Change and Continuity in Applied Theatre: Lessons Learnt from 'the Longest Night'

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1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One of this book, most applied theatre practitioners and theorists agree that applied theatre practice can help bring about social and political change for participants. For example, in Australia, where this kind of work falls under what is commonly known as community and cultural development (CCD), the main government funding body defines this kind of work as "collaborations between professional artists and communities based on a community's desire to achieve artistic and social outcomes […] distinct from other arts practice as it is the creative processes and relationships developed with community to make the art that defines it, not the art form or genre" (Australia Council 2016).

As is apparent in this definition, there is a common belief that this kind of practice can lead to social change, such as help address issues of social justice and equal access. In fact, change is one of five key elements that characterise applied theatre or CCD (McEwen 2008). The five elements are: (1) use participatory and creative processes; (2) engage with a 'marginal community'; (3) generate an aesthetic product that does not belong to the category of institutionalised art, such as the ballet, the opera, etc.; (4) is significantly financed through the relevant government funding body; and (5) intend a socially efficacious outcome.

These practices are thought to bring about change because they offer a break from routine and daily activities. They can become a catalyst for change and the expression of a culture counter to the mainstream because they can help stimulate reflection, the reimagining of situations or rethink "habitual views of life" (Cohen-Cruz 2002, p. 7), through dialogical and play-based encounters. They can, therefore, encourage people to see themselves as makers of history rather than as passive subjects (Clark 2002; Shepherd and Wallis 2004).

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The processes used in this work have an important role to play in bringing about change. The participatory and creative processes used are significant because they place participants as actors and active decision-makers in relation to all or parts of the content and/or format in applied theatre projects, rather than as simply vehicles to represent the artistic vision of a practitioner. The importance of the product or output should not, however, be ignored. Applied theatre products, such as public performances, showcases, and so on are also an important aspect of this practice. Not only can they be seen as part of the process, but, as the publicly visible element of applied theatre, they can increase the value and recognition of a project and, thus, further support the change agenda.

The kind of change practitioners claim or seek through their work, however, varies. A review of the literature on applied theatre published in scholarly papers between 2005 and 2015 (Chapter "Values, Intentions, Success and Impact in Applied Theatre Documents", this volume) highlights several layers of change. One layer of change relates to the aims or outcomes intended from the onset for the participants involved in these projects. These changes can be categorised as: awareness raising or developing; capacity building or strengthening; and transforming or empowering (Fig. 1).

In addition to that, there is another layer of change that pertains to the practitioner's own epistemology or personal approach to this work. For instance, practitioners might be motivated by a political agenda, an activist drive or a wellbeing goal to intervene on social change. Stanley (2002) defines this layer of change according to three categories: building social knowledge; stimulating social action; and supporting social change.

The third layer of change relates to the domain or the practical focus of change in participants embedded in the project. This can be one or a combination of the following three domains: skills and opportunities; community and belonging; and citizenship and identity.

The ways in which these layers intersect in applied theatre projects highlights the complexity and diversity of practices that exist in this broad field of practice (see Fig. 1). This also shows the range of potential change, from structural and systemic, to community-based or individual. While this work can be seen as providing a channel for participants' voices (Kelin 2001) and encouraging participants to see themselves as makers of history (Clark 2002), whether this actually happens for participants remains contentious. How these intentions and potential are translated into real change and what constitutes evidence of change for participants remain under-researched.

In this chapter, I discuss the kind of change that occurred for participants in an Australian applied theatre called The Longest Night (TLN). Through the use of a range of complex participatory activities, the project developed a three-part performance that included a *Dance-off* between local young people, a *Tour* of the site where the work was devised and a play also called *The Longest Night*. This project was, and remains, an exemplary project because, for reasons discussed later in this chapter, it had a greater potential than most applied theatre projects to achieve some social and political change for participants and their communities. Also, it was an

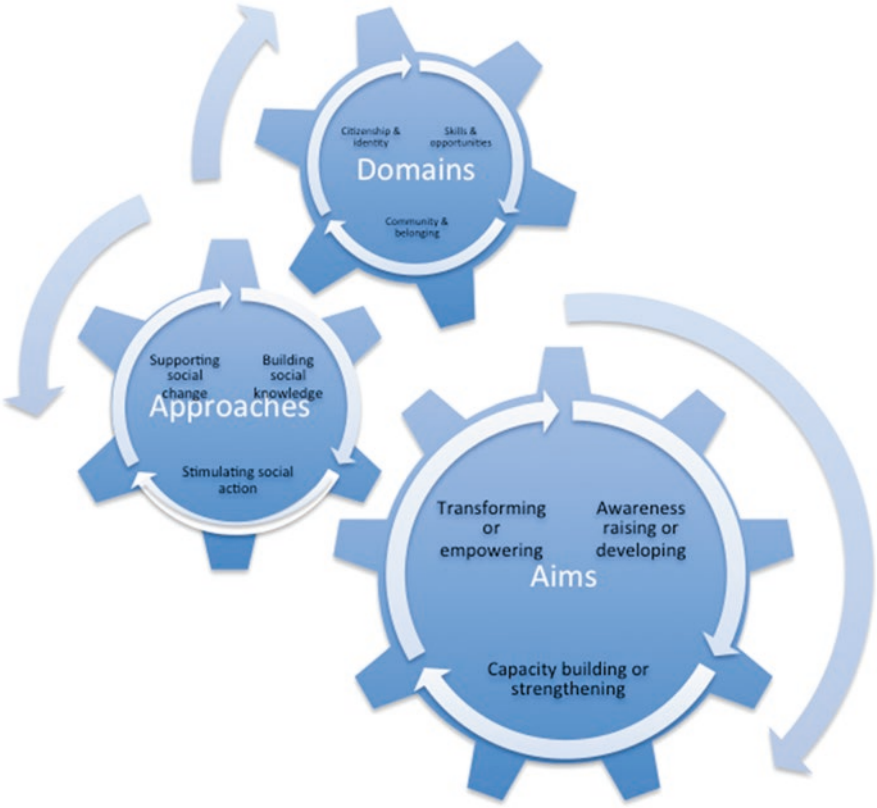

Fig. 1 Interplay between layers of change in CCD and applied theatre

exemplary research project, because data were collected between 2001 and 2006, a longer period of time than is usually offered such projects. This extended length of research time provided an opportunity to better analyse the relationship between processes, aesthetic product and change. Then, using Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical approach to field analysis, I highlight some of the tensions between the rhetoric of social change and outcomes for participants in these projects. I argue that participation in these projects fosters hope and provides a mechanism to recruit and train practitioners for the field of applied theatre. I also contend that though these projects might deliver in the short term promised change for individuals, this is often only short-lived, they do not deliver on promised changes to communities as a whole, let alone the rest of society. Finally, I come to the conclusion that this is the case because the practices and interests that maintain the field tend to contain change to the margins of society and limit change to raising awareness or building the capacity of certain individuals.

2 Methodology

2.1 Field Theory

Bourdieu's concept of 'field of practice' (Bourdieu 2000; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Swartz 1997) is useful in understanding the inner workings of applied theatre and the value of this work for participants and practitioners. According to Bourdieu, fields can be political, religious, legal, literary, intellectual, artistic, scientific, bureaucratic spaces, where people compete for positions, goods and services in order to acquire or maintain a certain position, or what he calls 'capital'. This can often lead to struggle and conflict as members of fields try to hold onto or accumulate resources according to specific logics and values. These resources enable members to practice and acquire economic capital, the most influential form of capital, but also provide them with signs of recognition and status.

Though Bourdieu often discusses four types of capital (social capital, cultural capital, economic capital, symbolic capital), it is important to note that there are as many forms of capital as there are human interests and as many 'fields' as there are capitals. Each capital is distributed throughout a specific field. It is also important to realise that each form of capital can represent and mean different things in different contexts according to people's interests (Bourdieu 1986). Fields are, thus, defined by an 'economy of interest'. This interest can be materialistic, economically deterministic or mechanical as well as non-rational or philanthropic. Moreover, it can be conscious or unconscious as well as explicit or hidden or misrepresented—e.g. appear as self-interest or disinterest—,or yet again personal or collective (Bourdieu 1984; Swartz 1997).

This capital can also be used by members of fields to establish their own sense of worth. Again, this is done by applying a field's accepted logic and regulatory principals around the accumulation of capital. Often these logic and regulatory principals are closely aligned with those valued by the field of power. However, it also happens that members of some fields assert their particular logic and regulatory principles over those of any other field. Which logic or principles are used can help determine the level of autonomy or dependence of the given field to the field of power, the overarching, or meta, economic field at the centre of power made visible by its members, the financially dominant members of society (Swartz 1997). In other words, a field's autonomy decreases the more its members recognise and legitimise the forms of capital that are of value to members of the field of power (Accardo 2002). This level of autonomy is also indicative of a field's capacity to influence society or enact change within and outside of its field.

To better understand why people seek out certain things and ascribe them a particular value, we need to turn to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus'. 'Habitus' describes elements of culture that are the product of a socialising process that predisposes people to behave and think in a specific way—including actions that perpetuate dominance or subservience— in a given context (Bourdieu 1979; Swartz 1997). This socialising process can be understood as the internalisation of historically

developed structures that teach people how and in which fields to act, improvise and strategise to further what they have come to see as their interests. As Bourdieu states "the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field... [and] habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy" (Wacquant 1989, p. 44).

Because Bourdieu's conceptual framework was developed to understand Western capitalist cultures in the twentieth century, it is only fair to ask how field theory holds in an environment where rational thinking is no longer a core currency and where there is increasing fragmentation of fields (Piketty 2014). I contend that Bourdieu's concepts are still relevant even in societies where change is the new constant, where borrowing and reusing values from across fields has become a norm, where structures and fields are more and more unstable, where, in terms of progress, "when you stop, you lose" (Bauman 2012) because his concept of homology provides a useful analysis of these mechanisms. Indeed, Bourdieu's notion of homology of fields, or the temporary alliances across fields of practices to help members of fields better compete for resources within their main field of interest, can help us understand the current interplay between and across members of different fields. In this context, even though the economic capital has become anti-capital, built on debt, hybridisation and movement, all changes to capitals are relative to each other in different ways and his notion of accumulation of capital remains true (Grenfell 2004; Piketty 2014).

3 An Ethnographic Approach

Bourdieu's theoretical framework was used to analyse TLN, a nine-months long applied theatre project co-created by a contemporary theatre company and young people 'at risk' for a major Australian arts festival. Over a six-year period, I gathered data by shadowing the artistic team members, observing participants and workers as well as, on occasion, participating in the project as a facilitator of some of the workshops with young people. The main tools used included observation, interviews, audience surveys, performance analyses and a literature review.

A combination of participatory and non-participatory observation of workshops, staff and production meetings, rehearsals, consultation sessions and performances were conducted. I conducted a substantial number of informal and formal interviews to gather different kinds of data as well as to establish, develop and maintain different kinds of relationships between informants and the researcher. These included face-to-face and over the phone interviews, one-on-one or with groups of young people, participants' carers, festival staff, theatre company staff and social workers, at the beginning, during and immediately at the end of the project as well as a year, three and four years after the project. Interviews lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. They were based on formal and informal semi-structured questions designed to collect subjective data.

Though this data is not discussed in this chapter, I also designed and used a post-performance audience survey to gather data on the impact of the performance on spectators. Data from the performance was also gathered using Gay McAuley's (1998) performance analysis schema to establish the meaning of the performance produced as part of TLN project.

Finally, I reviewed two sets of literature. One review of the literature was conducted to better understand community and cultural development (CCD) practices and their socio-historical development and the other to ascertain the history, demographics and socio-economic profile of the site and the local population where the project took place.

At this stage, it is worth highlighting some of the limitations of the study. Such a long and complex investigation is bound to carry with it some difficulties. The main challenges included maintaining contact with all the informants, because of a high number of transient people who participated in TLN and/or who moved because of the forced relocation program of housing trust tenants. There were also challenges in collecting evidence of change because it required being able to measure the unpredictable and unexpected and compare it with the hypothetical or what might have happened had the participant not taken part in the project. In addition, there was the challenge of understanding whether what might constitute evidence of change for one group of people might not be for another. Further, even if we accept that change can be observed or self-reported, there was an issue with determining whether any change could directly and solely be attributed to participating in a project. Moreover, the case study raised questions about the potentially biased sample of participants due to the payment of some of them for their input into the devising of the play, the production's inclusion in an international festival and the potential these elements might have had in attracting participants more 'committed' than most. Finally, as addressed earlier, the project was called into question about how representative it was of applied theatre projects.

4 The Case Study

TLN was an exemplary as well as an extraordinarily ambitious applied theatre project. TLN was initiated by Urban Theatre Projects (UTP), a Western Sydney-based contemporary performance company, who was commissioned by the 2002 Adelaide Festival of the Arts to co-devise a performance with young people living in The Parks, in the north of Adelaide. TLN had the capacity to meet its intended efficacious goals because it did not lack recognition; it was valued for its aesthetic quality and structure; participants were given a certain level of legitimacy as creative partners (they were paid $25 for attending consultation sessions to give dramaturgical input as a direct, rather symbolic, recognition of their contribution); it had enough resources (e.g. funding, seven professional artists from diverse performance disciplines); and the practitioners had the required skills and approaches to make it succeed (McEwen 2002).

5 The 'Longest Night' Processes and Products

Though TLN departed from standard applied theatre projects, it can be described as applied theatre because it conformed to the five characteristics of applied theatre mentioned earlier. It received significant government funding from the Australia Council's CCD Board (CCDB), the main government funding body of CCD at the time.

TLN engaged with marginalised community groups located in a disadvantaged area in the Northern suburbs of Adelaide to devise and perform with professional actors a highly physical and emotionally charged, three-part in-situ performance. The project's participants included young people from a local alternative schooling program called Western Youth Directions, aimed at helping out-of-school-teenagers back into the public education system. It included young people from a local African community group (a majority of Sudanese and some Somali and Ethiopian people) and young people from a first time parents group, managed by the local health service.

Additionally, TLN included a change agenda. In fact, the project included explicit intended aims or outcomes for participants that addressed all aspects of the three layers of change discussed above. UTP's artistic director sought to raise TLN participants' awareness about their capacity to be expressive and be seen and heard by outsiders to the area. There was also an intent to transform a community. Peter Sellars, the initial 2002 Festival director, sought, with this project, to affect the local community and culture, as well as the Adelaide's arts practice and society in general. Further, UTP's artistic director wanted to use this project to create a 'moment of realisation', a time and space for participants where they can envisage the change or greater potential in their everyday lives (McEwen 2008).

Moreover, both UTP and the Festival's artistic directors were motivated by a political agenda to build social knowledge, stimulate social action and support social change. UTP's artistic director's approach included initial activities (e.g. meetings, interviews and focus group sessions) dedicated to finding more about the living and working conditions of The Parks staff (i.e. health, youth and social workers) and young people as well as their concerns and hopes for the areas and the project to determine ways of meeting their needs through TLN processes and product. Plus, in a way, the Festival director took ownership of The Parks area and its local services and residents by deciding to involve them in TLN. Lastly, through the use of devising processes and performance, UTP's artistic director explored with participants, workers and spectators, alternatives to the existing conditions in The Parks in an effort to improve participants and workers' lived experience in and spectators' perceptions of the area. Through the use of 'exit interviews', UTP's artistic director also sought to address the life choices of some of the participants by encouraging greater reflection on their circumstances and the emergence of new possibilities.

Finally, there was also an intention to foster practical change in participants by creating new opportunities and helping foster new skills, help participants focus on

issues community and belonging, as well as on issues of citizenship and identity. For example, the initial artistic director of the 2002 Adelaide Festival brought The Parks and UTP together to give participants the opportunity to experience something unique and exciting. The UTP's artistic director hoped participants would acquire new creative and/or social skills. The theme of belonging was explicitly explored throughout the project and, more specifically, foregrounding the co-devised play. As well, the Festival's artistic director intended the project to help develop greater cross-cultural relationships, including with local Aboriginal people. Lastly, UTP's director focused on issues of citizenship and identity as highlighted by her use of a range of strategies, such as intentionally working with diverse performers (i.e. a male and female performer of Anglo-Celtic ancestry, a female performer of Italian and a male performer of Aboriginal ancestry), and by developing characters for the play whom participants could relate to and see as positive role models, to, in turn, be able to see themselves in a positive light.

Core participatory and creative processes were used with the young people recruited through the local youth, health and arts services. Focus group sessions, consultation sessions, workshops, mentoring and performances were the main activities used with participants to develop trust, establish relationships, devise performances and create 'moments of relations'. In the first six months of the project, 12 focus group sessions were held with local young people between the ages of 15 and 25 referred to the project by local workers or invited to attend by the artistic team. These were designed as a one-off activity to recruit local youth, confirm participants' interest in the project's major themes of 'belonging' and 'change', and establish sub-themes and possible story lines for the performance. These sessions had three parts: group dynamic games (e.g. variation on musical chairs, focus game requiring participants to repeat in turn gestures representing another member of the group), an information session (i.e. questions and answers about the project) and a party (e.g. a disco, a barbeque).

In the last two months of the project, six consultation sessions were held with groups of up to ten participants to develop a play with the same title as the project, *The Longest Night*, in collaboration with UTP's artistic team. During these sessions, participants watched sections of work-in-progress—initially devised by the artistic team based on the information gathered during the initial focus group sessions—, which they then discussed in terms of its credibility and accuracy of the content, before brainstorming to generate new material for the rest of the play.

Also, during the last couple of months of the project, a series of workshops were organised by UTP and the local youth services. Free two-hour music making and recording workshops, acrobatics, and hip-hop culture workshops led by members of UTP were offered to all local young people. Their main aim was to the develop material for the *Dance Off* and the *Tour*, the first two of the three components of the project's final performance product. The workshops also served to engage with younger participants through more familiar and playful activities, create friendships among young people, overcome some of the 'ethnic' divides, "give something back" to some of the participants, help performers demonstrate their skills, and

Photo 1 B-boying workshop in the community centre square with local young people and performers Shannon Williams (standing to the left) and Morgan Lewis (on the linoleum mat centre). Photograph taken by Sophia Koutroulis, Community Development/Youth Worker, Adelaide Central Community Health Services, Parks, Dept. of Human Services, Government of South Australia

establish close 'teacher-student' relationships between performers and participants in the hope that these relationships might create a strong learning experience.

Around the development of the performances, some one-on-one mentoring activities also occurred with participants who showed a greater interest in the social or creative aspect of this work. This consisted in pairing one participant with a member of UTP's artistic team to engage in non-formal activities, such as conversations or one-on-one training sessions. These non-formal activities culminated in what the artistic director called 'exit interviews', one-on-one confidential conversations aimed at fostering a 'moment of realisation' or a time and space for greater reflection for participants on their learning and to challenge them to think "bigger and better" about their future (Photo 1).

The participatory and creative processes were used to produce a three-part performance presented as part of the Adelaide Festival program and held at The Parks Community Centre in February and March 2002. The three components of the performance were: a *Dance-off* between local young people, a *Tour* of the grounds and *The Longest Night* play. The *Dance-off* was a highly physical set of four distinct performances showcasing young local performers' acrobatics, b-boying, Soul and

Photo 2 Gathering in the community centre square of participants of the *Dance Off*. Photograph taken by Sophia Koutroulis

Rap music, and R'n'B dancing abilities. During half an hour, young people took turn in performing short energetic routines on an elevated podium decked out with three concrete sails decorated with Aboriginal dot painting designs of a brown serpent, three black death-like figures, a starry sky and a black and white animal-like figure, in the community centre square, a large outdoor space bordered by grey concrete buildings and a few eucalypt trees (Photo 2).

The *Tour* comprised several concurrent tours taking spectators on a journey through local young people's life stories. During fifteen minutes, participants led spectators around the buildings of a typical example of 1970s welfare architecture and through the services housed in The Parks Community Centre, such as the library, sports centre, youth centre, security services and the canteen. These tours ended at the doors of the community centre's machine maintenance workshop where *The Longest Night's* play was held (Photo 3).

The Longest Night was a play performed by professional theatre practitioners, depicting the gritty reality of some youth people's lives in The Parks area. Through a mix of comedy, gentle teasing, drama and moments of barely contained violence, the play dealt with the main character identity crisis. Bernie is a single mother who has recently been allocated a house in a public housing estate and hopes to be able to overcome her old habits developed over many years of homelessness in order to secure the custody of her son who is in the care of the State. Her decision to be

Photo 3 Spectators being led by local residents and participants during the *Tour*. Photograph taken by Celina McEwen

drug-free and prove she can be a reliable mother is, however, challenged by the arrival of friends from her former life on the streets. Though they only stay with her for one night, when they finally leave, the spectators are left wondering whether any change is possible for Bernie and her child (Photo 4).

6 Stories of Change and Continuity

During interviews conducted at the beginning of the project, some participants speculated that their involvement would bring a "good memory", some skills ("Learn to break dance" or "Trying acting and comedy") and new friendships. A small number of interviewed participants hoped that the results of the project might also have an impact on people outside of the area, as this quote from a participants highlights: "[This project will] show the snobs what it's like in people's house [sic]" (Dale 2001). In interviews conducted in the aftermath of the project, most participants saw new opportunities and expressed new aspirations (e.g. "It might lead to work as a youth worker", "I am going to make my own film and help with workshops as a volunteer" or "might work at the bike shop"). Some also reported changes in circumstances linked to their participation (e.g. "Made me go back to dad, to my family instead of bumming around", or "Got work as a volunteer driver"). Some

Photo 4 Open-door rehearsal in the community centre machine maintenance workshop with community members and performers (*left* to *right*) Bernadette Regan, Charles Russell, Morgan Lewis, Shannon Williams and Lucia Mastrantone. Photograph taken by Sophia Koutroulis

also expressed changed views about themselves ("I learned that I am special and I have a role to play in the community").

By taking part in a range of activities and events with different groups of people, participants became part of a 'web of relationship' (Cohen-Cruz 2002, p. 7), that enabled the development of a strong sense of belonging to a more or less durable community formed by and around members of TLN. This occurred by working collaboratively on a performance that helped transform an imagined community into a lived one (however temporary) or a "viable and 'voiced' social entity" (Watt and Pitts 1991, p. 130). It also enabled participants (local expert dramaturgs as well as local *Dance Off* performers and *Tour* guides) to make artistic and logistical decisions that drove them to "engage in the ordering of ideas, people, and things" (Handelman 1990, p. 16) and, thus, create meaning in their personal lives.

Taking part in this highly visible performance helped boost some participants' levels of confidence because they were heard and seen in a different light by their family and outsiders of The Parks. This was implied by a key informant who stated:

> You can see the input that you've put into it, and that's pretty much the most valuable thing because you give something to make something good... People see it first hand and we know it's us and they don't know it's us. Their reactions is [sic] probably the best thing (Dale 2002).

This kind of recognition is important because it often leads to further opportunities to be seen and heard and ultimately to the opportunity to acquire additional forms of symbolic capital, increase social status, and accrue more resources and financial gain. For example, in 2001, Greg was a young 15 year old Nunga (i.e. southern South Australian Aboriginal) man who took care of his two younger siblings. He became involved in TLN first as expert dramaturg, then as MC in the *Dance Off* and guide in the *Tour*. Dale was a single teenage mother. She was involved in the project as expert dramaturg and *Tour* guide. Because of their contribution to TLN, they were perceived by some local workers as success stories and treated as local celebrities. As a result, Greg became the unofficial 'Parks MC' for subsequent youth activities, such as Youth Week. Dale became the face and voice of TLN beyond the activities of the local services, and was asked to present at conferences in Adelaide and Sydney and interviewed on radio programs to talk about her involvement in the project.

June was an outstanding example of securing gainful employment as a result of participating in TLN and acquiring cultural capital in the form of an extended vocabulary to describe her situation. June was a young woman who had been referred to the project by a member of staff of the local health service. June was attracted to TLN because she had been looking for something to distract her from her struggles in securing the custody of her son. In a post-project interview, she reflected that she had been attracted to the project because:

> [T]he Longest Night was like a job, kind of thing, like, you know, come in to work every[day], like coming to Parent[ing Network] or coming to The Longest Night and helping The Longest Night out 'cause we had to do that at least a couple of times a week if not more (June 2005).

June had grown up in an orphanage in India and had been adopted by an Anglo-Celtic family in Australia when she was 11 years old. At the beginning of the project, she was withdrawn and sad not to be able to be with her son, who lived with his father. During TLN project, she was in and out of court, but by 2005, she had been successful in her quest to live with her son and was, also, proud to be employed. After TLN, June remained involved with the local health service, first as a volunteer driver, then as a one-day-a-week paid driver and a volunteer at her son's school canteen. She also became involved in a subsequent large-scale inter-services project undertaken in The Parks, was coached in numeracy and literacy, attended a short course in peer education, and enrolled in a short technical and further education (TAFE) course she hoped would lead to qualifications as a community worker.

Despite the new opportunities generated by participating in TLN, in 2006 there was an overwhelming impression of continuity rather than change. By 2005, Greg was no longer performing voluntary duties at The Parks. He had fathered two children, was in and out of employment, and had not been able to follow up on his earlier hopes of studying at TAFE. Dale was battling severe bouts of depression following the birth of her second child and then the death of her third child from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Though June had gained increased levels of confidence, sense of responsibility and connectedness to the local community, she was

still feeling isolated ("My television's my best friend") and was struggling to remain focused and occupied when not with her son. What remained, however, for them was increased interest in participating in social life and raised levels of hope gained from their brief experience of the possibilities life might offer (Hage 2002).

7 Discussion

The Parks workers and residents were not new to social intervention and to arts-based practices, but TLN offered something different as this comment made by a local worker closely involved in the project reveals: "the festival experience was unique and nothing can duplicate that … It made things ecstatic for that time" (Katherine[1] 2004). It achieved higher levels of participation and engagement than any other similar past projects and produced a performance that had high artistic merit and visibility. It also, for a time, helped participants acquire various skills, provided a sense of community, order and meaning, increased levels of recognition, sustenance and hope for participants, and provide them with a glimpse at some possible pathways and new identities. These changes were, however, short-lived. On the whole, participants did not embody or embrace change in a way that might have led to longer-term changes in their everyday lives and conditions. Indeed, by late 2005, what remained of the experience was mostly good memories and raised levels of hope. In what follows, I discuss examples of change and explore some of the reasons why they were limited in their scope.

8 Change Contained by Lack of Autonomy

One reason why despite discourses and practices that engaged participants, motivated them to seek change or to pursue new opportunities, and fostered some level of individual reflection, when change occurred it was mostly only for a short while is because no processes were used to help aggregate individual changes into collective change. No processes were used to help participants gain deeper or new insights and knowledge about local or global historical themes and events. Neither were there processes used to enable participants to name the changes required, challenges to and issues in the development of a better community beyond a focus on individual and personal changes. For example, this could have included activities where TLN participants assisted The Parks workers or mentored other local young people. It could also have included activities where members of the wider community came together to discuss past local events and developments, such as the origins of The Parks and other historical activities that sought local change, and their relationship with TLN activities and other changes taking place in the are, such as the effects of

[1] All names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants.

the relocation program imposed on the local Housing Trust tenants as part of the Westwood (Parks) Urban Renewal Project.

These processes are essential steps to help transform existing conditions or make a difference on a social and political level (Freire 1972), but due to time and financial constraints they did not happen. Indeed, while these practitioners and practices are funded, the level of funding has increasingly been reduced and whatever is provided is mostly afforded because senior government bureaucrats and politicians have been able to use applied theatre and, more broadly, CCD practitioners and their practices as a tool for containing instances of social risks at the 'margins' of society rather than for enabling change that would challenge the status quo (McEwen 2008).

Further, these constrains (time, financial, etc.) serve to restrict practitioners' autonomy to really enact change and help sustain change for their participants. Though staff and board members of the Australia Council for the Arts, the main funding body of applied theatre in Australia, might not have consciously set out to contain applied theatre practitioners and their practices, the financial constraints, felt through the limited access to funds and the restrictive funding rules, contributes to the field's limited autonomy.

Their restricted autonomy is also related to the fact that practitioners do not work in isolated social spaces, but rather consume and produce discourses and practices that are hierarchically related to other fields. The legitimacy of their practices is limited inside the broader field of arts, and at a great distance from the field of power. This is evidenced by practitioners moving in the field of applied theatre and the broader field of the arts in pursuit of work or to seek recognition as artists according to social and cultural norms valued in the broader field of arts. And to close the loop, the knowledge circulating within the field of applied theatre and their priorities in terms of production and consumption of culture are controlled through funding mechanisms and policies implemented by well-established members of the field of cultural production and the meta-field of power.

9 Change Contained by Habitus

Bourdieu (1993) argues that people are, potentially, in a constant state of change as they assess what they have and what they want and how to obtain more it. He also argues, however, that people's capacity to effect change is limited by their habitus. This is the case because people rely on the dispositions of thought and actions learnt from past experiences to determine what present and future actions are possible, probable or impossible (Swartz 1997, p. 104). As a result, people become more or less resistant to change because they have internalised what to value and how to compete for it drawing on and/or recombining limited and historically defined sets of strategies.

As for the possibility of large-scale change dominant values and norms, Bourdieu (Swartz 1997) argues that it requires structural changes triggered by the mobilisation of a large group of people and/or a social crisis that helps make domination

visible. While these major structural changes are possible—for example in France in May 1968—, they are rare occurrences because they are an elaborate process that require dominant positions on offer within a field, including those with(in) established hierarchies, to alter and, in turn, affect all other positions. This only rarely happens because most positions tend to be reinforced through conservative education and other symbolic hierarchies.

Change for those who took part in TLN was limited to the acquisition of small amounts and forms of capital, limiting participants' capacity to compete for resources and other positions in society. There was no evidence to suggest that participation in TLN helped foster change at a broader level, such as the accumulation of significant levels of capital or an increase in individual and/or collective exercise of power. Though participation in TLN might have changed The Parks' environment, this was, perhaps, not for long enough to allow people to adapt their habitus to the change, not long enough for the small-scale types of changes to become 'natural'.

This lack of significant change can, perhaps, also be linked to the fact that though habitus is transposable, and conditions, attitudes, and on so, do change, changes that occurred for individuals while participating in an applied theatre project, were not of great enough value or legitimacy inside their dominant field of practice. Another possible explanation for this failure to effect significant change might be that, overall, The Parks residents' had a diminished interest in acting on local matters, as a key informant within the Health Service suggested:

> People are really unhappy. And we've certainly found that as a community development team that it's harder to engage people around "let's do some community action together" or "what issues are important to you?" There's certainly issues [sic], but [there's] not necessarily the energy that people want to commit to actually working with us on a project that might take twelve months, because they don't know if they're going to be here … Even if they've been here a while, the community that they've lived [in] is being, you know, dismantled, so you know, why would they want to put energy into a community that, you know, they might not be a part of and that they don't think is the same community that they used to be a part of (Katherine, Interview, 2005).

This diminishing interest, or lack of belief, in participating or intervening in local matters is a key issue, which can be linked to people's lack of hope for a better future (Hage 2003, pp. 222, 225). Though some major difficulties in working in The Parks were overcome, some of The Parks residents' wariness and the habit of being disappointed by the familiar short-term and one-off community development and social intervention programs and projects that came and went with little long-term benefit for local residents, were more entrenched, and thus more problematic to overcome, as this quote from a local Health Service community development worker, stated:

> A lot of my concerns come from working with young people in the local area and knowing that their experience has [been] that they may've been given things at some stage and then things are taken away from them. Or, things like the sports centre here being free five years ago or however many years ago and now being, you know, a privatised, yeah, privatised business that wants to make money that they can no longer afford to access. And, you know, The Parks high school being here that they used to go to, no longer exists. And things like

> that, things that come and go in young people's lives, that often set them up and are either disappointed or something, you know, really significant, like education, is taken away from them. So, I guess that's sort of some of the disadvantage that I see in the community that I, as a community development worker, I feel I have a responsibility not to further. So, I guess that's, as far as I'm concerned, setting young people up, kind of, not to fail necessarily (Katherine, Interview, 2005).

As this comment implies, the implementation of projects intended to bring about some positive change for local residents have been seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand this kind of investment is seen as developing or strengthening social cohesion. On the other, it is seen as a potential threat to local residents developing a sense of community because of the gap left behind once the project investments are over.

10 Hope and Moments of Realisation

The overall impact for participants in the aftermath of TLN was not as far reaching as applied theatre practitioners' discourses might suggest. Though there was some evidence of outstanding changes in attitudes and, to some extent, in circumstances during and immediately after the project. Five years later there were only a few traces left of positive changes. The increased opportunities and levels of hope had mostly been replaced with an overwhelming sense of continuity. I have argued that this can be attributed to three main factors.

Even though the final stages of this research project occurred in 2006, these findings are still relevant today. This is the case because the conditions in Australia have remained broadly speaking the same. Indeed, though the way the government funds this type of work has changed (reduced, no longer a stand-alone funding stream, more focused on excellence, etc.), there have been no significant changes to the practices and context within which it operates in Australia. Further, discourses and practices have also remained similar.

Though this case study highlights more continuity than change for participants in applied theatre projects, it might be unrealistic to hold practitioners accountable to aspirational or idealistic discourses and seek irrefutable evidence that their practices can achieve intended changes of sustained social and political efficacy. After all, applied theatre practitioners and their practices still have an important social and political role to play as enablers of increased interest in participating in social life, in general, and in the arts, in particular. Though the elements of culture produced and consumed through applied theatre practices ultimately reproduce legitimised social and cultural values and norms, the creation and maintenance of this kind of work can increase levels of hope by providing participants with a 'moment of realisation' that change is possible. This is not negligible.

11 Conclusion

What constitutes success in applied theatre remains contentious as it can be determined either based on the practitioners' intentions, on funding bodies' criteria of return on investment, or on participants' personal and/or collective levels of learning and change. Finally, the reproduction of culture and structures is not systematic and domination is not fixed or irreversible. This means that the positions of domination are complex and fragile positions that need constant attention and maintenance and can, therefore, be overturned.

Researching TLN was an exciting challenge, but it raised more questions than it was able to answer. For example, how to capture and better understand the complex relationship between intent, processes and success as well as between discourses and cultures consumed and produced, between change, everyday life and an arts-based set of practices, and between potentially transgressive forms of expression and more established and conservative expressions of culture? Additional studies are required to further understand this complexity. In particular, more research is needed focusing on the mid- to long-term impact on participants in applied theatre projects, the nature and significance of the aesthetic product generated by these projects and its impact outside of the local theatrical space, into the global sphere, as well as ways of reducing the gap between discourses, intentions and actual changes.

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