Research article

Look on Citizens' Participation in the Applied Theater: The Case of the Seoul Metropolitan Theater¹

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Abstracts:

The applied theatre was originated in Britain and France, and in countries such as the United States, Britain, and Australia, major academic journals and universities are changing the name of the discipline.

In Korea, both performing circles and academia moves away from the mere enjoyment of the applied theater. At first, diverse approaches were taken to make social, educational, participatory, and therapeutic theatrical productions. Then by the twenty-first century, cities around the world strive to overcome the crisis faced by pure arts in their policies by increasingly making the cultural industry use the activities of artists and citizens.

Seoul Metropolitan Government changed its policy in this regard. In 2013, the city's support for citizen's arts and culture focused on the harmony among people. However, by 2014, it shifted to cultural activists and job creation with the new program called 2014 We Love It: The Clubs. The program created jobs for professional artists and offered applied theater classes for citizens using local theater companies. By 2015, the program gradually expanded, and the theater associations in twenty-five gus (district) of Seoul operated their spaces for the exchange among citizens.

This study will look at how the early applied theater moved away from being an act of appreciation and became an act of participation. For this purpose, it will review the case of the SMT Applied Theater Class, focusing on the actual performances and the spaces the citizen actors use. Their cultural activities and content

¹⁾ This study is built on a previous paper titled "Humanities Contents Association, "Thinking How the Citizen's Participation in the Applied Theater Has Changed: A Case of the Applied Theater Class by the Seoul Metropolitan Theater" presented at the 2019 Spring Symposium hosted by Human Contents of Association (http://humancontents.or.kr/). A part of the previous paper was used for revisions and additions.

production will be subject to a comparative analysis. Finally, the study will examine how the citizens' participation has changed by reviewing the image of the SMT and their communication style as well as citizen actors' changed perception in this regard.

Keyword: Applied theater | Citizen's participation | Citizen actors | Job creation | Seoul Metropolitan Theater | Applied Theater Class

1. Introduction

1) Preceding Studies

According to the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF), thirty-seven cities, including Seoul, are leading diverse arts and culture policy for the city through various means. The WCCF membership is rapidly on the rise[1]. The increasing membership of cities results from the need for citizen's subjective actions and productivity beyond simple production: the conditions for a city's sustainable growth require the arts and culture to remain living in their ecosystem and protect diversity. We seem to need the participation of artists and the exchanges among citizens. In this vein, the Seoul Metropolitan Government made various plans, including the Seoul Culture Plan and Seoul Plan for Artists[2]. Cities around the world, when they address the need for urban regeneration, now promote cultural activities to connect artists and citizen's life to enhance productivity.

For instance, as Korea and many other countries used Shakespeare's works to shed the image as a former colony, the efforts were driven by producers in the fields of education and performance (Andrew Dickson, 2015)[3]. Meanwhile, recently, the cultural industry is driving the arts and culture education to overcome a crisis in the field. In the theater, the nature of arts as a process (Kim Yu-jeong, 1994)[4] is obvious, while professionals and citizens work together to promote the subjective capacity of the local people[5].

While the cultural industry has distinguished pure arts and popular culture in the past, it has now learned to take advantage of pure arts. For the past decade, various paths the applied theater worked with citizens, promoting their voluntary participation and reinforcing their capacity by creativity. In developing content, the work became more than an act of enjoyment, driving various kinds of performance through various channels. In each locality, this type of content production has become part of urban regeneration, and residents take the initiative in their activities, driving a policy direction. This study will review how the Applied Theater Class offered by the Seoul Metropolitan Theater has influenced citizens, actors, as they completed the programs and continued self-sustaining and productive activities. For that purpose, we should first look at the primary purpose of the applied theater by the SMT to understand the policy direction of the Seoul Metropolitan Government for citizen's arts and culture

The objectives of the applied theater below show us the meaning and direction of the SMT Applied Theater Class.

First, to offer an opportunity for a voluntary theater production in which citizens can find the art inside them and express themselves through art.

Second, to develop creative potentials and offer experiences on the stage to expand a foundation for citizens to enjoy the theater as a form of living culture.

Third, to reinforce communication and solidarity with citizens as a public theater company.

Fourth, to develop and present creative works to be included in the SMT-liaised programs in 2016[6].

The SMT Applied Theater Class excludes professional artists or people with theater arts degrees. First, the Class is for Seoul residents who are at least twenty years old. Second, the Class offers a program to experience what theatrical production is. Third, when the program goes on stage after the program, the production will usually be based on an original play[7]. Third, the applied theater in this context has an artistic, public, and popular nature, and it is a contemporary and urban theater in Seoul. Fourth, the applied theater is about the life and dreams of contemporary Seoul citizens in its story or theme. The last characteristic leads to the Citizen's Repertoire Monitor system[8]. Between 2009 and 2019, the SMT Applied Theater Class produced a total of 302 citizen actors[9]. In 2014 and 2016, the citizen actors made a one-off appearance in professional theater productions. Since then, there have been some cultural activities and spread of contents by home-grown citizen actors, which continue in a subtle but continued manner. The phenomenon matters as their activities in culture and production have a self-sustaining form; it exerts a positive influence on the region socially, culturally, and economically; it has become a crucial issue for local development. Hence the policy direction for the future of arts and culture by the local or central government is critical. There is an increasing tendency to review the role and function of the destination marketing organization (DMO) that can establish a theatrical company and connect the cultural activities of citizens to content production[10].

The urban policy for arts and culture in Seoul is in line with the general trend at the WCCF. Cities around the world emphasize and change the cultural policy of their cities to express new citizenship. In this context, it is essential to analyze the SMT Applied Theater Class, the self-sustaining and productive activities by citizens, and the process of using them.

According to Mun Byeong-ho, it is important "to find a solution by giving life to arts and culture education and to maintain and develop the function of pure arts to enlighten and educate." He thinks that a practical form may be to incorporate the spirit of the times and philosophical thinking into the planning of cultural contents. Mun emphasizes how the theater must contribute to society, acting as a medium to communicate the importance of "the reconciliation between nature and the human, among humans, and between the capital and the human[11]."

In reality, it may seem that citizen actors from the SMT Applied Theater Class are merely adding the number of productions in which they appear. However, the choice of plays serves the purpose of the applied theater, since the spirit of the times will be communicated to the humanness and story of the production. The results of production experiences by citizen actors (variables) and the SMT's system (infrastructure), namely, its space for education, become a field of encounter for both professional artists and citizens. As lives cross paths, the philosophical values of human life manifest themselves as practical actions. Cultural practices then take the basic forms of cultural and productive activities as citizens perform self-sustaining actions.

A recent phenomenon is behind such a trend. The applied theatre was originated in Britain and France, and in countries such as the United States, Britain, and Australia, major academic journals and universities are changing the name of the discipline.

In Korea, both performing circles and academia moves away from the mere enjoyment of the applied theater. At first, diverse approaches were taken to make social, educational, participatory, and therapeutic theatrical productions. Then by the twenty-first century, cities around the world strive to overcome the crisis faced by pure arts in their policies by increasingly making the cultural industry use the activities of artists and citizens[12].

Seoul Metropolitan Government changed its policy in this regard. In 2013, the city's support for citizen's arts and culture focused on the harmony among people. However, by 2014, it shifted to cultural activists and job creation with the new program called 2014 We Love It: The Clubs. The program created jobs for professional artists and offered applied theater classes for citizens using local theater companies. By 2015, the program

gradually expanded, and the theater associations in twenty-five gus (district) of Seoul operated their spaces for the exchange among citizens[13].

This study will look at how the early applied theater moved away from being an act of appreciation and became an act of participation. For this purpose, it will review the case of the SMT Applied Theater Class, focusing on the actual performances and the spaces the citizen actors use. Their cultural activities and content production will be subject to a comparative analysis. Finally, the study will examine how the citizens' participation has changed by reviewing the image of the SMT and their communication style as well as citizen actors' changed perception in this regard.

The following literature review has been conducted. For the applied theatre, the Research Information Sharing Services (RISS, http://www.riss.kr) was used to find articles, books, and theses. Since Philip Taylor and his Applied Theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community (2003) had greatly influenced Korea's policy on the applied theater, the book has been used for the basic concept and theory of the applied theater. On the policy side, the "2013 Seoul Comprehensive Plan for Theatre Development" (2013) was a valuable input to understand cultural activities under a city government. Other references include the 2015 World Cities Culture Report (2015) by the Culture Headquarters of the Seoul Metropolitan Government and Kim Kum-mi's previous work, A Trend in Applied Theatre Programs: The Case of Seoul Metropolitan Government (2019). For the community approach, Kim Ji-yeon's "Theater Outside the Theater: What to Do?" Applied Theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community (2010) and Park Jae-eun's Three Years in the Community of Living Culture, and After (2013)[14]. For various supports and approaches for citizen's arts, I have researched the websites of relevant entities, including: the WCCF; the Seoul Theater Association (STA); the Seoul Metropolitan Government; the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism; Arts Council Korea; Citizen's Theater Class; the Dongdaemun Solidarity to Share Culture (DSSC); and the SMT.

In Seoul, there was an early example of using the cultural activities and content production for the cultural industry: the citizen actors who completed the SMT Applied Theater Class appeared in commercial production at the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts as the members of the ensemble. Then the subjective awareness of citizen actors gradually changed regarding the cultural activities and content production; they either joined the existing theater companies or established their applied theater companies. In addition to this trend, there is a community function of theatrical works for social, educational, participatory, and therapeutic purposes through citizen's theater festivals. However, this last addition is not included in the scope of this study.

The review of preceding studies revealed several characteristics of the Korean applied theater. The SMT's use of their space and artists has been a crucial factor. The SMT Applied Theater provided policy support so that citizen actors could experience both the variable and the infrastructure parts of the theater. The first change was shown in the variables: the work and venue of performance changed, with citizen actors on stage. From 2015, the SMT Applied Theater Class started to include established plays in addition to developing original plays. The second change was about the infrastructure or the performing venue of citizen actors[15]. The performance venue used to be somewhere outside the Class. However, the Sejong Center theaters came to the scene from 2016 and onwards. The meaningful changes in the plays and venues chosen affected the awareness of citizen actors as well. There are six most frequently used performing venues, which are: Sejong S Theater; Sejong M Theater; Dongsoong Kokdu Theater; Seoul Namsan Gukakdang; Sungmisan Theater; and Dream Forest Art Center. Most of them are small theaters with less than 200 seats, but the scale grew as the Sejong Center's performance halls were used. However, the newer Sejong S Theater also showed that production by citizen actors tended to use a small theater regardless of the size of the local theater company. One reason may be the policy support by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, which is about using the existing small theaters rather

than the venues owned by local theater companies. Afterward, the SMT Applied Theater Class graduates began to launch theater companies on their own. This study will observe how such theater companies continue creative activities and content production, and how their works and use of venues exert economic, social, and cultural impact on their locality.

2) Methodology

The scope and methodology of this study are set to understand the changes in citizen's participation in the applied theater. The approach will not be about the concept but about what happened to the citizen actors who completed the SMT Applied Theater Class. For this purpose, surveys and interviews were conducted with the staff and art professionals who participated in the program. The data produced served as the primary material to show how the applied theater has been accepted and spread. An analysis of produced works and performance venues will help us understand whom the cultural activities and content production by citizen actors are accepted and spread. A broad framework will describe the awareness of citizen actors in this regard. An analysis of the literature from preceding studies serves as the base data, supplemented by this author's independent interviews with field workers. Also, a survey was conducted with citizens actors from the 2018 SMT Applied Theater Class to see the expected effects of their cultural activities and content production as well as the changed awareness regarding the local citizen's participation[16]. Finally, all the materials from the SMT Applied Theater Class were reviewed, published between 2009 and 2019[17].

In 2009, diversity was the focus when the Class was introduced, which worked as the driving force for the establishment of the applied theater in Seoul. The applied theater had a pivotal role and function to build solidarity among citizens and expand cohesion within the community. The SMT planned its program as a means to use its space and artists[18]. This study will review how the SMT Applied Theater Class moved between 2009 and 2019, looking at its variable and infrastructure components.

First, the variable components are the plays and people. The SMT Applied Theater Class usually produces its works between October and December. According to the statement made in 2016, the purpose was to develop and present original plays to be produced with the SMT. However, the direction seems to have changed to include existing plays from around the world. To understand the change in detail, it is necessary to analyze the programs between 2009 and 2019. During this period, the total number of works produced is twenty-two, including both original and existing plays. The production was geared to original plays, but it started to change from 2015, from the seventh to the tenth class. With Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the 7th SMT Applied Theater Class produced an established work for the first time, and the trend continued: the 8th Class produced *Seoulites*, an adaptation of Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor* and Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; the 9th Class made Anton Chekhov's *Ward No. Six* and Shakespeare's *King Lear*; and the 10th Class presented Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. At the initial stage, the production focused on developing original plays, but as time went by, the works were chosen by citizen actors. The experience later became an essential variable for citizen's theater companies as they chose what and where to produce their performance. Citizen actors thus influence how they conduct cultural activities and produce content as they have increasing autonomy in the choice of work recently.

Second, the infrastructure is about the venue. The SMT is under the Sejong Center, but it generally used facilities outside the Center for the applied theater program. The tendency gradually shifted, as evidenced in more recent productions. The 10th Class (2018) performed *Romeo and Juliet* at the Sejong S Theater. The 9th Class (2017) and the 8th Class (2016) used the Sejong M Theater for all of their productions. Before, facilities outside the Sejong Centers served as the performance venue. The 7th Class (2015) used the Kokdu Small Theater for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Almost Maine*, and *Innocent Motherhood*, *Guilty Motherhood*. The 6th Class

(2014) produced *Spring Days Are Going Away* at Munhwa Ilbo Art Hall. The 5th Class (2013) performed *Metamorphosis* and *A Box of Dried Fish* at Munhwa Ilbo Art Hall. The 4th Class (2012) produced *THE Family*, and *I Make Mistakes As I Wait For You* at Seoul Namsan Gukakdang. The 3rd Class (2011) presented *Think As You Like It*, *Le Tartuffe*, and *Misunderstanding Makes You Dance* at the Modl Theater. The 2nd Class (2010) performed *A Very Real Reality Show*, *Confessions: Oh My God*, *A Ship to Nabe Island* at the Sumgmisan Theater. Lastly, the 1st Class (2009) produced *Dad's Song*, *A Suspicious House*, and *Our Joyful Young Days* at the Dream Forest Art Center[19].

In summary, the following have been happening in the scene. First, the shift in how citizens participate will be examined based on the works produced (variable aspect) and the venues used (infrastructure aspect) by the SMT Applied Theater Class. While the Sejong center let some citizen actors appear in its musical, theatrical, or choir performances by established organizations, such appearance was on a one-off basis. Aside from the Citizen's Choir, there is no project employing citizen actors[20]. Some of them joined commercial theater companies (further research needed), and others launched applied theater companies. Also, the program participants (instructors and staff) may be involved. The shift in how citizen actors perform cultural activities and content production appears in the list of productions and venues for the SMT Applied Theater Class. The actors of the latter were distinguished from other cultural activists fostered by other cultural programs by the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Second, there are new citizen's theater companies. Citizen actors inaugurated their theater companies, including theater companies by citizen actors, including Applied Theater 2010, Siyeon, Dubichum, Ohdangchoom, Ttancheong, and Sichimi. This study will examine what they have been doing, excluding Ttancheong and Sichimi. Third, other program participants get involved. The instructors or staff who worked in the SMT Applied Theater Class sometimes work with the theater companies. A case for review here is the Neutinamu Theater Company. Fourth, there is an element of community in the alliance of the applied theater. There are many organizations, including the National Applied Theater Network Council, as well as theatrical associations in each Seoul administrative district (gu). However, this study will focus on the Seoul Theater Association (STA). Fifth, there are citizen's theater festivals in which the STA plays a certain role. The Sejong Center hosted the Citizen's Theater Festival, but it ended up being a one-off event. Then the STA turned it into a different type of content through the Seoul Citizens Theater Festival (SCTF) in 2015. The SMT, the citizen's theater companies, their participation in the SCTF, their productions, and the venues they use will help us categorize cultural activities and content production, which can serve as a kind of cultural indices.

In the nationwide applied theater in Korea, local theater companies use 'customized' theatre programs for citizens[21]. Yet it is not citizen actors but local producers or authorities that initiate such programs, acting as a cultural catalyst[22]. The subjective creativity and productivity of citizen actors have a positive impact on the making of the city[23]. Most of the relevant projects take the form of either a local community program or a club, and they may create jobs. The programs seem to expand from urban to rural communities. The collaboration between citizens and professionals creates a field of exchange among citizens, in which local theater companies and theater associations play a pivotal role. The STA stands out with the implementation of the SCTF since 2015. Polices for citizen's arts and culture are implemented to allow experts and non-specialists can get together[24].

While the Seoul Metropolitan Government was a relatively late runner in the applied theater and did not start a program until 2009, its program constantly expanded, reaching twenty-five gus by 2015. The program grew to cover all areas in Seoul, hence creating more jobs for professionals (in arts and culture). At each gu district, theater associations and companies work together to launch citizen's theater festivals. Although the local theater

companies do not foster citizen actors or cultural activists, the festivals let citizens take the initiative in production, serving as a field of exchange based on communication and openness. Why does it matter today? What matters is not who approaches the festivals and how, but which users achieve cultural activities and productivity. The distinctly individualistic life today affects not only our values in life but also the creation and destruction of community, which also has an impact on the local economy as poor activity will lead to poor productivity.

Recently, the applied theater is suggested as a means of encouraging the subjective participation of citizens to promote the city's self-sustaining role. Also, in the face of a crisis, the cultural industry began to use pure arts as a form of solution[25]. In the past, cities tended to focus more on superficial activities such as drawing murals than on the meaningful collaboration between artists and citizens. However, many municipal governments seek to transform their regions, using local resources through creative productivity.

Among the new theater companies launched by the graduates of the SMT Applied Theater Class, this study will examine the four cases of Applied Theater 2010, Siyeon, Dubichum, and Ohdangchoom. Ttancheong and Sichimi are excluded due to the lack of reference data and materials. The four theater companies are the producers of the most prolific content among their peers. However, this review will not address the element of the community, which will be a subject for a follow-up study.

2. Channels for Citizen Actors in Cultural Activities and Content Production1) Cultural Activities and Content Production by Establishing Theater Companies

There are many graduates from the SMT Applied Theater Class, who became citizen actors. The classes continued to launch theater companies together: Applied Theater 2010 (the 1st Class); Dubichum (the 1st & the 2nd Class); Siyeon (the 2nd Class); Ohdangchoom (3rd); Ttancheong (the 4th Class); and Sichimi (the 5th Class)[26]. This study will examine the first four theater companies.

■ Applied Theater 2010

In 2009, the SMT Applied Theater produced three graduation pieces—*Dad's Song*, *A Suspicious House*, and *Our Joyful Young Days*, which experience led to the inauguration of a theater company. The Applied Theater 2010 presents an annual performance and other reading events. As the number of citizen actors is not enough, they recruit members to maintain the company.

They produced a total of twelve performances for the past decade at venues like venues included Dari Small Theater and Naru Arts & Culture Center, including A Project—To Become a Good Person in Seoul (2018); Metamorphosis (2017); I Want to Know Who Your Parents Are (2016); Théâtre sans Animaux (2015); Twelve Angry Men (2014); Historia de una Escalera (2013); A Note on Seoul (2012); Twelfth Night (2011); and Our Town (2010). Among them, Historia de una Escalera (2013) participated in the Citizen's Festival hosted by the Sejong Center. In 2019, on the 10th anniversary, the company presented One of Those Days, A Midsummer Night's Dream, an adaptation by Lee Yeong-seok of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Sejong S Theater. While its early performances focused on classics with interests in social issues, the later productions were based on contemporary plays. The 10th-anniversary production was a modern interpretation of a classic.

■ Siyeon[27]

In 2010, the SMT Applied Theater graduates presented A Very Real Reality Show, Confessions: Oh My God, A Ship to Nabe Island at the Sumgmisan Theater. The 2nd Class then launched a theater company Siyeon. This company also offer an annual performance and reading events. They produced a total of eight plays, including A Literature Class for Travelers (2017); A Mad Play (2016); A Tale of Yangdeokwon (2015); God of Carnage

(2014); Cendrillons (2013); A Happy Family (2012); and What You Mean (2011). The venues were mostly small theaters with less than 200 seats, such as Dari Small Theater, Yeollim Hall, KB Arts Hall, and Modl Theater. Cendrillons (2013) participated in the Citizen's Festival hosted by the Sejong Center. The productions were generally modern plays focusing on social interests. Cendrillons or Cinderellas was a new interpretation of a classic.

Siyeon produces its plays working with professionals in the field. However, aside from stage props, sound design, and other elements that require technical expertise, the company manages it on their own.

■ Dubichum

Dubichum was launched by graduates of two classes, of 2009 and 2010. The theater company presents an annual performance and produces occasional project performances with other organizations. So far, they have presented a total of seven plays: *Brazil* (2018); *Bartleby the Scribner* (2016); *Uncle Sunwu* (2015); *Audience* (2014); *Fine, Thank You, And You?* (2013); *How to Relish a Home Meal* (2012); *A Marriage Proposal* (2011). *Fine, Thank You, And You?* (2013) was part of Project Dalbi Flower, an original play made in collaboration with another theater company. Dubichum mostly used small theaters in Seoul, such as Sundol, Mary Hall Theater at Sogang University, Arko Theater, Tree and Water Small Theater, Yeonwoo, and Hongik Art Center Small Theater. The company develops original plays for production, working with professional artists for diversity.

■ Ohdangchoom, A Theater Company of Everyday Life

Ohdangchoom was launched after the 3rd Class (2011) presented *Think As You Like It, Le Tartuffe*, and *Misunderstanding Makes You Dance* at the Modl Theater[28]. Between 2010 and 2015, they produced various plays: *A Pacific Diamond, Juan-joa-ho-land* (2015); *Imagine* (2014); *A Knick-knack Museum* (2014); *Platform 4-4* (2014); *Change Your Life* (2014); *Our Dance Dedicated to You* (2013); *A Persona in Séance* (2013); *What's Up?* (2013); *Equality* (2013); *Daddy's Playing House* (2012); *A Mice* (2012); *Misunderstanding Makes You Dance* (2012); *Think As You Like It* (2011); *Le Tartuffe* (2011). The venues were small theaters such as Sungmisan Theater, Eungpyong Peace Park, Seoul Art Space Seogyo, Sejong M Theater, Eunpyeong-gu Lifelong Learning Center, and Modl Theater. The company used the outdoor stage a lot, which is in line with their overall operation: they do not host or organize events but participate in other organizations' festivals and events.

The duration of Ohdangchoom's performance is not longer than ten minutes. This is why the company has been more prolific than its other counterparts. The company is distinctive in other activities, as they actively collaborate with other institutions, unlike other applied theater companies: Ohdangchoom operated a training program through workshops with Eungpeyong-gu Lifelong Learning Center and Paju International School. The company also planned a ten-minute theater festival in 2013, hosting the event for five times until 2017. The details of this festival will be described in the following section. Ohdangchoom presents its work through education and festivals, with a higher likelihood of collaboration.

In general, applied theater companies run an annual performance and additional reading events. Ohdangchoom plans educational programs and festivals. Further engagement by other participants in the SMT Applied Theater Class is worth analyzing as they also contribute to spreading cultural activities and content production. This point will be examined in the citizen's festival section.

The applied theater companies are not very specialized in their budget and human resources operation. It is why they work in collaboration with experts. Most of the applied theater companies take the form of a club; hence their structure is not-for-profit. Due to such a challenge in securing enough budget, they run on membership contributions. Citizen actors who have various real-life jobs can help in this regard. In some

instances, citizen actors use their job expertise for the management of their organizations. The SMT Applied Theater Class designed a program for primary cultural activities and content production; as these companies continue to operate, they can build citizen's experience in the region promote the participating citizens' productivity. Therefore the management of applied theater companies is quite crucial after fostering citizen actors, which can lead to more significant social, cultural, and economic impact and values for the region.

2) The Spread of Cultural Activities and Content Production Through Citizen's Theater Festival

Cultural contents of each country have a cultural narrative, unique and universal at once, to be delivered to users. Relevant policies move in the arena of the cultural industry[29]. The first specific action of its kind was the Citizen's Festival hosted by the Sejong Center in 2013. Another example is the citizen's festival hosted by Ohdangchoom, the self-labeled theater of every day. Still, another example is the Seoul Citizens Theater Festival hosted by the STA.

■ The Citizen's Festival by the Sejong Center

The festival appeared when the applied theater companies were launched by citizen actors. Those companies opened the door for the possibility of a citizen's theater festival. The event happened at the Sejong M Theater with applied theater companies at the center[30]. It was meaningful as the companies could experience a more substantial performance venue beyond the small theaters they used for their annual performance or reading events. Also, it served as the first opportunity for citizens to have a field of exchange for each other. The different performing results demonstrate the importance of local policy for citizen's program. It is vital to ensure participation in content production through citizen's cultural activities. The citizen's festival was a result of learning from the applied theater programs.

From the SMT Applied Theater Class, Siyeon, Ohdangchoom, Applied Theater 2010, and Ttancehong participated. However, these companies could not serve as the host of the festival due to the failure to secure the budget: it was to become a one-off event, one hosted and organized by the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts. The result was rather unsatisfactory in terms of openness, communication, and exchange for the subjective cultural activities and content production by citizen actors.

■ 10-Minute Theater Festival by Ohdangchoom.

Ohdangchoom, a theater of every day, interprets and extraordinarily produces plays. A Persona in Séance (2013) was one example that showed the power of an amateur theater company, focusing more on passion and sincerity than on techniques[31]. In 2013, Ohdangchoom planned its 10-minute Theater Festival, whose first event happened at the Sungmisan Theater. It was a kind of project group by applied theatre companies, and the participating pieces were based on original and established plays with a duration of 10 minutes or less. The festival continued until 2017, between March and April[32]. Ohdangchoom and other applied theater companies joined hands to establish a citizen's theater festival of a small scale. Compared to the one-off festival hosted by the Sejong Center, it is tiny; yet the positive influence is far greater, as citizen actors take the initiative in the cultural activities and content production, ultimately revitalizing the city in general.

In 2013, the 1st Ohdangchoom 10-minute Theater Festival opened at the Sungmisan Theater. The company presented *Equality* and *What's Up?* and the latter was an entry to the 10th Busan International Performing Arts Festival. For its second festival in 2014, Ohdangchoom produced *Platform 4-4* and *Change Your Life*. In 2015, the company performed *A Pacific Diamond, Juan-joa-ho-land*, for its third festival. The Sungmisan Theater served as the performing stage, and the theater is also a venue for the Sungmisan Village Theater Festival[33].

Ohdangchoom actively participated in festivals. It participated in the 3rd and the 4th Sungmisan Village Theater Festival with *Misunderstanding Makes You Dance* (2012) and *A Persona in Séance* (2013), respectively. It also presented *A Knick-knack Museum* (2014) at the Seoul Art Space Seogyo for the 17th Seoul Fringe Festival, an event joined by about 2,300 artists from 89 teams. Previously, the company participated in the festival with *Our Dance Dedicated to You* (2013). *Imagine* (2014) was an entry to the Eunpyeong Nuri Festival at the Eunpyeong Peace Park. The company also presented *Daddy's Playing House* (2012) and *A Mice* (2012) at the Eunpyeong Lifelong Learning Center.

According to the 2013 Seoul Comprehensive Plan for Theatre Development, such results came from the "support for artistic activities through local theater companies." Furthermore, the results from each district in 2014 led to the launching of the 2015 Seoul Citizens Theater Festival, which, in turn, contributed to promoting the participation of the applied theater companies. The purpose of the festival is to "provide arts programs so that people can discover their hidden desire for artistic expression." Besides, Seoul implemented the 2013 Seoul Arts and Culture School for Citizens, a program to enable people to meet arts in their vicinity[34]. Ohdangchoom produces content by participating in various local festivals, but it has not joined the Seoul Citizens Theater Festival.

■ The Seoul Citizens Theater Festival (SCTF)

The SCTF needs diverse approaches and promotion. The event is hosted by the Seoul Theater Association (STA) and aims to enable Seoul citizens to produce and perform a play. Any civic organizations based in twenty-five gus of Seoul are eligible to enter. The goal is to create an arts and culture community in everyday life and build a self-sustaining local culture[35]. The STA runs the festival at a different gu district each year to promote the applied theater across Seoul. The SCTF generally opens between May and September, and the year 2020 would have marked its sixth festival. However, the recent outbreak of COVID-19 may have an impact on the SCTF, as it does on all the festivals around the world.

Looking back at the four previous festivals, several applied theater companies have made repeat entries to the SCTF[36]. Byeoljubu and Paran joined all four events; Clear and Deep Water, Gangdong Arts & Applied Theater, Fiancé, Zelkova, and Nowon Theatrical Community Escape joined the second, third, and fourth festivals; Rainbow & Lovers, Miari Ridge Citizens Theater Company, Sotdae, Seniors Theater Company Fly White Heron, Applied Theater Accompany, Our Mapo Welfare Center's Today, and Beautiful Moon appeared in the third and fourth festivals[37]. The ratio of repeat entries is quite high.

However, none of the applied theater companies made by the graduates of the SMT Applied Theater Class has appeared in the SCTF. It requires careful observation as the STA has been encouraging the participation from all applied theater experts and ordinary citizens in all twenty-five *gu* districts of Seoul.

In addition to the citizen's theater festival, another event that is worth mentioning is the Human Rights Theater Festival. Some graduates from the SMT Applied Theater Class launched a theater company, forming a kind of solidarity with outside participants. Zelkova Applied Theater Company represents such a tendency. The

company produced a total of four plays between 2015 and 2018: Listen—聽 (2018) at Amuse Theater; I Have

Nothing But You Now (2016) at Hyehwadang Theater [38]; Life Is Beautiful (2015) at Sungmisan Theater; Remember to Remember (2015) at Sungmisan Theater. The performance venues were small theaters. I Have Nothing But You Now was an entry to the 2017 Human Rights Theater Festival. The company operates Academy Zelkova and offer Applied Theater Workshop, enabling cultural activities and content production by participants. The graduates from the 1st to 5th SMT Applied Theater Class banded together to produce Remember to Remember for the Human Rights Theater Festival in November 2015, an original play about the Sewol Ferry

Disaster and individual memory of it. The Zelkova Applied Theater Company was born in this process[39]. Academy Zelkova operates a club of Learning Community together with the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy. The scope of the academy's program expands to cover students, job seekers, senior citizens, and various underprivileged people, with a focus on changing the negative perception regarding them. The Zelkova Theater Company requires participants to attend the workshop at least once; the monthly meeting activities include play reading, lectures, theater-going, impromptu practice, performance planning and rehearsals, discussions to participate in theater festival, and playwriting[40].

3. Implications: Communication, Sharing, and Openness of Content Production by Citizen Actors

The program participants of the SMT Applied Theater Class, namely, citizen actors, staff, and instructors work to expand cultural activities and content production, while generating significant results through various channels. There are noteworthy aspects in this regard.

First, the SMT is a brand of the Sejong Center for the performing arts, and citizens pursued the cultural values they need in this high-end brand image. The choice of the SMT's program seems to be based more on such brand image than on geographic access. However, such a brand image can be both positive and negative.

Second, due to the high expectations, there is an assumption that the program will offer differentiated programs and plays for production experience. To ensure satisfaction, it seems necessary to separate theory and experience courses; only citizens actors who have completed the theory course should be allowed to move on to the production phase.

Third, the SMT has maintained a relatively low-profile in providing information and continuing exchange among citizen actors. Although the SMT class has been in place since 2009, it was difficult to find records regarding the applied theater as the staff in charge frequently changed. Before 2018, citizen actors had to resort to blogs, web communities, and other social media platforms in managing their activities. However, they tended to be passive about sharing information and making an open exchange. The conservative tendency in exchange made it very challenging to collect data. A system is needed to deliver information and enable the exchange to encourage voluntary participation by citizen actors.

From 2018, citizen actors gradually got involved in information sharing and open exchange. However, it is necessary to build a system of information on the performed plays and performance venues, as they can serve as indices showing the cultural activities and content production by the graduates of the SMT Applied Theater Class. The basic data will help us understand the channels of content production as citizen actors or cultural activities continue their actions.

Such indices, when established, will promote the role of citizen actors as they take cultural actions, produce contents, and build a city's foundation for self-sustaining culture. There should be applied theater websites where citizen actors can share information and make an exchange freely, which will be linked to various social media platforms. Each applied theater organization will have to make a decision according to the nature of their works and activities. When this system is built, it will primarily offer information on the applied theater together with the outcomes citizen actors will produce. Then it can also function as a platform for living communities sharing information, which will be open to ordinary citizens. There should be a channel that will include citizen actors, experts, and non-specialists to meet each other.

One such example is the Zelkova Applied Theater Company run by diverse participants. While the SMT only has a Facebook account, the Zelkova has its official website (http://academy.peoplepower21.org) and run other social media platforms, a Flickr account (https://www.flickr.com), and a Youtube channel (https://www.youtube.com).

The company uses such diverse communication channels, posting articles, photos, and images on their workshops, performances, and other activities. All the accounts are open so that everyone can have unlimited access to them and get the necessary information.

A survey was conducted for this study, with thirty participants in the 2018 SMT Applied Theater Class (citizens actors, staff, and instructors were all included, assuming that they will become the agents of potential cultural activities and content production). The respondents answered an 11-question survey, asking for basic information, including gender, age, and occupation. The results are as follows. By gender, males are the predominant group. Among the age groups between the 20s and the 60s, the 30s and the 40s constitute the majority in numbers, followed by the 20s, the 50s, and the 60s. By occupation, there are students, corporate employees, business owners, and others.

The respondents demonstrated the following characteristics.

First, in terms of the access to information, the majority of respondents were introduced to the SMT Applied Theater Class mainly by a referral by an acquaintance, and also by the Seoul Metropolitan Government or the SMT website. Second, in terms of other applied theater programs outside the SMT, only a limited number has the experience. Some citizen actors experienced a play reading in 2018 with the Theater Company GORAE, presenting *A Red Poem* at the Naru Culture & Arts Center. Third, in terms of continued interest after the completion of the program, respondents seem to be enthusiastic. That is, the SMT Applied Theater Class heightens interest in the potential career as citizen actors and performance production, thereby giving a synergy effect to boost productivity in the locality. The respondents care more for being citizen actors than for being content producers, showing a strong interest in the enjoyment culture. There should be more offers to produce content to meet such needs. The contents for citizens, including the SMT Applied Theater Class, tell us how the Seoul Metropolitan Government's policy support has enabled such diverse programs. Fourth, as respondents choose a program, the relevant brand image plays an important part: the SMT as a brand of the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts and their trainer pool influenced as the respondents made a choice.

There are different policies in place in the field: while the Seoul Metropolitan Government fosters cultural activities, the SMT fosters citizen actors. When the target is different, the activity indices must be different: is the applied theater program commercial, educational, or therapeutic? Moreover, the activities can either be open or closed according to such a tendency. However, a recent survey in 2019 shows that citizen actors prefer communication, sharing, and openness to get help for their cultural activities and content production, and their preferred platform is the website. However, in addition to a traditional website, other social media platforms should be used for different users and different PR purposes in everyday life. Citizen actors are willing to share and open their cultural activities and produced content for communication. Such change is considerably positive compared to the 2018 result[41].

There are also amateur theater companies producing commercial plays at the center of the Korean theater, Daehakro, since 2005, such as Action Mask and Holics[42]. In summary, cultural activities by citizens actors tend to be promoted by local theater companies. As the companies roll out applied theater programs, they, in turn, increased attention to cultural activities and content production by citizen actors. The SMT was a choice of citizens for its prestigious image as a brand under the Sejong Center for the Performing Arts.

4. Conclusion

This study has examined the case of the SMT Applied Theater Class to understand the changes in how citizens participate in the program and the relevant scene. The purpose was to find real actions of cultural education in the applied theater or citizen's participation. As the current times need the reconciliation between the human and nature, among humans, and between the capital and the human, the applied theater seems to

provide us a professional tool to find a solution. How would the chosen tool influence citizen actors or applied theater companies as they decide what to present and in which they participate?

The case of SMT Applied Theater Class under the Sejong Center analyzed in this study showed that a total of eleven classes graduated between 2009 and 2019. While the earlier programs focused on developing and presenting original plays, the recent programs seem to concentrate on producing established modern and classic works.

A survey with aspiring citizen actors in 2018 showed some significant results, mainly as they discussed the channels of their cultural activities and content production as well as any other applied theater experiences. A majority of respondents found the SMT Applied Theater Class through the Internet or referral by an acquaintance. Some respondents have experience in other applied theater programs outside the SMT.

The credibility of education seems to increase either by locality or by the institution that owns the cultural venue. It was possible to understand the various changes in how citizen actors get involved. First, the expectations for the quality of local and cultural spaces seem to be quite high. Second, the higher the expectations are, the more demanding the participants become regarding the quality of the training program. Third, the same can be said regarding the quality of the plays they deal with.

Fourth, there are improvement areas in access to the SMT Applied Theater Class. The primary form of information tool regarding the applied theater turns out to be the website. A dedicated website is necessary, which can be linked to other platforms to boost efficiency and convenience. As citizens perform as actors and produce plays, contents are made; those contents should be shared openly. The level of openness and sharing was quite low in the past, but it started to change from around 2018. The citizen actors also make progressive decisions and influence the applied theater programming. As they exchange ideas about what they can do in their performance, open exchange and sharing are becoming the norms, and citizens take the initiative to enhance the cultural quality in their activities.

Finally, the STA hosted the SCTF in 2015, perhaps to highlight voluntary participation and management by citizen actors and applied theater organizations. The question is when relevant institutions produce citizen actors using their programs, should stop getting involved in their further cultural activities and content production? At present, for the sustainability of citizen actors, the only solution seems to be the inauguration of an applied theater company. In this context, the question requires an in-depth discussion.

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