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"On Your Feet!": Addressing Ableism in Theatre of the Oppressed Facilitation

Caitlin E. Ray[1]

Theatre of the Oppressed workshops strive to be inclusive and democratic; however, the facilitation of such workshops may actually limit inclusiveness when facilitators assume a certain level of physical ability in its participants. By considering disability scholarship and Universal Design pedagogy, I introduce specific ways in which facilitators can be more inclusive to the diversity of bodies in our workshops. I also include an example Image Theatre activity that applies my disability-conscious suggestions.

Prologue: The Problem

"On your feet!" is a familiar, commonly expressed directive to a group of participants in Theatre of the Oppressed workshops. This utterance serves as an important marker to both the facilitator and participants that the activities we will be doing are different from what usually takes place in a classroom or other meeting space. However, an issue that those committed to practicing Theatre of the Oppressed within a variety of communities must address is how to effectively facilitate with a group of diverse

participants. Theatre of the Oppressed already allows those who learn best through the bodily-kinetic intelligences to succeed (Gardner 205). However, one particular identity of participants that may be excluded from Theatre of the Oppressed activities and facilitation are people with physical or movement-based disabilities.[2] It is this population, in particular, that may pose a challenge for theatre-minded facilitators: after all, the very phrase "on your feet!" assumes a level of ability in the bodies of the participants—that everyone in the room can rise to their feet in order to join the group.

The Background

The criticism that Theatre of the Oppressed facilitators might assume a certain level of physical ability in the participant is rooted in my own experiences as both a facilitator of Theatre of the Oppressed in K-12 classrooms and as a participant with a disability. I have spent much of my adulthood working with both Boal's and Freire's theories and methods. To me, the power of Theatre of the Oppressed is the way that it puts into motion the theories of Freire. Theatre of the Oppressed, developed by Augusto Boal in response to Paulo Freire's work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is among a long line of pedagogical practices that embrace "learning by doing." The importance of embodiment in Boal's theories is reinforced by other scholars. For instance, teaching researcher Kristie Fleckenstein describes embodied learning by pointing out that a student will learn better how to use a spoon by actually stirring cake batter than by simply being told a spoon can stir (21). The idea of "learning by doing" is also referenced in Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind,* particularly in his chapter about bodily/kinesthetic learning styles. Embodied learning, active learning, applied learning—these are all methods that educators are increasingly

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[2] Because this paper focuses on physical and movement-based disabilities, I do not discuss at length the needs of Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners with emotional, intellectual, sensory, or mental illness disabilities. Facilitators must consider the needs of these populations (just like those with physical and movement-based disabilities), and while some of the suggestions in this paper may begin that conversation, *much* more work needs to be done here.

incorporating into their classrooms as interdisciplinary pedagogical tools that promote a student's cognitive ability by engaging both the mind and the body (Fleckenstein 21-22).

Embodied learning takes on a new, transformative power when combined with Paulo Freire's beliefs in empowering oppressed populations through education. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire advocates for resisting the *banking method* of education, wherein teachers simply pass their expertise onto the students, implying that the teachers have all the answers. Rather, instructors should be encouraged to be in dialogue with their students to break down the teacher/student hierarchy that mimics that of the power structures that surround us (Freire 72). By resisting this power structure in the classroom through critical dialogue, students learn to think, question, and engage with the information that they consume and the teachers they encounter. Augusto Boal responds to this call by writing *Theatre of the Oppressed*, in which he argues for using theatre as a means for those who are disempowered to rehearse dialogue with the oppressors through theatrical games (games that are much more than the name implies). It is through these theatrical games and scenes where participants can practice speaking to power in the hope that they will then be able to use those skills throughout their lives.

My interests in higher education, teaching, and the body have led me to study pedagogical methods that work towards dismantling power structures in the classroom. As a teacher and thus a representative of those in power to students, I continually ask how I can provide lessons that foreground dialogue, and further, how I can provide tools that students could later use when they face an unequal power dynamic. Theatre of the Oppressed can be an answer to such questions—it is a method that can be utilized to help students break out of the traditional teacher/student hierarchies, learn in different ways, and create spaces to practice dialogue with those in power. This is a goal of all Theatre of the Oppressed facilitators, no matter the population with whom they are working.

But what happens when students or participants show up to our Theatre of the Oppressed activities who have a physical or movement-related disability? What do we do when our assumptions of a

"typical" body who participates in such physical activities is challenged? As a past full-time facilitator of a variety of Theatre of the Oppressed workshops, mostly in classrooms with K-12 students, I saw the benefits of Theatre of the Oppressed first-hand. I was often dismayed, however, at the many times where I wouldn't find out until I was in the room with participants that there was someone who would need accommodations to the activities—and I had to either quickly change our programming, or create modifications on the fly that might be extremely haphazard and not meet the objectives of the original games. Two examples that come to mind include attempting to keep my mouth visible to someone with a hearing impairment while in the middle of a circle of participants, or trying to speak softly in a room with several young students on the autism spectrum. These "accommodations" are hardly accommodations at all: I had no idea if the strategies I developed on the fly with only seconds of adjustment actually did anything to help those students participate fully in the activities. Ultimately, I found it ironic that Theatre of the Oppressed, a method that attempts to reach oppressed populations, can fail to truly incorporate a population (people with physical and movement-based disabilities) that are historically very oppressed. Or, perhaps more accurately, it was ironic that facilitators that are usually so attuned to the disadvantages of a variety of populations can fall into stereotype when attempting to create retrofits, or accommodations after the fact, for those with disabilities. Such inadvertent actions can communicate an ableist attitude, furthering the practices and ideologies that "devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities" ("What is Ableism). Much of ableism is ingrained in us in the ways that society attaches worth to people, and if facilitators aren't constantly trying to disrupt this thinking, ableism often becomes the norm (McRuer).

The Charge

Unfortunately, the experiences I had in creating very quick accommodations for students with disabilities highlights the problem of ableism in facilitation and the risks of "retrofitting" accommodations into activities after planning workshops. "Retrofit" is a term that refers to the action of adding "a component or accessory to something that has been already manufactured or built" (Dolmage 105). A term that originally

referred to the additional architectural changes made to a previously inaccessible space, "retrofitting" is a way of "adding on" to an existing structure, often in order to be in compliance with the law—like adding a ramp on top of already existing stairs. This idea can also be applied to curriculum or pedagogy when disability and accommodations are only considered after lessons or workshops are already created. As disability scholar Jay Dolmage writes, "too often, we *react* to diversity instead of planning for it" (106, emphasis his). Instead, we should consider disability and the diverse range of bodies that might enter the room (and this can apply to *any* disability, even if my focus in this paper is on physical and movement-related disability) from the very beginning of workshop development. While retrofitting often serves an important function of making space accessible, it communicates that disability is only a last consideration, and is not part of one's identity or integral in the ways that people make meaning. If disability isn't considered in Theatre of the Oppressed like other identity markers (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.), then we risk assuming that the embodied games we use are value-neutral. We should not simply add on to our activities "retrofits" for those with disabilities; we should instead incorporate disability into the very development of our workshops.

I know that this can be a difficult call to action, and one that will take careful and empathetic thinking to achieve. However, disability studies can help facilitators develop such changes to Theatre of the Oppressed programming. The concepts behind Universal Design can give facilitators ways to approach games included in workshops that incorporate accommodations into the overall design of Theatre of the Oppressed work rather than retrofitting accommodations "as needed." By considering the challenges to accommodation and retrofit culture posed by disability studies scholars, and by incorporating theories of Universal Design, Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners can find ways to truly incorporate all participants without sacrificing the quality of activities, and instead integrate the knowledge of everyone in the room.

The Personal

The specific perspective I bring to my Theatre of the Oppressed facilitation is rooted in my own

unusual journey into teaching, which began as a Theatre of the Oppressed facilitator in K-12 classrooms. In 2009, I graduated with an undergraduate degree in theatre and began working at an educational touring company, CLIMB (Creative Learning Ideas for the Mind and Body) Theatre, in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. In our training, we were taught ways to harness our theatre sensibilities into classroom teaching techniques, and we were heavily influenced by theories associated with Theatre of the Oppressed pedagogy. We led activities based on Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* and Michael Rohd's *Theatre for Community Conflict and Dialogue.* It is here that I cultivated the belief that it is possible to shape a classroom culture into an inclusive, safe space through theatre-based teaching pedagogies that help instructors find new and innovative ways to develop the learning environment.

As I continued to work as a teacher using theatre to substantially shape classroom activities, I was diagnosed with a chronic pain illness that very suddenly changed my own relationship to the space around me. After my diagnosis, I returned to the classroom as a student, and began experiencing the classroom space not as a friend, but instead as an enemy between my educational goals and myself. For example, post-diagnosis, I took a class that used a common introductory Theatre of the Oppressed activity: the teacher pushed all the chairs to the edges of the room and instructed us to "explore the space." As a theatre artist, this would have delighted me, but as a person with a newly diagnosed disability, I became afraid that I was going to require a chair during that activity. I felt uncomfortable and anxious rather than empowered. Needing to sit down when the chairs were purposefully pushed to the edge of the room would not only "out" me as disabled to a group of people I did not know, it would also physically remove me from the space where the classroom collaboration and knowledge-building was emerging. This moment has followed me since because it so vividly painted the paradox of the teaching style that I love. I believe strongly in the power of theatre in the classroom and its usefulness. But how do I use it in a way that doesn't exclude people with disabilities? How do we accommodate those who, like me, don't want to be identified as "disabled" to the facilitator or other participants in a workshop, and whose disability, while

present, is often "invisible" to the facilitator? How do we include practitioners that don't identify as disabled and thus don't request any accommodations—but could still benefit from them? These questions have shaped my research over the last couple of years, especially as I began teaching composition courses in my university's writing program and saw the possibilities for using theatre-based activities there. If the able-bodied assumptions of theatre-based teaching pedagogies can be mitigated, those pedagogies actually may offer facilitators ways of cultivating an inclusive classroom or workshop culture.

As a past theatre practitioner, now a teacher and someone who identifies as having a physical disability, I know that theatre can often assume an able-bodiedness that is difficult for some to participate in. However, the theories that often underpin Theatre of the Oppressed activities—like those of creating knowledge as a group and challenging spatial assumptions—can be harnessed to create a new workshop atmosphere and culture that is more open, simply because all in the room participate in making that classroom culture, no matter where they land on the able-bodied/disabled spectrum. In short, Theatre of the Oppressed and other theatre-based methodologies are uniquely positioned to embrace and empower the abilities of all that are participating if it can confront certain assumptions of ability that may be part of the workshop and facilitation framework. By integrating disability theory, particularly that associated with Universal Design, we can expand practices of Theatre of the Oppressed to include people with disabilities in the important work we do.

Universal Design and a Disability-Conscious Framework

Disability studies scholars have long worked on the issue of accommodations in a variety of classroom spaces. This scholarship is useful to review because it can provide insight as to how Theatre of the Oppressed facilitators can find pedagogically sound activities that can be changed or modified as the situation warrants. Many of the interests of disability scholars will be familiar to those who practice Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, as they are based in critical pedagogy and embodied learning. For instance, Margaret Price resists the idea of "retrofitting" accommodations in the classroom in her book,

Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life. She outlines "the things we [as teachers] can do" to allow our classroom culture to adapt to all of the students in the room, rather than the other way around (57). In addition to Price's work, Patricia Dunn's *Talking Sketching Moving* provides practical classroom activities that help students with different learning styles—including kinesthetic, visual, and auditory—participate in classroom activities. While learning styles are not necessarily a corollary to disability, looking at diversifying the modes a classroom uses with these types of activities can build inclusiveness across the disability spectrum. Facilitators should also be in dialogue with their students, breaking down the facilitator/practitioner hierarchy that can mimic that of the power structures that surround us (Price 72).

Both Price and Dunn, among others in disability studies, advocate for the increased use of Universal Design in planning classroom activities. *Universal Design* is a way to consider and integrate changes to the space and curriculum before there are known disabilities in the classroom. The purpose of Universal Design is to remove barriers in the way of educational practices, which includes curriculum that could exclude certain students. According to the Center for Universal Design of Learning, "Universal Design of Learning helps educators meet this goal by providing a framework for understanding how to create curricula that meets the needs of all learners from the start" ("UDL Guidelines"). The key to understanding Universal Design of Learning is the phrase "from the start"—that is, instructors work to make the materials and curriculum of the class as accessible as possible from the outset for two reasons. The first is so that students with disabilities do not need to disclose to an instructor that they identify as such in order to have equal access to the class. The second is that Universal Design of Learning, when incorporated in the classroom, may benefit everyone in the room, not just those with disabilities—just as easy access to elevators or curb cuts in sidewalks do not help just those with disabilities but may benefit able-bodied people as well (Bowe 3).

I must take a moment, though, to offer a word of caution about Universal Design. Having been both a student with a disability in a classroom and a teacher using theatre-based teaching methods, I know that the idea of Universal Design is very appealing because it allows teachers to be proactive and consider access and disability before there is an issue. However, the very idea that simple changes can be made to a classroom space or to our facilitation so that people with disabilities will be "accommodated" is misleading. Universal Design is an ongoing process that changes continually. Price describes Universal Design as "an aim rather than an accomplished fact: Universal Design sets as its ideal a learning environment that is accessible to all learning styles, abilities, and personalities, but acknowledges that such efforts must always be partial and engaged in a process of continual revision" (87). To not engage in this process of revision is to allow complacency on the part of the institution or teacher. Feminist theory, too, has offered a response to Universal Design. Kristina Knoll considers how "feminist analyses of privilege, oppression, and intersectionality provide a framework for looking at the diverse experiences of people with disabilities and our access to education" (122). She argues that while Universal Design can be implemented within pedagogy, we should do so while also continually having conversations about intersectionality and individual experience. This, along with Price's call for continual revision, leads me to argue that facilitators must find flexibility in designing Theatre of the Oppressed workshops in order to allow participants to better create knowledge together.

In order to illustrate how Universal Design ought to be considered a type of pedagogy rather than a means to an (accommodated) end, I will detail an example of this problem. At a past university, where I worked in the English Department, there was a prominent display of brochures by the door at the Writing Center. This display was a very long and narrow shelf, starting at about three feet off the floor and ending at about six feet off the floor. This is a place where there is an institutional ableist assumption that everyone who comes into the Writing Center can reach up to that six foot point and pick out a brochure. In this configuration, though, either people are able to reach the brochures without trouble, or undergo the

potentially embarrassing experience of asking for assistance to reach them. In a place that utilizes Universal Design in its space, this rack would be moved down or redone to be horizontal, at a point where all can reach it, no matter what their motor limitations might be. If the brochures are in a place where all can reach, there is no need for those with disabilities to ask for extra assistance in order to gain access. However, considering Universal Design as a type of *pedagogy* rather than simple changes to a classroom or space means that a display of brochures can't be the only thing that changes; the content and layout of the brochures themselves must also be changed. Simply changing the way the brochures are displayed does not ultimately address that they are a written text that may be difficult to impossible for those that are sight-impaired, or that the content in the brochure itself may not have considered disability perspectives. They were simply made easier to access for a small subset of those that would otherwise struggle to reach it.

Moving this idea into the classroom or workshop space, Universal Design, if not enacted as a pedagogy, does not disrupt the belief that if lessons in a classroom or games in a workshop are simply taught in a certain way, with accommodations added as needed, they can be "reached" by everyone in the room. The assumption in such retrofit-focused thinking is that knowledge within a classroom, or within a workshop, is static and simply lying in wait until practitioners and students can "reach" it and place it in their heads—a clear connection and ultimate contradiction to Freire's critique against the banking method of teaching. Ultimately, then, simply applying ideas from Universal Design to Theatre of the Oppressed, instead of considering Universal Design as a living and mutable pedagogical style, stands in opposition to Freire and Boal's belief in resisting hierarchical power structures. This is why I advocate for Theatre of the Oppressed facilitators to consider Universal Design as a pedagogy, as it can allow all participants to focus their attention on the creation of knowledge through theatre-based activities, rather than on issues of access.

The Praxis

In the following sections, I provide some concrete teaching strategies that can assist a Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner in considering Universal Design pedagogy in their facilitation. By focusing on several general teaching strategies and an activity I have done in my workshops and classes, I hope to provide suggestions that can be applied to many different classes and workshops spanning a variety of ages and disciplines. These strategies include: modeling, discovery activities, group work, and activities grounded in real life situations. Such strategies are embedded into much of what Boal writes in his guidance to facilitators, and is often utilized but unspoken by facilitators. Here, though, I hope to articulate and thus make visible these strategies, and highlight their usefulness to people with disabilities.

1. Modeling

The first strategy is modeling, or teaching by showing participants how an activity should run or what a final product should look like before leading the group through an activity. This can help participants understand the activity in a new way, as the directions are given context. Sometimes modeling is resisted by teachers and facilitators, and/or only considered a strategy for younger participants. Some may worry that modeling can "stifle creativity" or be too proscriptive. However, modeling helps participants who are visual or kinesthetic learners, and/or who might have difficulty applying directions to tasks when they are only spoken. Having a model to follow can help all participants, no matter their ability, to see a translation of successful activities. Additionally, this can be a moment where the facilitator can explain the physical demands of the entire activity, and narrate the physical movements for those who are sight impaired so everyone knows what is being asked of them physically. I would also suggest offering directions as optional as opposed to commands. By saying, "If you are able, stand and walk across the room" rather than "stand and walk across the room," the participants are able to make the decision as to what type of physical commitment to make in the moment without feeling as though they are resisting the directions given. This

simple permission-giving allows people who do need to take care of physical or mental needs momentarily to still feel part of the group.

2. Discovery

The second strategy is discovery, or engaging in activities that reinforce key ideas and themes while allowing participants the freedom to interpret and do their own actions. It is important for the facilitator to understand clearly, when developing new curriculum or workshops within a Universal Design pedagogy, the goals of the game. If the goal is for participants to discover a certain idea and theme, then the activity should not be too proscriptive in terms of the physical activity required, because if all attention is on how certain bodies need to conform to certain instructions, it undoes the ultimate goal of the workshop. Luckily, Theatre of the Oppressed encourages flexibility in how the facilitator responds to the participants. So, if the facilitator is flexible and open in how different modes and strategies can be utilized by participants, those participants will still engage with the ultimate goals of the activity. This acceptance by the facilitator is important because by discovering their own knowledge, participants feel ownership over the knowledge that was created through the group. Instead of an accommodation that retrofits the activity, people with disabilities are integral in creating the knowledge in the room, even if they are not adhering to specific physical demands of games led in a workshop.

3. Group work

Group work is connected to the idea of discovery. By having participants work as a group on a task with a clear objective, they can, again, feel ownership over the work they create. Placing group work into a workshop allows for active learning to take place, and shifts the focus from several individuals performing to or for the larger group to several groups working simultaneously. This allows participants who perhaps are not comfortable talking and performing in large groups to participate in a task in different ways. Additionally, those with physical or movement-based disabilities can take on specific group roles that give them more

freedom to participate in ways that they feel comfortable, and this gives them more agency in the workshop as a whole.

4. Activities grounded in real life situations

The last strategy that I suggest is to have activities grounded in concrete, real life situations with clear parameters and stakes. This may not always be achievable in Theatre of the Oppressed activities and games, but I hope to highlight the importance of outlining a clear situation with well-articulated stakes. By doing so, the purpose of these activities is clear to the participants, which can keep activities from becoming too abstract. If the task and purpose is clear and concise, and uses concrete language, those who struggle with language can understand clearly what is expected and required. Boal's Image Theatre is one such activity that has concrete parameters and stakes, even if the idea of, for example, enacting a statue is abstract within itself. This does not eliminate imaginative representations created by participants, but can be more relatable to those who are not actors, or those who hesitate to participate in abstract, movement-based activities.

To illustrate these four teaching techniques and how they can work together, I will describe a facilitator's outline of an Image Theatre activity, then articulate the ways these four strategies can shape the thinking of the facilitator both in the preparation of the activity and within the activity itself.

Example: Image Theatre Exercise

On its face, Image Theatre might prove to be a struggle for those with physical or movement-based disabilities. However, it is useful to remember Boal's own words, that "nothing in the Theatre of the Oppressed is obligatory" (*Games* 164). Indeed, in *Games for Actors and Non-Actors,* Boal outlines several methods during the image theatre sequence. I suggest having the option open to participants to utilize different modes to achieve the same goals. An outline of Image Theatre facilitation might look like this:

1. Preliminary work, where participants "illustrat[e] a subject with [their] body" (Boal *Games* 164*).*

    The facilitator leads the participants to shape an image with their bodies on a chosen theme

(violence, family, etc.). The entire group will be instructed to create images in isolation, and, after several minutes, the group is called together.

2. The dynamisation: instruct the participants to do their images all together, alongside one another, to begin to see how their images are similar or in contrast to others. Then, they are instructed to interact with one another, while still enacting their image. Who connects to whom? What relationships are formed? Is there conflict?

3. The model: the facilitator will pause the action, and ask the group to turn and look at some of the relationships that have developed. They select one to examine further, and this becomes a preliminary image for a sequence.

4. The response: The facilitator keeps the selected participants in the front of the room, where they depict a relationship through their images. The facilitator asks, what is happening? Why? Who are these people? What is their relationship?

5. The image sequence: Several volunteers are shaped into a responding image to the one that has already been created by the group. What does it look like? Does this solve the conflict outlined in the previous image?

This could lead to more images, or be the beginning of a set of scenes that can articulate a problem and a corresponding image that could happen as a result of the first.

This activity, a mashup of several suggestions within the Image Theatre section of *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (165-201), is a somewhat typical outline of such facilitation. However, several assumptions are made here about how the group would go about creating images and how they would interact with the larger group. The first is that there is no real discussion in this outline as to the goals of the activity or the specific ways that participants can behave in the workshop. In Theatre of the Oppressed activities in which I have participated, there is a sense of a "surprise" in how the activities will sequence and the images will build. I strongly suggest facilitators not do this, because the participants will not have a fair sense of the

type of physical demands that will be asked of them throughout the workshop. Instead, I suggest that the rules of the room are set up clearly, that permission is given to all participants that they can break from the group and sit down, stretch, walk around, or get a drink of water. It should be clear that if a participant needs to disengage from a physical activity that they are still part of the conversation and activity happening within the group. In addition to this permission-giving, facilitators should consider outlining to the group the activities within an activity sequence, offering several ways to engage with the activities, and describing the ultimate goals. This all relates to the idea of modeling and gives permission to the group to find multiple ways to meet goals even as the facilitator is still instructing the group through each step.

Next, the facilitator must examine the choices made in the Image Theatre session. This outline calls for participants to each create an image and then interact with one another. In creating this outline, I need to question myself: why these specific instructions? What is my goal in doing this? I might be worried about the group working together to create a single image when the group has, perhaps, not previously worked together at all. I might be interested in highlighting the variations and similarities in images created in isolation and then demonstrated to the group. However, by choosing this one way, I am eliminating other variations to this activity. What if, perhaps, I allowed individuals *and* groups to create images simultaneously? Or what if I decided to use group work exclusively for the initial image creation, where volunteers were shaped into an image by the audience? What if I also allowed a pen and paper, where some participants are drawing figures in poses that are also evoking the theme at hand that were later acted out by others? What if there were evocative costume pieces or props that could be an option for those who would have difficulty creating specific images with their body only? These may be unconventional in this type of workshop, but by allowing alternative modes to evoke images, people can

use their bodies in ways that are most beneficial to them, and the ways to create images are flexible in order to allow all to be involved in the creation of these images.[3]

Lastly, if I were using this facilitation sequence, I would also attempt to ask very specific questions when soliciting images from participants. For example, if the facilitator asks to "create an image that illustrates 'family' to you," it may seem to communicate what you want participants to do, but it is also an extremely abstract request. Instead, consider rephrasing to be more specific. This might include something like, "with your bodies [and/or with pen and paper], demonstrate an image that means 'family' to you. This can be about your own family, and your role within it. It could be a physicalization of a feeling that family gives you. Or it could be about the different roles within a family." This incorporates some concrete suggestions and clear language as to your expectations, and verbally models some suggestions for those who are unsure as to what such images may look like, while not being too leading, since the questions are still open-ended.

Implications for Future Practice

By beginning to reconcile issues of ableism in Theatre of the Oppressed, we can create an atmosphere and culture that is inclusive to people with disabilities. Through integrating Universal Design pedagogies within Theatre of the Oppressed, facilitators can empower participants who come from diverse and multifaceted environments to create embodied knowledge in a new way and deconstruct hierarchies of power. We as facilitators can still strive toward the ideal that Universal Design sets out to accomplish by carefully considering the ways that we facilitate, including how we develop workshops. In our use of Universal Design as pedagogy, we should examine the work we do in terms of access, and find ways to incorporate modeling, discovery, group work, and activities grounded in real-life scenarios. In doing this, we

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[3] I am inspired by Boal's "the cop in the head," activity which utilizes several interesting variations to traditional Image Theatre, specifically in how it includes a more concrete prompt (about oppressors), the use of props, and the use of voiced internal dialogues provided by participants in the context of an image (*Games* 206).

can challenge our own assumptions about the ways that participants engage with Theatre of the Oppressed and allow flexibility in order to bring together a group of people with seen and unseen physical and movement-based abilities and disabilities.

The ideas outlined in this paper are only the beginning; there is more work to be done in order to find ways to make Theatre of the Oppressed friendlier to those with disabilities. For instance, through this paper I am not overtly considering how to incorporate people with emotional, intellectual, sensory, or mental illness disabilities. Such work is incredibly important, particularly because the work of Theatre of the Oppressed interrogates difficult oppressions and subjects that would require careful consideration for people with, for instance, anxiety or PTSD, who may be triggered by some material. I am also not considering how the facilitators themselves may have disabilities, and how that impacts ways they develop and lead Theatre of the Oppressed games and activities—in fact, by only discussing the ways that participants might be people with disabilities in Theatre of the Oppressed workshops, I am falling into an assumption that facilitators are traditionally able-bodied—or even "super-abled" and do not have any bodily needs or concerns in their facilitation (Kershbaum and Price 22). As there is more discussion about disability and Theatre of the Oppressed, perhaps a more robust conversation can develop around facilitators and jokers with disabilities. However, this essay is only a starting point, and I hope that facilitators of Theatre of the Oppressed will continue to find ways to include participants of all abilities, and that discussion on ableism, disability, and Theatre of the Oppressed will continue far beyond what I offer here.

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