviews (which totaled around 15 hours of audio recording) were purposefully positioned as a point of reflection and discussion between me, participants, theater leadership, community leadership, and affiliated non-profits. We interrogated our experiences, meanings, and relationships to compound the performative and methodological processes already underway at the theater. Further, throughout the process of research, and through the entirety of the multi-week

performance cycle, I documented extensive field notes (100+ handwritten pages), which were subsequently translated and refined into memorandums for review.

Table 2: Reflexive Experiential Learning Through Dialectical Practice* (Lange, 2020a)	
Dialectics of Context	
Urban and Regional Planning	*Urban and Regional Planning*
Formal Bureaucracy	Formal Bureaucracy
Planner Driven Positivism	Planner Driven Positivism
Expertise/Professionalism	Expertise/Professionalism
Formal Funding	Formal Funding
Policy/Statutes as Structural Framework	Policy/Statutes as Structural Framework
Dialectics of Method	
Positivism/Instrumentalism	*Constructivist Embodiment*
External Absolutism	Experiential Internal/Social Learning
Scientific Process	Collaborative Process
Positionality of Expertise	Entangled Social Interdependency
Identity of Formality	Cultural Person as Process
Dialectics of Self	
Academic Institute	*Ethnographic Contexts*
Positivistic Training/Policy Background	Constructivist Embodiment
R1 Research Institute	Informal Social Theaters and Non-Profits
Urban and Regional Planning Program	Community-Based Theater
Dissertation/Article Research	Personal Relationality and Supportive Organizational Responsibility

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

The most powerful form of data analysis was the constant reexamination and revision of perceptions and observations 'in-the-moment.' The others of the research (participants and leadership) were the most poignant sources of refined information as opportunities for engagement provided access to learning with the people and the theater. "These relational and extensively conversational efforts covered such things as stage design, the artistic expression of scenes, the translation of scenes to audience/communities, etc" (Lange, 2020b, p. 3). As

research progressed into the writing phase, research narratives were more easily constructed as thematic aspects emerged from the experiential and documented aspects of data collection.

Juno's Theater

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

When I first arrived to Mountain County I met with Juno, as well as the new director and another member of the board, to discuss the organization of the stories and their portrayal on stage. At the meeting, we ordered the stories in a way that would elucidate the deeper illustrations of birth, growth, and death within the nuclear family. The stories ranged from adoption stories, oral childhood stories of the older generations, hilarious stories of family pets, stories of baptism and children symbolically drowning chickens to mimic baptisms, stories of childhood abuse, addiction, and stories of sudden death after a lifetime of labor.

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

> Our director had also scheduled rehearsal for a story about grandparents raising their grandchildren. These children had come to live with them because the parents were drug addicts and unable to provide a safe home for them. This was not my scene to design, so I was enjoying conversation with parents of our young cast members. I realized there was much discussion on stage as the members talked about how to stage this scene. The next thing I knew two of the cast members had left the stage crying saying the scene was too close to them in that they had experienced the same thing. I followed one of [the] teens to the outside hallway in an attempt to console her. These were not just teary eyes but tears such she could hardly talk. My heart breaks for her! She tells me she can't do this. "I have had a stepsister and stepbrother die from drug overdose. I don't like doing [AT] anymore," and wants to leave the

group. I hug her and ask her to not make any decision now until she has given herself time to think thru this. She gives me a slight nod of the head.

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

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

The following section is some of the spoken lines within the representative scene wherein the children are asking a set of questions to their grandparents at the dinner table right after their parents were arrested. Two of the children at the table are the children of the real story, and they took the opportunity to speak their lives through the performance – thus asking the audience to witness them and be their keeper. The children were asking for change to end the silencing and suffering that can engulf the lives of youth derived from parental opioid addiction. Of the scene, one of the actors had this to say:

You know you're dealing with a very vulnerable situation when you deal with them. Through all the practices, I don't know if you heard me, but I would turn to the boy and girl that was playing the parts, is their life, [asking] are you sure? We don't have to do this. We'll take this scene out. If this is too hard, we will take this scene out, and the boy kept saying, I've got too many friends that are living the same life I am living. [Grandmother of the scene] we got to let them know that this is not the way you raise your children. This is not what you do. We kept [the scene] in (Appalachian Theater Leader, Grandmother of the scene, personal communication).

It is important to note that during the performance, the real grandfather watched from the audience.

Kid 1: What will happen to us?

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

Kid 2: Where we gonna go to sleep?

Grandmother: Where you gonna sleep? Oh baby, you aint even gonna have to change sheets. You're gonna be in the same place. Okay?

Kid 3: What's gonna happen to Momma and Daddy?

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

Kid 4: Does this mean we are gonna switch schools?

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

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

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

Kid 5: What will happen if they come back to get us?

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

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

The following transcribed scene is the last scene of the performance; the scene is of symbolic death to culminate the ending of seasons and families. The narrator was a young girl positioned on the furthest left side of the stage facing the auditorium in a spotlight working to illustrate some of the happenings and connective tissues between a grandfather and his grandson. The grandfather and grandson were both dressed in blue overalls and the props were limited to a

bench and basic hand tools such as rakes. The grandson's name is bracketed for confidentiality.

> Narrator: When it came to family. When it came to love, [Ron] and Papaw had the strongest bond. They spent their time away from the world at Papaw's house. There were no phones, no distraction, just the both of them spending time together. [Ron] learned everything from Papaw, and he loved him more than anything in the world. He loved him so much, he would do yard work even if he didn't want to.

> Papaw: Hey [Ron], you know these leaves aren't going to rake themselves. Why don't you give me a hand?

> [Ron]: Well, Papaw, you know it might well be the hottest day of the year, right?

> Papaw: Oh it's pretty warm out. After all it is August. But, work never hurt nobody. Besides, if it was supposed to be fun, we wouldn't call it work.

> [Ron]: Well, I guess that's true.

> Papaw: Yup, yup…It is hot though.

> [Ron]: You can say that again.

> [After a few sluggish steps, Papaw collapses on stage grasping his chest]

> [Ron]: Papaw! Papaw! Papaw! Oh, oh, oh geese! I'll go get help!

> Narrator: [Ron] ran three miles to the nearest phone, and he ran three miles back while he waited for the ambulance. Papaw had had a heart attack. He was at the hospital for a long time, and [Ron] visited as many times as he could. It was about a year later after Papaw was out of the hospital when he went to go get the mail.

> Papaw: [Ron], I think I'm gonna go check the mailbox.

> [Papaw gets hit by a car while at the mailbox and collapses, throwing mail across the stage to symbolize the collision]

> [Ron]: Papaw! Papaw! Papaw! Papaw! Are you ok? Oh no no no, okay. Okay, I'm gonna go get help!

> Narrator: [Ron] ran three miles to get help, and three miles all the way back, again. But this time things were different. Papaw had broken bones, and lot of bruises. He spent a lot more time in the hospital than before, and when he did get out, things were different. His injuries had taken a toll on him, and he was tired. He and [Ron] didn't do much but stayed in and talked.

> Papaw: Hey [Ron], I just, I'm glad you spend so much time here. I've got to know you pretty good. I think you got to know me, and I just want to

say how proud I am of you. I think you can do anything you want to. You're gonna have a bright future ahead of you.

[Ron]: I don't really know what else to say except I love you, Papaw. And I wish I could ever be half the man that you are now.

Papaw: Oh, you will be son. You will be. I'm getting a little hot. Could you get me some ice water maybe?

[Ron]: Oh sure!

[Papaw collapses again, but this time dies on stage…[Ron] drops the cup of ice water as he runs on stage in horror]

[Ron]: Papaw! Papaw! Papaw! Papaw! No no no don't let this be the end! Papaw!

[[Ron] in shock on stage moves to front center stage in a somber sadness]

[Ron] as Narrator: I loved my Papaw more than anything in the world. He was a hard-working man, and I don't think he knew anything but work. But eventually I think he just did too much and took too much of a toll on him. The day that he passed, and after they carted him off, there was this ole big tree that we planted together. Once it growed up, by then, I just decided to sit under it. I didn't…it felt like forever. They tried to bring me something to eat, but I didn't want anything to eat. They tried to get me to come back inside, but I didn't mind the cold. I sat, and I sat, and I sat for three days. Just think about, man…I loved him so much [sic].

The Embodied Planner – Intimacy *IS* the Method and the Change

A dialogic space for the unspeakable, for talk of fear and loathing as well as of hope and transformation. This involves the design of a safe space in which conflicting parties can meet and speak without fear of being dismissed, attacked, or humiliated – a new space of recognition in which historic injustices are acknowledged, as a necessary prelude to addressing contemporary conflicts. (Sandercock & Attili, 2014, p. 20)

For the unspeakable to be shared, disclosed, and most importantly, *witnessed*, then care must be taken to create not just a safe space, but a space that can actionably challenge the historical and present norms of violence and silence in any community/locality. In the work here, as Juno and the transcribed scenes have shown, safety does not preclude grief, vulnerability, suffering, memory, love, conflict, and more. Emotion, as planners have often reduced these experiences to (Baum, 2015), are embodied experiences across space and time. Emotions are, at the risk of being reductionistic, unique to an individual and the happenings of their life, but emotions can carry the markings of generational and societal happenings that can be a source of such things as resistance to

16

oppression, buckling shame, passions for change, death, transcendence, the care of heritage and ritual. Emotions are the linkages between people that can signify connection, deep-seated conflict, or nothing at all. Emotions put most simply are a source of insight when seen and understood. Emotion is a *way* of knowing, expressing, experiencing, and communicating. They are fundamental to humanity, and to any method attempting humanistic intentions.

I want to bring deeper attention to Sandercock and Attili's (2014) research methodologies. Through the cultivation of relationships with the indigenous populations of focus, and further by working through such deliberative permission-based communicative processes, a very focalized documentary was created to – as best as possible – highlight the lives of the Ts'il Kaz Koh Nation to spur policy, methodological, and cultural change through a public showing. These methodologies are multi-positional, and more than purely reflexive. Sandercock and Attili (2014) paid special attention to cultural differences, recognition of historical academic predation and follies, the dangerous pitfalls of advocacy without competence, differences of knowledge structures, and the relationships to multifaceted oppression and historical colonially based planning ideologies (Young, 1986; Young, 1988). As important as the documentary was in *instigating* dialogue with local officials, even more can be brought to therapeutic planning through a concentrated dialogue on *methodology* for practicing planners. What if the communities' planners sought the creation of the videography, or here, the creation of a community performance?

If we first consider that therapeutic planning is a predominantly dialogical intervention being made to simultaneously change how planning is performed (and for whom), and how planning integrates and collaborates with oppressed populations, then immediate attention is brought to the pedagogical methods of discourse construction. Sandercock's (2003), Lyles and White's (2019), Sandercock and Atilli's (2014), and Erfan's (2017) work each heavily contest the role of the expert in planning, the power of the professional and institutional, and support the continued dismantling of the epistemic rationalism that reifies Eurocentric boundaries and borders (Sweet, 2018). When human connection is thus being asserted as a method of institutional reconstitution in the forms of intimate knowing, being, and relating *across* boundaries, then the behavioral *interaction* between individuals, groups, institutions, and peoples are the central premise through which knowledge construction and knowledge translation occurs.

There are important factors that must remain salient in the dialogical arrangements of such cultural and historically charged interventions; 1) Careful consideration must be made to *how* planning officials meet with oppressed populations because of planning's historical abuses; 2) Planners must aspire to more than reductive majoritarian collective-decisions and negotiations of traditional democracy building (Kim & Kim, 2008) such that cultivated relationships between planning/planners and oppressed populaces are the housing frameworks

that simultaneously open dialogues, deepen dialogues, and sustain dialogues; and 3) Interventions and decisions made through embodied praxes (story-telling, performances, forums, relationship building, etc.) must be continuously managed over long-term periods through co-produced methodologies (Lange, 2020). I argue that therapeutic planning be broadened to engage more intimately with collaborative embodied practices as to dismantle borders and fences between planning institutions and oppressed populations (Freire, 2018; Horton & Freire, 1990; hooks, 2014; Conquergood, 1991). Vulnerability on part of the planning community is vital here but has the power to *rebuild* relationships between planning and oppressed populations. There is no alternative.

Currently, theorizations of therapeutic planning have done well to work on procedural and facilitative matters (Erfan, 2017), policy enactments (Sandercock, 2003; Pratt & Johnston, 2007) and elucidating needed components of constructive dialogue (Lyles & White, 2019), but what has yet to be described is the re-characterization and reconstitution of the *assumptions* that underpin the normative planner. There is the pragmatic planner (Healey, 2009), the rational planner (Friedmann, 1987), the deliberative planner (Forester, 1999), the communicative planner (Innes & Booher, 2010), the advocacy and equity planner (Davidoff, 1965; Krumholz, 2011), but there is yet a solid focalization of the *embodied* sinew that links them all. Perhaps the closest is the compassionate planner (Lyles, White & Lavelle, 2018), but most assumptions of planners and their conceptions refer to planners in such a way that reifies mechanical apparatuses that led to overwhelming – and often violent – disconnections between planners and public in the first place. Planners are fellow community members, which does not minimize the justified contestations that oppressed populations have with normative planning, but rather elucidates the dualities within which planners exist. Upon entering the office, what is left behind at the door? Further, should planners bring pain, hope, and emotions with them through the door? Planners have often defended their models, in this neoliberal paradigm, to support and protect private life; but yet, the world building of planning's methods and their impacts quite literally organizes the private lives of citizens in very explicit ways (Frisch, 2002; Wilson, 2019; Jackson, et al., 2018).

I have proposed in previous work (Lange, 2020b) that the co-creation of community projects such as community-based theater performances can serve as a method to reconstitute and change cultural landscapes, but the relationships needed to do such work are actively cultivated *outside* of professionalized organizations and agencies. Liminal spaces are necessary for this work to exist out of the engrained dualities, and *histories*, of professional- and expertise- driven planning agencies. In other words, too much is defined as illegible, illegitimate, illiterate, and untrained by planning agencies and planning agencies' world views (Innes & Booher, 2010; Sandercock, 1998; Friedmann, 1987; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Sweet, 2018; Jackson, 2019). As such, Juno, theorized as a planner, does more than orchestrate a theater; they organized and shape relationships to activate

and actualize pathways of communication not yet realized in between people as an overall discursive and dialogical process (Lange, 2020ab). This process is extendable to the liminal meeting grounds between oppressed populations and planning institutions, and planners have the power to support the construction of such projects to bridge divides (Lange, 2020ab).

The basis of the dialogical material that underpins this type of communicative public engagement, and that is expressed more easily than in the normative divides of traditional public participation, is a planner based in intimate, relational transparency outside of bureaucratic boundaries. Planning must avoid maintaining its own historical inertia that performs public engagement in disconnected, abstract, solipsistic (planner/planning focused), divisive, and reductive methods which put more emphasis on forms of repeatable controls than on genuine human interaction and learning (Inch, Slade & Crookes, 2020). In my work (Lange, 2020a), I coined a concept called *multilocational embodiment*. In short, and to expand upon traditional ideas of the reflexive or deliberative planner, each planner in an intentionally driven public engagement event, or series of events, is located in multiple spaces and times both with themselves and others. More, each planner, within their respective contexts, is the face of their agency which includes, 1) the history of that agency's relationship to oppressed populations in the local community; 2) how the power structures of such public engagement events are or are not being reflexively examined and implemented; 3) the planner's internal world [emotions, beliefs, values, perceptions, sources of knowledge (and their type) and ignorance, and their own race, gender, sexuality, age, and more] and how they navigate this world alongside the others with whom they are collaborating. This *necessary* depth of self-awareness, transparency, and vulnerability to experiential learning should be the basis for what planning has deemed communicative-action (Lange, 2020a; Kim & Kim; 2008), and not the synthesis/extraction of multiple voices, or 'knowledges', into a policy intervention or policy proposal that a local planning agency may or may not heed (Innes & Booher, 2010). Without this discursive breaking open of the proverbial planner in the bureaucracy, then Conquergood's question of "For whom is the border a friction-less zone?" will always be the same; a sad excuse of trying to help oppressed populations without knowing them, listening to them, or dare say befriending and collaborating with them (Forester, 1988).

Juno, when they work with a community-member, see a person, and not just an object or artifact of the 'public.'

> "I am always telling myself don't think ahead of your game, enjoy and
> be in this moment as you won't come this way again. My heart always
> swells with love and respect for our people as we begin the process of
> listening, loving, and doing. (Juno Journal Excerpt)

The core of Juno's integrity, and willfulness for a full experience with the 'other,' is manifest through the cultural apparatuses of their theater. These apparatuses

are actively constituted through the relationships being formulated and refor-mulated in the theater (see figure 2). The setting itself, whether it is the high school auditorium or the stage at the downtown park, is a venue of an intention-ally co-created multi-dimensional community-based theater process for people to get to know each other and share their lives together (Lange 2020; Boal, 2000). As such, the presentation of a documentary for policy change, or the fa-cilitation of forum for communal dialogue, is not the same as an unstructured, improvisational, spontaneous, and open platform of a multidimensional space that affords a myriad of communication pathways between community mem-bers. These pathways are based upon learned insights that generate the needed experiential knowledge that locates planning and planners in space, time, and most importantly, culture. Planning agencies and institutions are not separate from their physical geographies, and they are not separate from the multiplicity of people whose lives are impacted by their decision making. Planning as a pro-ject has functioned as an intervening method in and of itself for cultural change, for both good and ill (Doan, 2011; Frisch, 2002).

Figure 2 – The Hall of Local Mirrors and Meanings (Lange, 2020b)
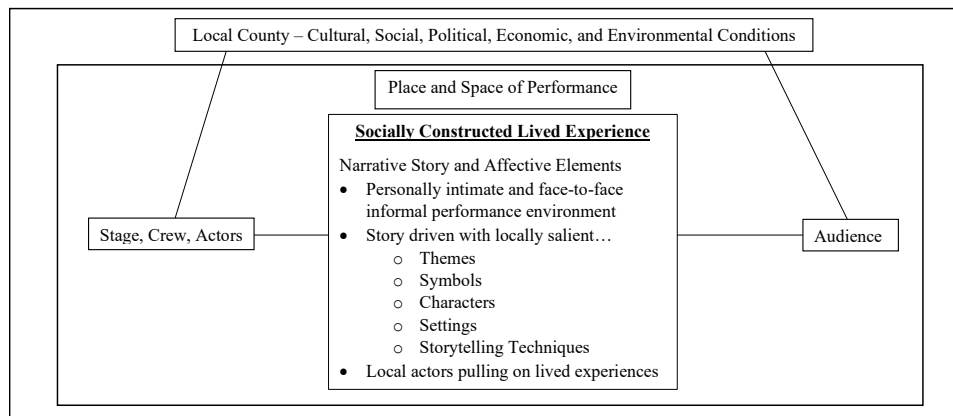
The pervious boundaries of Juno's theater are vital in supporting intimate social exchange whilst also creating performative expressions derived from lived experiences. This rearrangement of power *demands* support, acknowledgement, discourse, and flexible responsiveness of key figures such as Juno. If we revisit Juno's story briefly, we see that Juno's immediate concern was with the health and wellbeing of their young theater participants. What Juno and the theater did or did not do was predicated upon permission to tell the children's story as well as to help provide support during the performative re-experiencing of their trauma on stage. There is much that can be learned from this for planning theory and practice. As stated by Sweet (2018),

> According to the dualistic Western thinking that dominates planning practice, if the planner is competent, then the subjects of the planning are not competent, requiring the expert to fix them and their communities. The power dynamics of such a competent/incompetent framework are socially constructed but have real-world consequences for the subjects of planning (p. 7).

Erfan's and Sandercock's work, as well as the work presented here, are seeking the construction of decentralized discourses between present/historical cultures, methods, and institutions. Specifically, within Erfan's case, the facilitative process of the planner helps to navigate and safely make organized meaning from emergent dialogues. Within Juno's work, the ability to support and help create performed, intensified, episodic stories through co-created live productions provides meaningful narratives that arranged discourse in such a way that generates new modes of being and new community relationships (Lange, 2020b).

The tacit mental models of planners simultaneously put normative planning at the center of interventionist strategies, as well as obfuscate from cultural responsibility through an a/temporal, a/spatial, and a/relational duality (Grosfoguel 2012; Wilson, 2019). In other words, planning can direct, produce, and export entire models upon the worlds around us, but often fails at letting 'in' the world and people with which it interacts. However, the expression, sharing, and disclosure of personal lived experiences are nevertheless based within interpersonal narratives and storytelling that directly cut across this disconnect and divide. As stated by Sweet (2018),

> Storytelling often traverses time and space and can delve deeply into relationships and how they shape and mold realities. Stories are often filled with twists and turns that, from a God's-eye view, could be interpreted as unfocused but nonetheless represent experiences in everyday life (p. 8-9).

Juno is *culturally embedded* within local life, and their work provides a safe platform and place for *voluntary* expression and storytelling. Juno's model of performative work need not be ostracized from planning's methods.

Juno's methods are pedagogical, and she labors to,

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

Juno's performative work supports many facets of the work done by Erfan (2017), Schweitzer, (2016), and Sandercock and Attili (2014). Dialogic environments supported with ethical emotional intimacy have the capacity to create personal and cultural breakthroughs, relationships, and new understandings of self/other. Within such an environment, pedagogical methods based within

either the performative arts, the deliberate creation of a videography, or facilitation of discourse can provide entrance to deeper and honest critical discourse outside of the pervasive and divisive methods of traditional forms of public engagement and public institutions (Innes & Booher, 2010). As a part of this pedagogical and experiential process, environmental considerations based within informal and deescalated interactions help elucidate and differentiate with institutional methods and inertia that exclude local knowledges, experiences, identities, and lives.

Table 3: Juno - The Act of Getting to Know Others and Working Together
Contextual
Utilizes performative spaces to construct, restructure and question personal and cultural narratives.
Seeks the development of interdependent and deeply inclusive socio-cultural participatory experiences through performance construction and execution.
Actively develops places and spaces of diversity and multiplicity of identity.
Interpersonal
Inspiration of 'other' is the primary motivation for action and is highly supportive of each participant within individualized ways.
Sensitivity and empathy to lived pain and suffering, but also of joy, play, and happiness are the communicative bases of relationship construction.
Learning through experiential interaction and co-creation is their predominant behavioral modality as a community leader.
Through interpersonal relationality and intimacy, invites and aids in the construction of salient cultural messages and meanings to bring the 'world' into dialogic view as part of narrative re/constructions at the individual, group, and community level.
Shared Labor as the Sinew for Reconstituting Communication and Boundaries
The shared responsibility inherent in project construction and enactment is the tension that requires collaborative communication, and thus transforms boundaries from being impervious to transparent and navigable.
As a part of transparent disclosure, shares their perspectives, beliefs, emotions, thoughts, and experiences as a relational practice of openness, access and sharing of reciprocal power during all stages of narrative construction and performance execution.
The interdependency requires mutual agreement of respect between community members, but also requires the space for trust to speak disagreement and sources of conflict. This tension is thus navigable through the adherence to respect and vulnerability to *transcend* normative and limiting communicative and behavioral practices between community members and themselves.

Conclusion

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

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