

# Boal's theatre of the oppressed



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Boal's techniques in theatre are simple ways of being able to express yourself through acting he uses the effect of oppression being used against someone. His techniques give people the option to speak up for themselves and have a say in what they think should be changed or helped. Boal's theatre created questions that went meant to be brought to the surface and let the public answer them with what they thought.

Some of his techniques are image theatre, forum theatre, newspaper theatre, invisible theatre, photo romance, breaking repression, myth theatre, analytical theatre, legislative theatre, rainbow of desire, spect-actor and joker/facilitator. The few techniques we have explored in class are image theatre, forum theatre and invisible theatre. During class we used image theatre as an exercise and as a starting to our assessment performance. Image theatre gives the audience the capture of emotions through pictures not a performance.

Boal used this technique as he believed “ that the body is the first and primary method of expression “ he also said image theatre was mainly used for the expression of oppression. Through the image theatre, we used it an introduction to the performances, like an overview of what was going to happen. This gave the audience time to take in the emotions that were going to be the most powerful throughout the performance, for example the performance of the Jews (me, Carly, Kim, Jess and Jarrod).

S and Jarrod) showed the strong moments of oppression, family's will to stay together and the power of death. Image theatre is more about the feeling and expression that is being shown than the story being told. The emotion

that the actors can show through image theatre gives the audience something to think about or act upon as they have no influence from the actors, just their expressions. Forum theatre is the technique we used most throughout studying Boal's techniques.

Forum theatre is a very effective technique in which it gives people a say in the oppression is being portrayed through acting. In class we used various types of oppression that related to the past and the present, we used the issues of the Cronulla riots, Jews being gassed by Nazis, witches. We used these issues and created a negative ending performance about the oppressed the spect-actors would then contribute to the performance and change it to face the challenges they think should be or should have been heard.

During the Jew performance spect-actors contributed to the performance by the father coming home to save us and make us run away from the Nazis, this gave us a chance to run away and become positive about our future then another spect-actor joined to tell us her lover was a Nazi and she had told him where we were and where they could find us, this gave us the challenge of overpowering the Nazis again but in a totally different way, which conflicted with love, betrayal and decisions. The group that performed the play about the accusation of the witch, as a spect-actor I tried to change the outlook on it but I found it hard as there was not many ways you could change this.

It was changed for the better and the 'real' witch was taken. Tahnee did a good job of changing the performance by asking many questions that were

not asked in the original performance, they brought different aspects to the performance that were not addressed and needed to be for a positive change. Invisible theatre is aimed to confront a problem as actors and get the general public involved as they do not know this is rehearsed. Through this technique it opens the public to join the debate and offer their opinion. This is a great way of publicly sharing the issues of the community or people.

Luckily some of the class got to participate in invisible theatre, as half the class had gone to an excursion. The half that didn't which I was included in decided to develop a scene for invisible actors. This actually did get a little heated as we were expecting. It was very effective as it defiantly got everyone's opinion out and created an impact on an obviously very touchy subject. This gave us a very good example of what could happen and how to improvise something very quickly to make people argue. Boal's theatre is a very clever way of making an opinion.

Life always has its problems that affect many people with oppression. Boal just wanted to face these problems and see what change could be made and give people a chance to speak up. This may not have changed the government's thoughts or some people of the community's thoughts but it was a way of people being able to express their feelings with others that had similar thoughts or wanted to take the opinions further. These types of theatre are also quite risky as they were susceptible to police and authorities laws and often had heated moments of opinions going too far.

Boal was very brave to let this happen and find actors that would perform this for him as it isn't easy to mix with others opinions. Today in the modern

society Boal's techniques could be used with many issues that are confronting and close to home, such as, the Muslim school, war with Iraq, the Cronulla riots and many others. Racism is a big issue in many countries around the world. If Boal's techniques were used with the issue of the Muslim school in Camden I think a lot of people would want to say. We did use the Cronulla riots as an example in forum theatre in class.

We read through some notes about the Cronulla riots and read some of the messages being sent around and offensive words being said. We then made a performance on it and used forum theatre to change it. We didn't go very far as this was our first forum theatre and therefore did not change it in a positive way. But the Cronulla riots were a disgusting problem that affected most of the Sydney area. It gave Australians a bad name and really caused a lot of problems. It would be immensely interesting to use this issue and Boal's theatre techniques to see what the response would be and how people would act.

All of Boal's techniques could be used to help this issue and present it to the public. The theatre of the oppressed could be taken to so many ranges and issues. Many people even today are still oppressed and are crying out for help. The problem is no one wants to help. Boal's theatre brought the issues to the surface for people to see, have an opinion on and do something about it and to see what challenges they may face. The oppression of people is hushed and unheard of therefore Boal's brought it through and gave the people something to think about and analyse in their own minds.