The Student Spect-Actor: Embodying Community Through Theatre

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Introduction

“What does it mean to be able to bring together the naturalistic and the visionary, to imagine community as capable of reanimating even its most hopeless and anesthetized members?”

The Treyvon Generation by Elizabeth Alexander (The New Yorker)

Theatre pedagogy often teaches that the biggest outcome of the art form is the creation of performance. In classes taken in this discipline, there is an understanding that most of what will be created is to be put up on a stage. This performance will then be consumed by audience members whose main involvement in the artistic experience is their paying for a ticket and experiencing the production. Not often enough are there explicit conversations about how theatre can impact community and be a tool for change-making. Or that performance can be a transformational experience for both theatre-maker and audience member that leads to reanimating community involvement by creating transformative action. This is why applied theatre is an important technique to gain insight into theatre’s broader applicability.

Applied theatre, the methods of Theatre of the Oppressed created by Augusto Boal, and Theatre for Living created by David Diamond look at the ability to bring all people into the creation and transformation of dramatic action. They are theatre methods used in a group setting by those who identify as actors and those who do not. These methods are physically involved for each participant and can create a sense of embodiment in the work. The transformation of dramatic action means that everyone has full participation in the creation and experience of the stories told together. This transformation is also about the spectator (or audience member) of a theatrical phenomenon becoming a participant (performer) in it, therefore the spectator becomes an actor in this theatrical experience. This participation allows people to use theatre to create a deeper understanding of themselves, the people around them, and the community they are a part
of. The understanding cultivated through theatre can lead to greater participation in the community through actionable change on a community issue.

My first introduction to Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed method was through a guest workshop over zoom in 2020. Nabra Nelson the Director of Arts Engagement at Seattle Repertory Theatre hosted a virtual workshop at Western where she facilitated some of Boal’s methods. She facilitated us experiencing and being involved in the stories fellow participants shared and seeing how these stories changed. Getting to experience a theatre method that asked everyone to be a participant in dramatic action and centered on the breaking of repression was interesting to me. I began to wonder about my ability to be a facilitator of theatre methods that have direct application to the groups involved and the way I could explore this with my peers at Western. This also intersected with my passion for student advocacy and working to undo the harmful impacts of systems maintained and created by oppression.

After learning about Theatre of the Oppressed in 2020 I realized I wanted to create a deeper understanding of it in my work as a theatre artist. I believed that applied theatre methods like this one allow for theatre to have applicability to the common person outside of seeing a show. And that the use of applied theatre can be crucial to creating connected and support communities. I wanted to fully understand how using theatre could empower people to enact change in their communities and their relationships with others by creating advocacy or activism-focused mindsets. I wanted to bring my peers into this work of exploration and discovery because my peers at Western are those with who I am constantly in a shared community. This community is created by the institution we are a part of together but often the relationships together extend past our shared identity as college students. I decided to create and facilitate a series of four workshops with fellow Western students as participants. During my
time at Western Washington University, I had become very passionate about student advocacy and issues related to white supremacy at universities. Issues such as ways the institution prevents students from making impactful changes to support their success in college. I had taken on roles at WWU that were within the institution’s hierarchy and I was confronted with the lack of change that could be achieved from the positions I had taken on. Understanding this and feeling that theatre could be a way to create change, I decided to center these workshops around solving issues Western so that I could try to learn how applied theatre methods like Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre for Living could be used for confronting and changing the issues at predominantly white institutions? And in what way can theatre lead to community advocacy and/or activism at the student level?

**Applied Theatre and White Supremacy**

Applied Theater is the practice of using theatre techniques and methods as ways to discover and learn, explore issues in communities, and identify problems and provoke solutions. The technique opens up the opportunity for participants to develop new perspectives while also rehearsing approaches to action on issues in communities. (“What Is Applied Theatre.”) Applied Theatre is used as an umbrella term for many types of theatre but most of these methods are used without the intention of creating a theatrical performance for audience entertainment. Using theatre in this way focuses more on how theatre can apply itself to creating a healthy community. The Theatre of the Oppressed method was created by Augusto Boal in the 1970s. Boal created his theatre method using Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire wrote a theory about the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Part of what he wrote in this theory was how to get to the point of ending cycles of oppression through action. He writes, “the starting point for organizing action: present, an existential, concrete situation, reflecting the
aspiration of the people. Posed as a problem that requires a response at not just the intellectual level but level of action.” (Freire 95) This concept of “the level of action” is very important to the theory of Boal’s work. He believed theatre can be used to understand this present and existential problem of oppression in a community and work on it at the level of action not just from an intellectual perspective. Boal’s objective with Theatre of the Oppressed was to use theatre as a way to change the people who are spectators, passive beings in a theatrical phenomenon into subjects and participants in the theatrical action. (Boal 122) He wanted all people to become transformers of the dramatic actions themselves. And this concept opened up the rehearsal space for theatre to be an opportunity for revolutionary action. Boal wrote, “theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution.” (Boal 141)

Augusto Boal also created a systemized plan for transforming the spectator into a ‘spectactor’. This approach helped plan my workshop series. It is an important lens to use to understand where participants in applied theatre are in their transformation into a changer of dramatic action. The plan for transformation as specified by Boal is, 1) Knowing the body: embodied exercise, limitations-possibilities, social distortions. 2) Making the body expressive: using a series of games by which one begins to express one’s self through the body, abandoning other, more common and habitual forms of expression. 3) The theatre as language: theatre that is living and presents such as simultaneous dramaturgy, Image theatre, or Forum theatre. And the final step, 4) Theatre as discourse: simple forms in which the spectator-actor creates “spectacles” according to the need of the community to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions. (Boal 126) My goal in these workshops was to work through all of these steps as best as I could.

Theatre of the Oppressed as an applied theatre method focuses on the relationship participants have with their community and the issues their community faces. This is one of the
main reasons I wanted to use this method for working with fellow students to understand white supremacy in our community. To prepare for working with other students on these issues in a theatrical setting I also did research into white supremacy and white supremacy culture. One of my main resources for this work was Layla Saad’s book *me and white supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. This book is an anti-racist workbook that teaches about white supremacy while also prompting the reader to reflect on their relationship with and experiences of white supremacy. In the workshops, I directly quoted Layla Saad’s definition of white supremacy so that the participants had a shared vocabulary to understand the complicated and pervasive issue. Saad’s definition of white supremacy is, “the racist ideology that is based upon the belief that white people are superior in many ways to people of other races and that therefore, white people should be dominant over other races. White supremacy is not just an attitude or way of thinking. It also extends to how systems and institutions are structured to uphold this white dominance.” (Saad 12) This definition was important to the exploration through theatre of how white supremacy is present in the community each of us is a part of. The reflection on this was centered around individual experiences and how us working and exploring this together could make a difference. In the book, Saad also talks about how systems and institutions are created and upheld by many individuals. She believes that doing personal inner work related to your relationship with white supremacy creates a ripple effect of actionable change in how white supremacy is upheld. In doing applied theatre work I hope that exploration and discovery through theatre can also create a ripple effect of actionable change that extends into the wider community. (Saad 12)

Another resource used in the workshops was the document called “White Supremacy Culture - Still Here”. This document and the subsequent website were created by Dr. Tema Okun
an author, facilitator, and educator whose work centers on issues of equity. The document is a short exploration of what white supremacy culture is and how it manifests. Most of the document is dedicated to understanding the characteristics of white supremacy culture. Okun explains that “the incitation for this and every characteristic is to investigate how each and all characteristics and qualities lead to disconnection.” (Okun 6) During the workshops, we investigated four characteristics of white supremacy culture: perfectionism, individualism, fear, and a sense of urgency. To aid in our exploration and inquiry into white supremacy in our community we used the definitions of these characteristics from the document. As the facilitator of the workshops, I choose to contextualize these four characteristics as attributes of white supremacy. I choose this wording because it meant these things could be a quality of white supremacy culture or caused by white supremacy culture. I think this is an important distinction because it allowed the participants to understand how they upheld the attributes of perfectionism, individualism, fear, and a sense of urgency and/or how they are affected by these things. It gave an internal and external view of white supremacy and how it affects the individual as well as their community.

**Applying Theatre**

After months of researching and sitting with the information gathered, I began to outline how I would like to create a series of applied theatre workshops. A starting place was that I wanted the workshops to focus on the issue of white supremacy in our community and for each workshop to have a goal that leads to the next. The titles and goals of each workshop went:

- **Workshop 1:** establish community with each other. Understand the individual’s relationship to community and establish the embodied work,

- **Workshop 2:** create a shared understanding of what white supremacy is and what it looks like in our communities,
Workshop 3: investigate how white supremacy manifests in our individual and communal experiences at WWU. Create the image of what this looks like systemically at WWU, Workshop 4: play through radical positioning and imagination exercise on how we can create radical transformations in our community at WWU.

Each workshop had different games, exercises, and discussions but they all ended up following the same structure. This structure allowed the workshops to take the participants through Boal’s systemized transformation of the spectator into actor. The workshop structure started with the group setting the space. This included the environment of the room as people entered. Music would be playing and then they answered sign-ins and entrance questions. It also included introductions, check-ins, and the creation and then the review of our community guidelines. After this, the group would be led through an embodied warm-up. Often the warm-up was the Brain Dance. Next, the workshop would lead to theatre games and exercises. Many of these games and exercises were taken from Augusto Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. The exercises and games he laid out in the book would often change because of how I facilitated them or how they were received by the group. After this, we would have group discussions about the experience of doing these games and exercises. Then in workshops 3 and 4, the group moved into storytelling work. And finally, in workshop 4 we did some image theatre work. The workshops often followed this structure:

- Setting the Space: Individual introductions and Community Guidelines
- Embodied Warm-up: Brain Dance
- Games and Exercises: *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*
- Group Discussion
- Storytelling and Story Sharing
- Group Discussion
- Image Theatre
- Embodied Cool Down and Discussion

The attendance of the workshops varied each time. Participant numbers would range from four to twelve and often there was an even split between people who would identify as actors and people who would not. Many of the people in the room had done theatre in some capacity before but had not in a long time. It was important to make everyone in the space comfortable with doing theatre and doing it with people they did not know well. My intention for this project was to work with a group of non-actors. I was interested in the way that theatre can be impactful to those who are not used to doing it. The workshops were opened up to anyone who wanted to participate so I got to explore with both actors who are used to doing some of this work and non-actors.

The first step of spectators becoming actors, or in simpler terms making everyone comfortable with doing theatre, is knowing the body. This can be seen as a very simple step but it is one of the most vital. Embodiment is often very uncomfortable for people. It is especially uncomfortable for people who do not do theatre in their lives often. Embodied work is about expressiveness through physical form but also how the use of the body affects the mind and spirit. It is about taking time to do movement-based work but also allowing people to process what is happening in their bodies. This is why for the workshops the Brain Dance was used as the warm-up to help the participants achieve the first step of transforming the spectator into actor by knowing the body. The “Brain Dance” leads the participants through a series of full-body movements that follow the development of the brain as a newborn. It starts with the breath every time and the movement steps that follow can be modified as long as each step is followed. After
this, in the workshops, we would move into embodied games and exercises that were often taken from or inspired by Boal’s book *Games for Actors and Non-actors*. For example, in workshop 1 we did body mirroring and the game “Columbian hypnosis”. Both of these allowed the participants to use their bodies in unusual ways and through this connection with a partner or to the larger group. In workshop 2, we did a game called “the point of focus, the embrace, and the handshake”. This game allowed participants to become more connected to a partner and themself in a physical space. It created a greater awareness of the presence in a room which is a form of knowing the body.

All of the workshops allowed the group to experience the second step of the transformation of the spectator into actor which is about making the body expressive. We used games and exercises to understand our bodies better through embodiment and then moved further into expression with the body. In workshop 3 we used a modified version of the game “stop, walk, and justify” from Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. This game is a good example of making the body expressive. In this game, the participants were asked to move around the room in ways that they do not usually move their bodies. Some would call this experience doing silly walks. When everyone is moving around the room, someone calls out “STOP” and asks one person in the room to justify what they are doing. This game allows the participants to use their bodies in new ways, use their bodies to express themselves in different ways, and they have to confront why they are moving and expressing themselves in this way. This type of expression also allows for the people to develop a better understanding of the other people in the room. They get to form relationships with each other and hopefully grow a better understanding of their relationship with the community. Making the body expressive is important for opening people up to deeper inquiry and active participation in theatricality.
In workshops 3 and 4 the group got an opportunity to move deeper into the transformation of spectator into actor by using theatre as a language. Using theatre as a language is about attempting to use the act of pretending as a means to communicate and understand a set of circumstances. In the workshops, we started from a place of discussion using Layla Saad’s definition of white supremacy to begin our conversation and exploration using theatre. After this, the group used warm-ups and games to understand and connect to our bodies. Then when making our bodies expressive we were able to engage fully in the next step of creating theatre that is living and present. In workshop 4 we used the tool of storytelling to start our journey of using theatre as language. During these exercises, the group would start with partnerships. The partners sat together and were given a prompt to “tell an impactful story from your time at WWU”. They each got some time to think and then the partners shared their stories. The stories were told in as much descriptive detail as possible and had a beginning, middle, and end. After telling these stories the groups joined back to gather and did a word gathering exercise where they came up with words that connected with the telling of their own story or listening to another story. Some of the words generated in this exercise were: support, comfort, harmony, mentorship, community, expectation, and duty, as well as other words.

Then to move further into using theatre as language the partnerships were created again and we did a physical exercise related to the words that were just generated. In the partnership, one person had the chance to mold their partner’s body into the shape that they felt represented the word they picked. All the sculptors got to move around the space and observe the sculptures. Then we switched. After this one sculpture got to mold all the bodies in the space. This exercise of shaping and molding bodies to communicate an idea was an act of using theatre as language. It also lead to the Image theatre work we did. Image theatre was created by Augusto Boal as a
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form of Theatre of the Oppressed. He talks about how in Image theatre the spectator gets a chance to directly intervene by “speaking” through images that are made with bodies. They get the chance to express their views on a theme of common interest. (Boal 135) In the workshop, we approached image theatre in the way that it is done by David Diamond in the Theatre for Living Method. In our Image theatre work, we started by creating images of dysfunction in the community. Asking the question of what does the dysfunctional community look like? The group took a few minutes to discuss this and then started to figure out what that looked liked and how it was experienced in the body. What the group found was that jagged shapes in the body felt like an experience of dysfunction in the community. The group created three images and in the first one, they created an arc of levels through all of the bodies in the space. Each person was connected physically but in a way that was pulling on each other and also creating jagged shapes with their limbs. Creating these images brought up conversations about conflict and chaos in our community. After these three images were created I asked the question of what could be an image of the dream we have for what our community could look like. Once again the group started with a short discussion about what this could look like then they began exploring it with their bodies. The group once again created three images, this time representing the dream of a functional community. The group found themselves connected to creating circles and being in closer proximity physically. In many of the images, the group is holding onto each other and connecting both emotionally and physically. After this, the group got a chance to look at the images they created and reflected on them together. The discussion of these images focused on what the picture was created, the experience of creating it, and how it is interpreted. The group felt they discovered more about their community and their relationships with each other by using theatre as language in this way.
As mentioned previously a few definitions were used from the document “White Supremacy Culture - Still Here”. During these workshops, we talked about perfectionism, fear, a sense of urgency, and individualism as attributes of white supremacy and white supremacy culture. During workshop 2, the definitions of perfectionism and individualism were introduced into the space. During workshop 2, we had a small group of four people, so we stayed in the group discussion part of the workshop. I started by sharing with the group the specific definitions from Saad and Okun and I asked them to think of ways that individualism and perfectionism manifest in our community. They worked as partners and started to make lists. Making these lists brought up conversations around how people treat each other in the classroom setting and what individualism and perfectionism look like as forms of oppression in our society. In Workshop 3 started to physically explore these attributes through embodied theatre using the “abstract emotion exercise”. This exercise asked each individual to think about a story where they were invested in one of these attributes. After each person wrote their stories down we split up into small groups and shared our stories. Each group was given time to reflect on hearing and sharing the stories. Then each person in the group was asked to think about the context they were in during the story they had just written about. They explored the space through movement to try to understand numerically between 1-10 how invested they were in the attribute we were exploring. After this, we then tried to raise the number and understand how this impacted our bodies and experience. Each person worked to find the movement/action/phrase that could take them into a place of separation from this attribute. This is how we explored the attributes of white supremacy and how they manifest in our community.

Evaluation
An important aspect of the Theatre of the Oppressed method is the role of the facilitator or “joker” as it is called. The facilitator of this method has an important job of being a leader of the theatrical action and a participant in it. Learning how to be a facilitator is a big growing process, especially when doing applied theatre methods. A very important aspect of these workshops was creating a shared understanding of community. I believe as a facilitator I was successful in achieving a shared understanding for the participants. During the workshop series, participants were asked often to reflect on their own identity and understand how that related to the community they are a part of. We wanted to establish that we were all in community together in the theatrical space during these workshops but also understand that the community extends beyond the space and time we shared doing the workshops. One way that this was done was through the way the space was set at the top of the workshops. For every workshop, the group would enter the space and check in with an opening question. Questions like, what environments do you feel most comfortable in? What is an aspect of your identity you want to share? Then we would gather as a group and do check-ins where people introduced themself and how they were doing. The group had conversations about the questions posed and general thoughts that had come up from the work we were doing. The participants also worked together to create community guidelines. These guidelines helped create an agreement about how we wanted to interact with each other and approach the work we were doing. The guidelines were: respect each other, let this be a brave space, normalize advocating for yourself, speak from personal experience, embrace the absurd and work towards releasing judgment, be in community with each other, and that consent is ongoing. By constantly returning to these agreements the group got the chance to reconnect with each other and see if the ways we wanted to interact would change.
The way that discussions were approached during the workshops was an important aspect of the process. As a participant in various types of anti-racism and equity work, I have noticed that often the work being done gets stuck at the mindful discussion stage. Using applied theatre allows for a lot of discussions to have reflection and discovery time but the work should not just be discussion-based. That is one of the reasons applied theatre and theatre of the oppressed work are very focused on embodiment. The connection to self through movement can help open people up for a more engaged conversation that can lead to action. As the facilitator, I would come up with discussion questions beforehand to use throughout the workshop. Many of the questions focused on reflection about what games and exercises were just experienced. Or the questions would help push the group deeper into understanding the definitions of white supremacy. But during each workshop, the discussion would become guided by what the group brought up. It centered around reflection, discovery, inquiry, and openness. One thing I believe I was successful at as a facilitator was the ability to guide discussions without dominating them. Doing this allowed the group to have space for their discoveries. I believe I was successful in being flexible with the planned material. Often I would change games and exercises to work better with the group and I would engage participants to understand what they wanted to do. All work in the space was guided by how the group was functioning.

An area for improvement for me as a facilitator is the specificity of the connection between the theatre work and the anti-racism work. During workshop 3, the group discussed the experience of doing the “Abstract Emotion Exercise” using the attributes of white supremacy. One participant talked about their issue finding the connection between exercises like this one and their ability to dismantle white supremacy in their community. They could not see the connection between these exercises and actionable change. At that moment I responded saying
that their struggle with seeing this connection was completely valid and that part of these workshops is to try to discover and understand the connection but we may not always be able to do that. I still agree with what I said about this but I do believe that I could improve these workshops by trying to make the connection clearer. Presenting an issue in the community can allow for inquiry but there is more that needs to be done to push participants towards the level of action. Theatre of the Oppressed creates an opportunity for rehearsing changes that could happen but you have to help participants find the actionable change they can rehearse. In these workshops, I think the participants were able to gain a new or different understanding of what white supremacy is and how specifically it manifests in our community. They were able to do this because they were asked to move past just dealing with these issues from the level of mindful discussion. During the workshops, they got to fully engage their bodies in this work to have further discovery. This allows for the participants to better recognize white supremacy and how they uphold it. And the understanding of individual participation in white supremacy helps people approach future incidents of white supremacy differently. Maybe even in a way that can change the cycle of oppression.

In the workshops that I created and facilitated, the participants were not led to the fourth step in the transformation of spectator into actor. This step is theatre as discourse and included simple forms in which the spectator creates “spectacles” according to the needs of the community to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions. Theatre as discourse is a way of making performance completely community-facing. The participants in Theatre of the Oppressed get to create a piece of performance that reflects the issues they have been exploring and then they bring this performance to an audience. And in the way that theatre of the oppressed is always participatory, this audience is also asked to be involved in the performance. With these
workshops, I choose to not have a product of performance come from them. I think I do not have
the skills as a facilitator to aid in the creation of a piece of performance that speaks on white
supremacy in our community. It would have been interesting to bring an audience into the work
that we were doing and it may have provided more of a goal for the participants. This is an
aspect of applied theatre I would like to explore someday but I did not want to in this project.

An outcome of this project was recorded conversations I had with workshop participants
after the workshops had already happened. I talked with six of the workshop participants and
asked them ten questions about their experience doing these workshops. Each of these
conversations lasted about fifteen minutes and brought up very interesting ideas. These audio
recordings are moving conversations showing that the topics and actions explored during the
workshops extend beyond just that space and time. The participants are continuing to think about
these experiences and taking that consciously or unconsciously further into their lives. This, in a
way, is a form of theatre. Performance is the action of expressing oneself with the intent to move
and share with someone. And that is what we did during these conversations. The audio project
allows for more knowledge about the experience of the workshop and allows the participants to
have power over their experience. These six people got to articulate how they transformed from a
spectator into an actor and what made this happen for them.

Another area for growth that I see is that the work was lacking in diversity of perspective
and was not informed by enough current scholarship on race. This is very important and will
continue to be a focus in further iterations. For this project, I spent most of my time doing
research on Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre for Living. My research focused on the
facilitation of theatre methods and understanding how I could execute that. Since these applied
theatre methods focus on being useful to all types of communities the issue being confronted
through the theatre facilitation can be guided by the community itself. I choose to focus on white supremacy and white supremacy culture because it is an issue that is ever-present and crucial to dismantle. I feel that it is a pressing issue that needs more attention and is not often discussed in the classroom of theatrical spaces. It also is an issue specifically recognizable in predominantly white institutions like Western Washington University because of the role whiteness takes in marginalizing students. These workshops were an opportunity to work with fellow Western students who were also experiencing the challenges of being at a predominantly white university and the repression they felt because of this. The work must be informed by diverse perspectives. I am a white person and the majority of the participants in the workshops were also white. There could have been more research done into anti-racism, race, white supremacy, and predominantly white institutions. I focused more on the theatre methods and my experiences in anti-racism workshops as well as Layla Saad’s workbook. As I move further into the work of being an applied theatre practitioner I need to make sure that my work is always informed by diverse perspectives and contemporary pedagogy. I have to create a lack of hierarchy in the theatrical spaces I cultivate. What will be important to all of this work is that I find collaborators who are willing to work on these types of community-building projects with me. I would like to work with other theatre practitioners who are willing to collaborate and challenge the existing systems and practices together.

**Conclusion**

The formation of this capstone came from the drive to investigate how Theatre of the Oppressed can be used by university students to confront the issues they are experiencing in their community. At Western Washington University there are specific challenges faced in the community because it is a predominantly white institution. These challenges maintain the
repression of students through harmful hierarchies and disconnection of the community. By using applied theatre to understand the attributes of this issue students were able to better understand their experiences and influence on the community. As a first-time facilitator of these methods, I got the opportunity to learn and grow from this experience. I believe a supportive environment was created for the participants in the workshops and that they got to opportunity to explore deeply through theatre. After the workshops, I interviewed five of the participants and asked them about their experience with the workshops. This process was important because I got the opportunity to receive feedback for my work and hear directly what people's experiences were. Every person I interviewed felt that they learned and grew from the process. They think that they received more tools to combat the issues they see and experience in their community. Each of them also said they would do a workshop like this again. Knowing this I feel like I was successful in my facilitation of these methods. The participants grew more confident in themselves and their work. Going forward I would like to continue to be a facilitator of applied theatre. I will be getting further training and education in these methods. I hope that I can do work to make theatre an important part of advocacy spaces and community building.
Here are the appendices for this paper. Each one is something that was an important part of these workshops. The information helps you to better understand what was used and created during these workshops.

Appendix A

Brain Dance
Breath: Starting from sitting, guide the group to find a comfortable position and begin to focus on their breath. Focus on the physical sensation of the inhalation and exhalation. Where does this breath move in your body? How does this feel?
Tactile: Once you are ready move to a new body position and start giving your body tactile information. Rub, brush, poke, squeeze
Core-Distal: Now work on extending as far as you can and then pulling into your core. Finding the extension and flexion of the body.
Head-Tail: Start to feel the connection between the top and bottom of the spine. Moving your head and tail in connection with each other.
Upper-Lower: Now feel your feet get stuck to the floor and allow for the free movement of the upper body. And switch by keeping the upper body still and moving the lower body.
Body Side: Now find stillness in the left side of your body and movement on the right side. Once you are ready switch.
Cross Lateral: Next movement find connections across your body.
Vestibular: Spin around till you feel dizzy then stop until that sensation has dissipated. Do it again going the other way.
Appendix B

Workshop 1 // Establishing Community
Guiding Questions for Workshop Series:
How can Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre for Living be used for confronting and changing the issues in PWIs?
In what ways is theatre useful to people when tackling big issues?
How can theatre lead to community advocacy and/or activism?

Entrance Question - What types of environments do you feel most comfortable in?

Aidyn introduced herself and the work of this workshop series. Group went around the circle introducing themselves and checking in.

Creating Community Guidelines
Respect each other
Let this be a Brave Space
Normalize advocating for yourself
Speak from personal experience
Embrace the absurd and work towards releasing judgment
Be in community with each other
Consent is a requirement

Warm-up: group breath and spine exploration

Games and Exercises:
- Clap Exchange
- Group connection work: circle contraction and expansion, movement passing, movement leading
- Body Mirroring into Columbian Hypnosis
- Friend and Enemy: In groups of 3 one person is given instructions by two people who are either their friend or enemy (they are unaware of who is who).

Cool Down
First introduction to the Brain Dance

For next time - to ponder :)
How does building relationships with each other help create a comfortable community?
How would you define white supremacy?
And what do you think of when you hear PWI? Does WWU create ‘environments’ you feel comfortable in? Why or why not?
Appendix C

Workshop 2 // Understanding White Supremacy Culture
Goal - Create a shared understanding of what White Supremacy is and what it looks like in our communities.

Introduction to “Me and White Supremacy” by Layla F. Saad

Entrance question: What is an important part of your identity?

Reviewing Community Guidelines
Respect each other
Let this be a Brave Space
Normalize advocating for yourself: Spoke a little on the importance of self-care with dealing with difficult subject matter
Speak from personal experience
Embrace the absurd and work towards releasing judgment
Be in community with each other
Consent is a requirement

Going around the circle:
Name, Pronouns, High-Lows, How are you entering the room today?

Warm-up
- Started with 2m of silent individual focus
- Brain Dance

Breath: Starting from sitting, guide the group to find a comfortable position and begin to focus on their breath. Focus on the physical sensation of the inhalation and exhalation. Where does this breath move in your body? How does this feel?

Tactile: Once you are ready move to a new body position and start giving your body tactile information. Rub, brush, poke, squeeze

Core-Distal: Now work on extending as far as you can and then pulling into your core. Finding the extension and flexion of the body.

Head-Tail: Start to feel the connection between the top and bottom of the spine. Moving your head and tail in connection with each other.

Upper-Lower: Now feel your feet get stuck to the floor and allow for the free movement of the upper body. And switch by keeping the upper body still and moving the lower body.

Body Side: Now find stillness in the left side of your body and movement on the right side. Once you are ready switch.

Cross Lateral: Next movement find connections across your body.

Vestibular: Spin around till you feel dizzy then stop until that sensation has dissipated. Do it again going the other way.
Games and Exercises:
- The point of focus, the embrace, and the handshake (spatial awareness, connection to another in the room)

Start with walking around the space, creating awareness of the space, connection with a partner despite the distance, and awareness of all others in the room. Ask each person to fix their gaze on a fixed point somewhere in the room. Now they close their eyes to make their way slowly towards their particular point. After a few moments, the Joker asks everyone to open their eyes again and realize where they are. Are they close to the designated target? Do a second attempt Find a partner embrace then they close their eyes, release one another, and walk backward, either till they meet an obstacle or for a preordained number of steps (individual). Then they try to retrace to meet the embrace of the same person.

“Declarations of Identity” (try centering this around the entrance question)
Each participant must declare who they are, in a few lines, three times, with three different recipients in mind: for instance, a loved one, a neighbor, the boss on whom their employment or function depends…or another figure of authority. Each time that they declare who they are, as our identity is also bestowed upon us by our relationship with others or the environment we are within—none of us is confined within ourselves—the writers discover identities that exist, which are indeed theirs, but in disuse or unsuspected. They discover multiplicity and richness. Dive deep within one's self

Big Idea of Workshop
What does it mean to be accountable for whiteness? Focusing on how this separates us and breaks down community

What is white supremacy? Layla Saad
Is the racist ideology that is based upon the belief that white people are superior in many ways to people of other races and that therefore, white people should be dominant over other races. White supremacy is not just an attitude or way of thinking. It also extends to how systems and institutions are structured to uphold this white dominance.

Since systems and institutions are created and held in play by many individual people...personal inner work...there will be a ripple effect of actionable change in how white supremacy is upheld out there.

What is white privilege?
The unearned advantages that are granted because of one's whiteness or proximity to whiteness. In the absence of white supremacy white privilege is meaningless. The privilege is received in exchange for participating, voluntarily or involuntarily, in the system of white supremacy.

Attributes of white supremacy culture
Delving into a couple of them. We had a discussion and then we created lists of what these attributes can look like in our community.

**Perfectionism**
Perfectionism is the conditioned belief and attitude that we can be perfect based on a standard or set of rules that we did not create and that we are led to believe to prove our value. (white supremacy culture used perfectionism to preserve the status quo. If we are striving to be perfect we do not question the standards that have been set)

**Individualism**
A practice that emphasized the moral worth of the individual. It prioritized the interests of the individual and affects the political, economic, and social independence of a person through initiative, action, and interests.

Closing questions!
What is your experience of whiteness at WWU?
How have hierarchies affected your experience of college?
What do you see as a change that needs to happen in our community?
Appendix D

Workshop 3 - Interrogating WWU as a PWI
Goals - Investigate how white supremacy manifests in our individual and communal experiences at WWU. Create the image of what this looks like systemically at WWU.

How does white supremacy manifest in our experiences at WWU, our communities in WWU, and A theatrical exploration of Layla Saad’s prompts

Introductions: Went around the group: Names, Pronouns, Why are you here?, Fun Fact!

Conversation about: What is an important part of community to you?
Explored again how identity ties into this

Reviewed Community Guidelines
Respect each other
Let this be a Brave Space
Normalize advocating for yourself
Speak from personal experience
Embrace the absurd and work towards releasing judgment
Be in community with each other
Consent is a requirement

The starting point for organizing for action: present, an existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people. Posed as a problem that requires a response at not just the intellectual level but level of action.

Warm-up
On the floor Brain Dance!
Group connection: Passing movement energy while walking around the room

More Games and Exercises
Stop, Walk, Justify 10m, pg 104
The actors walk around the space in strange and unusual ways. Someone calls out ‘STOP’ and the actors stop where they are in the position they were in. And each person must justify the strange position or say something that makes sense with the position they are in.

Definition Added to the Room!
What is white supremacy? Layla Saad
Is the racist ideology that is based upon the belief that white people are superior in many ways to people of other races and that therefore, white people should be dominant over other races.
White supremacy is not just an attitude or way of thinking. **It also extends to how systems and institutions are structured to uphold this white dominance.** Since systems and institutions are created and held in play by many individual people...personal inner work...there will be a ripple effect of actionable change in how white supremacy is upheld out there.

**Exploring some attributes of white supremacy culture**

**Perfectionism** -
Perfectionism is the conditioned belief and attitude that we can be perfect based on a standard or set of rules that we did not create and that we are led to believe to prove our value. (white supremacy culture used perfectionism to preserve the status quo. If we are striving to be perfect we do not question the standards that have been set)

**A Sense of Urgency** -
A sense of urgency reflects a cultural habit of applying urgency to our everyday lives in a way that perpetuates power imbalance while disconnecting us from our needs. This sense of urgency denies space for actual progress and focuses on important work and connection. **Individualism**-A practice that emphasized the moral worth of the individual. It prioritized the interests of the individual and affects the political, economic, and social independence of a person through initiative, action, and interests.

**Fear** -
Fear creates disconnection from others, ourselves, the earth, and spirituality. Antidote: naming fear when it arises. Developing skills to meet fear, sit with fear, name out fear, and not allow fear to drive our beliefs, actions, and decisions.

“The thing that has made the strongest impression on me in recent years”
The group got time to think of a story that had impacted them related to one of these attributes. Then in small groups, we shared and reflected on these stories together. Tried to identify what about the story impacted us.

**Abstract Emotion Exercise**
The group then as individuals got to think about the context they were in during the story they had just written about. They then explored the space trying to understand numerically between 1-10 how invested they were in the attribute we were exploring. We then tried to raise the number and understand how this impacted our bodies and experience. Then we worked to find the movement/action/phrase that could take us into a place of disconnection from this attribute.

**Groups discussion about the experience**
Appendix E

Workshop 4 - Radical Positioning and Transformation
Goals - Radical positioning, Imagination exercise. How can we create radical transformation?

Introductions: Went around the group: Names, Pronouns, High-lows

Continue Community Guidelines: Refer to the Posterboard
How should we approach these today? Has anything new come up?
Reviewing Community Guidelines
Respect each other
Let this be a Brave Space
Normalize advocating for yourself
Speak from personal experience
Embrace the absurd and work towards releasing judgment
Be in community with each other
Consent is on-going

*The starting point for organizing for action: present, an existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people. Posed as a problem that requires a response at not just the intellectual level but level of action.*

Warm-up
Brain Dance

Take your partner to your favorite spot on campus: Everyone partnered up and used the space to play an imagination exercise of taking their partner to their favorite spot on campus. Using description, physical movement, and imagining of the space.

Body Mirroring: With the same partner we did some quick body mirroring. The leadership was switched and then leadership was shared.

Story sharing: The partners sat together and were given a prompt of “Tell an impactful story from your time a WWU”. They each got some time to think and then the partners shared their stories. The stories were to be told in as much descriptive detail as possible and were to have a beginning, middle, and end.

Word Generation: We joined together as a group and began generating words that connected us to our stories or the experience of hearing our partner’s story.
The words were:
Elevated
Support
Comfort
Spontaneous
Improvised
Care
Harmony
Mentorship
Community
Sharing
Expectation
Listening
Duty
Self-pressure
Lasting
Impact

**Sculpting practice into Image work:**
We then returned to our partnerships and a sculpture chose a word. They then got a chance to mold their partner’s body into the shape that they felt represented the word they picked. All the sculptors got to move around the space and observe the sculptures. Then we switched. We then allowed one sculpture to mold all the bodies in the space.

After this, we asked what an image of dysfunction in our community looks like? The group then discussed a bit and started to put their bodies into shapes in the space. Once the group agreed we took a picture. 3 images were generated from this.

Then we asked what an image of the dream we have for our community looks like? The most functional, healthy, supportive community looks like. The group discussed and then started to relate their bodies to each other. 3 images were generated from this.

We then looked at the images together and talked about what we saw and felt.

Discussion questions explored in the workshop today:
- Embodied Practice: How can be more connected, and reconnected to our body help us? How can it help us when thinking and dealing with the issues we have talked about?
- What have we discovered about community and our relationship to it?
- Does this work help us break out of the same cycles? Especially as we did some exploration of the attributes? I think the work gets stuck in the mindful discussion spot, how do we put past that into action?
Appendix F
Images created by workshop participants using Image Theatre to show dysfunction in the community.
Appendix G
Images created by workshop participants using Image Theatre to show the dream of the community.

Citations
www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/06/22/the-trayvon-generation?source=search_google_dsa_paid&gclid=CjwKCAjwy_aUBhACEiwA2IHHQG8XmwX8W0Xjhpvf6l5264cFyb0wqo7Fthsqr7H6-MZSefdFaKnPxxoCqZ8QAvD_BwE. Accessed 6 June 2022.


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