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Abbreviating Boal at the Louisiana Old State Capitol Museum: Using Image Theatre

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This article describes the execution and reflections of a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop offered in 2017 to middle and high school groups visiting the Louisiana Old State Capitol Museum on half-day field trips. The workshops accompanied The Power of Children: Making a Difference exhibit, which features the stories and struggles of Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank. Despite initial plans for an hour-long session, the workshop designed to respond to the stories of children in the exhibit and to examine the notion of "power" was cut to fifteen minutes. Our group of four facilitators discusses ways we modified Augusto Boal's Image Theatre practices, the difficulties we faced leading short sessions in the setting of a school field trip, and our worries about maintaining emotional safety as youth tackled themes of power, powerlessness, and policing.

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During spring 2017, Bonny McDonald collaborated with three graduate student colleagues, Joshua Hamzehee, Naomi Bennett, and Montana Smith, to offer interactive theatre workshops for groups of middle and high school students directly after seeing *The Power of Children: Making a Difference* exhibit at the Louisiana Old State Capitol Museum in Baton Rouge. The exhibit, created by the Children's Museum Indianapolis, focused on the lives of three children who faced extreme struggles and changed the world: Ruby Bridges, Ryan White, and Anne Frank. When we began to envision this work in 1916, Alton Sterling had recently been murdered by police, hundreds of Black Lives Matter demonstrators were arrested when they peacefully marched against the court decision not to prosecute those responsible, and soon after, the city endured historic, destructive flooding. Racial tensions were higher than usual in this strained climate (Fausset, et. al 2016).

The stories of the children in the exhibit, especially Bridges', felt particularly relevant. Bonny met with the museum's education director several times to ensure the workshop aligned with the museum's mission, including educating the public "on Louisiana's rich history and the democratic process through exhibits, programming and the arts," and to inspire "engaged citizenship" (*Louisiana's Old State Capitol*). We wanted to create a workshop that would enhance student understanding of the exhibit by encouraging them to make connections to their own local experiences, inviting students to think critically about power dynamics, and to engage embodied knowledge via kinesthetic imagery. Sometimes, we met these aims; sometimes, students and teachers expressed deep gratitude for our work; sometimes, we struggled; sometimes, we really struggled.

In this account of our work, we describe the challenges and successes we faced as we worked to meet the needs of student participants while accommodating various institutional demands. Indeed, the difficulties of planning and executing this project quickly mounted: the workshop had to respond directly to the exhibit, be flexible enough to be offered by facilitators with

varying experience levels, and work for groups of different sizes, ages, and time constraints. At first, the museum anticipated having an hour for these sessions, but then the reality of schools' schedules hit. Teachers often wanted to prioritize time in the gift shop over this mysterious "interactive theatre workshop." The time allotted for the workshop was cut to forty-five, then thirty, and finally only fifteen minutes.

Bonny met with Naomi, Josh, and Montana and several docents to review the script and ask clarifying questions, and then they observed her doing at least one workshop before offering it to students themselves. We originally envisioned asking participants to generate their own prompts after teaching Boal's exercises with our prompts, but as our available time shortened, room for participant control contracted. The final version of the workshop modified Boal's TO methods by prescribing prompts directly connected to *The Power of Children* exhibit, and by using a circular "Statue Garden" format to arrange student bodies for sculpting techniques.

After a series of warm-ups designed to acclimate students to Image work, we focused on two of Boal's most straightforward exercises: Image of the Word (*Games* 176-186) and sculpting techniques (*Games* 136-7). In the Image of Word series, we asked students to make individual images of "Something that struck you or something you related to from the Power of Children exhibit." After observing everyone's images, we moved into a series of prompts: "Power," then "A moment when someone used their power over you unfairly," and finally, "An image of what that person was afraid of in you." Throughout the activity, we asked students to comment on what they saw in each other's images

 In the "Statue Garden" sequence, students paired up and formed two rings, with the outer ring sculpting the inner ring of "clay." We asked students to sculpt an image of someone they bullied or someone they witnessed being bullied. The clay was then invited to transform this image in as few moves possible into one of "security." Once images took shape, we walked around the

circle to view and discuss them before switching roles for the last round. We ended the session with a round of "takeaways."

Collectively, we offered the workshop to about twenty different school groups over two months. The sessions took place in the old Senate building, an imposing room with hardwood floors and enormous stained glass windows that set a serious tone. We met mainly with East Baton Rouge Parish public middle school classes of about twenty-five students per group. We also met with a few local private schools, high schools, and a homeschool group. With rare exceptions, these groups were racially homogenous: all-white groups or all-Black groups, reflecting deep segregation along private and public school lines in Baton Rouge.

We presented our experiences in Dallas, TX at the National Communication Association conference in 2017. In the spirit of participatory theatre, we created an interactive panel. We invited session attendees to participate in a truncated version of the workshop interspersed with our observations about our experiences. We echo that format in this article, offering individual accounts and musings from each workshop leader and end with a few collective reflections and recommendations. While a few teachers and students offered profound appreciation for our work, as we finalize our reflections from the distance of a few years, we are left wondering if the extremely short sessions wound up being too emotionally risky for participants. Were the risks worth the rewards?

Bonny: Quick, Make Something Deep!

My confidence as a facilitator (and former middle school theatre teacher) allowed me to at least barrel through participants' initial difficulties and keep students moving through the workshop. Along with some surprising benefits, this sense of "pushing through" came with some notable risks. One moment highlights this tension. In the last round of the sculpting exercise working with an

especially energetic group, I asked students to rotate a few steps to find a new partner, and then create an image of someone they once bullied or harassed, or someone they witnessed being bullied. The new pairs got to work, but I realized one pair of boys was having trouble. I walked over. They said they did not want to work together. Worrying about the time a change would cost I said, "Can y'all please make it work – everyone else is paired up and we only have a few minutes left, I'm sorry." They nodded affirmatively, if reluctantly. I called out reminders to work physically and without discussion, helped another pair to stay on task, then prompted everyone to walk around the circle to view the statues.

Most of the students made realistic poses depicting a person looking sad, small, covering their bodies, or hiding their faces in shame. But one image stuck out: the one made by the two boys who had objected to working together. The sculptor was white and the sculpture was Black. The white student looked sheepish; the Black student was posed with arms up, fists curled over, a low squat, lips pursed in an "O." I asked the Black student, "Is this pose okay for you?" He said "Yes" very confidently. When I asked the group which one stuck out, everyone indicated this one, and they all laughed uncomfortably and looked at one another as if this pose had prior significance. No one wanted to answer when I asked what they saw in this pose. So, I moved on to the next part: transform the image in as little movement as possible to one of security, to resistance to the bullying.

The Black student in the pose stood up straight, turned his mouth into a grim line, lowered one curled fist, and turned the other outward into a Black Power fist, staring squarely at the white student who put him in the previous pose. I went over to them while the rest of the group arranged themselves. I said, "So, come on, what's up with this one?" The Black student said: "He called me a 'monkey' last week in class. I got him in trouble with the teacher, but this is like an apology to ME right to my face." I said, "Is that what you were going for with the pose? The white student said,

"Yeah, I called him that and I still feel really bad." And what do you see in this response? "He's showing he's strong. He's showing he's proud of who he is." I asked, "Is that what you were going for with your second pose?" "Yeah, I'm not letting that get to me. He meant to joke, but it's not funny." I said, "Thanks for working together – I'm sorry I didn't listen before – I hope this was okay for both of you." They nodded at me. Their faces were sincere, even relieved.

The takeaway round was tough for the middle schoolers. After some uncomfortable giggles, a few students commented on enjoying the chance to "have a conversation without words;" some made statements about how we need to be nicer to each other; one made a strong statement about how there was more bullying going on at school than teachers realized, and many nodded in agreement. I noticed the group tuned in to the pair of boys who worked together, eager to hear what they would say. Aware of the eyes on them, they kept it simple: the Black student said "It was good," and the white student echoed him: "It was good." Then, it was time to go to the gift shop. On their way out, a pair of their classmates informed me that they had been best friends before "the incident." I noticed the two boys casting glances at each other as they walked away.

This particular moment could have gone badly, and I remain relieved it seemed productive instead. The need for speed in this and other sessions meant I charged past participant discomforts in a way that was risky, but it also meant students put themselves out there, trying out the unfamiliar physical form despite initial fears of embarrassment. My urgent energy left little room for them to resist the program: the middle schoolers I worked with took expressive risks, surprising me, their teachers, and themselves. However, their options for that expression were restricted by our preset prompts, and many of those prompts were quite provocative. In Image Theatre Boal encourages us to "feel" images, to allow that "the meaning of an image is an image itself" (*Games* 175). He asserts the entire method hinges on "the multiple mirror gazes of others – a number of people looking at the same image, and offering their feelings, what is evoked for them, what their

imaginations throw up around that image" (*Games* 175). Both aspects are critical, but in this workshop, we did not have enough room for teasing out what those multiple gazes witnessed. However, the images still spoke, sometimes powerfully. The museum education director emailed me after one of our sessions to say when she asked a student what they thought about the experience, he said "I think there's a way to move forward after a bad time with someone."

Bullying was a topic that clearly resonated with students and Image Theatre seemed useful for its examination. In many sessions, we saw power dynamics exaggerated and considered, as well as students "admitting," often nonverbally, to having perpetrated bullying themselves. Warren Linds and Linda Goulet write about working with youth and TO on racism and discrimination, and the way sharing stories allows students to "overcome isolation, breaking the silence of oppression" (165). They write, "In the representation of a common incident of oppression, [students] discover the features of domination and how it is enacted" (165). Images of physical domination came to the fore in many workshops: cops, teachers, bullies – all literally loomed over the victim, raised fists, batons, or guns, made bodily threats. When I asked, "so what do these images say about how we think of power in our society?" I heard: "violence," "power-over," "anger," "hitting," "I'm bigger than you so I win." I wish we had had time to change the images, to think about "power-with," to brainstorm about what this means for us. And I cannot help but remember in this same light a group of four teachers from a local middle school watching their students nervously, as if ready to pounce on anyone "who got out of line," disciplining with their collective gaze of mistrust. They were figures Josh refers to in the next section as "supervising bystanders."

Josh: Categorizing the Outsize Gaze: Boalian Spectators as Supervising Bystanders, Personal Observers, and Space Navigators

I will explore one twenty-minute Power of Children workshop where I performed as facilitator to twenty-four white homeschooled high school students. Both students and myself were affected by an unexpected array of outside gazes. Before the workshop, the museum curator informed me these high school students were part of a conservative-leaning homeschool group that meets regularly to focus on politics. Influenced by this information, I wondered how these students would interpret the Image Theatre workshops. I did not wonder how the presence of a dozen-or-so teachers and parents/guardians would impact our session. In their article, "Language and Liberation: A Dialogue on Image Theatre Practice," Uppal and Vachon write, "we do not usually create formal Images to communicate in everyday life, and as such, collectively, we may not be sure what people in the room will make of our Image" (18). Reflecting on this workshop and the people in the room, I realized one way to have reduced my uncertainty and improved the workshop was to have addressed the different categories of outside gazers I encountered, like supervising bystanders (the visiting teachers), personal observers (parents in the room), space navigators (the museum curator), and other outsiders (passers-by).

Each of these observers have a different interest and connection to the workshop and thus have different impacts on participants. As the workshop began teachers and parents were spread out in the old congressional house theater space, a panopticon of oversight. Also observing were the museum curator and a museum volunteer. Before the workshop, one volunteer said that what I would do with these students is "impossible, I could never do it." The potential experiences and positions of students, chaperones, and staff made me consider how accessible Image Theatre is to those unfamiliar with the language of this type of embodied pedagogical experience. In "Theatre for the Less Oppressed than I: Reconsidering Augusto Boal's Concept of Spect-Actor," Yonghee Lee writes, "TO practitioners endeavouring to create meaningful discourse and consequences must be

sensitively aware of diverse implications in an individual's formation, and consider what may be causing the underlying reasons for silencing among the participants" (162). As our warm-ups began, I began to wonder how the observing spectators would impact student spect-actor silencing, and how outside gazers would influence how and what we create.

As the workshop progressed, I recognized my focus was spread thin between all the different people. Throughout, students were polite, museum staff was mostly silent, and outside gazers provided mixed reactions. While most students invested, two rowdy high school students brought excess verbal language into our physical focus. While this could stem from uncertainty about the activities we were undertaking, the short time limit and the workshop being placed by curators as the final stop of the exhibit could have also impacted focuses. They were firmly told to settle down by two chaperones. The presence of outside gazers seemed to influence some students to invest in the workshop differently than if they felt unobserved. While I began the workshop aiming to be the most democratic facilitator I could, I ended by trying to keep this homeschool train on the rails by bringing student focus back to our circle through reminders, directions, and amplifying my voice when providing directions. Throughout I noticed my focus would drift from inside the circle to those observing outside.

After the workshop, a group of five students thanked me, telling me the workshop guided them to thinking about the role power dynamics played in their own lives, in their choices, and their relationships to others. One student mentioned how the presence of their mother possibly impacted how they participated. A group of three parents also thanked me for leading the students. Throughout the workshop, I noticed two chaperones standing together—the same ones that told students to settle down—shaking their heads at what (I perceived) we were doing in the activities. They kept their distance following the workshop and I did not get a chance to interact with them. As

the students and their chaperones exited, both the curator and museum volunteer said they were amazed by all we did in such a short time, and the volunteer reiterated how "impossible" it seems to lead students in this manner.

Reflecting on this workshop, spectators and spect-actors clearly had impacts on each other, and those impacts seemed to magnify depending on the relationships. My own comfort zone as facilitator was clearly affected by the different positions people in the room occupied. Lee writes, "if one's desire to step into the scene is repressed or affected by outside gaze, Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed does not address this behavior" (167). Drawing on David Zinder and Viola Spolin's notion of an actor's split attention in Body Voice Imagination: A Training for the Actor, Odangiu roughly estimates, "any actor reserves 10% of his/her mind for the "outside gaze" – a small part of the actors attention is among the spectators, checking their "temperature"" (25). While we can quibble with the exact percentage of one's attention that is commanded by spectators, the feedback received from one's split attention has clear impacts regarding spect-actor involvement, reflection, commitment, and adjustments. In light of these observations, I offer four categories to begin parsing through different types of observing in workshop settings: supervising bystanders, personal observers, space navigators, and other outsiders. A key condition to being categorized in these roles is that those actively participating in the workshop sense the outside presence. Addressing the following categorizations individually allows facilitators to better address the variable that is spectator presence. Some may occupy multiple positions at once, and there are many positions possible between the following extremes I have encountered as a workshop facilitator.

First, supervising bystanders include those who have vested interests in spectator outcomes from an educational or organizational standpoint, like teachers, chaperones, and guides.

At this workshop, I encountered an active teacher who seemed to have a strong rapport with students. I also noticed two chaperones only engaging with rowdy students. Second, personal observers include those who have deeper and familial ties to the spect-actors, like parents, guardians, and friends. At this workshop, I encountered a parent who outwardly scoffed when issues of power were broached, seemingly resistant to unconventional pedagogical methods. I also encountered a guardian who was eager to be involved and embrace the novel opportunity to learn with their body. Third, space navigators include those who are experts of the space used for the workshop, like curators, employees, docents, and custodians. At this workshop, I interacted with the exhibit curator who was excited about the prospects of Image Theatre and had a heavy stake in determining if the workshop will be continued. Additionally, I noticed facility employees who felt the workshop was inaccessible to them because of their inexperience. Fourth, other outsiders include all others who gaze upon the workshop, like museum-goers, passers-by, students passively participating in the workshop as spectators, and even animals. In this workshop, we encountered museum-goers passing by, and one could be heard muttering, "weird."

As shown throughout my description of this workshop, each type of outsize gazer can affect participant and facilitator behavior in unique ways due to their unique positions, and these categories deserve further attention from TO practitioners. The impacts of outside observers are palpable, are amplified when power dynamics between spectators and spect-actors are considered, and can be magnified when there are time constraints. Future studies would do well to address ways to plan for and acknowledge the presence of each category before, during, and after workshops. Questions TO practitioners must also continue to ponder include: How do the presence of spectators influence the democracy of the workshop? How can facilitators include those who gaze from the outside? Are there times we should exclude? Ultimately, if outside gazers are

allowed to be a spectating variable, we must continue to inspect their impacts and plan for their presences.

Naomi: Freedom of Speech is Not Just for Adults

The first time I shadowed Bonny, I was struck by her willingness to allow conflict, to allow dissonance, and most importantly to allow the voices and actions of youth to be heard and seen – especially in a limited timeframe. I could tell that the volunteer museum docents, who were originally expected to lead this workshop, did not possess the skills to navigate the inevitable conflicts bound to arise when speaking *with* youth, rather than speaking *to* them.

In over twenty years of working with youth of all ages, I have rarely been in an environment that allowed children to speak freely and openly without some form of censorship. As educators we are taught to anticipate and diffuse conflict, be polite, and discourage violent or disparaging ideas. Even in my previous position as a group leader in a youth arts program that focused on facilitating conflict resolution skills and positive communication, any topic relating to violence or personal anger was either hidden away or quickly "resolved."

But Bonny didn't do that. She didn't shut anyone down. She dealt with issues when they came up – and they did come up – but she never preemptively separated anyone because of an impending conflict. With this permission to allow the youth to express themselves, difficult images came up in my workshops as well. And I let them. And we acknowledged them. And even though my instinct was to push forward given the limited time allotted, I modelled Bonny's example and did my best to see and hear the feelings expressed in the room.

Unlike TO workshops which I have chosen to participate in as an adult, these youth were brought to the museum by their chaperones as part of organized school programs. As facilitators, we worked within this frame to allow students the choice of non-participation, but the hierarchical

structure of the institution of youth education lurked in the back of my mind. This structure, in which we as facilitators, museum staff, and chaperones were positioned as leaders, inherently removed a level of agency from youth that adults often take for granted. As Paulo Freire notes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "the difficulties and problems will be far greater for a group of leaders who try (even with the best of intentions) to carry out the revolution for the people. To attempt this is equivalent to carrying out a revolution without the people" (127). With this tension in mind, I tried to balance the institutional need for structure with the revolutionary need to allow the youth to lead. As facilitator, my role was to step aside and actively listen to and hear what the youth had to say about overcoming oppression. I found that even with the short amount of time allotted, many of the youth jumped at the chance to express themselves.

One recurring image all the groups I met with made in response to "someone who uses power unfairly" was an image of the police. This mirrored sentiments I had heard both from previous work with students in marginalized communities, and from Black friends and coworkers in Baton Rouge. Like other difficult topics, police brutality is given short shrift within school systems, yet clearly weighs on the minds of young people. *The Power of Children* exhibit worked to give a voice to a group of people often brushed aside and ignored; our workshop simply opened the floor for further conversation. As a facilitator, my job was not to stifle but to encourage youth voices and to engage with them in dialogue about power and oppression without setting myself as another oppressor. Although I believe many of our workshops were important and powerful, I have mixed feelings about my position as an outsider facilitating this work.

Montana: When Joking Turns Serious

Imagine, as the leader of an Image Theatre workshop, you see an image of a middle school child who is using a belt to imitate a suicidal pose. They pull the belt from the loops in their jeans and

place it around their neck to mimic a rope. Now, imagine this child is Black. Imagine everyone in the room laughing at the image this student is creating. How would you facilitate their reaction into a meaningful reflection with only a few minutes for discussion? This was my experience working as a facilitator, or "Joker" for the first time (Boal, *Games* xxvi). I knew one strategy to get students to consider an image would be to model offering my own realizations by pointing out how a specific image struck me. However, this proved to be more difficult than I expected.

After the Image Theatre portion of the workshop was over (see the description of steps in the workshop above), I had students sit in a circle to discuss what they created. I asked, "What were the differences you saw from the first set of images compared to the second set of images?" Students pointed out changes in levels, highlighting that during the bullying images they had their partners low to the ground versus standing high when they were sculpting them into positions of power. Then, they pointed out the "suicidal" pose. I jumped on this, asking, "Why do you think we laughed at that image and not the other ones?" One student, a young white female, mentioned "It may be because they are our peers and seeing them in these poses is different for us." I agreed with her and probed further by asking, "What else?" We sat in silence for a few seconds. Then a student said, "Yeah… now you're making us feel bad." I explained that I am not trying to make them feel bad, but I want to make us aware of the use of laughter/humor to combat awkward or uncomfortable situations. We use humor in this way all the time, but it is important consider how we may be able to stop the laughter and reflect on why we are laughing in the first place. It was a fleeting learning moment, but I could tell the students had nestled the experience in their minds.

The museum's education director emailed me after it was over. She said, "You did an awesome job today! This group really enjoyed it and I think came away really considering more about what they saw in the exhibit. Interesting point about how they laughed at the second set of 'sculptures' – it gave us all pause when you pointed out this reaction … Nice work!" After leaving

the workshop, however, I began thinking about all the things I wish I would have said during our talkback had we been given more time.

For instance, I wish I would have said, "After seeing the exhibit about Ruby Bridges' struggle to integrate into public schools, and the history of civil rights in the deep south, this makes me think of lyching. How can we make sense of this together?" Within the context of being in southern Louisiana, I began to ponder what a young Black man with a belt around his neck in this workshop signified. Trayvon? Alton Sterling? The work that Jokers do in Image Theatre is about these moments that are awkward and we do not know what to do with them. How do I, as a facilitator, speak about this topic with a group of Middle School students I only just met?

In retrospect, I did not handle the discussion the way I wanted to. I used humor to disguise the real issues being presented during the workshop and failed to use my time wisely in order to discuss these underlying themes with the group. I turned to humor just the way they did during the Image Theatre portion of the workshop. To ignore the bigger problems. Adrian Jackson, notes that the Joker's role "is not that of facilitator, [but] a 'difficultator,' undermining easy judgments, reinforcing our grasp of the complexity of a situation, but not letting that complexity get in the way of action" (Boal, *Rainbow of Desire* xix). Sometimes as a facilitator we make mistakes. We say the wrong things and do not realize it until after the moment is gone. I move forward from this experience having learned from its complexities and look forward to being a better "difficultator" for future groups.

Reflections and Recommendations

We all agreed these very short sessions were hard, but despite all the institutional and personal challenges, they had a few notably positive effects: they centered students' observations, making them active collaborators and not just observers at the museum, and respected their

participation as actors in the world. They also showed teachers how concerned their students were about bullying and unjust policing and how ready they were to talk with us and each other about these topics. The sessions invited a bodily freedom and trust for youth ideas that left an impact on students, teachers, and museum staff. However, the short time limit meant a host of risks and regulations on student reflection. We conclude with a self-evaluation: a few final worries, some ideas for improvement, and ultimately, trust in the value of Boal's methods, however abbreviated.

The prompts we used sometimes stirred up complicated and possibly traumatic associations from our young participants. The inability to unpack these conversations, as in the incident Montana describes, in the time allotted remains troubling to us. On the other hand, Bonny notes the freedom from verbal expression allowed many middle schoolers to participate without worry of vocalizing their opinions in ways we suspect made them more willing to express themselves than in a typical classroom discussion. We learned, as Naomi notes, that prioritizing youth voices even at the expense of not getting through the entire workshop is often preferable, but such adjustments can be difficult to make on the fly. We also learned that we need to consider strategies for dealing with institutional observers, who might suppress participant freedom of expression in the context of work with youth as Josh's experience suggests.

We repeatedly found that groups focused on images of police when asked about someone who uses their power unfairly. While this pattern was a notable outcome of this prompt, revealing to adults in the room how much this issue was on these young people's minds, the workshop did not allow sufficient time for students to share their thoughts and feelings on the images they made. One way to condense the program further in order to allow more time for discussion of images they do have time for is to do a quick warm up, a round of solo images showing "something from the exhibit you connected to," and then only one round of the statue game. Zeroing in on one exercise

and planning provocative questions might have better served our goal of considering the theme of "power" more fully.

Another wish for this workshop would be to make room for formal feedback. Bonny sent home a document of resources and exercises for follow-up Image work in the classroom, and we hope some teachers helped students continue the conversations we tried to start. A few let us know they had. A chance for students to briefly write down their impressions of the workshop would have taken another minute that might have been well worth it. A quick follow up email asking teachers what they thought is the least we could have done; offering to collaborate on finding ways to continue this work in their classrooms would have been fantastic.

When we presented our experiences at NCA, in one of the break-out sessions, we asked participants to create various observer poses based on the four categories Josh devised. When participants rotated into this group, they were asked to embody the act of looking, judging, and/or evaluating by taking on the observer roles we encountered at the museum: supervising bystanders, personal observers, space navigators, and other outsiders. Then, this group performed their gazing poses at each of the other small group discussions or mini-workshops. This reenactment was instructive: our ability to stay present shifted enormously based on when we were watched and who was doing the watching. Planning for observers will be part of any future TO workshop training we undertake.

One option for workshops that acknowledges the poignancy of the observer gaze is to be explicit with adults about their impacts. We could say: "In this work, there are no observers – it feels awkward to take risks and share what's in our hearts if there are people watching, so jump in and join or find another activity to do for the next few minutes, thanks!" And if folks insist on standing around observing, we could ask them to create a pose for their specific observing role,

suggesting a menu of categories they are likely to find themselves enacting! Even if they refuse, this public acknowledgement interrogates the observer's gaze and disrupts its disciplining power.

We see so many ways we could have better served the youth we met. Still, the chance for students to explore kinesthetic image work and offer their experiences in relationship to a formal exhibit, even in this limited way, was ultimately worth the risks. A museum can be an imposing place, and the Louisiana Old State Capitol museum is no exception – it is a fortress with huge stained glass windows, a grand staircase, and state history adorning the walls. Teachers fussed over students from the moment they stepped off the bus to be on their best, quietest, most passive behavior. Yet, when they walked into our workshop, we centered their stories the way the children in the exhibit had been centered. The material of their lives was elevated to the status of "worth viewing." The ways they had been bullied, the people they had seen use power unfairly – these observations were worth our time, worth our formal consideration, worth enacting in a historical building. Indeed, they were set right alongside famous children who changed the world.

We conclude that youth participants did think critically about power dynamics, even when we failed to name some of these dynamics explicitly or ran out of room for discussion. Many students performed teacher-bodies when asked to express "a person who used power over them unfairly." Indeed, one of the most significant sites of bodily control students experience is the school system and the adults that discipline them into order. Their "power" poses often featured images of male bodies, police, and angry teachers, while the "powerless" poses often featured images of themselves in relationship to these same figures. We wish we had had more time to name the power structures we saw: "ageism," "racism," "sexism," "police brutality." Yet even when we did not get to unpack images of inequity, we saw them right before our eyes, and often saw them as shared burdens.

While we stretched and chopped and contorted our little workshop to comply with the forces of the school system, the museum, and even the gift shop, Image Theatre carved out a space for youth, however briefly, to express their creativity, their fears, their power, and their feelings of powerlessness. It was not enough, but it was something. Youth participants were restricted by onlookers, by their own self-consciousness, and by the specificity of our prompts, but at least they were not "shushed" for those 15 minutes. Working with Boal's methods always affirms the value in making room for one another's voices – these youth voices were no exception. Image Theatre urges us to get out of participants' way, often literally. How can we make even more room for these voices? One small way is to prioritize listening, to be willing to adapt in the moment in order to listen the very best we can, even when that makes us or other adults uncomfortable. Even when we run out of time.

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