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Performing Liminal Citizenship

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Performing Liminal Citizenship

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Dedication

To my parents

Dr. Fayad Skeiker and Raghda Al-Kak

To my family

Lida, Amer, Dima, Kinda, and Kinana

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Performing Liminal Citizenship

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Abstract

This study examines traditional and alternative citizenship models such as legal, flexible, global and cultural citizenship. These types of citizenship lay the foundation for the understanding of 'liminal citizenship.' This study identifies international students as liminal citizens and gauges the role of theatre in encouraging them to be civically engaged by creating a model for using applied theatre to 1) make international students aware of the possibilities of inclusion within their host community; and 2) empower them to become active members in it.

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Introduction

“Advocacy belongs in the theatre classroom in specific, and in the academic curriculum as a whole” (Martin 64).

“There is a long tradition, dating back to the ancient Greeks, that distinguishes between a good person and a good citizen. A good person lives his or her life virtuously and honorably, but without any involvement or interest in public affairs. A good citizen, by contrast, not only lives decently in his or her private life but also committed to participation in public life; at the very least to taking an informed interest in public affairs and, ideally, playing an active part in them” (Cogan qtd. in Kushner et al. 4).

“All theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them” (Boal ix).

Overview

My research was inspired in part by my own feelings of liminality which began upon moving to the United States from Syria in 2004. Like most international students, I experienced a profound sense of culture shock upon my arrival. Over the years I have often found myself feeling like an outsider, wondering where I truly belong, reluctant to fully engage in activities that would allow me to feel more at home, more involved in my host community.

I am not alone in my liminality. My country, Syria, is full of liminal citizens; it has 1.5 million Iraqi refugees who are living temporarily in Syria (Iraq: The World's Fastest Growing Refugee Crisis 2007). In addition, there are a large number of international students in Syria studying Arabic, as well as numerous foreign travelers, many of whom are artists who come to Damascus to experience the culture and broaden their own artistic perspectives. All of these ‘citizens,’ however different their

circumstances are, share the two major characteristics of liminal citizenship: a) they are not legal citizens in their host communities; and b) they live in a host community for a significant amount of time.

On a more local level, and more specific to my own experience within the body of international students at UT-Austin, I have observed an issue that demonstrates that many liminal citizens are hesitant to become involved in community issues, even when it involves them directly. In this case, The University of Texas Brackenridge graduate housing is in danger of being demolished, and its residents are actively attempting to stop the UT Board of Regents' plan to lease the deed to commercial developers.

In 2006, in response to legislative pressures, the UT Board of Regents formed a Task Force to consider the best and highest uses of the remaining Brackenridge tract acreage. The Task Force determined that the 74 acres that currently house the Colorado and Brackenridge Apartments did not meet the standard of 'best and highest use' of the land.

This raised a concern among the residents that the graduate housing will be lost. As a result, residents began organizing groups to preserve their housing. Seventy percent of the 700 units' residents of the Colorado and Brackenridge Apartments are international graduate students, with the majority from China and Korea and the rest from 50 other countries. Many of these students have spouses and children who benefit from the unique support services for this diverse community, services that include affordable housing, nearby schools, parks, and safety for its residents.

According to Sheril Smith, a manager in the UT Division of Housing and Food Service, there are a number of reasons international students are hesitant to participate in the activist meetings. First, as graduate students, these international residents lead stressful lives trying to balance their academics with life in a foreign country. Second, most of the international students who live in Brackenridge Apartments have families which require their attention in their free time. Third, they are not sure they can make a difference since they are not legal citizens. According to Smith, they think that their voice will not be heard. Fourth, some international students come from countries where participating in a public forum can have detrimental consequences. Smith noted that even though she is aware of these reasons that hinder international students from getting involved in the community, she still regrets seeing people not participate, particularly when they can be seriously affected (Smith 2008).

The level of activism among international students has been disproportionately small when compared to their numbers. For example, a year ago there was a meeting between the Colorado and Brackenridge residents and the UT Regents. Seventy-five family members showed up, of which only 20% were international students. This small percentage does not reflect the international students who live in Brackenridge Apartments.

Smith believes that getting international students to be civically engaged is important for two main reasons. First, their collective voice could send a strong message to the UT Board of Regents about the importance of preserving graduate

housing. Second, getting them involved would hone the civic skills of both international students and local citizens, making them culturally competent (Smith 2008).

It is precisely this type of situation that calls for an educational model that will awaken international students to their civic rights and responsibilities. This dissertation examines the role of applied theatre in addressing the issue of citizenship as it relates to international students living in host communities. Further, this study creates a specific workshop which can be implemented by university International Student Offices (ISO), to achieve the goals of helping international students find a place in their new community and become civically engaged in it.

International Students in the U.S.: Historical Background

The founders of the U.S. were not keen on the idea of sending students abroad to continue their studies. When the Common Council of Philadelphia made a donation in 1750 to Benjamin Franklin's academy, "the council optimistically expressed its hope that with the opening of Franklin's new school, no young person would be 'under necessity for going abroad' for their education" (Bevis and Lucas 31). Thomas Jefferson stated, "An American, coming to Europe for education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, and in his habits" (Bevis and Lucas 32). In the mid-seventeenth century, there was no attempt to attract students from other lands.

Nevertheless, since their inception, U.S. academic institutions have attracted international students, who, in those early days, were adventurous individuals who dared geographical distance to learn about this newly formed country. Among the first international student pioneers was Francisco Miranda, Yale's first international student in

1784. It should be noted that he did not come to the U.S. for purely educational reasons. He was already a public figure in his country of Venezuela, and he desired to create diplomatic relations with the U.S. It should also be noted that this effort to strengthen diplomatic relations continues as one of the primary reasons for recruiting international students. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. It was not until the mid-1800s that sizable numbers of students from China and India began to enroll in U.S. universities (Bevis and Lucas 2007).

Significance of the Study

According to *Report on International Educational Exchange* (2007), the number of international students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States increased by 3% to a total of 582,984 during the 2006/2007 academic year (2007). Forty-six percent are pursuing graduate degrees. There are 4,650 at UT-Austin alone, 9.2% of its overall enrollment (*Measures of a Global Campus* 10). The majority (60%) are privately funded, with only 3.2% supported by U.S. government programs.

International students are not new to U.S. academic institutions. What is new, however, is the pattern of growth in the number of international students studying here. Based on historic growth rates, a report compiled by the Committee on Foreign Student and Institutional Policy issued in 1982 predicted that international student enrollment would top one million by 1990. However, due to stricter U.S. policies on issuing visas after the 9/11 attacks, and competition from other countries in attracting international students, the rapid growth has slowed down. The number of current international students is only slightly over half the predicted one million.

In a globalized world, there is a greater need for having international students on U.S. campuses. A major benefit is “increased cross-cultural competence and an increased global orientation (*Report on International Educational Exchange* 2007). The report by the Committee on Foreign Student and Institutional Policy mentioned that the Information and Exchange Act of 1948 describes student exchanges and other forums of exchange as a way to enhance “mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries” (26). This act, in conjunction with the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and even some activities such as the International Education Week (International Education Week 2004), which was enacted after the 9/11 attacks, are aimed to encourage the presence of international students in the U.S. The benefits of having international students include, but are not limited to: 1) promotion of international understanding and cooperation; 2) opportunity for U.S. citizens to understand other people of the world; 3) opportunity for people around world to understand the U.S.; 4) construction of national identities through interaction with others of different nationalities.

A shared goal between academic institutions and the national policy is to prepare the next generation to have a certain level of global competence. The increased numbers of international students on U.S. campuses can be a major factor in developing this skill for U.S. students (*Report on International Educational Exchange* 2005). International studies scholars Volet and Ang go further in linking the presence of international students on U.S. campuses to the larger process of internationalization of higher education in

general and to the creation of cultural diversity that will assist the students in intercultural learning (2008).

When returning to their home countries, international students are often perceived as carriers of Western civilization and thought (Spilimbergo 2006). Public organizations such as the Fulbright Program and private ones such as the Ford Foundation support the studies of international students in the U.S. with the goal of fostering democracy when they go back to their country of origin. From the perspective of these organizations, education becomes a form of ‘cultural diplomacy’ and promulgation of U.S. ideals.

All of these benefits could be maximized if international students are encouraged to be civically active both on- and off-campus. Engaging international students in civic activities in their host communities will add a diverse cultural element to the U.S. community. Furthermore, becoming civically engaged benefits international students by giving them civic skills they can use wherever they go after their education is complete, whether it is another country, their home country, or in the U.S. should they decide to stay.

The Role of Theatre in Teaching Civic Engagement

One important citizenship skill is the ability to perform both individually and as an active member of a group. Citizenship studies scholars Hunt and White write, “Citizenship [...] requires both self-mastery and attention to relations with others” (93). The theatre workshop I have designed provides international students with an agency that is felt both individually and collectively while participating in the theatre exercises.

A sense of *communitas* is established among the participants of the workshop. The notion of *communitas* is first used by anthropologist Victor Turner and later appropriated to theatre studies by performance studies scholar Richard Schechner who claims that the audience at a theatrical event can become a ‘temporary community.’ Being part of a group requires a sense of empathy towards other community members. My theatre workshop offers a site for this practice of empathy allowing for the potential of creating a sense of fellowship among the participants. *Communitas*, in the context of my workshop, makes it possible for the participants to openly share stories and thoughts of exclusion, prejudice and/or group membership.

In my theatre workshop, the line is blended between audience and participants. A stronger form of *communitas* may be experienced since the participants of the workshops become spect-actors where they switch their roles between performing and spectating. Participants in the workshop rehearse performing their citizenship because they are given the chance to become engaged in what performance studies scholar Jill Dolan calls “a critical conversation about politics and oppression, love and hope” (Utopia in Performance 92).

Theatre is uniquely suited to address civic engagement issues for several reasons. First, both theatre and civic engagement can foster and empower the human characteristics of voicing one’s personal beliefs and respecting others (Checkoway 2001). Theatre can be an excellent mechanism for developing these civic qualities in individuals since theatre in general, and applied theatre in particular, directly addresses issues of ‘voicing,’ *e.g.* giving voice to oppressed citizens, and examining issues of

tolerance and acceptance (Boal, Rohd, Taylor, Neelands). Applied theatre scholar James Thompson acknowledges the power of theatre to give voice to disadvantaged communities: “One of my political and community theatre principals had been the importance of the concept of ‘giving voice’. Theatre gave voiceless communities an opportunity to speak out” (30). The theatre workshop format is a means for challenging the “abusive rhetoric of certain voices and enabling others to find theirs” (Thompson 31). International students in my theatre workshop expressed their voices in several forms: through their collective drawings and writings; through their bodies when they did image work based on these drawings and writings; through their reflections and discussions on the ideas that the workshop presented; and finally, their voice was documented in the post-workshop questionnaire.

A personal characteristic that intersects with civic skills is building awareness of and consideration for an alternative point of view. Theatre educator Jeffrey Wilhelm notes that enacting dramatic activities and then reflecting on them offers participants “an opportunity for sustained conversation around an issue, a chance to consider and engage alternative points of views, to take a tentative position, to articulate where one [...] currently stands and why” (169). While leading the theatre workshop with international students, I was struck by their understanding of their positions as liminal citizens living in a host community. One of the participants said that she perceives herself as a ‘resident citizen.’ Her comment was supported by most of the other participants who responded by saying that being a resident citizen does not justify being excluded from the community of legal citizens. Another participant expressed her contempt of living in the

U.S. and claimed that she was not interested in being part of any civic engagement activities at UT or in the Austin area. The theatre workshop format offered an opportunity for such a contrast of opinions to be expressed, contested, considered and discussed.

Second, theatre can be an empowering tool for individuals and groups. Empowerment is perceived as a force that will help individuals and groups to take actions in order to improve their situations (Gutierrez 1994; Ramon 1999). Theatre can enhance other personal qualities such as trust, self-acceptance, acceptance of others, and empowerment (Neelands 1984). Erven (2001) and Harding (1998) agree that applied theatre has the potential to create change among a powerless population. Theatre as a tool for empowerment has been discussed by James Thompson in *Applied Theatre*. He notes that theatre workshops give the participants a chance to ‘act for themselves’ (Thompson 1999). In addition, applied theatre enhances an individual’s awareness of group dynamics (Mulenga 1993). Empowerment in my theatre workshop is the backbone of my work with liminal citizens. Participants of my workshop gain empowerment in each step, from taking responsibility for choosing the materials they want to perform, to having the freedom to express their ideas artistically (drawing, image theatre, and acting). The goal is for them to be able to replicate their acts learned in the workshop in their daily lives. In this regard, the theatre is the site where they rehearse options for their activism in life.

Third, theatre has proven to be an effective method of teaching citizenship skills. Theatre educator Ian Kirby notes that “drama, through re-enactment,

communication, active involvement and sharing, offers a powerful and unique learning process that enables students to formulate an understanding of the world around them, of what it means to be a ‘citizen’” (Kirby 4). David Turner and Patricia Baker acknowledge the role of theatre in teaching citizenship. They claim that both citizenship and drama aim at teaching some of the same skills, such as learning to empathize with the views and opinions of others, learning how to address conflict and find resolution, and learning how to make democratic decisions in groups (2000).

The dramatic method helps prepare thinking and questioning citizens capable of making decisions to perpetuate democracy. Theatre educator Ronald Morris, for example, found drama to be useful in social science classes. Morris conducted his research in a seventh grade middle school social studies classroom, using drama as a tool to teach world history. His study examined how students understand the essence of the phenomenon of drama in a social studies class and then utilize it to understand concepts of citizenship, democracy and public dialogue (Morris 1997).

Fourth, theatre is particularly effective for international students since it relies heavily on image theatre work and the physicalization of an idea. Neither image work nor physicalization requires that the participant be fluent in English. Most of the exercises begin with an image which is made up of human bodies. The images created by the bodies constitute a site that can be presented, expressed, and even contested among participants regardless of their language. Bodies of the participants are utilized for playing, learning, and building awareness among the participants. Using the example of theatre scholar Augusto Boal, my workshop employs theatre games aimed at freeing the

bodies of the participants. This becomes a starting point and a metaphor for freeing the mind.

In summary, theatre is uniquely suited to address issues of civic engagement and citizenship among international students because it can be a successful tool in addressing citizenship skills (Morris 1997), and personal skills that increase civic competencies of trust, respect, and listening to others (Norris 1995).

Goals of the Research

Though the presence of international students is significant on the UT campus, their work and involvement within the UT community is not representative of their numbers. In an effort to change that, I have identified three goals for conducting this research. The first goal is to practice what sociologist Jürgen Habermas calls the "democratic deliberative process" (24) which creates a space for "communicative presuppositions that allow the better argument to come into play in various forms of deliberation" (Habermas 24). Imbedded in Habermas' theory is 'argument' which requires a high command of language. He also argues that verbal language is the specific tool for communication, an assertion that I will challenge by my focus on body language and the act of embodiment rather than relying on verbal language alone.

The second goal of my research is to design a theatre workshop for international students at UT, conduct it and gauge the results of using theatre as a means to address issues of active citizenship and civic engagement.

The third goal is to invite other scholars to use my theatre workshop as a vehicle for working with liminal citizens and as a method for examining a host of conflicts

around the world that involve identity, territory, nationhood, international relations, conflict resolution and peace making.

_To achieve these goals, I chose a quantitative methodology which allowed me to assert the interdisciplinary nature of the field of performance as public practice. The choice of this methodology, however, is not meant to undermine other methodologies that are used in Performance as Public Practice such as ethnography and historiography. Using quantitative methodology as a primary method, supported with aspects of qualitative methodology such as interviewing, allowed me to investigate my study more deeply.

While addressing international students as liminal citizens, I reevaluate the concept of citizenship, community and civic engagement by “rethinking community, civic virtue, and citizenship without the conservative baggage of ultra-nationalism, homogeneity, moral prescription, or ‘majoritarian’ rule” (Reinlet 287). In this reevaluation, it has become clear that there are a number of viable alternative definitions for citizenship which will be discussed in the following section, using these terms to describe the relationship of individuals to citizenship: citizenship, active citizenship, civic engagement, liminality, and liminal citizenship.

Defining Terms

Citizenship

Citizenship can be defined simply as “the individual’s relationship to the public realm” (Joseph xxii). In order to construct the notion of citizenship, a citizen must “perform affiliations—private and public, formal and informal” (Joseph xxii). For this

study, I have adopted Joseph's concept of citizenship since it perceives citizenship as a construct which is built through the citizen's behaviors and enactments.

Active Citizenship

Most of the definitions that encompass the meaning of active citizenship stress the citizen's inclination to participate and/or get involved in local governance (Kearns 1995). In addition, active citizenship stresses the importance of personal "responsibility for the local community" (Coffey 47). In the context of my research, I define active citizenship as the willingness to give private time, effort or resources to the local public cause.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement emphasizes the same ethics of participation and responsibility that are affiliated with active citizenship. Civic engagement is "behavior that influences public matters" (Levine 7). Throughout my dissertation, I will use the term active citizenship interchangeably with the term civic engagement since they both stress the 'participation' factor as a core element in their definitions.

Civic engagement, within the limits of my research, covers a broad array of activities and opportunities available to international students. I include in my definition such things as volunteerism both on- and off-campus; participation in extracurricular activities such as cultural committees, student government, and writing for student publications; and involvement in the arts or sports, whether as practitioners or as spectators.

Liminal

The term liminal originated from the Latin word “limen” which means threshold. Anthropologist Victor Turner was the first scholar to use the term to describe a marginalized space that could advance potential structures, forms and desire. Turner describes liminality as “a fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structures” (Turner *From Ritual to Theatre* 12).

I specifically use the term ‘liminal citizens’¹ to describe international students living in host communities, borrowing the term 'liminal' from Turner to describe the time experienced by international students during their studies. I also position them as 'citizens' in their host communities to assign agency and status to them and encourage them to be active members in it. My use of the term 'citizen' also includes contemporary theories about citizenship, defining different ways an individual can identify as a citizen without necessarily being a permanent or legal resident in a given community.

Liminal Citizenship

Liminal citizenship describes the experience of residents who live in a community for a significant period of time without being a legal citizen of that community. International students, war refugees, and illegal immigrants are examples of liminal citizens. The definition of liminal citizenship is also shaped by their potential to be an active part in their host community.

¹ Addressing international students as citizens came out of a lengthy discussion with my supervising professor Joni L. Jones when I was describing to her my own limbo position as an international student. The term ‘liminal citizen’ came out of this same discussion.

New Ways of Looking at Citizenship

Globalization, mobility and advanced media technology require us to consider new ways of looking at citizenship. Richard Falk, political scientist, argues that “the erosion of state autonomy and the emergence of arenas of decision and power beyond the control of the state have been weakening traditional bonds of identity between individuals and the state” (1). As a response to both Falk’s argument and to globalization, the traditional notion of citizenship has been re-examined, resulting in calls for open borders, for allowing dual and multiple citizenship(s) and for finding new ways to practice citizenship among undocumented citizens.

Political scientist Joseph H. Carens suggests that borders should be open and that citizens should be free to live in any place they want regardless of their birthplace. He suggests that any human should be able to choose any citizenship he or she wants regardless of original citizenship. His call is based on a deep commitment to and respect for all human beings as free equal persons (Carens 1987).

Another call for changing the way we look at citizenship is proposed by citizenship scholar John Hoffman (2004). He states that we need to “support policies that make it easier for residents to become citizens, and for citizenship to be ‘dual’ and ‘multiple’ in character. Nations have a right for their own state but short-term expedients must be coherently linked to longer-term goals” (63). His call is based on his belief that we should develop a ‘notion of democracy beyond the state’ (3).

Globalization and Citizenship

Globalization affects the way we look at citizenship. “The expansion of world markets as a form of economic globalization can be understood as a process of integration composed of international flows of capital, goods, information, and people” (Peters 1). The flow of people does not simply mean the flow of highly skilled laborers; it also implies the transition of refugees and undocumented workers and allows more flexibility for educational mobility. This flow makes it imperative for globalization and transnationalism to “recognize the multiple definitions of citizenship” (Kofman and Youngs 203). Most of these definitions of citizenship resist the conventional way of looking at citizenship as a legal bond between the citizen and the state, finding instead new definitions such as cultural, flexible, global and tactical, which are discussed in Chapter 2.

Inclusion and exclusion are prevalent as two active enactments of citizenship. However, globalization has intensified the paradox between the two opposing notions. Veit Bader (1995) summarizes this paradox as follows:

Within states, the tendency toward universalist inclusion is relatively advanced [...] However, this equality of inclusion has always been, and still is, intrinsically interwoven with systematic exclusion (legal and political inequality between citizens and noncitizens) [...] Noncitizens and denizens increasingly get rights that, traditionally, have been reserved to citizens, and, by this, citizenship does lose much of its traditional legal, political, and social importance. (Bader 212)

The universal inclusion that Bader discusses supports my claim that liminality should not be a barrier between international students and their host community.

International Students as Liminal Citizens

The concept of liminal citizenship is derived from my experience with international students at The University of Texas at Austin. Most international students at U.S. universities typically reside in the U.S. between one and five years (*Report on International Educational Exchange 2007*), endowing them with the potential of becoming citizens who could contribute positively to their host community.

International students, like any other marginal community, are often direct or indirect targets for stigmas imposed against them². These stigmas may range from relatively harmless stereotyping to potentially dangerous racial or ethnic profiling. The potential in the ‘liminal’ includes transporting them beyond their stigmas where they become active members of their host communities.

According to performance studies scholar Susan Broadhurst, an important trait of the liminal is indeterminacy and fragmentation (1999). As liminal citizens, international students have the same features of the liminal that Broadhurst describes: they are indeterminate citizens in the sense that they do not fully belong to the community they live in, and they are distanced from their country of origin. International students are marked by their temporalities. Whether they decide to remain in their host community, return home, or move to another country after they have completed their education, they almost always face a period during their stay when they feel that they neither belong to

² These stigmas are constructed by the locals as a tactic to exclude international students from their local community.

the community where they physically reside, nor are present or active in their community of origin. They are "neither here nor there" (Turner *The Ritual Process* 1969). They are fragmented, fragile citizens who are trying to be here in their host community, and there in their original country, at the same time. They become liminal.

Broadhurst's idea of liminality is analogous to mine since both understandings of liminality allow individuals to occupy two citizen positions simultaneously. They could be marginal in the community they live in or central to it. In other words, they could be passive citizens who do not care to learn about or participate in the social/political events of their host community, or they could be active citizens who are truly invested in advancing their host community.

There are two important aspects that shape the experience of international students as liminal citizens. The first factor is mobility; the second one is their feelings of exclusion.

Academic Mobility

Since education is an important factor in making a choice to leave one's home country, academic mobility is central to shaping the experience of international students. International education scholar Karine Tremblay proposes that studying abroad can be part of a 'deliberate immigration' strategy from the students' perspective (2005). Assuming Tremblay's claim is correct, then the choice to leave one's country for academic purposes implies an intention and expectation of inclusion within the host community. However, most of the academic programs in the U.S. do not offer courses

that are designed specifically to introduce international students to civic engagement activities that they could be part of while they study, contributing to their feelings of exclusion.

Risks of Exclusion

Scholars have found that international students often feel a sense of alienation and exclusion (Cushner and Brislin 1986; Searle and Ward 1990). The feeling of exclusion among international students may affect negatively their psychological well-being and their interaction with members of their host community (Schmitt *et al.* 2002). Exclusion increases the feelings of culture shock already felt by international students and should not be underestimated when considering elements that form international students' experience.

Discrimination, whether real or perceived, also contributes to feelings of exclusion. Schmitt *et al.* found that

international students who perceive discrimination have at least two potential identities that they might turn to in response to discrimination. One possibility might be to increase their identification with their home country [...] An alternative response to perceived discrimination that we see as more likely is to identify with the category 'international students' who are more likely to share in the experience of being treated as an outsider or 'foreigner'. (4)

Either of these responses will ultimately limit the international student's participation in any possible political or non-political activities in his/her host community, and will increase his/her liminal status.

Education scholar Jacqueline Kennelly examined Canadian citizenship and categorized excluded citizens thus: women, people with disabilities, homeless people, prisoners, aboriginal people, working class/working poor, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender, immigrants and refugees. ‘Aboriginal people’ was the only racially defined category she identified. All other categories crossed racial and ethnic lines.

Symptoms of both culture shock and exclusion include but are not limited to “psychological disturbance, a negative reaction to the new surroundings and a longing for a more familiar environment” (Mackinlay *et al.* 379). Exclusion can also affect the adjustment process of international students. Consequently, international students experience a “lack of assimilation of American culture and an inability to effectively interact with Americans” (Al- Sharidah and Goe 699).

I theorize that the feeling of inclusion could have the opposite effect, and that international students who feel included are more likely to truly care about their host community and want to play an active role in it. The host community would be the immediate beneficiary, since civic engagement contributes to the good of the whole. In addition, the international student would personally benefit by becoming proactive in issues that concern him/her, not only from the standpoint of achieving specific desired results, but from the personal empowerment that comes from knowing, claiming and exercising one’s civil rights.

Lack of Civic Training Among Liminal Citizens

Many international students choose to stay in the U.S. after they complete their formal education. In essence, they shift from being academically mobile to professionally mobile. A correlation between academic and professional mobility, which is defined as moving geographically to achieve advancement professionally, has been reported (Blumenthal *et al.*, 1996; Teichler and Jahr 2002). According to a study conducted by international education scholar Michael G. Finn, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of temporary residents who received science/engineering doctorates from U.S. universities in 1997 were still in the United States in 1999 (Finn 2001). Even though Finn focuses his study only on individuals who earned their PhDs in science and engineering, it is clear that the retention rate among international students is high.

Colby *et al.* report that some U.S. academic institutions are committed to providing their students with civic training. They also state that many U.S. colleges favor preparing active citizens, but too few endeavor to follow through with this commitment (Colby *et al.* 2003). This lack of civics training affects both domestic and international students. When considering Finn's statistics in light of Colby's findings, it is evident that international students are ill prepared to be civically engaged in U.S. life.

Unless specifically enrolled in a course of study preparing them for governmental or political professions, international students are not required to take courses or participate in activities that qualify them to enter public life. My dissertation seeks to bridge the gap between the instruction they need and the instruction they receive by

developing a theatre-based teaching tool to introduce international students to the possibilities of civic engagement.

Introducing international students to civic engagement opportunities through theatre has the potential to inspire them to be active citizens. The theatre workshop I have developed is a useful tool in encouraging their civic engagement regardless of whether they return to their country of origin, stay in the U.S., or move to another country altogether.

Fostering Acts of Citizenship

In *Nomadic Citizenship*, performance studies theorist May Joseph recalled her attempts to expressively stage citizenship in the early independent days of Tanzania. She learned that speaking the native language and dancing traditional dances were not enough; what was required was “a sense of historicity in relation to this transitioning place of Tanzanian socialist citizenship” (Joseph 2). She further argues that “citizenship is not organic but it must be acquired through public and psychic participation.” (Joseph 3). According to Joseph, the process of becoming aware of one’s place in the community and in history is a skill which can be learned, and that this awareness is the first step towards civic engagement. I propose that international students are not only capable of learning these skills, but that theatre can be an appropriate teaching tool.

Acts of citizenship and civic engagement take any number of forms. Voting and volunteer work are two obvious expressions of civic engagement, though they are not necessarily accurate indicators of citizenship. Social work scholar Barry Checkoway (2001) suggests additional forms of civic engagement that should be considered when

examining acts of citizenship such as interest in public issues and the ability to argue these beliefs, respect for differences, and the desire to enter political life. None of Checkoway's criteria for gauging civics require legal citizenship status, making them appropriate in my study of theatre as a tool to foster these forms of civic engagement among international students.

Active Citizenship as a Public Act

Active community membership involves operating in a public sphere. Many scholars believe that citizenship is a public act (Kennelly, Maira, Ong and others), and most of them agree that citizenship skills can be acquired through theatre methods (Boal, Bray and Chappell, and others). Jacqueline Kennelly identifies three characteristics of a democratic public sphere where "it nurtures communicative or 'deliberative' exchanges; it fosters plurality; and it combats our collective tendency to become oblivious to injustices" (548). It is apparent that these features of the public sphere do not differentiate between a legal or a liminal citizen. Anyone can be part of it; anyone can participate.

Many scholars believe that theatre can play a role in enhancing a democratic public sphere. For example, in an optimistic spirit, performance studies scholar Jill Dolan wants a democratic public sphere to start in theater departments. She asks, "wouldn't it be exciting, relevant, and educationally stimulating to regularly program town hall meetings in our departments for our students and for our community?" (The Polemics 518). Bray and Chappell believe that using theatre as a method to discuss

citizenship issues would have a goal of transforming "public space, making it more welcoming to people at the margins" (91).

Performance offers a way to expose and interrogate these exclusions. As Jill Dolan writes, in historical moments such as the 'NEA Four' case where four performance artists were denied National Endowment for the Arts grants on the basis of subject matters, "theatre and performance became places where citizenship was redefined," where performance exploring identities implicitly regarded as excluded from full citizenship "was enough to cause one's exile from the category of taxpayer with basic civil rights" (Rehearsing Democracy 4). In my research, the creation of a theater workshop has become my tool to combat this feeling of exclusion and to redefine what it means to be a liminal citizen.

This dissertation identifies international students as liminal citizens and gauges the role of theatre in encouraging them to be civically engaged by creating a model for using applied theatre to 1) make international students aware of the possibilities of inclusion within their host community; and 2) empower them to become active members in it.

My research focuses on creating a workshop to examine citizenship and international students. Performance studies scholar Dwight Conquergood acknowledges the importance of having a practical component in performance studies research by stating, "there is an emergent genre of performance studies scholarship that epitomizes this text-performance hybridity. A number of performance studies-allied scholars create performances as a supplement for their written research" (Performance Studies 318). For

Conquergood and other performance studies scholars, such as Stacy Wolf and Sonja Kuffinec, performance is a tactic of intervention, a place where theory and practice are intertwined. My theatre workshop offered a site for international students where they could perceive themselves in a what performance studies scholar Janelle Reinlet calls a ‘production of social imaginary’ which could act as a “potentially vital role in shaping social change” (Reinlet 289).

Chapter Outlines

Chapter one explores citizenship as performance, covering traditional and alternative citizenship models. I focus on legal citizenship, flexible citizenship, cultural citizenship, global citizenship, and tactical citizenship. These types of citizenship lay the foundation for the introduction of 'liminal citizenship.' I then define international students as liminal citizens and describe the factors that hinder them from being active members in their host communities, such as their academic concerns, language difficulties, and social stigma. Focusing on the International Students Office and orientation programs, I discuss resources currently available for international students that help them transition into their host community.

Chapter two discusses theatre, education and academia. It examines the role of academia and higher education in civic engagement. This chapter includes examples of performance artists in the academy who work on issues of citizenship and civic engagement. The chapter also examines applied theatre as a tool that could be adopted to work on issues of civic engagement. Special attention is paid to the work of Michael

Rohd and Augusto Boal. At the end of the chapter I situate my dissertation in the field of Performance as Public Practice.

Chapter three covers my theatre workshop with international students, beginning with the questions that the workshop wants to answer. The chapter describes the process of organizing and leading the workshop and covers my methodology and pedagogy while leading the workshop. Finally, the chapter presents the workshop process and an analysis of the results.

The conclusion discusses my findings in support of the theory that theatre can be an effective tool in addressing issues of civic engagement. In addition, I offer recommendations for improving ISO orientation programs, extending the role of the ISO, and using the university setting as a site for civic training.

Chapter 1

Liminal Citizenship

“It is argued that the demands of national citizenship should not be denied, but must be combined with a realization that no nation can operate in isolation in today’s world, so that citizenship must contain both national and multinational dimensions” (Cogan qtd. in Kushner et al. 3).

“I find the concept of cultural citizenship helpful. This concept grows out of an ongoing dialogue among Latino/a scholars that connects culture and identity to issues of equality, respect, social rights, and activism. I believe that culture and creativity can be key components of a vibrant democracy—both to affirm commonly held values and to give voice and shape to alternative visions. In my vision for art and progressive social change, cultural and political hierarchies are turned on their side and replaced by participatory cultural and social movements. The deepest change happens when those who have the most at stake—often the poor and excluded—are active participants in the process” (Atlas qtd. in Kushner et al. 76).

Citizenship as Performance

Studying citizenship from a performance studies point of view allows us to perceive citizenship as a construction in process. According to performance studies scholar Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “performance studies takes performance as an organizing concept for the study of a wide range of behavior” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 43). She continues, “The field is particularly attuned to issues of place, personhood, cultural citizenship, and equity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 51). In the same vein, performance studies scholar Charlotte Canning states that citizenship is “not a passive condition one can merely absorb but an identity to be actively pursued and earned” (Canning 46).

In this study, I will demonstrate that theatre workshops can aid international students in actively forming awareness about their positions in their host communities and empower them to claim their citizenship rights as citizens. Theatre workshops with liminal citizens offer a setting wherein they can voice their exclusion, improvise tactics that will help them to overcome that exclusion, and transcend it to become active citizens. If nothing else, theatre will offer them a tool to help them crystallize their awareness of what it means to be a citizen in a host community.

The term performance is used in a wide range of activities: in the arts, in literature, and in social science. Performance studies scholar Marvin Carlson states,

the recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as ‘performance,’ or at least all activities carried out with a consciousness of itself. The difference between doing and performing, according to this way of thinking, would seem to lie not in the frame of theatre versus real life but in an attitude – we may do actions unthinkingly, but when we think about them, this introduces a consciousness that gives them the quality of performance. (Carlson 4)

Quoting ethnolinguist Richard Bauman, Carlson argues, “All performance involves a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action” (qtd. in Carlson 5). Carlson continues by stating that this comparison is made by

an observer of the action. In applying Carlson's notion of liminal citizenship, for example, international students observing an election in the U.S. compare the U.S. election process to the election system in their home countries.

To transform liminal citizens from passive observation to active participation, I advocate introducing them to civic engagement by means of theatre workshops. This allows them to become aware of their own performances while they are practicing civic engagement; they are performing acts of civic engagement for themselves in the theatre workshops as a rehearsal to do the same publicly.

Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor lists behavior activities that could be studied as performance. She notes that "civic obedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, for example, are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere. To understand these as performance suggests that performance also functions as an epistemology" (Taylor 3). She continues, "performances [...] may not give us access and insight into another culture, but they certainly tell us a great deal about our desire for access, and reflect the politics of our interpretations" (6).

Taylor claims that performance could be used as a "methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events as performance" (Taylor 3). Anthropologist Victor Turner claims that performance becomes a tool that allows populations to understand each other through their performances (qtd. In Taylor 4).

International students can use performance practice of their own embodied behavior to absorb as well as transmit knowledge, benefiting both themselves and their

host community. In other words, they empower themselves by performing civically; and the host community benefits by gaining new insight into diverse cultural perspectives.

When international students make the decision to travel to the U.S. to continue their studies, they assume the role of spectators with a desire and an opportunity to learn about the U.S. community and culture. However, their position often shifts upon arrival in the United States. The moment the international student receives his or her student visa, the student is told by his or her international advisor that he/she is an alien. This verbal utterance is confirmed by a legal document describing the international student with the same word. Philosopher John Langshaw Austin refers to situations where “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (Austin 6). International students then, according to Austin’s theory of performativity, become entitled to act as aliens. What’s more, international students are often viewed as novelties by natives who watch their behaviors as performance. This paves the way for their liminality in their host community.

In the context of this study, I use the term ‘performance’ to address citizenship, both as a conceptual tool and as a social practice that is enacted or has the potential to be enacted through civic engagement. By putting performance theory, theatre studies, academia, and activism into one unit, I use the theatre workshop model as a tool to boost international students’ active citizenship performance.

Citizenship

The concept of citizenship dates back to the ancient Greeks (Aristotle 1984). In recent times, however, globalization has given rise to new theories about citizenship. As the number of students, refugees, undocumented workers and mobile professionals has increased, old ways of looking at citizenship are no longer adequate to describe how individuals relate both to their home country and to their new country of residence.

One vital consequence of spending a significant amount of time away from one's country of origin is a sense of liminality, of belonging neither in one's home country nor in one's country of residence. This chapter will review the literature and examine theories of citizenship and liminality as it applies to a specific group: international students.

Legal Citizenship

Legal citizenship is tied to nationality. Political theorist Judith Shklar (2001) makes this connection and restricts civic activism to political practice. She states, "citizenship as nationality is a legal condition; it does not refer to any specific political activity. Good citizenship as political participation, on the other hand, concentrates on political practices, and it is applied to the people of a community who are consistently engaged in public affairs" (5). Political practice, as Shklar explains later, is not limited to voting on Election Day; it goes far beyond that to include a gamut of activities, from serving on juries to speaking out against injustice. Possessing legal citizenship, however,

does not mean automatically being an active citizen. Many citizens simply do not care about making any effort to be active in the public sphere; many do not even vote.

Legal citizenship does not guarantee automatic protection or equal status for all citizens. Sunaina Maira states that there "were 700 reported hate crimes against South Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and Muslim Americans, including four homicides (two involving South American victims), in three weeks following 9/11/01" (232).

In the United States, legal citizenship is granted by two means: birth and naturalization (*US Constitution* 2008). The process of naturalization is a complicated one, and most of the questions asked in the final interview test the applicant's familiarity with the names and functions of U.S. governmental agencies. The naturalization exam does nothing to introduce the applicant to his or her civic rights and duties (*U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*). For example, these questions are typical of the ones asked on the exam:

- What is the economic system in the United States?
- Name one branch or part of the government.
- How many U.S. senators are there?

These three questions are representative of the type of questions asked on the exam.

There is no single question that gauges the future citizen's willingness to be an active part of the fabric of the U.S. community, indicating a lack of relationship between the questions on the naturalization exam and civil rights or civic engagement.

Liminal Citizenship

Within the context of this study, I define a 'liminal citizen' as any person who lives in a host community for a significant period of time without becoming a legal citizen of that community. I base my definition on the work of scholars Homi Bhabha (1994), Charles Lee (2007), and Gloria Anzaldua (1987), who analyze different kinds of non-conventional citizenship, and anthropologist Victor Turner, whose concept of liminality is discussed below. My definition is further shaped by my personal experience as a post 9/11 international graduate student in the United States.

Liminality According to Turner

Victor Turner's 'liminality' is an important term that helped me coin the phrase 'liminal citizenship.' Turner offers this description: "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (*The Ritual Process* 95). Turner reports that "their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint" (*The Ritual Process* 95). Turner's description shows that liminal members' behaviors can often be characterized as compliant, submissive, and obedient.

Other Ways of Describing Citizenship

Scholars such as Chakravartty (2000), Ong (1999), Maira (2004), Rocco (2004), Wingebach (1998) and others began examining different types

of citizenship when they felt that the traditional concept of citizenship was no longer sufficient to address issues of relationship between the citizen and the government. They have identified flexible citizenship, cultural citizenship, global citizenship and tactical citizenship as viable perspectives on citizenship. Each of these is similar in concept to liminal citizenship, revealing different civic attributes that might be applied to liminal citizenship.

Flexible Citizenship

Aihwa Ong identifies flexible citizenship as "a concept that emerged to describe the experience of migrants who use transnational links to provide political or material resources not available to them within a single nation-state" (*Flexible Citizenship* 30). This description narrows the reasons for immigration to civic or economic benefits.

Ong formulated his understanding by studying the transnational Chinese public in the West. His classic work *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (1999) offers insight into the concept and its implication. In it, he defines flexible citizenship as "flexible practices, strategies, and disciplines associated with transnational capitalism" that create new "modes of subject making and new kinds of valorized subjectivity" (*Flexible Citizenship* 17-19). Ong builds his definition of flexible citizenship on his observation of the implications of Chinese transnational practices, examining these new complex practices of citizenship in the host country in relationship to the authoritarian political culture in China. It is evident from Ong's definition that professional and academic mobility engendered by capitalism is a major factor in forming

flexible citizenship. Imbedded in Ong's definition is the connection between migration and flexible citizenship.

Paula Chakravartty proposes flexible citizenship as an alternative way of looking at citizenship in a study in which she examines a new attitude among Indian workers in the United States which rejects a total separation between their Indian-ness and their new status as North Americans. In “The Emigration of High-Skilled Indian Workers to the United States: Flexible Citizenship and India's Information Economy,” a study focusing on highly skilled Indian workers in the U.S., Chakravartty examines the civic relationship between Indians overseas and their indigenous Indian political culture. Chakravartty argues that the practices of flexible citizenship are affected by both the host and the indigenous country. The U.S. interest in investing in Indian labor has been an important factor in shaping these practices. The political practices of these flexible citizens are apparent on two levels: 1) addressing inter-community racial politics in the U.S., while 2) simultaneously justifying intra-community class and caste politics across national boundaries. Chakravartty makes it clear that flexible citizenship is a concept which has emerged in a time when emigration does not mean permanent departure from one's home country.

Chakravartty's and Ong's work laid the foundation for my exploration of liminal citizens. Both flexible and liminal citizens share the same social dynamic, especially when they are trying to negotiate their positions as both residents in their host country and legal citizens in their country of origin.

Flexible citizenship is not to be confused with dual citizenship. Dual citizenship provides legal citizenship in two countries. Flexible citizens might acquire legal citizenship in their host country; but they understand their citizenship in relationship to their original country as well as to their host country. Sunaina Maira offers the example of Muslim immigrant youth as flexible citizens who understand citizenship "in relation to the U.S. as well as one more nation in South Asia" (225). In addition to a material connection maintained through financial support in either direction, a cultural connection to one's original home country is preserved through popular culture such as films, DVDs, and satellite TV. The internet also provides instantaneous information from one's home country, providing an immediate and often continuous connection.

According to Maira (2004), most flexible citizens travel for two reasons: labor and education. Through her field study in Cambridge, MA among South Asian Muslim youth, Maira found that labor and education offer the only two settings where significant interaction occurs between Muslims and non-Muslims. Outside these two settings, Muslim youth usually spend time with other immigrants (Maira 2004). However, this lack of interaction does not prevent young immigrants from being proud of being new U.S. citizens and, at the same time, identifying themselves with their home country. This is, in essence, flexible citizenship in its simplest state.

Within the category of flexible citizens are international students, liminal citizens tinged with flexible citizenship features. Spending years of study in a host community

does not mean permanent departure from home, and most international students still feel strong civic ties to their countries of origin (Mori 2000).

Global and Complex Citizenship

Global citizenship is another term that has recently come into use in response to the rapid changes which are happening in our world. A global citizen “is a member of the wider community of humanity, the world or a similar whole which is wider than that of a nation-state” (Dower and Williams 2002).

In “Justice After Liberalism: Democracy and Global Citizenship,” Ed Wingenbach introduces the idea of global citizen as a reaction to traditional, nationalistic citizenship. He writes, “Nationalistic citizenship contributes to the continuation of a particular construction of social reality, while global citizenship opens up new transformative possibilities” (160). These transformative possibilities imply recognition of cross-cultural responsibilities for our world.

Citizenship studies scholar Bernard P. Dauenhauer, in *Citizenship in a Fragile World*, advocates what he considers citizens’ responsibility towards the world, and not limited only toward their immediate community. He calls this allegiance ‘complex citizenship.’ Complex citizenship “requires that those who practice it recognize that they have political responsibilities not only to members of their own society but also to humanity as a whole” (Dauenhauer 2). Both global citizenship and complex citizenship transcend the traditional notion of citizenship which is based on loyalty for one country, and perceive the citizen as part of the universe with responsibilities toward humanity in general. This deviation from the traditional way of looking at citizenship and the implied

responsibility of the individual to the world, regardless of national affiliation, links these types of citizenships to the liminal citizen.

Cultural Citizenship

Cultural citizenship is defined as preserving the right of individuals to continue to maintain their cultural specificity while contributing to a participatory democracy (Rocco (2004), Maira (2004), Ong (1996)). The term originally referred specifically to the Chicanos' unique position in the U.S. While many Chicanos preserve proud cultural ties to their roots in Mexico, as evidenced in their language, food and arts, their civic engagement is within the perception of their own U.S. citizenship.

Cultural citizenship has also been used by scholars to describe other races and ethnicities such as South Asians and Chinese (Maira 2004 and Ong 1996). This expansion in the definition of cultural citizenship has been generated by globalization and internationalization.

Lok Siu defines cultural citizenship as "behaviors, discourses, and practices that give meaning to citizenship as living experience" (9). Siu conceives citizenship as an expression of the personal and social fabric and not as civic rights or duties. In other words, Siu perceives citizenship as a personal relationship to the social construct of the society and not as a legal bond between the individual and the state. Cultural citizenship also refers to finding one's place in relationship to the power dynamics of the society.

Practicing cultural citizenship has never been more dangerous than it is now in the U.S. since the Patriot Act of 2001 exposes any citizen or non-citizen who does not fit into the category of 'normative,' as defined by the Act. For example, according the Patriot

Act, any person who identifies herself/himself culturally as Middle Eastern is under threat of interrogation without any proof that he or she constitutes a threat to the public. Under the rubric of the 'War on Terror,' the very civil rights that have characterized society in the U.S. have been devalued to the point that governmental practices such as profiling, surveillance, or detention of any 'suspects' have become accepted and are considered necessary measures to maintain public safety. Even legal citizenship has not protected its holders from being interrogated under the Patriot Act. It is clear that these practices widen the cultural, religious, social and political gaps within the fabric of the U.S. society.

In this particular time, cultural citizenship can provide a much needed counterattack against these attempts of exclusion (Shifting Politics 2007). Settings for such often timid counterattacks have been practiced in "cultural institutions like museums, schools, and neighborhood initiatives which are developing various concrete and creative projects to expand cultural and artistic participation. Aiming both to democratize culture and to use culture activities to develop social bonds" (Shifting Politics 3). However, these attempts are by no means enough to help counterbalance and restore the loss of freedom of cultural identity destroyed after the enactment of the Patriot Act in 2001.

Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's definition of cultural citizenship as having "the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense" (Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy 402) supports my understanding of liminal

citizenship where being different simply by virtue of one's birthplace need not exclude the citizen from belonging. Rosaldo explores changes that can be effected in academic institutions to achieve this utopian goal. He argues for a cultural change on two levels: curricular change and institutional change. The curricular changes include the addition of reading materials that give voice to marginal groups. Institutional changes include giving voice to traditionally overlooked disciplines such as feminist and ethnic studies.

Sociologist Margaret L. Andersen (1987) in "Changing the Curriculum in Higher Education" makes another call for a change in the curriculum to reflect the multicultural aspects of U.S. society.

Across the Atlantic, cultural citizenship is also examined for specific reasons related to the European Union and the emerging need to create shared common ground for a new European citizenship. Researcher Juan Delgado-Moreira (1997) echoes Rocco's call for the right to be culturally different yet still able to participate in a democratic sphere. Both of these scholars see cultural citizenship as an advantage that can both enrich the democratic process and subvert the exclusion factor.

Practicing civic engagement does not have to mean fostering acts of inclusion and becoming part of the 'melting pot' which can lead to erosion of one's cultural identity. Cultural citizenship becomes an important concept to consider when marginal people are expected to be part of the public, yet do not want to lose their cultural heritage. When liminal citizens enact their citizenship, whether by being a part of the public sphere or by simple civic engagement, they enact their restored behavior. "Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be

rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence” (Schechner *Between Theatre and Anthropology* 35). If we accept Schechner’s division between the act and the social/personal background of the performer, then liminal citizens become disconnected from their original personhood while performing their citizenship, an assumption that I will try to subvert while introducing liminal citizens to civic engagement. My theatre workshop was designed to empower them to be part of a public sphere while maintaining their original identities. The theatre format of the workshop offered them a site “patronized by consensual community of citizen-spectators who come together at stagings of the social imaginary in order to consider and experience affirmation, contestation, and reworking of various material and discursive practices pertinent to the constitution of a democratic society” (Reinelt 286).

By bringing fresh perspectives and original voices to their host communities, international students present an excellent example of cultural citizens who have much to offer their host communities. If they are encouraged to practice their cultural identity, they will help to unfold the multicultural potentials of their host communities and thus enhance the democratic process where every voice is heard, even the voice of the marginal and the liminal. Conversely, by not encouraging or requiring liminal citizens to infuse U.S. life with their cultural specificity, their very presence undermines the democratic principles that the U.S. espouses.

Tactical Citizenship

No discussion of citizenship would be complete without noting the existence of undocumented citizens and the role they play within their communities. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha uses the term 'undocumented citizens' in order to refer to people who are residing, and often working, in a country other than their own without the documentation required to give them legal status. Laborers and service workers make up the majority of these undocumented citizens.

Bhabha compares them to citizens as "almost the same but not quite" (6). In other words, undocumented and legal citizens are members of the same community, yet they are not treated equally. An undocumented citizen may visually appear indistinguishable from a legal citizen, but his or her civil rights and responsibilities are in no way comparable to those of a legal citizen.

Political scientist Charles Lee's work on undocumented citizens introduced the concept of 'tactical citizenship.' Lee describes undocumented citizens thus: "the undocumented subject is neither 'in' nor 'out,' neither official legal citizen nor 'unaffiliated' alien, but both a member and a stranger, both a citizen and an outsider" (6). Lee's description of undocumented citizens is more optimistic than that of Bhabha who claims that it is difficult for them to become civically engaged. Undocumented citizens live on the margin of their communities, they have no certain positions, they function in their host community but they keep strong connections with their country of origin. They lead two lives, both here and there.

Charles Lee's doctoral dissertation *Deviant Cosmopolitanism: Transgressive Globalization and Traveling Citizenship* (2007) explores several groups of 'illegitimate' travelers: a) undocumented domestics; b) sweatshop workers; c) global sex workers and transsexuals; and d) suicide-bombing terrorists. Lee suggests conceiving of them as global traveling agents who can help us reshape our ideas about citizenship. In another study, Lee examines undocumented workers and investigates their tactics in practicing citizenship (Lee 2007).

Lee argues that undocumented citizens are able to find creative ways to participate in their host communities. He acknowledges a distinct difference between what legal and tactical citizens can do. Lee lists civic activities such as voting, serving on a jury, or running for elected office, that are restricted to formal citizenship. He notes that while tactical citizens do not have a comparable activity to rulemaking, they can still campaign and deliberate in town hall meetings. He lists alternative methods such as protesting and manipulating spaces of power relations in the everyday that undocumented citizens use to practice their citizenship, activities which do not require legal citizenship.

Citizenship Skills

Citizenship skills tend to be general and not specific enough to make U.S. skills, for example, distinctive from Tanzanian or Chinese citizenship skills. Performance studies scholar May Joseph, for example, notes that performing citizenship in Tanzania means participation on both the personal and collective level in public sphere. According to Joseph, participation takes the form of constructing affiliation both formally and

informally (1999). In modern China, on the other hand, citizenship means popular participation in political and economic activities (Zarrow 1997). In *What It Means to be an American* (1992), political philosopher Michael Walzer enumerates general citizenship skills: loyalty, service, civility, tolerance, and participation in political life. Theatre educator Joe Norris (2004) identified these general citizenship skills: negotiations, consensus ability, cooperation, group decision, listening to one another, debating expressed points of view, and action conceived by collective. As the reader will notice, none of these skills are related to legal citizenship practices, such as voting or jury duty. In general, all of these skills are instead related to creating active community membership and can be practiced by any citizen: flexible, global, cultural, tactical or legal. Further, the practice of any of these skills can reduce the feelings of liminality.

International Students as Liminal Citizens

Along with the work of Bhabha and Lee, feminist scholar Gloria Anzaldua's work has also been integral to my understanding of the precarious citizenship held by international students. Anzaldua describes the mestizo who "continually walks out of one culture and into another, because he/she is in all cultures at the same time" (79). The mestizo does not fully belong to a particular culture and thus he or she encompasses all of them.

I return to anthropologist Victor Turner and his use of the term 'liminal' to describe a marginalized entity that holds potential forms (1969). Influenced by these scholars and others, I define liminal citizens as *individuals who live in a host community*

for a significant period of time without being legal citizens and with the potential of being civically engaged in their host communities.

The description of liminal entities can be applied to international students in the U.S. They are physically present in a host community while they are constantly aware that they do not belong there, by virtue of a number of reminders ranging from cultural or linguistic differences to a lack of civic rights and privileges. They feel they belong to a place where they no longer live; they are "neither here nor there." They are liminal.

International students often find themselves overwhelmed with challenges related to cultural differences, social habits and language difficulties, causing them to feel isolated and vulnerable. As a result, many become passive in their host community. This passivity may be characterized by 'politeness,' which is to say they are always obeying the law, possibly out of fear of deportation.

According to international studies scholar Schmitt *et al.* feelings of exclusion cause international students to form their own groups and cluster together with fellow international students who share the same feelings of exclusion from the host community. Schmitt *et al.*, report that "people experiencing discrimination are not likely simply to cling to whatever social categories they have available to them. Instead, they identify with a group that is relevant to the discrimination they experience and the context in which they find themselves" (10). This relevant group is most often students from their same culture. Instead of helping them assimilate into their new host community, these new groups can actually increase international students' feelings of exclusion from their

host community by serving as a comfortable buffer between the student and the host community.

The Politics of Educating International Students

The U.S. government actively recruits international students, who are defined as “students who are neither U.S. citizens, immigrants, nor refugees, thus excluding permanent residents” (*Students on the Move* 3). On its website, the U.S. State Department lists foreign leaders who studied in U.S. institutions including, among others, King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan (Georgetown University), Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili (Columbia University), or former French President Jacques Chirac (Harvard). This gesture is intended to indicate how important international students are for U.S. policy. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, “every foreign student attending one of our universities represents an opportunity to enhance democracy in America and to strengthen the cause of freedom abroad. Our citizens learn from the different perspectives that foreign students bring to our classrooms” (*Measures of a Global Campus* 17). Rice’s statement emphasizes the role of international students in enhancing democracy in the U.S. Her speech, however, stayed within the realm of generalization. While Rice suggests that international students enhance democracy in the States, she does not clarify exactly what that means or how U.S. educational institutions are helping international students to be part of the democratic process. Rice talked about the role of international students in ‘strengthening the cause of freedom abroad’ which may imply that they are going to be trained to be civically active. Nevertheless, unless

they are enrolled in a program specifically designed to prepare them for governmental or political professions, international students do not receive academic or practical training in issues of civic education, international democracy, and civic engagement. This lack of training is prevalent in most U.S. institutions.

Currently, there more than half a million international students studying in the U.S. During the 2005-2006 academic year there were 564,766 international students studying at U.S. universities (*Measures of a Global Campus* 19). The State of Texas supports having international students in Texas, and UT alone had 5,395 during the 2005-2006 academic year. An excerpt from The State of Texas House Resolution Supporting International Education No.143, May 17, 2004 states that

the house of representatives of the 78th Texas legislature, 4th called session, finds that international education is an essential component of the bright future of the great State of Texas; and, be it further RESOLVED, that the Texas House of Representatives supports and encourages international education to ensure the students and future leaders are prepared to meet the challenges of global society. (*Measures of a Global Campus* 17)

Like the emphasis put on the U.S. State Department website on preparing international leaders, there is also an emphasis in the Texas legislative report on preparing leaders of foreign countries and preparing international students to be competent in a global world.

The large number of international students and the importance of their education and experience here in the U.S., as stated by Rice, raise these questions:

(1) Are international students being well prepared academically, culturally, civically?

(2) Are international students being provided with a well-rounded experience in the U.S.?

In order to answer these questions, we must first consider the challenges that international students face.

Understanding International Students' Social and Academic Challenges

There are many factors that prevent international students from being civically engaged. The culture shock that most international students experience when they move to the United States is usually associated with a feeling of social loss. Researchers L. Hayes and H. Lin describe this feeling of loss by stating that "in moving to another country for the first time, international students experience a profound sense of loss. As a consequence, they often feel less confident, sense unremitting tension, take less time off, enjoy it even less, and become confused how to have fun" (Hayes and Lin 8). This feeling of loss hinders international students from becoming socially active. Social activity in turn, is a major component of being civically active. "The general loss takes the form of a social loss which leads in turn to behavioral dysfunctions in new cultural contexts" (Heikinheimo and Shute 1986). Behavioral dysfunction among international students can form another obstacle against their civic activities (Mori 2000).

Culture shock can also be experienced as personal loss. Many international students come from collective communities where the identity of the individual is part of the larger shared identity. Reflective of this culture of shared identity are students from India and China. Indian students constitute the highest percentage of international students (13.5%) of total enrolled international students in 2005/2006 academic year, followed by Chinese students (11.1%) (*Report on International Educational Exchange* 2007). Most of the enrolled international students are from non-Western countries with a specific cultural heritage that surrounds the individual with a social support system. They come to the U.S. and are expected to act individually without their social support system; they experience a sense of loss which leads to alienation and not caring about their host community; they become civically and socially inactive (Hayes and Lin 2001). Social psychologists John Dillard and Grace Chisolm (1983) describe the changes that international students go through by saying that international students "experience difference in climate, food, social values, modes of behavior, and verbal and nonverbal communications. These experiences often result in a loss of cultural and personal identity" (Dillard and Chisolm 102).

International students face additional challenges related to their beliefs, ideas and thoughts. Social Psychologist Susan Cross notes these changes and relates them to the fact that international students are immersed in a new culture. She states "immersion in a new culture often challenges one's belief, values, self-values, and the world view. The new-comer is confronted by new information and patterns of behavior and must learn different ways of thinking and behaving" (Cross 676). Dillard and Chisolm argue that the

feeling of loss may lead international students to attempt regaining "their once familiar worlds and self-identities through forming microcosms or subgroups that provide viable support system" (Dillard and Chisolm 102). One way international students can move past this feeling of loss is by creating channels of communication with and within their host communities.

International students need help to overcome the sense of loss and to help them create connection with their host community (Hayes and Lyn 2001). The counseling centers which exist on most university campuses stand out as obvious options; however, international students may refrain from visiting the counseling center for cultural reasons. According to Dillard and Chisolm, international students "underutilize professional counseling because of a strong adherence to their cultural value orientation that restrains them from seeking professional help, psychological stress within those cultures is usually handled within a socio-cultural context by family members and peers" (Dillard and Chisolm 102). Before coming to the United States, some international students could discuss problematic issues with their families. Upon arrival at their new university, however, they must find a way to adjust to the new social system without the help of their families.

One common coping mechanism when confronted with these potentially overwhelming changes is for international students to form their own communities in an effort to create another, more familiar pattern of social life that feels similar to their

country of origin. This often results in a failure to integrate with their host community and, consequently, limits their desire to engage civically.

Upon arrival in the U.S., international students no longer have social support from their families/friends at home and have not yet formed an adequate replacement for their loss. Often the only person that they have direct connection with is the international student advisor, but international students' advisors are not prepared to do social counseling.

Impediments to Civic Engagement

Language Difficulty

There are many factors that hinder interaction between international students and members of their host communities. A major factor is language. Canadian scholars Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) have found that mastering language can be an important factor in social adjustment. Language is certainly critical in understanding matters of civic importance, issues that can have a direct effect on everything from garbage pick-up to visa extensions. Without language competency, it is impossible to fully understand and participate in civic activities, to voice one's concerns, or even to defend oneself should the occasion arise.

For international students, the language barrier is twofold because they must learn both the conversational language needed for social communication, and the formal language required in order to succeed academically. Confusion arises when formal

and/or conversational language is used inappropriately or at the wrong time, placing the student in a potentially awkward or humiliating position.

Researchers Richard Hayes and Heng-Rue Lin found that "international students who reported that their use of English was adequate on arrival in the United States were significantly better adapted than those who did not" (Hayes and Lin 12). Heikinheimo and Shute, on the other hand, note the importance of cultural adjustment to language.

Isolated students also reported more academic problems caused by their poor English skills. Thus, it seems as a student's use of English language improves, social and academic adjustment becomes less of a problem and cultural learning and adjustment easier. Cultural adjustment problems are complex, however, and it seems that no quick and simple solutions can be discovered to overcome cultural barriers between foreign students and their host society. (Heikinheimo and Shute 405)

Even though the authors claim that there is no quick and simple solution, it is evident that they are linking many of the problems that international students face to their poor language skills.

As an international student, I appreciate the role of language as a key to better social and academic adjustment. However, I believe that perceived discrimination can play a significant role in creating a resistance towards learning the language of the host country. When international students feel discriminated against by locals, they may react to this by not making enough effort to learn the language of their host country. Virginia

P. Collier, a language education specialist, notes a relationship between perceived prejudice and learning a new language:

Community or regional social patterns such as prejudice and discrimination expressed towards groups or individuals in personal and professional contexts can influence students' achievement in school, as well as societal patterns such as subordinate status of a minority group or acculturation vs. assimilation forces at work. These factors can strongly influence the student's response to the new language, affecting the process positively only when the student is in a socioculturally supportive environment. (2)

Stigmas and stereotypes

Hayes' and Lin's research recognizes stigma as a factor that hinders international students from interacting with their host peers. They state that "different students will encounter different prejudices depending on their own specific stigmatized characteristics" (Hayes and Lin 11). Most international students are the targets for subtle or direct discrimination at some point during their academic careers. Heikinheimo and Shute report that "all except 4 of the 46 students interviewed (91%) believed that there was racial discrimination in Canada. According to most of these students, discrimination is subtle or silent, but it does exist" (403). Heikinheimo and Shute found that isolated international students "reported more problems related to cultural, academic, and social adjustment than did students who had interactions with Canadians" (Heikinheimo and Shute 404).

Perceived discrimination, whether subtle or direct, affects the student's experience and can discourage him or her from becoming an active citizen in the host community. Social psychologist Julie-Spencer Rodgers asserts,

individual stereotypic beliefs about international students were significantly correlated with overall attitudes and behaviors (social contact) toward the group. The negative evaluative content of participants' individual stereotypic beliefs was strongly related to prejudicial attitudes and social avoidance of the group. (640)

In my own experience as a Syrian born in the Middle East, I have been stereotyped as coming from a wealthy Muslim family who lives in a tent. Further, I have been stigmatized as a potential terrorist based solely on my nationality. While some assumptions are annoying or laughable, others carry a very dangerous potential.

Academic Concerns

Language and academic achievement are closely interrelated. Many international students report language difficulties as their major academic problem (Heikinheimo and Shute 1986). A recent study showed that academic achievement and civic engagement are not mutually exclusive (Boston *et al.* 2005). According to the results of the Preliminary Survey I conducted with international students, however, academics could be perceived as an obstacle against civic engagement when coupled with high academic expectations and language difficulties. Preliminary Survey results showed that international students believed that their presence in the U.S. is solely to study and to

succeed academically. According to them, any other work that does not fit into their academic regimen would be considered a waste of time.

Virtual Civic Engagement

New opportunities for civic engagement have developed in the internet age. Much of the interaction between citizens and government that once took the form of a physical activity can now occur via the internet. President Emeritus of Public Technology Institute (PTI) Costis Toregas (2003) names many civic activities that can be done online. Some of these are official tasks such as paying taxes or renewing a driver's license, while other activities take the form of personal initiatives, such as online petitioning, polling, blogging, or even sending mass emails regarding political, social, or economic issues.

This new format for civic interaction has found many supporters because "the variety of information and telecommunication technologies through which a government can connect directly with its citizens and enhance service delivery provide sustainable economic development, and safeguard democracy" (Toregas 235). While e-government websites are restricted to existing governmental entities, the boom of the internet has allowed the spread of what may be called 'alternative e-government,' namely individuals' or non-governmental organizations' websites. These websites allow people to practice their citizenship online by engaging in such activities as debating relevant issues, fact-finding, or contributing to causes.

Though this new method of communication between citizens and the government is ubiquitous, there is no concrete answer as to whether it actually activates citizens. While on one hand it makes it easier for them to contact officials, on the other it removes face-to-face interaction, making it a more passive act. In this context, citizenship becomes a private act rather than a public gesture. This is not necessarily a detrimental change in how citizenship is enacted but it is a development that is worth noting.

The spread of the internet helps in collapsing the physical borders that exist among nations. Citizens in privileged countries who have better access to the internet perceive the world as a global village. Some students from privileged countries begin to work on what I call 'global activism.' These students, as they absorb the massive amounts of information available, begin to care about international problems the same way they care about domestic problems. They begin to think in terms of global citizenship values where forming bonds with citizens of other countries is based on humanity rather than nationality (Dower and Williams 2002). Evidence of civic engagement on a global scale can be found in student organizations that support international causes such as collecting donations for children in Darfur.

The relationship between the internet and civic engagement is relevant here to explain one reason why international students are less civically engaged on the local level. The internet allows international students to communicate with their home countries while they are studying abroad. It is relatively easy for an international student to practice citizenship by communicating with governmental websites in his or her own

country, by responding to blogs that discuss social or political issues, or by simply reading the daily newspaper. These activities have both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, all these activities are civic in nature and they allow international students to feel that they are fulfilling their civic duties to their home countries. On the other hand, these activities may make them feel less compelled to practice their civic rights in their host communities because they are already practicing their citizenship virtually with their home countries.

The International Students Office

The role of the International Students Office (ISO) should be seminal in preparing international students for a well rounded experience while they are in the U.S. However, since the 9/11 attacks, international students face more paperwork, more security checks, and more bureaucratic difficulties before they can obtain a student visa and enter the United States. Much of this increased paperwork is done directly through the ISO in most U.S. universities and has weakened the international student advisor's ability to serve as a link between the international students and their host community. One new post 9/11 development is the introduction of the Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), a computer system designed to process the visa documents of international students (Warwick 583). Dealing with SEVIS has not only shifted the focus of international students advisors from offering advising for international students, SEVIS has actually made more difficult for international students to obtain their visas to the U.S. Library and Information Studies scholar Shelly Warwick states:

Current regulations require students to request a visa while in their home country and to pay a fee of \$100.00 upon application for a visa. The General Accounting Office reported, in February 2004, that it took the average science student sixty-seven days from his/her date of application to receive a visa. Students in the sciences and engineering were originally required to reapply for a visa each year, but in February 2005, the State Department moved to extend those visas for up to four years. (Warwick 575)

Such a procedure makes the international students feel unwelcome even before they arrive in the U.S., and contributes to students' feelings of exclusion and being under suspicion.

Resources for International Students at The University of Texas at Austin

International Office

International Student and Scholars Services at The University of Texas at Austin coordinates and administers programs that serve international students, faculty and visiting scholars at The University of Texas at Austin. It was in that office that I hoped to find answers to the questions I raised earlier in this chapter concerning the overall level of performance by U.S. academic institutions in providing a balanced academic and cultural experience for international students. I also hoped to get a better perspective on introducing international students to opportunities for civic engagement in Austin and UT. To that end, I interviewed Teri Albrecht, director of International Student & Scholar Services at UT-Austin. I started by asking her about the mission of the International

Office and how it translates in terms of getting the international students involved in civic engagement. Her answer focused on the role of the International Office and its mission. The mission, according to Albrecht, is to “help students who come here to transform their lives to be better individuals and better global citizens” (Albrecht 2007).

Albrecht linked the ISO’s mission to a global intercultural context. She focused on preparing students to be active citizens in any country they live in. “We want to be able to provide all the different aspects of an experience, so that a student can -- whatever their plans are, if they’re going to live in the United States, or if they’re going to go back to their home country or live somewhere else that they’ve been equipped with understanding different cultures and interacting with different cultures, and we truly feel it’s our mission of inter-cultural education” (Albrecht 2007). Although Albrecht’s discourse sounded promising, she did not address any practical tactics of how the international office could achieve these goals.

I then asked her about the types of opportunities for civic engagement that international students might have at UT or in Austin. Her response focused on volunteerism, saying, “thinking more about becoming more civically involved, would be working harder to get students involved in volunteering in the community” (Albrecht 2007). She did not offer any suggestions on how to achieve this goal even after I asked the question again.

She did mention one form of civic engagement offered through the International Office, a program designed to integrate international students into their communities.

The Host Family Program matches international students with a U.S. host family, not to live with but to spend some time with on the weekend or have dinner with in order to better understand the lifestyle in the U.S. Albrecht mentioned that the need for such a program grew after international student advisors reported that international students might spend years in the U.S. without visiting a local family.

The conversation with Albrecht made me aware of the complexity of my project and how ambitious it is to ask international student to be active in their community when many of them spend their years of study never visiting U.S. homes. After meeting with her, and after examining the ISO websites at Florida State University, University of Michigan, and Emerson College, I concluded that U.S. academic institutions work diligently to provide a successful academic experience for international students. However, they are not working enough on providing a civic experience for international students.

Orientation Programs

Orientation programs typically offer two major types of activities. The first is aimed at preparing students to be successful academically. Students meet and interact with faculty members as a way to lessen the fear of the unknown and help prepare them for classes. The other is aimed at preparing students to successfully adjust and be more involved in their host communities by offering workshops to teach them practical skills for living in the U.S.

New students are usually given an opportunity to interact closely with faculty. Faculty members are invited to the orientation programs for international students in order to give useful tips to incoming students. However, orientation programs should include other activities that go beyond the campus life. Most of the new students are not familiar with the new environment, its culture, the history of the institution they are enrolled in, or the politics of the city they live in. Even though I recognize the importance of giving international students an opportunity to meet with faculty, I feel that it is happening at the expense of other activities that could ease the transition to their new city and introduce opportunities for civic activity during their course of study.

Case Study: Orientation Programs at The University of Texas-Austin

In order to be clear about what kind of information is offered during an orientation session, I attended a session at The University of Texas at Austin. The goal of the orientation as explained by Teri Albrecht is to "get them quickly adjusted to UT and into the United States [...] really to equip them with some survival skills" (Albrecht 2007). Some of the survival skills that she mentioned are how to apply for a credit card, how to get cell phone, how to open a bank account, etc.

Major information disseminated through the orientation workshops include:

1. General Information

- (a) Course registration
- (b) Services offered by the university

- (c) Banking
- (d) Public transportation

2. Getting Around Austin

- (a) Wheels 101- Buying a Car
- (b) Knowing the Law
- (c) Legal Services for Students
- (d) Health Insurance & University Health Center Services
- (e) Personal Safety
- (f) Banking and Finances
- (g) University Federal Credit Union
- (h) Employment and Taxes

3. Information about the University of Texas at Austin

- (a) Explore Internship and Career Options
- (b) How to Use the Course Schedule
- (c) How to Register
- (d) Buying Books Online
- (e) Be the Perfect Student

(f) Tips for Academic Success

(g) Academic Integrity

(h) Using UT Libraries

(i) Using UT Computers

(g) Get Involved at UT

4. Making Connections and Creating a Community among International Students

(a) Movie night

(b) Ice Cream Social

(c) Trip to Zilker Park

(d) Baseball Game

Some of these information sessions, such as ‘knowing the law’ or ‘getting involved at UT,’ could arguably be considered training in civic engagement. However, the time that is given to address these issues is not sufficient, and the kind of information that is presented is limited to factual information that does not entice international students to become involved civically.

It is interesting to note the amount of time allotted to each activity. While all activities in sections one through three, *i.e.* the practical skills, are delivered in a week or

two at the most, the information in section four, social activities is an ongoing project that extends over the student's life at UT. There is a vast amount of information given to the new international student right at the start of his/her experience in a new country and community; it can be overwhelming. I argue for the need to revisit all the information again at the beginning of each semester.

In order to evaluate the kind of information that is offered specifically for UT students, I explored the content and form of activities held by the International Office (orientation, seminars, etc.). I focused my findings on activities that can be looked at as civic engagement activities.

An example of this kind of information is found in a session entitled: "Knowing the Law: Staying Out of Trouble. Understanding Some of your Legal Rights in the United States." The session included the following information:

- * Keeping the document (visa) current and safe
- * Criminal activities and their relationship to visa status
- * Alcohol and drugs
- * Traffic violations
- * The Miranda rights
- * Rights to privacy
- * U.S. visa implication

Another session offered is a seminar entitled "Get Involved at UT." This seminar included the following topics:

- * Life as a UT student
- * UT athletics: Sports seasons and events
- * Dean of Students office, resources
- * Recreational sports: Services, facilities
- * Getting involved: Student government

In an ideal environment, counselors are “challenged to help these students work through the loss of social support experienced in coming to America and to develop the social networks necessary to support them academically” (Hayes and Lin 7). Implied in Hayes and Lin’s discourse is the premise that counseling should not only assist international students in overcoming social loss but should also help them form new circles of social support in their host community, which is vital for academic success, personal growth, and civic engagement. Another study (Abel 2002) found that academic success among international students is accomplished through a number of channels, some provided by social and educational assistance. Since many international students perceive their focus on their academic achievement as a factor that hinders them from being civically active, it is predicted that providing a social support system for international students will result in helping them to be civically active. ISO counselors should be trained to recognize the sense of loss among international students. With adequate training, they would have a better understanding of this phenomenon and would be able to work more effectively with international students. Dillard and Chisolm share my perspective when they state that “counselors need to recognize that the counseling relationship is not a monoculture encounter” (101).

Regarding the criteria of hiring international advisors in UT's ISO, however, there is no specific international knowledge required, according to Albrecht. Contrary to my argument of blending the work of international advisor and social counseling, Albrecht draws a line between the work of the ISO and the social worker's job. She stated that when hiring an international advisor, she would look into their international experiences and their abilities to work within a multicultural context, but she stresses the fact that the work of the international advisor is not to offer social counseling. Due to the sometimes overwhelming amount of paperwork required of the international advisor, especially tracking and complying with visa requirements, there is very little time to work with international students on personal issues such as loneliness, a sense of loss and depression.

Relationship between Civic Engagement and the Arts

What, then, can bridge the gap between the transitional assistance that international students need and the assistance they receive? If the ISO is the only place on campus that offers services specifically for international students, where else can they find a way to make inroads into the civic culture of their new temporary home?

One of the many resources for channeling civic awareness can be found in the arts. The arts offer an opportunity for both the artist and its audience to engage in dialogue, and directly or indirectly enhance for both what it means to be part of a community. The arts instill a sense of belonging in a community. This community is

constructed in two ways, first, through building work together and second, through being an active audience for the art.

I recount here an incident from my own experience when I first felt that I truly belonged in the Austin community. In January 2008 I led a shadow theatre workshop at UT. The news about the workshop reached a local puppetry society and they posted the workshop on their website. They introduced me in their posting as a ‘local theatre artist.’ Even though the person who introduced me knew that I was not from Austin, being involved in the theatre scene had become my ticket to being addressed as ‘local.’ That label enhanced my sense of belonging in Austin and made me more concerned about it even though I am not a legal citizen. Art has helped me discover what it means to belong and what it means to be civically engaged. My personal example of belonging was achieved through building art work and being a part of an art community. I look at my theatre workshop as a site which offers international students an opportunity that allows them to create artistic work as a group and entice them to be curious about local arts venues. Whether connecting to the arts by creating works or by attending artistic functions, the connection provides a step toward civic engagement.

In *Animating Democracy*, a report commissioned by the Ford Foundation, Bacon *et al.* claim that art can be a powerful force for revealing the real meaning of our civic experience. Art, with its liberating power, offers us an opportunity to confront and test new ideas and concepts using a unique set of tools. By looking at issues through the filter of art work, regardless of the medium, we become aware of our own societal experiences.

The authors further connects arts to civic engagement by stating "the potential of the art to create indelible images, to express difficult ideas through metaphor, and to communicate beyond the limits of language makes it a powerful force for illuminating civic experience" (Bacon *et al.* 1).

Confronting a great piece of art can be a uniquely collective experience. There are a number of opportunities for the audience to share the work of art: from waiting in line to buy tickets, to seeing the art, to applauding it, to discussing it with others afterward. These shared experiences enhance the citizens' feelings of belonging by allowing them to be part of a group all connecting to something larger than themselves. The act of creating is often done in a solitary environment, but the inspiration for the creation often arises from collaborative acts with other people. The act of viewing the art is another extension of the collaboration that connects the artist to the audience and vice versa, and also connects like-minded audience members to one another.

In 2008 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released a report entitled "The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts Involved in Life." The report, which gauges the relationship between arts and civic engagement, found a significant correlation between citizens who are involved in the arts, whether as artist or audience, and civic engagement. The report states that "arts participation overwhelmingly correlates with positive individual and civic behaviors" (*The Arts and Civic Engagement* 1).

Based on interviews with 17,135 adults, the report investigates the direct relationship between civic engagement and the arts. While it does not specifically define

‘the arts,’ it is clear that the criteria for the NEA report in defining art were directed towards arts recipients rather than those who work in the arts. According to the NEA study, participation in ‘the arts’ can be defined by the following activities: reading fiction, listening to music, and attending performances.

The report also does not give a specific definition for civic engagement. However, the results of the report consider the following activities to be civic engagement activities: attending arts events, physical activities, engaging in sports, people who consider themselves creative, and people who participate in volunteer work.

The report concludes by stating that “arts and civic engagement bring harmonious blend to our lives and communities” (The Arts and Civic Engagement 1). Building awareness among international students that they, too, can be an active part of their host public sphere constitutes the first step toward getting them to be civically engaged. According to the NEA report, being part of the art scene whether as creator or audience can be helpful in building this awareness.

Because of this ability to engage and connect, the arts can and do play a decisive civic role. When artists assume a civic role, creating art in their communities, using their talents as tools of communication, they not only give themselves the chance to develop their art and make it more accessible to more citizens, they also become a vital part of the democratic process. “In exercising this civic role, cultural institutions are expanding opportunities for both democratic participation and aesthetic experience, engaging a

broader, more diverse public in giving voice to critical issues of our time" (Bacon *et al.* 1).

Art creates a platform for civic dialogue. Art becomes a space where people meet and talk about the piece of art they just witnessed and about other social issues. Art activities, when performed in public spaces, become a catalyst for civic dialogue through creating local relationships between people. Public spaces such as libraries, museums, and theatres offer ideal locations for such a dialogue.

My research in this dissertation used theatre arts as a tool to build awareness and create dialogue among international students about issues of civic engagement. My theatre workshop, described in chapter 3, provided a safe environment where participants used artistic/theatre tools to build awareness among international students of opportunities for them to be civically engaged. In addition, the workshop provided a nucleus for a community to be formed among international students.

My theatre workshop was an effective tool for generating community. Building civic awareness among international students is a holistic approach that starts with encouraging them to leave their houses, being social, and ends in encouraging them to be civically active. Sociologists Anabel Quan-Hasse and Barry Wellman found that being a part of a community occurs on many levels. The first level could be called a 'private community' comprised of social contacts with friends, neighbors, roommates, etc. The second level is a 'public community' and can be identified by such activities as gathering in public places, attending concerts and public lectures, etc. The third level is where

engagement in the community happens, where the individual becomes willing to contribute to the well-being of the community (Quan- Hasse and Wellman 2003). While the main goal of my work on liminal citizens is to get them to achieve the third level of engagement, the theatre workshop allows them to work on the first two levels as well. The theatre workshop is a tool that allows liminal citizens to make friends, make them aware of their public surroundings, and encourage them to be active citizens.

Chapter 2

Civic Engagement, Higher Education and Theatre

“I’m most concerned with how we can think about teaching, creating, and theorizing performance as a public intellectual practice” (Dolan The Polemics 508).

“Advocacy and activism by the academic sector can help redefine the public discourse” (Martin 64).

“It is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative” (Boal ix).

“Should art educate, inform, organize, influence, incite to action, or should it simply be an object of pleasure?” (Boal xiii).

Overview

From its inception more than two hundred years ago, public education in the United States was designed to create informed, active citizens. This has been achieved through continually evolving methods ranging from traditional lectures, to hands-on training, to online educational modules. Theatre has emerged as one of these viable tools for teaching civic engagement, both in the context of the classroom and in the community at large. This chapter will examine; 1) the roles of education and theatre in civic engagement; and 2) how education and theatre have merged in the creation of my specific research project, a theatre workshop designed to civically engage international students.

The Role of Higher Education in Civic Engagement

Higher education institutions as inspirational centers for culture, sports and civic engagement, is not a new concept for U.S. universities. From their historical beginnings, universities in the United States have connected their work to the community. Creating a link between the community and the university has been emphasized in the mission statements of many academic institutions. One clear historical example of the community-mindedness of universities is that of Benjamin Franklin convincing the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) to “teach in English rather than Greek and Latin, and to include courses in practical subjects such as accounting and agriculture” (Lawry *et al.* 7). Such an example shows the importance of creating a link between the needs of the community and the educational institution. It also places the educational institution’s main components, students and professors, in the center of its community. The initiative proposed by Franklin redirected the college’s mission toward addressing local issues and playing a more active role in the community that it served.

Another example of an administrator understanding the relationship between average citizens and the university would be that of Thomas Jefferson who “persuaded the College of William and Mary to drop some of its more esoteric areas of study and instead to teach more practical subjects, such as public administration and international law” (Lawry *et al.* 7). This focus on offering a practical side of knowledge created a more productive interaction between U.S. universities and the local community. Other universities soon followed the examples of the University of Pennsylvania and that of the College of William and Mary by making their curriculum accessible and relevant.

Higher education scholar David Moxley acknowledges this role of a university by saying "civic engagement requires universities and other institutions of higher education to cross boundaries and to fill nontraditional roles" (Moxley 236). Moxley's call has found a response in some academic institutions, resulting in initiatives that connect the university's work to the community.

Moxley further advocates for a stronger partnership between local centers and academic institutions. He states the role of universities, and higher education in general, "increasingly requires engagement in partnership with various communities and in collaboration with other local and societal institutions" (Moxley 238).

Most universities in the U.S. were established to prepare students for active participation in a diverse democracy and to "develop knowledge for the improvement of communities" (Checkoway 125). Reviewing the mission statements of many academic institutions gives the impression that there is an increasing discourse that calls for bridging the gap between the university and the community. An example would be the mission statement of The University of Texas at Austin: "The University contributes to the advancement of society through research, creative activity, scholarly inquiry and the development of new knowledge. The university preserves and promotes the arts, benefits the state's economy, serves the citizens through public programs and provides other public service" (Mission Statements). The core purpose of the mission statement is "to transform lives for the benefit of society" (Mission Statements).

Universities in the United States, such as UT-Austin, often branch out to the surrounding communities. Often, internships require students to work in the community

in areas that are not related directly to their academic training. An example of this kind of work is a course offered through the graduate school at The University of Texas at Austin, called 'Theory in Action.' The course requires the students to lead a project off-campus where they can test the practical aspect of the theories they are learning in the classroom. Such work is required by universities in order to create a stronger partnership between the university and the community, as well as to develop students who are more prepared to be active citizens in their world.

In addition to this specific graduate course, The University of Texas at Austin offers several programs that connect the work of the students to the community. UT Connection, the Austin Project, and Oral History as Narrative are just a few of these programs that help bridge the gap between UT and the Austin community. It also allows students to gain knowledge about the community and help them develop their own civic competencies.

The UT community embodies Moxley's concepts about a symbiotic partnership between the academic institution and the community. Visitors to Austin often comment on the vibrant feel of the city and a sense of creative energy on campus. This is due, in large part, to the mutually beneficial relationship between UT and its off-campus partners.

The UT graduate school offers a number of courses designed specifically for students interested in pursuing a project that connects their field of study to the community. These courses offer graduate students the time and facilities to create connections with the community and to plan projects that could be beneficial for both the

students and the community. These projects, initiated by UT, flourish as a result of collaborations among various organizations. It should be noted, however, that though UT has diligently worked to create these collaborations, reaching out to the community is not the work of UT alone. The community must also be willing to offer the potential for such collaboration.

The relationship between education and civics has been recognized by many scholars, among whom is Benjamin Barber who clarifies the connection between democracy, education and citizenship. He argues that in order to create a democracy, there are two factors that should exist: 1) having democratic bodies/constitutions/institutions; and 2) educating citizens who are able to navigate these entities. Education stands out as a major factor for helping citizens to channel possible ways of being active and interacting positively with the democratic bodies of their community. Barber states, “Strong democracy is defined by politics in the participatory mode: literally, it is self-government by citizens rather than representative government in the name of citizens” (Barber 447). Democracy itself is defined as a “government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system” (Defining Democracy 2008). In the words of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Defining Democracy 2008).

Historically there has been a strong connection between democracy and education. Barber offers the example from the early leaders of the United States. He asserts that they were all aware that the success of the newly born democracy was not

only dependant on having democratic institutions, but it was also dependant on the quality of citizens who would constitute the new republic. The founders of the young republic encouraged colleges and universities to connect their curricula to their own communities as a means of facilitating civic engagement. Barber's assertions are congruent with the discussion concerning the curricula of early U.S. academic institutions found later in this chapter.

From a contemporary vantage point, the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation at The University of Texas at Austin also concludes that academic institutions can be instrumental in increasing civic participation. In a study of high school students, the institute concluded that the students exhibit a lack of interest, trust and faith in the government. As a result, the youth's participation in civic life becomes less visible.

The authors of the Annette Strauss Institute report conclude that students lack the motivation and the skills for community engagement. The report states that citizens with higher levels of political knowledge are more likely to vote, to volunteer, to exercise their voices, and to make their communities better places. The report further states that, ironically, the emphasis on teaching citizenship by providing information about government has failed to create a more knowledgeable youth cohort.

The report shows that U.S. citizens now are less informed than their parents and less receptive to the idea of participating in community engagement activities. U.S. citizens are less inclined to voice their belief in the system. The study creates a distinctive difference between civic education courses where students train for an

informed and responsible life in their community, and government classes where students learn about nation's founding principals and governmental structures at the state and national levels. Schools are trying to teach information about government, but there is less and less focus on teaching students about how to become involved in their communities. The materials in this document support my argument that we need to revisit the methods and even the content which educators use to teach our students how to become civically engaged. Since liminal citizens are not legal citizens, and thus have no legal right to participate in conventional civic duties such as voting or running for office, I focus on other aspects of civic engagement such as volunteering and being an active part of environmental, social, and even religious communities.

Political scientist Eric B. Gorham argues in *The Theatre of Politics* (2000) that political participation involves learning. In his book, he critiques the U.S. educational system for its detachment from encouraging students to be politically active outside the universities' campuses. He notes that the universities should be clear about raising students' political awareness and encouraging them to form their own political judgments (Gorham 2000). Gorham argues that learning in general, and learning social and political sciences in particular, becomes political practice in itself. Gorham stresses that a university classroom is one of the best places for individuals to present themselves as citizens. The university setting offers them a chance to express their ideas, argue, communicate and learn without an authority that dictates how they should be behaving as citizens.

I share Gorham's views about connecting learning, being active as a university citizen, and building a strong critical thinking base among students. The author suggests that social science courses offer the most interesting place for students to act as citizens. While I agree that social science classes offer an ideal environment for practicing citizenship, I contend that arts in general, and theatre in particular, offer other settings where citizenship can be practiced. Gorham's argument offers a context for my work, which is to offer international students an educational framework wherein learning traditional knowledge and acquiring citizenship skills are intertwined.

Gorham continues, "in the university, being an active participant means learning about learning." (xiv). Sadly, the focus on getting a good grade too often becomes more important than learning. More and more, universities are adopting what educator Paulo Freire (2000) called 'the banking system of education' where the students' minds are treated like empty bank accounts. Students are to fill up these empty accounts with data and information that will help them get a good grade. Within this system, students, domestic and international alike, are often more concerned about high grades than with learning and consequently fail to see the university as a "theatre of politics where individuals are permitted to act publicly" (xv). There is a problem when there is a rift between the grading system and the act of learning. My call for using theatre as a tool to encourage students in general, and international students in particular, to be active citizens is a solution for mending this rift.

A university offers many opportunities for civic engagement through student organizations, political forums, and social service networks. These settings can serve as a

good rehearsal for lifelong community involvement, empowering students to learn in a public setting where they do not have to compete for grades. However, university students, both local and international, often relate to public life as observers rather than as participants. There is little desire to be involved. Ideally, the student should be encouraged to stop the mere observation of public life and to begin to examine it from a participatory stance. University students should experience what it means to be an active citizen. Encouraging students to be active university citizens also means encouraging them to care about learning for the sake of learning.

All of the above referenced work on citizenship in community and educational settings has raised many questions in my mind about whether citizenship is teachable. Studies such as those conducted by Bray and Chappell (2005), Norris (2007) and Neelands (1984) agree that it is indeed teachable, but that raises other questions such as: what are citizenship skills?; and what kind of citizenship skills do we teach in classrooms?

Most of the studies focus on teaching social skills, teaching individuals how to be part of a group, teaching skills that will enable students to brainstorm about social problems and help them to think collectively. Theatre educators use theatre as a tool to prepare people to be 'good citizens,' identified by Bray and Chappell as people who "have knowledge [...] develop competency [...] act well" (87). It is interesting that these skills are universal and are not restricted to one nation-state or a specific culture. Education scholars L. Sax and A. Astin, for example, noticed that public service enhances some citizenship skills such as interpersonal skills, ability to work

cooperatively, conflict resolution, and critical thinking (1997). These skills can be applied in any community. Such a commonality makes it important to teach these skills to liminal citizens since they can practice them in their host community, their original country if they decide to go back, or a new country of residence.

Citizenship and Theatre

When I started my research on theatre, citizenship and civic education, I was pleased to find that there are some existing studies in the literature addressing the connections between these concepts. Some of the most insightful studies have been produced by Bernard L. Bray and Larry W. Chappell, political science researchers with limited theatre experience. They co-authored “Civic Theatre for Civic Education,” published in *Journal of Political Science* (2007) in which they illustrate how valuable a tool theatre is for engaging the community through civic education. They propose that civic attention, that is citizens paying respectful attention to one another, can be taught using two primary pedagogical strategies. The two strategies they identify are civic hermeneutics - or “interpreting other citizens with the aim of granting them civic respect” (83) - and civic staging – or “organizing public space to allow citizens to better communicate” (83).

In the second part of “Civic Theatre for Civic Education” Bray and Chappell argue that theatre can be an effective tool for teaching civic attention because it is “uniquely valuable for understanding, criticizing, problematizing, practicing, transforming and even for resisting politics” (83). Their article offers several practical examples of the ways in which theatre can teach citizenship skills. The authors divide

theatre into two categories, classical and experimental. They discuss classical examples, such as Sophocles' plays in relationship to the politics of Athens compared with the experimental theatre work of Boal and Rohd, where students assume the roles of audience, actors, and author. By 'experimental,' they mean theatre that is not produced within the Aristotelian rules.

In the following pages I will discuss a number of these techniques of theatre such as forum theatre, activating theatre, simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, playback theatre, and demonstrate how they are viable methods for engaging audiences in civic dialogue. I would also examine utopian performative, performance studies and performance as public practice as school of thoughts that deepen my understanding of applied theatre.

Applied Theatre

Applied theatre is broadly defined as the use of theatre techniques among a specific community to engender collective thinking about a specific issue while embodying it Taylor (2003), Thompson (2003), Rohd (1998), Boal (1985). Theatre educator Philip Taylor describes it as a medium that "opens up new perspectives, poses options, and anticipates change" (xxi). He argues that applied theatre helps in facilitating a dialogue, healing a pain, or processing a specific issue of significance within a community. Taylor also believes that theatre is "a platform that empowers a transformation" (Taylor xxvii). He goes on to say that "applied theatre operates from a central transformative principle that shares much with other participatory and community theatre movements, where a central emphasis is on the applications of theatre to help

people reflect more critically on the kind of society in which they want to live"

(1). Applied theatre invites participants to “create and make present realities vivid enough to beguile, amuse or terrify. And through these presences, they alter moods, social relations, bodily dispositions, and states of minds” (Schieffelin 199).

Many performance studies practitioners (*e.g.* Sharon Grady and Sonja Kuftenic) insinuate applied theatre into the core of their practice and research. Performance studies scholar Jon McKenzie acknowledges this connection by saying performance studies scholars have constructed cultural performance as “emergent of social norms, as an ensemble of activities with the potential to uphold societal arrangements or, alternatively, to change people and societies” (McKenzie 30). McKenzie continues by connecting performance to research and pedagogy, positioning performance in the middle of them. “Performance scholars have for decades asserted the social efficacy of our own research and teaching activities, not only calling for but also participating in challenges to the norms of scholarship and pedagogy” (McKenzie 48).

Applied theatre scholars such as Rohd, Taylor, and Boal place value on the transformative power of theatre. There are dozens of stories told by Rohd, Taylor and Boal that prove that theatre can be a transformative agent. These stories can be found in *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual* by Rohd, *Applied theatre* by Taylor, and *Theatre of the Oppressed* by Boal. Taylor asserts that theatre can be an influential tool in “raising awareness about how we are situated in this world and what we as individuals, as communities, might do to make the world a better place” (Taylor xxx).

Applied theatre scholar James Thompson practices applied theatre in a myriad of locations. Thompson reports that applied theatre often includes “the practice of theatre where it is least expected; for example, in prisons, refugee camps, hospitals, museums, centers for the disabled, old people’s homes and under-served rural villages: sometimes in theatres. Applied theatre is a participatory theatre created by people who would not usually make theatre” (Thompson 15).

Most of the scholars and practitioners who write about applied theatre agree that the function of applied theatre is not necessarily to create a performance at the end of the work. Rather, the function of applied theatre is to create dialogue and opportunities for the community to reflect upon their problems, to give voice where they have been previously unheard, and to make them more articulate and expressive about their problems (Taylor, Rohd). In the words of Phillip Taylor, applied theatre offers a space where “individuals connect with and support one another and where opportunities are provided for groups to voice who they are and what they aspire to become” (Taylor xviii).

Forum Theatre

In “Civic Theatre for Civic Education” Bray and Chappell use Boal's forum theatre as a platform from which they discuss issues of citizenship with their students. Boal's forum theatre is a unique tool for initiating dialogue because "in forum theatre no idea is imposed: the audience, the people, have the opportunity to try out all their ideas, to rehearse all the possibilities, and to verify them in practice, that is in theatrical practice" (Boal 141). Boal further states,

the participant has to intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it...First, the participants are asked to tell a story containing a political or social problem of difficult solution. Then a ten- or fifteen-minute skit portraying that problem and the solution intended for discussion is improvised or rehearsed, and subsequently presented. (Boal 139)

The audience actively participates in a performance workshop that explores their social problems, thereby gaining empowerment through their participation.

Empowerment is achieved by giving the audience the power to voice what they believe in; they are no longer a passive audience willing to merely accept whatever the performance is offering. Audience members transfer from being spectators into being spect-actors, 'spect-actor' is a term coined by Augusto Boal in his *Theatre of the Oppressed* which refers to a spectator who mounts the stage and becomes an actor. Spect-actors suggest alternative actions for the actors to create. They even have the chance to go on stage by themselves and embody what they believe in. Theatre becomes a place where spect-actors are empowered to: 1) change their theatrical passive practice ;and 2) express their voices in a public arena (Boal 1985).

Forum theatre is a flexible theatrical tool that can lend itself to any discipline to explore and challenge differing issues simultaneously. The act of gathering, the festive atmosphere, and audience involvement help the group to become more comfortable about participating in the performances. Gathering in the theatre workshop format enacts "one of the last available forms of direct democracy" (Reinelt 286). Gathering is "an assembly of 'citizens' in the tradition of civic republicanism, related to the small assembly, town

meeting, church social, school board meeting, or neighborhood block party” (Reinelt 286). A festive atmosphere is achieved through playing theatre games with the audience; through presenting a scene and inviting audiences to play with it and reconstruct it; and through inviting the audience to go on stage and be part of the theatrical play. Achieving a level of comfort encourages the audience to become part of the scene, and can be an incentive for them to participate publically in civic life. Theatre thus becomes a site for rehearsing change. All of these elements help emancipate spect-actors from their everyday oppression by presenting a new understanding for a better life, a shared community feeling, and hope for a better future. These performance workshops provide the targeted group, liminal citizens in my case, with a utopian feeling of solidarity that they can carry with them outside the theatre workshop.

Activating Theatre

Michael Rohd is another theatre practitioner whose work on ‘activating materials’ provides a unique model for connecting theatre to civic engagement. Rohd describes activating materials in *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual*. Working on activating material involves two major steps: in the first step, the participants present short scenarios related to their own lives; and in the second, the facilitator asks audience members ‘what can be done’ to solve the problem presented in the scene. Rohd’s work aims to create a safe public space where citizens can dialogue and express their ideas (Rohd 1988).

By their very nature, these workshops demand audience *participation*. To ensure that each audience member is an active participant, Rohd does not allow observers to

attend. "Don't allow people to come as observers. The only way to learn about and appreciate this work is to engage in it. I'm not saying get them there and then force them to play. They can pass on anything at any time, but get them there as participants" (Rohd 136).

The nature of the workshops involves intervening and participation by the audience/participant, often prompted by the facilitator during performances. A utopian feeling is experienced while audience members participate actively in performance workshops, a utopia where all voices are heard, where all opinions matter, where one thinks about better ways of living. Audience/participants openly comment on the characters' actions, and these comments then become part of the performance. After a performance is finished, the audience continues the dialogue about what they had just experienced. This continuing dialogue links what is happening in performance to what is happening in the community.

In describing activating theatre, Rohd notes that "an activating scene grabs everyone in the room. It is a scene that you create with your group" (97). Rohd's definition emphasizes involving the audience members in creating the scene. While activating the scene, audience/participants become involved in many ways: asking questions about the scene, discussing different possibilities and choices the characters might take, and brainstorming ideas about how to suggest solutions for the problem discussed in the scene.

Rohd's description of the physical status of the audience highlights the intense atmosphere of his work. For example, in describing an activating scene that involves a

sexual harassment theme, Rohd says, "I, as the facilitator shout 'freeze.' The audience is all leaning forward, intensely involved, frustrated, mad, upset, and not satisfied with the turn of the events" (101). He makes sure to choose such a moment to freeze the scene, then draws on the aroused emotions of the audience and urges them to express their disturbance, irritation, and anger about what has just happened in the scene. Rohd chooses to stop the scene in this particular moment because it is not his point to present a scene with a happy ending. "The scenes pull the audience (of participants) into the story. They bring you forward to the edge of your seat, and they freeze. They end, or stop, unsatisfactorily. You, the audience, are left with a strong desire – a need – to change what is happening, and you get that chance" (Rohd 98). Rohd continues: "A happy ending is not your goal. Your work on a scene ends when your time is up or when you feel you've played out the possibilities in the room at that moment; not when you have found the answer" (Rohd 124). Utopia in the last example is achieved through the communal feeling of the audience/participants. The material and the workshop format present a setting for the audience/participants to confront a problem that concerns each and every one of them and to unify their ideas.

Boal uses another important element – games and exercises – to encourage audience participation. Both Boal and Rohd incorporate games and fun activities into their workshops. These activities create a festive atmosphere and encourage audiences to participate in performances by commenting on the scenes presented to them.

Simultaneous Dramaturgy

One of the techniques Boal uses is simultaneous dramaturgy. The spect-actor is invited to intervene without actually being physically present on the stage. The audience suggests an idea, and the actors improvise a scene based on that idea. Actors work on the scene until they reach a point at which the main problem reaches crisis and needs a solution. Then the actors stop the performance and ask the audience to offer solutions. "They improvise immediately all the suggested solutions, and the audience has the right to intervene, to correct the actions or words of the actors, who are obligated to comply strictly with these instructions from the audience" (Boal 132). Simultaneous dramaturgy is Boal's way of getting his spect-actors excited about and involved in the scene. "This form of theatre creates great excitement among the participants and starts to demolish the wall that separates actors from spectators" (Boal 134). Their excitement and involvement in the action empowers them. "The spectators feel that they can intervene in the action" (Boal 134).

Image Theatre

Another method Boal uses to encourage audience involvement is image theatre, a term he coined to describe a process whereby the audience members are asked to express their opinion about what they see without talking. Instead they use their bodies to form images that convey what they wanted to say. According to Boal, "the spectator has to participate more directly. He is asked to express his views on a certain theme of common interest that the participants wish to discuss" (Boal 135). In image theatre, the bodies of the spect-actors become the site of the theatrical experience. He continues "in image

theater, the participant is asked to express his opinion, but without speaking, using only the bodies of the other participants and 'sculpting' them into a group of statues, in such a way that his [or her] opinions and feelings become evident" (Boal 135). Image theatre can be done with the help of the facilitator who becomes the spectator-sculptor. The facilitator builds two body images. The first image represents the actual image of the problem under discussion. The second sculpture represents another, ideal image. Finally, the facilitator is asked to build a third transitional image. The transitional image shows "how it would be possible to pass from one reality to the other. In other words, how to carry out the change, the transformation, the revolution, or whatever term one wishes to use" (Boal 135).

Contents in the workshops of Boal and Rohd provoke audiences to comment on what they are witnessing. All of Boal's and Rohd's work involves stories of social and political oppression. The facilitator researches the community he or she is going to be working with and chooses a topic for discussion relevant to that specific community. The performers and the audience/participants translate the collective memory of a community into representations of frames or image theatre. This content is utopian since it helps in creating a society where average people become aware of social dynamics, and attempt to make a difference in their communities.

Boal and Rohd share a dream of living in a society where participatory democracy is practiced by everyone in public forums. They believe that sublime ideas like equality, liberty and freedom should prevail and that all forms of oppression should be demolished. Also, they agree that theatre can offer a site to practice our longing for a utopian

community. In this utopian community, Boal hopes that his theatre will at least create an action, any action!

The work of Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd work is typically done in disadvantaged communities and proves to be an active vehicle for raising social and political awareness. *Playing Boal* (1994) offers several modules for the application of Boal's techniques in various sites and different demographics such as urban Aboriginals in Vancouver, leading theatre of the oppressed workshops with the elderly, or the application of theatre of the oppressed in therapy settings.

An example of a successful application of applied theatre is evident in "Putting Yourself in Other People's Shoes: the use of Forum Theatre to Explore Refugee and Homeless Issues in Schools." Theatre educator Laura Day documented outcomes of the use of applied theatre in general, and forum theatre in particular, in addressing issues concerning refugees and the homeless. She notes that students claimed repeatedly that the forum theatre workshop had altered their perception of refugees and homeless people. Day reports that "in focus group discussions students related the empathy they had felt with the refugee character in the play to refugees they knew at school" (27). Students also were able to think of the material of the workshop as a metaphor for different life situations where oppression exists. Day further states "students also transferred this feeling of empathy to human experience in general, considering that it may not only be refugees and the homeless who are marginalised, but anyone who is perceived as *different*" (27). Also, the workshop helped students come up with specific actions outside of the performance space. Day explains her workshop by saying:

The workshop certainly provoked a desire among students to “do something” in response to the issues raised, and in interviews conducted after the workshop, students expressed what they intended to do. At an individual level, students expressed intentions such as “giving more attention to people who need help” or choosing their friends more carefully. During the follow-up interviews 2 months later, some students made claims to having interacted more with refugee students in their class, and one student had broken off a friendship with another student who was a bully. However, in addition to such individual actions, students also expressed a desire to take some collective action as a school or group, such as fundraising or campaigning for charities and organisations working with marginalised groups. (Day 29)

The work of Laura Day is just one documented example of the efficacy of applied theatre work outside the performance arena. Other stories with such tangible results can be found in *Playing Boal* and in the work of other applied theatre scholars such as Thompson and Taylor.

In an example of a project that addresses a social issue in relationship to democracy and justice, Boal uses theatre of the oppressed to teach literacy in Peru. Boal focuses on: 1) teaching two kinds of languages, the native and Spanish languages; and 2) teaching literacy “in all possible languages, especially the artistic ones, such as theatre, photography, puppetry, films, journalism, etc.” (Boal 121). Describing a project he did with the People’s Theater in Peru, he says, “we tried to show in practice how the theater can be placed at the service of the oppressed, so that they can express themselves and so

that, by using this new language, they can also discover new concepts" (Boal 121).

Boal's work goes from the specific to the general and vice versa. By teaching illiterates how to read and write, he is being specific and offering a service to the targeted community while, at the same time enhancing values of democracy and justice.

In the work of Boal and Rohd, the act of gathering enhances the sense of belonging among the participants. Boal and Rohd lead their workshops in non-conventional settings for theatre. Town squares, schools, social centers, streets, and public halls are places where one might encounter their work. Such unconventional places provide audiences with an encouraging environment in which they can talk freely before and after the workshop; it also offers participants a familiar setting that is conducive to participation in the workshop. Choosing the place of the workshop can be crucial in determining its success since the choice of a venue can affect the responses of the audience. Performance studies scholar Marvin Carlson says that every physical setting of a performance is "culturally encoded, and always, sometimes blatantly, sometimes subtly, contributes to the reception of the performance" (206). Public spheres have an important role in enhancing the workshop experience of Boal and Rohd. Dolan acknowledges the importance of this factor by saying: "The public sphere is *ad hoc* and spontaneous; its very informality keeps it free of the surveillance that constrains more structured regulated systems" (Dolan, *Utopia in Performance* 90). The workshops of Boal and Rohd present excellent opportunities for the audience/participants to express themselves and to voice ideas that would otherwise remain suppressed. Debates and arguments that happen in public spaces in Boal and Rohd's workshops are microcosms of

what should happen in an ideal society, where citizens enter into dialogues that address their social and political problems.

Playback Theatre

Playback theatre is another technique that falls under the general umbrella of applied theatre. Theatre scholar Linda Park- Fuller describes playback theatre as:

an audience-interactive, improvisational performance form in which audience members tell stories from their lives and then watch those stories enacted on the spot. In Playback Theatre, a conductor functioning as an emcee and trained interviewer invites audience members to come to the stage. One by one, audience members come forward and tell stories of personal experience that are then enacted or “played back” by the improvisational actors and musicians. (291)

In playback theatre, audiences are empowered through making their own lives the center of the theatrical event. Each theatre session revolves around one main idea. Audience members are invited to share their stories about this particular theme, and thus audiences get to see different strategies in negotiating life situations.

I contend that all of the above mentioned applied theatre techniques constitute viable tools to address issues of citizenship and civic engagement among liminal citizens. However, I chose to focus on a handful of these techniques while leading my workshop with international students. Due to the fact that the liminal citizens group I was working with had limited English skills, I chose exercises that focused on positioning the body in space as a medium of communication. For example, an important component of my workshop was an exercise using image theatre as a tool to allow the participants to

present civic engagement story with their bodies and without the need for a narration.

This exercise allowed the participants to both embody their civic engagement stories and to reflect on their embodiment. Leading a theatre workshop with liminal citizens who have full command of language allows the facilitator more freedom to choose any of the above mentioned exercises since all of them proved to be effective when dealing with marginal citizens.

Utopian Performative

This optimistic view of theatre is expressed by performance studies scholar Jill Dolan. Theatre in general, whether applied or presented in a traditional form, offers tremendous communicative value. Theatre invites audience/participants to converse together and to engage in meaningful dialogue. It also allows audiences and participants to feel the unity that they share by being in the same place. Jill Dolan calls this communal feeling the utopian performative. According to Dolan, the utopian performative is a "feeling during performance that provides us with experiences of an ideal society" (Dolan, Performance 455). When experienced in a community gathering, the utopian performative also enhances the feeling of belonging to a group; and according to Dolan, it is the combination of the liveness, gathering, participating in the event and the immediacy of performance that create a utopian performative moment. Dolan reflects, "why do people come together to watch other people labor on stage [...] Why do people continue to seek the liveness, the present-tenseness that performance and theatre offer? Is the desire to be there, in the moment, an expression of a utopian impulse? Certainly." (Dolan, Performance 455).

Michael Rohd describes a similar power that applied theatre offers, a power that allows us to communicate with each other and to feel that we belong to a group. He says that “theatre allows us to converse with our souls – to passionately pursue and discover ways of living with ourselves and others. We are all artists and theatre is a language. We have no better way to work together, to learn about each other, to heal and to grow” (Rohd xix).

Dolan believes in the role of performance as a way to help audiences imagine new ways of living. She notes: "I believe in theatre's value as a place to fantasize how peace and justice, equality and truly participatory democracy might take hold sometime in a near or a distant future, as well as in theatre's value as a place in which to connect emotionally and spiritually with other people" (Dolan *Utopia in Performance* 90). While Dolan's utopia might take place after performance and in some moments during the performance, the structure of the work of both Boal and Rohd commands utopia to be present in the workshop. Boal's work on image theatre makes utopia present physically in the bodies of the spect-actors.

In her writing, Dolan focuses on providing an intellectual framework for advocacy. Dolan refers to actual performances to prove her case that theatre can present a site for civic dialogue. In the examples she provides, audiences go to theatre, see plays and are inspired to think about the issues that they are watching. Dolan writes about how she yearns for performance that encourages audiences to practice democracy and to be active citizens. The audiences' participation in the event, Dolan implies, allows them to express anger at their oppressors and to discuss possibilities for a better future. This kind

of democracy is seen as well in her call for a participatory performance. Dolan says, "My argument is that theatre and performance create citizens and engage democracy as a participatory forum in which ideas and possibilities for social equity and justice are shared" (Dolan, *Performance* 456). She goes further in linking performance and utopian feelings to political concepts such as democracy and social justice.

Even though the work of applied theatre has much in common with Dolan's utopian performative, it is still expressed differently in two aspects. First, Dolan's definition of utopian performative is based on her experience as a spectator, while utopian moments felt in applied theatre work are usually engendered by facilitators and participants. Second, Dolan analyzes how audiences are connected with the performance intellectually by their thoughts and feelings, while applied theatre generally works toward involving the audience as participants by creating scenes, embodying them, and reflecting on them.

Performance Studies

According to communication studies scholar Joseph Rice, performance studies as a discipline has been concerned in the late twentieth century with the employment of "diverse fields of knowledge as a process-oriented strategy for measuring, describing, analyzing, teaching, learning, healing, discovering and understanding ourselves and the world around us" (Rice 2). The approaches discussed earlier in this chapter represent theatrical forms that are invested in audience participation and in the application of performance studies on citizenship related topics. Another shared characteristic of these

practices is the fact that they are currently happening or can be practiced in educational settings.

Performance studies scholar Stacy Wolf weaves one of her studies around a pedagogical/performance experience. In a recent study on learning and activism, Wolf and co-author Wendy Coleman use their teaching experience to explore the complicated negotiation of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, power, and privilege in a classroom in which half the students were African American and half the students were white (*Rehearsing for Revolution* 1998). The interaction between the students on one hand, and between the students and the teachers on the other hand, present an exemplary educational environment where students are rehearsing citizenship skills such as cooperation, fairness, patience, and respect, among others.

Sonja Kuflinec, employing theatre to form new identities, uses her practical experience in youth camps to launch her theoretical ideas. She leads workshops on citizenship and theatre in the Balkans. In “Fighting Fences: Theatrical Rule-Breaking in Former Yugoslavia,” Kuflinec describes her experience in Europe working with another U.S. director on creating a piece called “Fighting Fences” in the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. In another article, “Bridging Balkan Rapids,” she addresses the importance of theatre in bridging differences among youth of various religious affiliations within the city.

Even though I have found Kuflinec’s work inspiring, particularly since it investigates issues of citizenship, I tend to differ with her theatre methodology when working with liminal citizens. Specifically, Kuflinec creates performances at the end of

her workshops. She trusts the aesthetic experience of performance to create new ways of understanding among participants in her workshops. My work, on the other hand, does not aim at producing a final performance. The theatre exercises in my workshop are intended to spark a dialogue among participants in the workshop. Also, the participants in my workshop come to the event knowing that they will not be expected to perform for audiences. Sonja Kuflinec's work exists within the theatre camps where participating youths know that they will be performing at the end of the camp. Both approaches, each tailored for its specific audience, are valid means of reaching the established goals. Kuflinec notes that both the performance and the process of creating it can offer insight into how ethnicity is constructed by the community and enacted by the individual. (Playing with the Border: Dramaturging Ethnicity in Bosnia 1998). Kuflinec uses theatre to bring citizens from different backgrounds together. My work with international students shares this quality of her work as I bring citizens from different nationalities together.

Susan C. Haedicke is another performance studies scholar who is interested in the relationship between performance and citizenship. In "The Politics of Participation," Haedicke describes a performance she attended in France, *Un Voyage Pas Comme Les Autres (A Voyage Unlike Any Other on the Road to Exile)*, where the actors were actual refugees. The performance is meant to educate audiences and help them to reach their

own conclusions about the issues of refugees³. The performance invites each audience member to step into the shoes of an immigrant character. Each audience member is instructed at the beginning of the performance to choose one of twelve characters. The performance uses interactive methods which allow the audience to embody the character they have chosen. Such identification is critical in creating more understanding for the refugees' plights. The performance aims at raising public awareness towards refugees' politics and offers a new perspective on presenting liminal citizens in performance. The performance has specific significance for the refugees themselves since the performance is acted out by both actors and non-actors, among whom are refugees who were granted asylum in the EU. *Un Voyage Pas Comme Les Autres* relates directly to my work on liminal citizenship since it makes the immigrant experience relevant to the natives of the country. It allows natives to see immigrants who fit within my definition of liminal citizens in a different perspective than the one that is presented in the mainstream media.

Performance as Public Practice

The first performance studies program was inducted at New York University (NYU) in the early nineteen-eighties. With its strong commitment to activism and civic engagement, NYU's program in Art and Public Policy offers an MA in Arts Politics. The aim of the program is to create a connection between arts, community, and civic engagement.

³ Ariane Mnouchkine is another French director who creates intercultural performances with artists from around the world addressing refugees' issues.

Another academic program is the graduate program in Performance Studies at Northwestern University which focuses on the study of performance, public identities and political positions. These programs incorporate interdisciplinary and inter-culturalism into performance education (Rice 1997). Rice states however, that while “performance studies is interdisciplinary in nature, the hub of its activities has been primarily located in the disciplines of Oral Interpretation and theatre” (Rice 6).

Performance as Public Practice (PPP) at UT-Austin is a graduate program that came out of a movement calling for expanding the study of performance and how it relates to, among other things, social sciences, anthropology, and activism. The PPP program has been active in preparing its students to practice the vital combination of being artists/scholars/citizens. The PPP program overview found on the Department of Theatre and Dance website states that the program aims at preparing artists who "use performance as a tool for understanding communities and difference"

(Performance as Public Practice). Conceptualizing an artist as a community-based facilitator reflects a national trend in the academy.

University of Minnesota professor Sonja Kufinec, for example, notes that her concern centers on "the interaction between the university and its surrounding communities. Programs referred to as service learning, outreach, or community-based learning encourage students to work actively with local organizations and secondary schools outside of the college setting" (Educating the Creative Theatre Artist 49-50). The artist's role in the community is to go beyond being active; we need an artist who is an activist. Theatre artist/activist Keith Martin states that "advocacy belongs in the theatre

classroom in particular" (64). Martin proposes activism that starts in academia with the goal of reshaping public discourse.

Part of the scholarly work of PPP practitioners involves teaching in an academic center. As PPP educators, we are expected to embody the knowledge we preach by adopting a progressive approach to teaching. Reflecting a shift in the discipline in general, the PPP program overview focuses on preparing and encouraging the citizen to practice civic engagement. The PPP practitioner uses performance as an efficacious tool of civic dialogue.

My desire to find a link between art work and activism has been stimulated by the ideas of Carol Becker and Jill Dolan. Both of these scholars view the public intellectual through progressive trajectories which situate the public intellectual in general, and the artist in particular, in a leading role in his or her community where he or she is expected to be responsible for being an incendiary factor in the development of her community. According to Carol Becker in "The Artist as Public Intellectual," the role of the artist should exceed the classic role of self expression. It should go beyond the artist's creative work to become a vehicle for integrating his/herself into the community. The implication is that artists should assume the role of public intellectuals and be more visible in the public sphere. Becker proposes, "in their role as spokesman for multiple points of view and advocates for a critique of society, artists may well be understood as public intellectuals – those who believe in and take seriously the importance of the public sphere" (Becker 240). She claims that this vision of the artist as a public intellectual is fairly new in the American perception of the artist. She supports her claim by stating,

“we do not have in our collective consciousness, or probably unconsciousness as well, images of artists as socially concerned citizens of the world, people who could help determine, through insight and wisdom, the correct political cause for us to embark on as a nation” (Becker 239). This claim of Becker is challenged by Janelle Reinelt’s essay *Notes for Radical Democratic Theater: Productive Crises and the Challenge of Indeterminacy* where she says that:

Western Theater, as an institution and as a social practice, is already deeply implicated in the heritage of Western democracy. The arts occupy a space in culture associated with the ‘free’ expression of gifted individuals, the ‘enhancement’ of national life, the production of entertainment for leisure consumption, the public representation of American (or British, or French) national character. (284)

Reinelt’s notion of the connection between the art and the community is supported by the examples of theatre artists whose work reflect an array of racial and sexual themes: Tim Miller, Tony Kushner and Anna Devere Smith. Apart from these recent examples, Reinelt supports her idea by introducing experiments of Asian American Theatre in San Francisco, Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica, WOW café in the East Village of New York, and others. Reinelt believes that “politically committed and engaged theatres have staged race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality as foci for social struggles and possible community in the middle of difference” (285).

Progressive scholars like Jill Dolan, among others (Becker, Kuftenic), call for the integration of artists in general and theatre artists in particular into their communities. Immersing the theatre artist in her community helps locating the theatre artist in the centre of the discussions that are happening about any issue that is of an interest to the public. Dolan questions the role of theatre artists in their communities by saying, “Why don’t theatre departments and performance studies departments open their theatres to just this sort of debate, about social issues, gender issues, sexuality issues, about affirmative action, gay/lesbian civil rights, immigration and welfare, or even about the ways in which academic courses and productions create knowledge in theatre and performance studies?” (Dolan *The Polemics* 517). Dolan believes that when the theatre artist thinks more broadly and involves his or her art in pressing social issues, the artist will gain more recognition in his/her community and will advance his/her art at the same time. Therefore, Dolan advocates for a more visible role for the theatre artist wherein he or she becomes involved in “widening the public discussion about local arts practices and blending these practices in larger discussions about pressing social issues” (Dolan *The polemics* 518).

One of Dolan’s platforms for advocating her ideas was the Performance as Public Practice (PPP) Program at The University of Texas at Austin⁴. Dolan explains her philosophy by saying, “one of my primary goals is to train my students to use performance as a tool for making the world better, to use performance to incite people to profound responses that shake their consciousness of themselves in the world” (Dolan

⁴ Jill Dolan moved to teach at Princeton in 2008.

The polemics 519). I fully embody Dolan's philosophy in my theatre practice and embrace her belief in the importance of "teaching students to be critical, engaged citizens/scholars/artists, people who can bring their passion to spectatorship just as easily as they can to their artistry" (Dolan The polemics 522).

Even though the PPP program is committed to train artists/scholars/citizens, it may fall short of training artists and scholars to be active in their communities by virtue of its loosely constructed structure which leaves ample freedom for students to take any course they want. As a result, many students choose courses that focus on history or theory, spending their entire graduate career uninvolved in any community or even artistic project.

My Research as a Performance as Public Practice Project

My work with international students on issues of civic engagement is a tangible response to the calls issued by Boal, Rohd, and Dolan whose work from among those discussed in this chapter, seems most germane to my examination of liminal citizenship. Applied theatre, particularly, is profoundly suited to launch my activism work with liminal citizens. In this project, it is essential to engage the audience physically as well as intellectually with the ideas that are discussed in the performance. While searching for a vehicle that will allow me to connect both Dolan's theory of engaged audiences and my desire to create an application for such theories, applied theatre has proven to be the best fit. Applied theatre offers me a method to embrace Dolan's ideas intellectually and, at the same time, my committing to the embodiment of social change through the application of Boal and Rohd's theatre work.

Applied theatre has been used in many non-theatrical contexts, such as prisons (Thompson 2003), therapy (Boal 1995) and the corporate sector (Koppett 2001).

However, there is no research indicating that theatre has ever been used by International Student Offices to work with international students. Applied theatre offers a perfect milieu for my work with them. International education scholar Colleen Ward (2001) found that international students are vulnerable citizens who need an outlet to express their own unheard voices which are often suppressed, stereotyped both negatively and positively and sometimes misunderstood by locals. The physical nature of applied theatre also makes it an accessible tool for dialoguing, since language barriers may prevent international students from engaging with plays that could express their concerns and pain.

In addition, applied theatre offers an immediate opportunity for international students to socialize with other international students: to leave their houses, interact socially, make friends and start the process of becoming civically active. Social interaction constitutes a major component of social capital which, in its turn, can initiate an action. Social studies scholars Paul Adler and Seok- Woo Kwon define social capital as “the good will that is engendered by the fabric of social relations and that can be mobilized to facilitate action” (17). Social capital, a concept developed in sociology, is an umbrella term that covers the study of informal communication, trust, culture, social support, social network, etc. (Adler and Kwon 2002). It assumes that building connections among social networks and individuals contribute to the well being of the society (Putnam 2001). Communications studies scholar Robert Putnam describes the

term as “connections among individuals- social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (19). My theatre workshop with liminal citizens offers them a platform on which to build the social capital that will empower them to be civically active.

Chapter 3

The Theatre Workshops

“As an embodied tool of learning, theatre offers one of the most radical possibilities for the practice of freedom in education” (Kuftinec Educating the Creative Theatre Artist 44)

“Progressive instructors often teach new knowledge in new ways, and our commitments push us to teach them well, so that our classrooms become activist sites at which consciousness regularly changes” (Dolan Geographies 120)

Overview

My research uses theatre workshop as a tool for addressing civic engagement among liminal citizens, paying particular attention to the techniques developed by theatre practitioner Augusto Boal to make theatre a rehearsal for change (Boal 1985). In addition, Michael Rohd's notion of theatre as a setting for practicing activism and Dolan and Hook's progressive pedagogical approaches have influenced my planning and facilitation of the theatre workshop.

My research explores the use of theatre workshops to facilitate social change among international students at The University of Texas at Austin. This chapter includes a review of relevant pedagogical methods; the results of a preliminary survey I conducted among international students at UT-Austin to gauge their attitudes towards civic engagement; a thick description of the workshop; and the results of the post-workshop questionnaires that I conducted with the participants of the workshop.

Pedagogy

I used applied theatre techniques to lead workshops with international students. The workshops become the means through which I explored citizenship, civic engagement among international students. While creating plans for the workshop, I had to choose a pedagogical philosophy that I was comfortable emulating, a pedagogy that had goals related to my own objectives of creating a better world.

Critical pedagogy scholar Peter McLaren defines pedagogy as "the process by which teachers and students negotiate meaning" (McLaren 34). Though the term 'pedagogy' has a wide range of interpretations, I adopt this specific definition because it locates pedagogy in a middle ground between teacher and student. When the student is in the center of the educational process, the class dynamic becomes more engaging and productive. Anne Berkeley, an arts educator, agrees that the ideal teacher is a "facilitator, introducing performance forms and structures as catalysts for generating content that would lead, in turn, to the production of texts and performances" (25).

Educators define advocacy according to different pedagogical models and personal teaching philosophies. Media studies scholar Lawrence Wallack describes advocacy as a "catch-all word for the set of skills used to create a shift in public opinion and mobilize the necessary resources and sources to support an issue, policy, and constituency" (27). The term advocacy shifts meanings depending on pedagogical approaches. Despite differing applications of advocacy, most educators still share the hope that their classroom practices will affect and inform students' community lives.

My pedagogical approach regards experience as the best method of learning. Therefore, I foster a workshop culture wherein practice and reflection are given equal weight. As the workshop leader/facilitator, I strove to create an environment in which students could tackle personally relevant public issues in relation to more theoretical material.

My pedagogical work is an advocacy in itself since it always creates a connection between theatre, social issues and civic engagement. The advocacy in my citizenship workshops was characterized by 1) sharing expressive tools with international students that would allow them to voice what they felt and; 2) connecting theatre experience to public issues. I have coined the term “advocate pedagogy” to describe my pedagogical approach. One of my pedagogical goals in introducing advocacy is to encourage my workshop participants to broaden their thoughts; in other words, to connect and apply what they learned in the workshop to their communities.

Jill Dolan and bell hooks likewise support the idea that pedagogy as advocacy means challenging the workshop participants to work both bravely and creatively within their communities. Before describing my own practice, it would be useful to outline few aspects of Dolan's and hooks's advocacy practices, since my pedagogy is influenced by both educators.

Dolan's Pedagogy

Jill Dolan's advocacy in the classroom sets high intellectual expectations and advocates challenging her Women's Studies students. . She argues, “teach to the highest common denominator. Students will rise to the occasion. Learning should be hard”

(144). For example, Dolan insists that Women's Studies should not be an anti-intellectual major when she recalls, "I often had to confront the student's presumption that women's studies courses should somehow be easy, and their animosity because they knew that theory would be difficult" (134). Dolan maintains a fine balance between the progressive content of her courses and a more conventional style of teaching. She states that her course content is progressive but her presence in class is "fairly traditional" (*Geographies* 130). Dolan explains her teaching style by saying: "I set very high standards for students' oral and written assignments; and I require respect for the forms and contents of the knowledge we are addressing" (*Geographies* 131). Dolan's choice to be a demanding teacher is based on a belief that "difficult thinking could also be the basis of a feminist activism and that demanding academic and intellectual work might well bear fruit in the social movement" (*Geographies* 134).

While teaching "Writing About Performance" at the University of Wisconsin, Dolan advocated for her students to take pride in both their creative and critical work. Dolan reflects, "I wanted these students to learn that it's okay to be smart and creative at once. I wanted them to believe, as I do, that writing and rigorous thinking is as important to their work as actors or designers or directors" (138). Dolan's advocacy stems from her deep belief that the artist is able to practice his or her role as an intellectual. Therefore, She chooses rigorous materials that challenge students both intellectually and artistically, a pedagogical style I strive to emulate.

Dolan's influence motivated me to intellectually challenge my workshops participants by asking them to start thinking about their dual responsibilities as citizens of

both their original community and their host community. In addition, Dolan's connection between advocacy and arts provided the impetus for my own research.

hooks' Pedagogy

bell hooks' advocacy has been characterized by her struggle to end any sexual or racial discrimination in classrooms. hooks remarks that "racism, sexism, and class elitism shape the structure of classrooms, creating a lived reality of insider versus outsider that is predetermined, often in a place before any class discussion begin" (83). Her advocacy results in marginalized students finding an empowered voice in the classroom. hooks states,

I recognize that students from marginalized groups enter classrooms within institutions where their voices have been neither heard nor welcomed, whether these students discuss facts – those which any of us might know – or personal experience. My pedagogy has been shaped to respond to this reality. (84)

As a black woman, hooks has experienced "as a student in a predominately white institution how easy it is to feel shut out or closed down" (86). hooks is "particularly eager to help create a learning process in the classroom that engages everyone" (86). To foster her advocacy, hooks asks each student to write an autobiographical paragraph about an early racial memory and read it aloud in class. This collective listening, hooks claims, "affirms the value and uniqueness of each voice" (84). hooks's autobiographical exercise empowers the students and assures each one that his/her personal, racial experience matters. hooks comments, "I can circumvent this possible misuse of power by bringing to the classroom pedagogical strategies that affirm their presence, their right to

speak, in multiple ways on diverse topics" (84). More specifically, hooks shapes her advocacy by addressing racist and sexual biases. In her classroom, hooks is keen that "the issue of gender will be addressed, and feminist struggle to end sexism will be considered a necessary component of our revolutionary agenda" (112). By trying to end sexism and racism, hooks attempts to build a class culture where a "feeling of community creates a sense that there is a shared commitment and a common good that binds us" (40).

The educational system in my home country of Syria emphasizes the homogeneity of the group, rather than the distinctive personalities and background of each student. I had been trained in my undergraduate work to treat race and gender issues by not addressing them directly. hooks's advocacy has enlightened me to be more aware of issues of race and gender among participants in my own theatre workshop. In addition, her emphasis on building a community among the learners encouraged me to implement workshop tactics which allowed participants to have a sense of community within the context of the workshop.

Hypotheses

I tested three hypotheses in my study:

- 1) international students are not interested in civic engagement;
- 2) international students find theatre to be an appropriate tool to make them more aware of how they can become more civically involved in their host community;
- 3) international students who participate in a theatre workshop show better attitudes toward civic engagement.

Research Questions and Methodology

I addressed two main questions in constructing my workshop: How can performance strategies be used to create greater civic participation among liminal citizens at The University of Texas at Austin? What impact do the performance strategies have on increasing participants' self-reports of their own increased empowerment? In addition to these main questions, there are several related questions:

- a. How can theatre be used to address issues of social inclusion/exclusion among international students at UT Austin?
- b. How can performance be used as a catalyst for personal and social transformation among international students at UT Austin?
- c. Are international students interested in being active participants in their host community?
- d. How can performance strategies be used by the International Students Office to help international students overcome feelings of discrimination and exclusion?

These questions are shaped and informed by my research on liminal citizenship reported in Chapter One and my research on the role of theatre and academia in addressing civic engagement discussed in Chapter Two. By designing a theatre workshop as a main component of my research, I chose to test these questions by direct practical application.

Preliminary Survey

Before leading the workshop, I sent out a preliminary survey (see appendix) to 28 international students at The University of Texas at Austin. The survey asked questions

about what it means to be civically engaged as international students. I hoped to discover more about international students' thoughts concerning civic engagement before conducting my theatre workshop. Of the 28 email requests, I received 9 responses, a 33% return. This small sample represents a microcosm of the international student body and is statistically significant to gauge the attitudes toward civic engagement among international students according to Frey (1999).

The preliminary survey contained five questions:

1. How do you define being an active citizen in your host community (consider both the university and the city you live in)?

Out of the nine participants who answered the survey, six addressed this question. Their answers focused on two levels of activism in which they can engage, participation and volunteering. The participants' focus on these two aspects support my argument in Chapter One concerning participatory and voluntary outlets in which international students could be active.

The anonymous responses to this question follow:

- “Active citizen is someone involved in the issues that concern the community. An active citizen expresses involvement through the following: active participation in the political process related to the community, writes to civic and or governmental organizations to express his views about the issues that concern the community (especially when something is wrong), donates to the community, volunteers and/or represents the community in aspects of interests directly related to the community” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

- “Participating in any community services, being members of any student organizations, etc...” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Being involved in the local (workplace, neighborhood, city, district) activities and initiatives that serve the causes I believe in” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Initiating, leading and/or participating in community-based activities such as cultural, religious, social, political and educational organizations, programs or events” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Being a good teacher and colleague” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Getting involved in community activities as activism for a specific cause, doing volunteering work like mentoring historically underrepresented, minority undergraduate students” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

2. As an international student, why/or why not do you feel the urge to be an active citizen in your host community?

I received five answers for this question. Only one response exhibited a lack of interest in being an active citizen. The other four responses focused on the idea of repaying their host community as a reason for their activism. One student noted the urge to share her knowledge and education with members of the host community. The anonymous responses to this question follow:

- “I feel the community has welcomed me as a resident here and so the least I can do is be an active member and help out wherever I can” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

- “I feel part of the community and therefore I give to it. Also, I feel the need to educate people about my political views – I support any that are congruent with these views. I feel I would benefit from being active in the community since it may influence my life personally” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “In order to share my previous experience as a community leader in my home country with my host community. To contribute to the welfare of the host community” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Sometimes I do not feel it is my place to be as engaged” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “I feel the urge to be an active citizen because I believe that I have some cultural values to contribute in the well-being of my host community. It is a give and take process. I believe I can offer something. Cultural values such as caring, solidarity, and spontaneity need to be shared worldwide” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

3. If you are civically engaged in your host community, how do you exercise this involvement?

I received four responses to this question. The answers contained practical examples of activism opportunities available to international students. For example, one could become an active member of student organizations. One participant reported two venues where she practices her activism; 1) in her neighborhood, and 2) as a part of a theater collective. One of the participants focused on building social capital as a venue for practicing her activism. One participant made a point that being a part of a theatre collective is a form of civic engagement. Such a comment validates my beliefs about the

role of theatre in building civic awareness. In fact, most of the answers to these questions intersect with my insights about civic engagement opportunities for international students presented in Chapter One. The responses to the third question follow:

- “Participating in events held by student organizations of which I am a member” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Community service: volunteering, providing logistical support, making donations. Discussion: engaging in political and social conversations, speaking out, attending talks, lectures, etc. Spreading the word – talking to people about events to attend” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “I would tutor and/or mentor high school students in my spare time” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Right now, I’m a Tenant Advisory Board member and take my time with other members to educate the community about recycling and neighborhood watch. As a board member, I bring my specific experience and perspective as an international African woman. The board organizes cultural events in order to create a more internationally inclined, accepting community. At times, I join some organizations to demonstrate in front of the Capital. I recently joined the race against Cancer awareness. I’m also part of a Theatre collective ‘Weird Sisters Theatre Collective’. My participation in the collective activities helps show another side of an African woman to which people are not necessarily familiar” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

4. How do you practice your civic duties with your hometown while you are physically away?

I received five responses to this question. Four of them acknowledge the role of the internet in maintaining civic communication with the participants' countries of origin.

The responses follow:

- “By writing in newspapers about issues that do not please me” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Online forums, participate in expatriate activities such as talks related to my country of origin” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Almost impossible (I would try to stay in touch by the way of email” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Calling my family regularly, keeping myself aware of current events by reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, keeping in touch with my friends back home” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Unfortunately, I have not been able to practice my duties with my hometown” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

5. How can the International Office be more active in introducing you to opportunities where you can be civically active?

The answers for the fifth question centered on enhancing social activities, and on making volunteer opportunities for international students more visible. The responses follow:

- “Not sure. In the case of my school we had a great international students services office that was overseeing all social activities exercised by the students. It gave a small budget to encourage the associations, it also provided them with some logistical support (such as room and equipment for meetings). Maybe other international offices should do the same. Most importantly, what they need to learn from my school’s international office is the ‘freedom’ that students enjoyed in expressing their views” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Create tailored listserves for which students can voluntarily sign up to announce events of interest. Encourage student groups. Initiate student groups with budgets and staff/faculty coordinators. Help these groups liaise with out-of-campus communities with similar interests” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “By posting and actively advertising list of community organizations and activities” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “The I.O. should be more amenable to their international students” (Preliminary Survey 2008).
- “Making the opportunities more visible. It seems that it is doing that, I’m not sure but I think they can be more ‘aggressive’ about it and explains the benefits to current and prospective students” (Preliminary Survey 2008).

Methodology

I used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in developing this study. For example, before leading the workshop I conducted an in-depth interview with an official at the UT International Office. The choice of a qualitative interview offered

me the opportunity to ask open ended questions and receive answers in the form of a narrative derived from the interviewee's experience (Weiss 1994).

Quantitative information was gathered by means of a questionnaire, using a set of questionnaire data and items provided by Verba *et al.* in *Voice and Equality* (1995). I chose this particular questionnaire because it was designed to gauge civic engagement among members of the community regardless of legal citizenship status. The data analysis and research presented in this dissertation benefited from the guidance provided by Talia Stroud of the The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation at The University of Texas at Austin.

I chose to use the survey and questionnaire both as a method of learning about international students' attitudes toward civic engagement, and as a tool for gauging the effect of theatre on their civic engagement attitudes. I chose these two methods for two reasons: first, giving them the survey and questionnaire to work on them by themselves gave them the time and opportunity to reflect on the questions posed; second, it is not uncommon for international students to have stronger writing skills than conversational skills, allowing them to give more in-depth responses in writing than in interviewing.

In a study entitled *Sojourner Adjustment*, international education scholar Austin Church offers a critique to studies of international students, claiming that there is an absence of baseline data or adequate control group. One suggestion proposed by Church's study is the use of a small group experiment. My research meets these challenges by proposing a quantitative methodology wherein I use both a control group and baseline data as the backbone for my study.

Participants

Forty-five international students at The University of Texas at Austin took part in this study, 26 of whom participated in the theatre workshop and 19 who did not participate in the workshop. This sample was based on recruiting international students by means of distributing flyers, inviting students online, and making personal invitations to international students whom I know (*i.e.*, Convenience Sampling). Convenience sampling simply involves getting participants wherever they are found and whenever is convenient. It is literally taking whoever “is convenient as a participant in the study” (Jackson 84).

I sent more than 200 fliers to the International Students Office at The University of Texas at Austin and to Austin’s franchise of House of Tutors, a learning center where international students can receive tutoring or test preparation assistance. In addition, I created an event on Facebook. I sent an invitation by email through graduate coordinators in the College of Fine Arts. The COFA coordinator sent the same invitation to other graduate coordinators across campus. In the end, only four students responded to my modest campaign and attended the workshop, a disappointing return. I should have planned my recruiting campaign more carefully. I missed out on many strategies that could have helped attract more participants. For example, I could have put an ad in the *Daily Texan*, sought airtime on the student radio station, or engaged in other recruiting methods.

The response results were disappointing for me. If international students were reluctant to participate in a theatre workshop that addressed issues related to their lives,

then how could I ask them to be active in participating in their civic duties? On the other hand, I feel that my work is valuable specifically because it encourages them to change their passive attitude. I led another recruitment campaign on the UT campus that included standing in the lobby of the International Student Office and handing out fliers, and calling thirty four international students I know and personally inviting them to participate. My second campaign proved more effective and I gained another twenty participants. I led one more recruitment effort and gained an additional twenty-one participants. My recruitment methods themselves resembled a civic engagement activity. They all revolve around building social capital (calling, emailing, meeting with them, making connections, etc.) Social capital is an essential component of civic engagement (Adler and Kwon 2002).

Procedure

To test the use of theatre in addressing issues of civic engagement among international students, I led three theatre workshops. I had four participants in the first workshop, twenty participants in the second, and twenty- one in the third. By concentrating on international students, I was able to target a specific population in my recruitment efforts. My own status as an international student defined a commonality with all who participated in the workshops. In my theatre workshops I created an environment modeled on the one that Gorham discusses in *The Theatre of Politics*⁵ ; the theatre workshops offered a safe place for international students to talk about their ideas on being active in their host community without being monitored by their counselors or

⁵ The environment is meant to create a safe space in an academic setting where discussing issues of politics is encouraged.

any other influence that might hinder their freedom of expression. My workshops aimed at facilitating a dialogue and processing a specific issue of significant importance within the community.

I divided the participants randomly into two groups: those who did not participate in the workshop (control) and those who did (experimental.) I thanked the control group for coming to the workshop, and I asked them to fill out a questionnaire that gauging their attitude toward civic engagement before dismissing them. I then facilitated the workshop with the experimental group. At the conclusion of the workshop, I asked the participants to fill out the same questionnaire the control group had completed. I added four additional questions that gauged their impressions on using theatre as a tool to address civic engagement issues, based on their workshop experience.

The Workshop

The three workshops took place in room 1.139 of the Winship Theatre Building at The University of Texas at Austin on November 16th, Dec 5th 2007 and March 16th 2008. The following describes the workshop that occurred on March 16th 2008. The other two workshops followed the same format. During the course of the workshop, I took digital photographs and made an audio recording of the process in order to document the students' participation for subsequent analysis.

The choice of a space for an applied theatre workshop is critical to the success of the workshop since most of the participants are not actors, and may experience stage fright. Consequently, I chose to hold the workshop in a large classroom with plenty of

windows which allowed sunlight to fill the room. Movable chairs permitted maximum spatial flexibility and further reduced the feeling of being in a theatrical setting.

I set up snacks in one corner of the room. Sharing snacks at the beginning serves as an excellent ice breaker, allowing the participants to get to know one another before starting the workshop. I welcomed the participants one by one as they arrived, introducing them to each other and inviting them to share snacks. The participants represented the countries of The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Poland, Egypt, and South Korea. Giving the students a time to connect and get to know each other before the start of the workshop is an important step since it allows them to create connections and build their social capital without the supervision of the facilitator.

The workshop was planned to start at mid-day. The participants began arriving early at around 11:30. I started the workshop by asking the participants to stand in a circle while I explained the first activity: each person was instructed to move his or her body in a funny way while saying his/her name. The movement was meant to represent an embodied signature of the participant. Each participant repeated his/her name and movement and all the other participants imitated him/her one after the other. I chose to open with this game because it is an activity that generates laughter among the participants, allows them to relax with each other, and reinforces the learning of one another's names. I have played this game with diverse populations, young and old, international students and local residents, and I have always been fascinated by how easily this game can be applied in any context. I noticed that the participants were shy in

expressing themselves in bold movements. As the facilitator, I kept coaching them to produce bigger movement, asking them to magnify each movement that they produce.

This activity was followed by a theatre game called ‘Join me if...’ The entire group starts together in one line. Anyone in the group can cross the room and say, “Join me if you (...), like me.” The person can fill in the blank with something as simple as “Join me if your favorite color is blue,” or as complex as “Join me if you think that the U.S. is ready for a female president.” Most of the statements during the workshop were cultural in nature. What follows is a list of the statements that were expressed by the participants;

- Join me if you speak more than three languages
- Join me if you have been to Japan
- Join me if you study science at UT
- Join me if your name is hard to pronounce
- Join me if you have been living in Austin for more than a year
- Join me if you have not seen your parents in a year
- Join me if you like listening to rock music
- Join me if you like to drive in the countryside
- Join me if you like eating at fast food restaurants
- Join me if you like being at UT-Austin
- Join me if you miss home
- Join me if you come from a big family
- Join me if you have a family living in the U.S.

- Join me if you have any family living in Austin

This game created a safe, non-judgmental environment in which the participants could find commonalities and converse casually.

At the end of these two games, I invited the participants to sit with me in a circle and talk about civic engagement. I began by asking, “what does civic engagement mean to you?” and “Do you consider yourself civically engaged, and why?” The answers for the first question follow:

- Civic engagement means belonging to a community
- Civic engagement means being a good community member
- Civic engagement means being a good student
- Civic engagement means participating in student organizations
- Civic engagement means being a good neighbor
- Civic engagement means volunteering time and/or money to charities
- I consider myself civically engaged because I volunteer my time for an environmental cause
- I consider myself civically engaged because I am part of a soccer team
- I consider myself civically engaged because I vote in student organization
- I consider myself civically engaged because I volunteer as a teacher in a local school
- I consider myself civically engaged because I attend my student organization meetings

- I consider myself civically engaged because I am aware of political activities that occur in Austin

Though the answers varied, most of the participants agreed that civic engagement means being involved in local activities, for example in the workplace, neighborhood or university. Other responders put a value on donating money or time to the local community, or being active as a volunteer. In general, most of the responses focused on activities that are not political in nature; rather, the participants identified opportunities in which they, as international students, felt they could freely participate.

After we finished the discussion, I divided the participants into three groups and gave each group a *Daily Texan* newspaper. I asked each group to; 1) find one story that included elements of civic engagement; 2) use markers and large pieces of paper to make drawings in response to the story they chose; and 3) present their findings to the other participants.

One example was a story about an Austin Community College organization which developed a fundraising event wherein bicyclists ride for 24 hours to raise money for a fund for women in Central America. Another story was about a campaign to get a new Metrorail in the Austin community.

After each group shared its presentation with the others, I introduced them to the frozen image exercise by demonstrating how it works. Image work is a technique developed by Augusto Boal where participants create a frozen image by using their bodies in response to a story or an idea. I then asked them to work as a group to create

three frozen images based on the stories they had found in *The Daily Texan* of the first exercise.

Image work is a safe start for participants who are not actors. It helps them to get into their bodies and represent their ideas expressively. The core of the exercise is in the observation and discussion, since each participant has a unique interpretation which may or may not be what the creator of the image intended.

Once we had fully explored the image work, we moved to a values clarification exercise. In this exercise, everyone sat in one part of the room facing the largest open space. I positioned signs in various parts of the room that said “agree,” “unsure,” and “disagree.” I then read the following statements that address issues of civic engagement as they apply to international students:

- I follow the American election with enthusiasm as if I have the right to vote.
- I am curious to know who are the officials who are leading The University of Texas at Austin. For example, who is the president of UT, what is his background, what are the backgrounds of the people on the board, etc.
- I am curious to learn more about the politics that govern Austin.
- Focusing on study is my sole concern while being in the United States.
- I do not feel that I am inclined to be an active citizen at UT and in the Austin community.
- Since I am not a legal citizen, I should not be concerned about UT and the Austin community.

- I do believe that getting involved in the American community would enrich my academic experience in the States.
- Americans would find it weird if I decided to be a politically active community member.
- I feel the urge to be an active citizen in the States even though I am not a legal American citizen.

Each person decided how they felt about the statement they had just heard and then moved to the corresponding sign. After each statement, I gave the participants an opportunity to say why they had chosen their positions. Once all who wanted to share their thoughts had done so, I proceeded to the next statement.

Values clarification was a constructive way to end the workshop. It allowed the participants to finish while they were still engaged in determining how they felt about the issues that were discussed over the course of the workshop.

Results

To gauge the efficacy of my workshop, I developed a questionnaire modeled after the work of Verba *et al.* (1995). Based on the work of communications scholar Talia Stroud, I adopted the following steps to gauge the results:

- a) Divided participants into two groups, a control group and an experimental group;
- b) Distributed a workshop standardized questionnaire to the control group and asked them to not participate in the workshop;
- c) Conducted the workshop with the experimental group and administered the workshop standardized questionnaire to them after the workshop;

- d) Compared and contrasted the results between the control group and the experimental group.

The results obtained from the two groups were examined to discern whether participants from the experimental group recorded better attitudes towards civic engagement than members from the control group. There were two parts to the questionnaire. Each statement had five answers from which to choose: **1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neither; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = strongly agree.**

First, I asked the participants to respond to four statements in order to gauge the efficacy of theatre workshop in empowering international students to become civically engaged. The statements were:

- **The theatre workshop was helpful in causing me to be more aware of my civic engagement right**
- **This workshop made me want to get involved in UT's community**
- **This workshop made me want to get involved in Austin's community**
- **This workshop would have been more effective if it were in a lecture format**

Second, I presented the participants with two sets of statements. One set listed reasons for being active citizen, and the other listed reasons for not being civically active. Using the scale described above, the participants indicated their response to each statement.

Reasons for Being an Active Citizen

Thinking about the time you decided to become an active member in UT or in Austin by volunteering or being part of an organization or a group, please indicate your response to the statements below using the following scale: **1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neither; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = strongly agree.**

- *I found it exciting*
- *I wanted to learn about UT politics and/or government*
- *I wanted an opportunity to work with people who share my ideals*
- *I wanted an opportunity to meet important and influential people*
- *I wanted an opportunity to influence government policy*
- *I considered this my duty as a citizen*
- *I am the kind of person who does my share*
- *I saw this as an opportunity to further my job or career*
- *I saw this as an opportunity for recognition from people I respect*
- *I might want to get a job with the government someday*
- *I might want to run for office someday*
- *I wanted an opportunity to be with people I enjoy*
- *I did not want to say NO to someone who asked*
- *I might some day need help from an official on a personal or family problem*

- *I saw this as an opportunity to make the community or nation a better place to live*

Reasons for Not Being an Active Citizen:

Here is a list of reasons people give for not being very active politically. Please indicate your response to the statements below using the following scale: **1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neither; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = strongly agree.**

- *I find that as one individual, I do not feel I can have an impact*
- *I am afraid that I might get into trouble by getting involved in politics whether at UT or in Austin*
- *I find that politics is very complicated for me to understand*
- *I find politics uninteresting and boring compared to other aspects of my life*
- *I think I should take care of myself /my family and my study before I worry about the welfare of the community and nation*
- *Given the many pressures in my personal life as an international student, I simply do not have enough time for politics*
- *I have never thought about being involved*
- *I think that politics is dirty business, and do not want to do anything with it*

- *I think that what I get out of political participation/activism is not worth the time and trouble I would have to put into it*
- *I feel it is not my responsibility to participate*
- *The really important things that affect my life have nothing to do with politics*
- *It is not my place to be involved in politics*
- *I feel burned out*
- *I find that politics can not help me with my personal or family problems*
- *There just are not any good causes anymore*

The complete results of the questionnaire are documented in the following table.

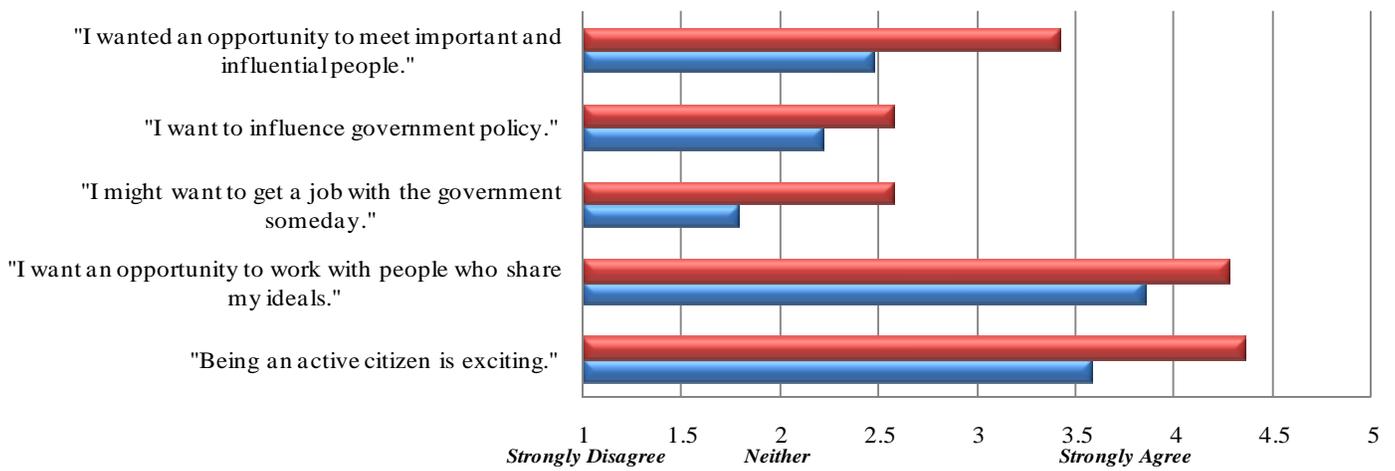
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There were ten significant differences recorded between the control group and the experimental group, five in the first set and five in the second set (see diagram 1 for differences in the first set of statements). Results were gauged by calculating the significant difference between the control group and the experimental group. Significant difference is defined as an “observed difference between two descriptive statistics (such as means) that is unlikely to have occurred by chance” (Jackson 148). The ‘magic’ number by which analysts decide that a significant difference exists is .05, also known as .05 alpha level. The occurrence of such a difference means that the “likelihood that this result is due to chance is small. If the result is not due to chance, then it is most likely due to a true or real difference between the groups” (Jackson 148).

In the first set of questions, participants were asked about reasons for being active citizens. The results for the statements that registered significant differences are illustrated in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1

Reasons for Being an Active Citizen



	"Being an active citizen is exciting."	"I want an opportunity to work with people who share my ideals."	"I might want to get a job with the government someday."	"I want to influence government policy."	"I wanted an opportunity to meet important and influential people."
■ Experimental Group	4.35	4.27	2.57	2.57	3.42
■ Control Group	3.58	3.84	1.78	2.21	2.47

There was a significant difference between those who attended the workshop and those who did not attend when they were asked to identify the ‘exciting’ factor of being an active citizen (“Being an active citizen is exciting”). The mean for the experimental group was 4.53 out of 5, while the mean for the control group was 3.58 out of 5.

Another result that registered a significant difference was the response to a statement about activities that gauged participants’ desire to be part of a group (“I wanted an opportunity to work with people who share my ideals”). The participants of the workshops scored 4.27, while those who did not attend the workshop scored 3.84 out of 5.

In response to a statement that gauges the participants’ attitudes toward working for the government (“I might want to get a job with the government someday”), the reaction of the experimental group marked a significant difference. Participants who attended the workshop were more aware of opportunities of working with the government than the control group. The mean was 2.57 for participants in the experimental group and 1.78 for participants in the control group.

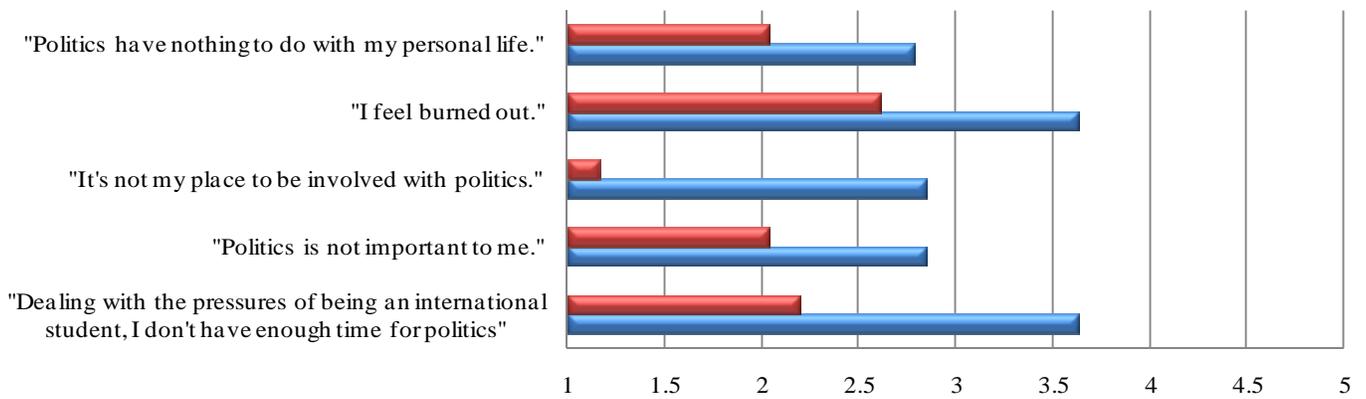
One of the most interesting and significant differences was recorded in the responses to a statement about the role of the individual and his or her responsibility toward the government (“I wanted an opportunity to influence government policy”). With a mean of 2.75 for the experimental group and a mean of 2.21 for the control group, a significant difference was noted.

Making professional connections (“I wanted an opportunity to meet important and influential people”) was also an enticing factor for being an active citizen in both groups; however, the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group. Those who attended the workshops scored 3.42, while those who did not attend the workshop scored 2.47 out of 5.

In the second set of questions, participants were asked about reasons for not being active citizens. The results for the statements that registered significant differences are illustrated in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2

Reasons for Not Being an Active Citizen



		<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	"Dealing with the pressures of being an international student, I don't have enough time for politics"	"Politics is not important to me."	"It's not my place to be involved with politics."	"I feel burned out."	"Politics have nothing to do with my personal life."
■ Experimental Group	2.19	2.03	1.16	2.61	2.03
■ Control Group	3.63	2.84	2.84	3.63	2.78

Participants in the control group scored significantly higher than participants in the experimental group when asked whether the pressure that they are dealing with as international students might be a factor that prevents them from being active citizens (“Given the many pressures in my personal life as an international student, I simply do not have enough time for politics”). Participants who attended the workshop registered 2.19 while participants who did not attend the workshop scored 3.63. The difference demonstrates that the theatre workshop was helpful in making participants more aware of the importance of including politics in their daily life activities.

The participants were asked to identify themselves with a statement that gauges the relationship between the personal lives of international students and politics (“Politics is not important to me”). Participants who attended the workshop scored 2.03 while participants who did not attend workshop scored 2.84. The significant difference is an indication of the success of the theatre workshop in making participants aware of the importance of taking an interest in politics.

Participants in the experimental group scored lower in response to the following statement: “It is not my place to be involved with politics.” Their score of 1.16 is significantly lower than the 2.84 which is the mean for the participants who did not attend the workshop. This difference is important since it demonstrates that the theatre workshop was successful in; 1) bringing more attention to political issues; and 2) broadening the definition of politics to include civic engagement activities.

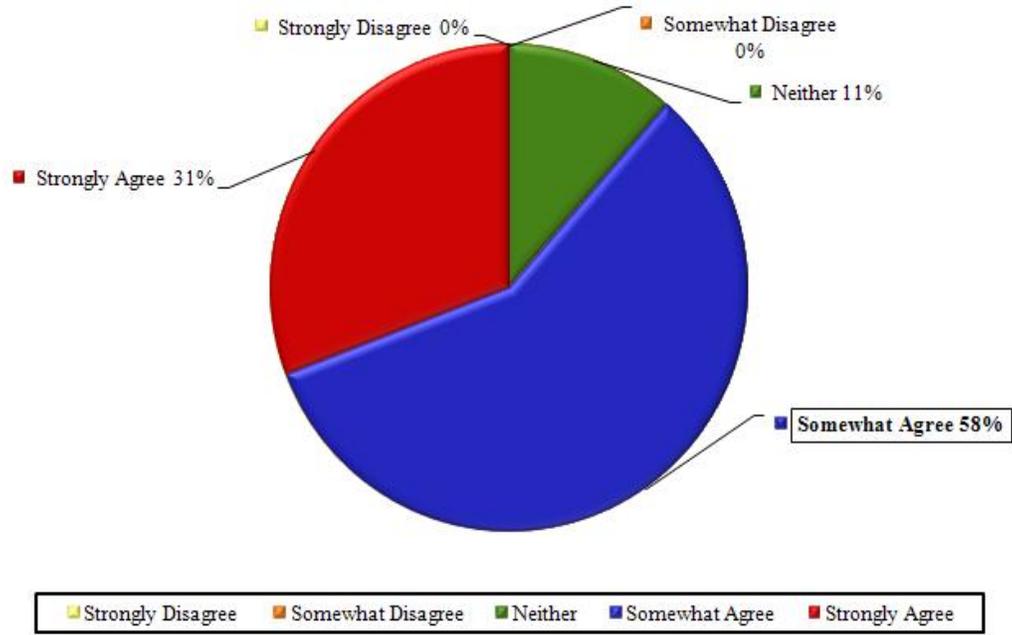
Participants in the control group expressed a feeling of ‘burn out,’ as was indicated in a higher score on the following statement “One reason why I am not an

active citizen is the fact that I feel burned out.” The mean for the control group was 3.63 while the mean for the experimental group was 2.61. The difference indicates that the theatre workshop was able to address issues of participants’ frustrations concerning being part of public life.

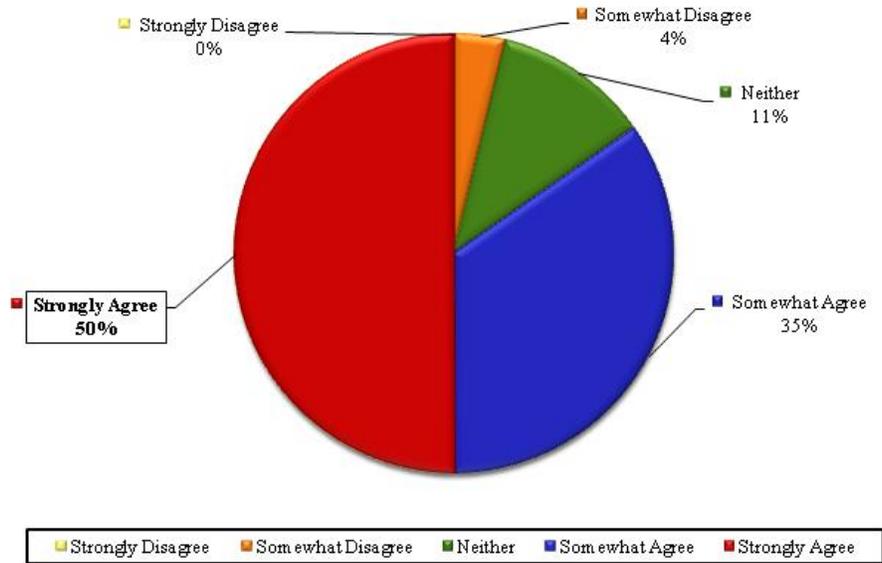
The results revealed significant differences on questions related to the personal attitudes of the participants towards politics in general. For example, there was a significant difference in a question that establishes a gap between personal life and politics (“Politics have nothing to do with my personal life”). The mean for the experimental group was 2.03 while the mean for the control group was 2.78.

In addition to asking participants in both the control and experimental groups about reasons for being or not being active citizens, I asked the experimental group questions related to the use of theatre as a tool to address issues of active citizenship and civic engagement. The results indicate that the theatre workshop format was effective in making participants in the experimental group more aware of their potential for civic engagement and more encouraged to practice their civic engagement duties. The results for the four additional questions answered by the experimental group follow:

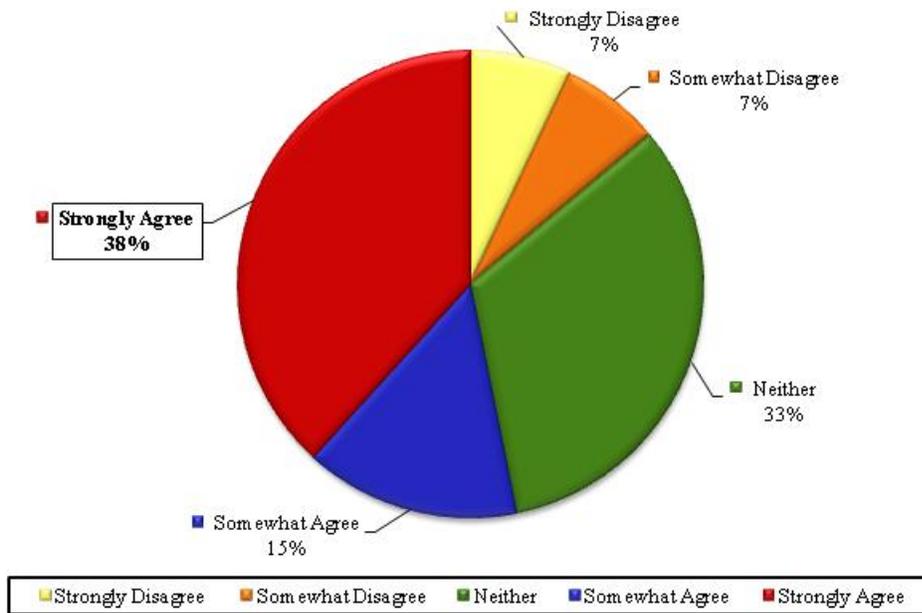
"The theatre workshop was useful in helping me to be more aware of my civic engagement rights."



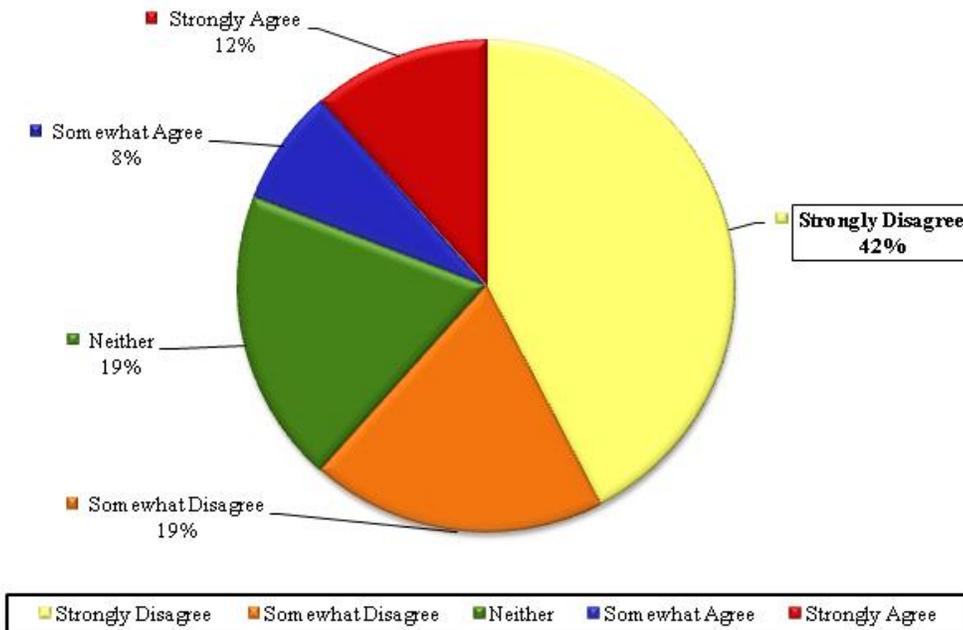
"This workshop made me want to get involved in UT's community."



"This workshop made me want to get involved in Austin's community"



"This workshop would have been more effective if it were in a lecture format."



Discussion

Participants in the experimental group recorded significantly higher scores in these areas:

- Being an active citizen is exciting
- Being active citizens allows them to know people who share their ideals
- Being active citizens opens possibilities for them to work for a governmental agencies
- Being active citizens give them the opportunity to affect government policy

One of the significant differences occurred when participants from the experimental group scored higher when asked to identify whether being an active citizen is an exciting activity. The theatre workshop was an important factor in causing the experimental group to score higher on this statement. Theatre games and exercises allowed participants to tackle issues of civic engagement in a dramatic form that made them exciting. The significant difference supports one of the hypotheses of my research which states that theatre can play a role in encouraging people to be active citizens. The participants' attitudes towards civic engagement were shaped by both the workshop activities and the discussion during the workshop.

Data also revealed that international students have the desire to become civically engaged. International students yearn to find other people with whom they can share their ideals. The theatre workshop resulted in the experimental group scoring higher on a statement linking active citizenship and interacting with people who share the same

values (I wanted an opportunity to work with people who share my ideals). I attribute this difference between the two groups to a specific theatre exercise I conducted in the workshop. I refer to the values clarification exercise where participants were asked to identify with specific statements related to their civic engagement. Another interesting finding was recorded in the responses to a statement about working for the government (I might want to get a job with the government someday). None of the international students are U.S. citizens; yet, the workshop helped them to recognize the possibility of working for the government, whether their own or the U.S. government. The theatre workshop helped participants to make a connection between civics and governance.

In response to the question about their desire to influence government policy (I wanted an opportunity to influence government policy), it was clear that the theatre workshop helped participants to build a connection between their work as active citizens and the work of the government. The theatre workshop enabled them to see their work as active citizens as part of a system in which they could play a participatory role.

The responses for the second set of statements, which asked the participants about reasons for not being actively engaged, support my main hypothesis which states that the theatre workshop can help international students become active citizens. Most of the statements in this set examine why international students are not inclined to be civically active. Since the control group scored higher in this area, it follows that the theatre workshop was a significant factor in creating less negative attitudes about civic engagement.

For example, a major significant difference was revealed in response to the question about the affect of feeling the pressure of personal life on not being an active citizen. The results recorded that the theatre workshop made participants in the experimental group feel less pressured than participants in the control group.

Another important factor that prevents international students from being active citizens is the fact that they do not see a connection between their personal life and politics. Results showed that the theatre workshop helped participants to create this connection, and showed them that they could become more active.

One major reason that international students are not more civically active is the fact that they are personally frustrated. I arrived at this conclusion after reviewing their responses for the statement “I feel burnt out” as a reason for not being civically active. The control group scored significantly higher in this area. Again, the theatre workshop proved to be an important factor of empowerment for the experimental group s since they scored lower on this factor.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is related to the methodology. For example, my choice of language in the questionnaire may have affected the results. Further, the group who participated in the workshop may have been predisposed to offer favorable responses to the survey. The control group may conceivably have been equally directed to intended results by the wording of the questions.

Another limitation of the methodology is related to the factors other than the content of the workshop that might affect the participants’ responses . An example

would be the demeanor of facilitator. In a broader future study, it could be beneficial to conduct the workshops using different facilitators followed by a comparative analysis of the results from the different facilitators.

Conclusion

The study showed that international students have the desire to be active citizens both at UT-Austin and in the Austin community. The study also revealed that the theatre workshop proved to be an effective tool in encouraging international students to be civically active. The benefits to the students are evident as they begin to understand and embody their potential to make a difference and to claim their place in the local community. The benefits to the university or the local community emerge as these newly empowered students engage in local civic activities ranging from volunteerism to political activism.

Conclusion

“Because of these debates over art in America, theatre studies educators should indeed be practicing advocacy in the classroom. We need to advocate for our students and ourselves as citizens of a democracy-in-the-making, however compromised, however imperfectly realized. Advocacy in the classroom means bringing these issues to the public forum that the university provides and giving our students the critical tools with which to engage debates about censorship, about art as a public entitlement, about who has the right to speak in public forums using federal money” (Dolan Rehearsing Democracy 4)

“We simply cannot continue training prospective faculty for their roles as teachers and researchers while altogether ignoring their responsibilities as citizens in a profession” (Kolodny 16)

This dissertation investigated the role of theatre in empowering liminal citizens to be civically engaged in their host communities. I began by introducing the concept of liminal citizenship, focusing on international students as a population that exemplifies the concept. My work developed this model of international students as liminal citizens by exploring new theories of citizenship such as flexible citizenship, cultural citizenship, tactical citizenship and global citizenship. All of these types of citizenship share with liminal citizenship a rethinking of the normative legal notion of citizenship based on ideas of exclusion/inclusion and legal rights.

After explaining the concept of liminal citizenship, I discussed the relationship between academia and politics, advocating for using academic institutions as a site to

practice politics and for training students to be active citizens. I explored theatre methods that proved successful in addressing civic education issues, focusing on Augusto Boal and Michael Rohd, among others, as seminal figures in the use of theatre as a tool for building civic skills. Through the development and facilitation of theatre workshops with international students at The University of Texas at Austin, I then demonstrated that theatre can indeed be an excellent tool in building civic awareness among liminal citizens.

In my dissertation, international students serve as representatives of a population of liminal citizens. I chose to work with this particular demographic for two main reasons. The first reason is a practical one since I already have access to this population by virtue of being an international student myself at The University of Texas at Austin. The second reason is driven by a personal desire to learn more about my own liminality as a member of the population of international students.

The Role of the International Students Office

As an international student, I am aware of the importance of the International Students Office and the role it plays in the life of the international student community. Since arriving in the United States from Syria as a graduate student in 2004, I have been a frequent visitor to the International Students Office at both institutions I have attended: Emerson College and The University of Texas at Austin. The ISO is critically important to international students since it handles all the visa requirements for travel and employment, issues which have become more complicated since the 9/11 attacks on the

World Trade Center. In addition to visa compliance, international students must fulfill registration and academic requirements. The International Students Office assists international students in understanding and meeting these requirements. Academic and visa issues require countless visits to this office which is staffed with advisors who speak carefully and slowly to make sure that they are understood, since most of their clientele do not speak English as a first language. Most of these international students have been in the top of their class in their countries of origin (Mori 2000) and are not accustomed to being perceived as ‘mere foreigners’ who need assistance even before the start of their academic studies.

In most U.S. institutions, the university’s International Students Office is the first point of contact and connection between the international student and his or her new university and host community. These initial visits to the ISO form the student’s first impression of both this new place and his or her place in it. It is vitally important, therefore, that the advising staff be fully cognizant of and trained to address the unique needs of international students. Every student comes with a unique set of needs, history, and cultural beliefs. Each student should be treated as an individual, not as one of any number of generic international students.

At The University of Texas at Austin, International Office advisors serve as facilitators for new students, teaching them specific skills they need to adapt to a new lifestyle, and striving to create a community among international students. The first mission of the office is to introduce incoming students to the specifics of how to live in

the States (International Office 2008). The office is stocked with pamphlets, brochures, and booklets that contain critical information about how to function in the U.S.: from information on how to apply for a credit card to how to ride the bus, cross the street, or rent an apartment and choose good roommates.

The second mission of the office is to create a community and a bond among international students (International Office 2008). One way this is achieved is through organized trips to tourist destinations near the university. Examples of activities that are led by ISO at UT include a trip to the Rodeo, a movie night, and a trip to San Antonio. These activities are social in nature and can constitute a starting point from which to inspire international students to venture into civic engagement opportunities. These activities constitute a major element of a social capital that can be built over the students' academic years. Creating a bond among international students is further achieved through a series of seminars that cover many topics of importance to the international student community such as language difficulties, visa issues, and academic progress. All of the above mentioned activities are designed to include international students in their host community, and to help them create their own communities at the same time. In addition to these activities, the ISO organizes orientation sessions for incoming international students that focus on preparing them for their upcoming challenges.

While these activities are a good starting place for new international students to become acclimated to their new environment. I propose three practical suggestions inspired by my research and my work in the theatre workshop participants: (1 Improving

orientation program; 2) Extending the role of ISO; and 3) Using the university for training civic engagement skills. These suggestions are meant to inform universities' policy makers about possible ways where they can improve the role of the university in building civic awareness among international students.

Improving the Orientation program by the Addition of a Theatre Component

Academic achievement is the highest priority for most international students (Heikinheimo and Shute 1986). Therefore, the primary emphasis in most of the orientation sessions is placed on academics. However, it should be noted that each international student goes through rigorous academic orientation through their respective academic programs. I argue that it is redundant for the International Office to focus on academics during the ISO orientation sessions, and that the time could be redirected to address issues that would ease the transition into this new community. Therefore, I argue for orientation programs that strike a balance for both presenting both academic information and social/political information about the host university.

By focusing only on academics and regulating international students' visas, it would appear that the International Office is failing to introduce information about and opportunities for civic engagement. Based on the work of this study, I propose that the ISO shift its focus to address these three areas:

- (a) Presenting information about how to maintain their visa status
- (b) Presenting information about legal rights
- (c) Presenting information about how to be an active citizen

Granted, there are some activities used in orientation programs at UT that touch on civil requirements for international students, such as maintaining their visa status. In order to more comprehensively understand the way different institutions deal with their orientation, I checked the website of international student offices at the following institutions: University of Michigan, Duke University, and Florida State University. All these institutions share a similar format consisting of a session where students are taught how to obtain a driver's license, fill out tax forms, and get a social security number. This is vital information that every functional citizen needs to know in order to live in any U.S. community, but it falls short of actually showing international students what they can do beyond these necessities, *e.g.* introducing them to community organizations that might be interested in working with them, setting them up to visit schools and mentor middle or high school students, and encouraging them to be an active part of their host community.

Orientation sessions in the institutions I listed use many diverse tools to communicate information to international students: telephone hot lines, slide shows, video cassette modules, work-study opportunities, large orientation sessions, small seminar groups, individual counseling, orientation programs led by faculty, advising staff, or students, and even testing or simulation gaming. This wide range of activities encourages students to be active participants in the orientation process. Because so much information is presented in a compressed amount of time, orientation must remain interesting and engaging. My research shares some of the same goals as the ISO and the orientation programs but adopts theatrical tools to achieve them.

Data from the post-workshop questionnaire revealed that international students at UT-Austin were more inclined to be civically active when they were introduced to notions of civic engagement through theatre methodology. Therefore, I advocate for initiating a ‘civic engagement’ session during orientation using theatre as a creative tool for communicating this information. Theatre, if facilitated successfully, offers a safe place to express international student’s fears, worries, and anxieties about their new institutions.

Scholars such as Boal, Rohd, Neelands and many others talk about the power of theatre in creating change. Additionally, dance theorist Susana Foster asserts that embodiment becomes a tool for theorizing (1995), and Diana Taylor recognizes embodiment as a ‘process of transference’ (2003).

The data I gathered in my workshops also demonstrated that theatre games and exercises can be tremendously effective in helping international students embody and transfer knowledge about civic engagement and to theorize about their relationship with it. This embodiment lays the foundation for civic engagement.

I also suggest, based on the results of my survey, that; 1) the duration of the activities in the workshop be extended; and 2) the activities be made available at the beginning of each academic year.

Extending the Role of ISO

Although the ISO works toward introducing international students to the U.S. culture and to their role in their host community, I recognize critical gaps that should be

addressed. I disagree with UT's International Office director Teri Albrecht when it comes to the role of the International Office counselor/advisor. In my interview with her, she created a distinction between the work of the social advisor work and the international student advisor. I argue that the work of international advisor should extend beyond managing paper work. I share the call with scholars such as Elizabeth Jacob, and John Greggo (2001) for special training for a multicultural counselor, one who is capable of providing both academic/international and social counseling.

Students from the host country should be recruited and carefully trained to help their peers through what is often a maze of initial adjustment. Using the assistance of other local students and assigning a mentor/student has proven to be effective and helpful (Abe 2008). University of Colorado, for example has a Peer Mentor Program which helps international students to get acquainted with CU-Boulder.

A Peer Mentor Program could be even more effective if it prepared and oriented local students before they meet their international counterparts. This could be achieved by leading a special orientation session for local students. It can also be achieved by creating a strong connection with community organizations that are willing to include international students in their activities. Since theatre has proven to be a useful tool for addressing issues of civic engagement among international students, I suggest that theatre in general, and applied theatre in particular, could be used as a tool to train locals.

I advocate for using theatre as a tool to prepare international student advisors. Potential research beyond this dissertation would include creating a theatre program designed specifically to train them.

Using the University as a Site for Training Civic Engagement Skills

The results of the survey and the questionnaire are meant to demonstrate that theatre can be used by international students offices while they conduct their orientations with international students. My research is intended to serve as an incentive for international student offices to use theatre as a tool for communicating information with international students.

I advocate for the university and its classrooms to become an extension of the political public sphere. My dissertation shows that theatre could be a major factor in moving liminal citizens from being civically passive to civically active. The university experience (ISO activities, student elections, student organizations, etc), combined with theatre techniques, enables civic experience to be formed, tested, and above all, embodied among international students who are liminal citizens.

When colleges and universities become sites for practicing politics, this in itself enhances the democratic aspect of the community since it decentralizes the official settings for producing politics, namely governmental or non-governmental agencies. Colleges are not governmental centers, yet they are expected to produce citizens who are aware and who can contribute to the social/political/economic public spheres. University

campuses present a site for discovering new meanings of citizenship. To this end, I advocate for educating international students about their civic engagement opportunities and encouraging them to navigate civic engagement opportunities in which they could participate.

Suggestions for Further Studies

A suggestion for further study is to take the concept of liminal citizenship and use it as a starting point to examine a host of conflicts around the world that involve identity, territory, and nationhood. A powerful destination for this work targets international relations, conflict resolution, and even peace making.

Another suggestion is to apply theatre techniques in different types of liminal populations such as war refugees, political refugees, or international residents who are not in the U.S. for educational reasons.

Final Conclusions

Citizens, whether they are liminal, complex, flexible, cultural, global, or tactical can contribute to their community of residence, regardless of where they may hold legal citizenship. Education, in general, can play an important role in making liminal citizens aware of the opportunities they have in their host communities. Theatre, in particular, can empower them to practice the rights they have. Theatre can play a role in transforming liminal citizens into active citizens who vote in campus elections, participate in voluntary activities, are aware of the public sphere of their host community, and behave in a manner that reflects their awareness.

The theatre workshop is expected to influence the participants' behaviors toward civic engagement. According to communication studies scholars Icek and Fishbein, actions are influenced by intentions of the participants and by having a supporting environment that encourages the participants to take an action. They report that "any given behavior is most likely to occur if one has a strong intention to perform the behavior, if one has the necessary skills and abilities required to perform the behavior, and if there are no environmental constraints preventing behavioral performance" (92). Assuming that international students who decide to attend the workshop already have positive intentions to be active members in their communities, the workshop then provides them with knowledge and skills that allow them to become civically engaged. Even in cases where intention is not formed among international students to be civically active, the theatre workshop can contribute to the formation of such intent.

In conclusion, my research demonstrated that liminal citizens in general and international students in particular have the potential to become civically active. I have demonstrated that applied theatre techniques can provide a viable and accessible platform for helping liminal citizens realize this potential.

Appendixes

Appendix A: The Workshop Flyer

Civic Engagement and Theatre

What's this project all about?

I am looking for international students who live in the Austin area. I will lead a theatre workshop with them wherein I will investigate their attitudes towards issues of civic engagement in their host community. The workshop will start and be followed up by a questionnaire that will gauge the workshop efficacy in changing participants' attitudes towards issues of civic engagement.

Who am I?

My name Fadi Skeiker, and I am an international student myself. I am a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin working on my PhD in Performance as Public Practice. I am interested in using my background in theatre to make a positive impact on international students, like myself, who have restraints against being active citizens in Austin.

When will this project take place?

This workshop is *tentatively* scheduled to take place in mid-March on campus at Theatre and Dance Department at the University of Texas at Austin.

Who am I looking for?

I am looking for international students who attend UT- Austin. Both graduate and undergraduate students are welcome in the workshop. Although the workshop will take a

theatre format, participants are not required to have a theatre background. The primary prerequisite for being a part of this project is having an interest in exploring issues of civic engagement among international students.

More questions?

If you have more questions, feel free to contact me by phone at 617.543.5931 or by email at fadiskeiker@hotmail.com

Appendix C: Consent Form

Title: Performing Liminal Citizenship

IRB PROTOCOL # 2007-11-0090

Conducted By: Fadi Skeiker

Of The University of Texas at Austin

Department: Theatre and Dance / Office; B.2108

Telephone: 617 543 5931

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of theatre in empowering international students to become active citizens in their host community

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Interview about your experience as international student
- Participate in a theatre workshop

Total estimated time to participate in study is one hour for the interview and three hours for the theatre workshop

Risks of being in the study

- The risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life

Benefits of being in the study

- There are no benefits for participation in this study

Compensation:

- There is no compensation

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board, and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,

complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Preliminary Survey

Dear friend,

My name is Fadi Skeiker. I am in the process of writing my dissertation which investigates the role of theatre in encouraging international students to be active members in their host communities.

Your responses to these questions will be completely anonymous and will be used by me to develop one of the questions of my research.

I. Information about the participant:

- A. Nationality:
- B. Age:
- C. Gender:
- D. Grad or undergrad:
- E. How long have you been in the States?
- F. How long do you plan to stay?

II. Questions about the research:

- A. How do you define being an active citizen in your host community (consider both the university and the city you live in)?
- B. As an international student, why/or why not do you feel the urge to be an active citizen in your host community?
- C. If you are civically engaged in your host community, how do you exercise this involvement?

- D. How do you practice your civic duties with your hometown while you are physically away?

- E. How can International Office be more active in introducing you to opportunities where you can be civically active?

III. Would you be willing to be interviewed later?

Thank you very much for making the time and effort to answer my questions!

Best,

Fadi Skeiker
fadiskeiker@hotmail.com

Appendix E: Civic Engagement and Theatre Workshop

Workshop Plan:

Time:

90 minutes

Space Requirements:

Large room

Materials:

Snacks

White sheet of paper

Markers

Participants:

International students at UT

Workshop Outcomes:

The purpose of this workshop is to:

- Investigate participants' attitudes towards civic engagement
- Using theatre tools to create a dialogue about what it means to be an active citizen
- Gauge participants' attitudes towards civic engagement by distributing a pre-workshop and post-workshop survey

In my introduction, I will include the purpose of the workshop and briefly run through the timing of each activity. I will set up a general rule for the workshop. Every voice should be heard in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

Plan:

Mingle and eat snack

Why?

Sharing snacks at the beginning is an excellent way for participants to get to know each other before starting the workshop. I hope to establish a friendly, comfortable environment.

Personality signature (Unknown)

Everyone stands in a circle. The object of the game is for each person to move her body in a funny way while saying her name. Each participant will go over her name and movement and all other participants will follow her

Why?

I have chosen to open with this game because it is a fun game that will create a sense of humor among the participants

Join me if:

The entire group stands in one line. Anyone in the group crosses the room and says “Join me if you (...) like me!) The blank could be any statement simple or complex. An example would be as simple as “Join me if your favorite color is blue like me!” or as complicated as “Join me if you think that America is ready for a woman president!” I will ask members of each group to explain their positions and ask them to look around focusing on who actually share their ideas.

Why:

The exercise is important since it will bring people together. It recognizes the similarities among a widely diverse group of international students from different nationalities, races and genders.

Discussion about what it means to be civically engaged

Distributing the Daily Texan and asking each group to make a presentation about one story that includes elements of civic engagement. The participants are expected to use markers and pieces of papers to make graffiti in response to the story and are expected to present

Why:

Participants are pushed to find elements of civic engagement in non-political stories

Frozen Image:

I will introduce the participants to frozen image work by demonstrating with a volunteer from the group. A group of people assume a position and freeze their bodies to express an idea/ a concept or a story.

Why:

Image work is always a safe start for participants who are not actors. It helps them to get into their bodies and to be expressive in presenting/representing their ideas. Observing the images and talking about them is the core of the game since each participant interprets the image according to her own belief and not necessarily to what the creator of the image intended. The facilitator's role here is to keep asking the following question: "Is this really what you see? Or are you projecting your ideas on what you see?"

Each group will create three images in response to the story they presented

Value Clarification (Rohd 54)

Everyone sits in one part of the room facing the largest open space. I put down signs in different parts in the room that say "agree, unsure, disagree" I read statements that address issues of civic engagement and international students. Each person decides how they feel and moves to the sign. I give participants a chance to decide why they feel about their choices. After everyone who wanted to share their thoughts has had a chance to say why they chose to take that position, I will read the next statement

Statements:

- I follow the American election with enthusiasm as if I have the right to vote
- I am curious to know who are the officials who are leading UT, Austin. For example, who is the president of UT, what is his background, what are the backgrounds of the people on the board, etc.
- I am curious to learn more about the politics that govern Austin
- Focusing on study is my sole concern while being in the States
- I do not feel that I am inclined to be an active citizen at UT and in the Austin area

- Since I am not a legal citizen, I should not be concerned about UT and Austin community
- I do believe that getting involved in the American community would enrich my academic experience in the States
- Americans would find it weird if I decide to be politically active community member
- I feel the urge to be an active citizen in the States even though I am not a legal American citizen

Why:

Value clarification is a constructive way to end the workshop. I choose to end with this exercise because it will allow the participants to end the workshop while they are determining what they feel about most of the issues that are discussed over the course of the workshop

Final discussion, process, and general reflections

Appendix F: Workshop Questionnaire

Workshop Questionnaire

Please take some time to complete this pre-workshop survey. Your input will help me with my research and this program's development.

1. Write a short paragraph that characterizes your understanding of your civic engagement duties while being an international student at UT Austin. An example of being civically engaged may include but not restricted to the following:

- Being part of a student organization
- Being a part of a university committee
- Being part of a community organization in Austin

Indicate your response to the statements below using the scale. Include any additional explanation you have.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

1. The theatre workshop was helpful in helping me to be more aware of my civic engagement right

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe:

2. This workshop made me want to get involved in UT's community

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe:

3. This workshop made me want to get involved in Austin's community

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe:

4. This workshop would have been more effective if it were in a lecture format

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please describe:

Reasons for being an active citizen

Thinking about the time you decided to become an active member in UT or in Austin by volunteering or being part of an organization or a group, please indicate your response to the statements below using the following scale.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I found it exciting*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I wanted to learn about UT politics and/or government*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I wanted an opportunity to work with people who share my ideals*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I wanted an opportunity to meet important and influential people*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I wanted an opportunity to influence government policy*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I considered this my duty as a citizen*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I am the kind of person who does my share*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I saw this as an opportunity to further my job or career*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I saw this as an opportunity for recognition from people I respect*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I might want to get a job with the government someday*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I might want to run for office someday*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I wanted an opportunity to be with people I enjoy*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I did not want to say NO to someone who asked*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I might some day need help from an official on a personal or family problem*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I saw this as an opportunity to make the community or nation a better place to live*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reasons for not being an active citizen:

Here is a list of reasons people give not being very active politically. Please indicate your response to the statements below using the following scale:

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I find that as one individual, I do not feel I can have an impact*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I am afraid that I might get into trouble by getting involved in politics whether at UT or in Austin*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I find that politics is very complicated for me to understand*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I find politics uninteresting and boring compared to other aspects of my life*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I think I should take care of myself /my family and my study before I worry about the welfare of the community and nation*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *Given the many pressures in my personal life as an international student, I simply do not have enough time for politics*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I have never thought about being involved*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I think that politics is dirty business, and do not want to do anything with it*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I think that what I get out of political participation/activism is not worth the time and trouble I would have to put into it*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I feel it is not my responsibility to participate*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *The really important things that affect my life have nothing to do with politics*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *It is not my place to be involved in politics*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I feel burned out*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *I find that politics can not help me with my personal or family problems*

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- *There just are not any good causes anymore*

Strongly
disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor
disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Appendix G: IRB Approval



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT & COMPLIANCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

*P.O. Box 7429, Austin, TX 78713 (512) 471-8871 - FAX (512) 471-8873
North Office Building A, Suite 5.200 (Mail code A3200)*

FWA# 2030

Date: 11/30/07

PI(s): Fadi F Skeiker

Department & Mail Code: FINE ARTS, DEAN OF

D1400

IRB APPROVAL – IRB Protocol # 2007-11-0090

Title:

Dissertation in Theater and Dance about the role of theater in empowering international students to be active citizens in their host community. The title is "Performing Liminal Citizenship"

The IRB reviewed the above listed study and determined that it is not human research as defined in the Common Rule (45 CFR 46) or FDA regulations (21 CFR 50 & 56). This study falls outside the IRB's jurisdiction. At this time you are free to begin your project without IRB approval. Please feel free to call this office (471-8871, rsc-group@austin.utexas.edu), if you have any questions. Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Jensen".

Jody Jensen, Ph.D., IRB Chair

Appendix H: Pictures of Workshop



Workshop facilitator describes one of the exercises to the participants



Workshop facilitator discusses a drawing made by workshop participants



A frozen image to express campaign to get a new Metrorail to the Austin community



A frozen image to express fundraising event wherein bicyclists ride bikes for 24 hours to raise money for a fund for women in Central America

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