

A THEATRE INTERVENTION FOR SEEKING JUSTICE

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HOW DOES ONE SEEK JUSTICE WHEN OPPRESSIVE INITIATIVES ARE PRESENTED AS VIRTUOUS?"

An upcoming conference (4/2024), which I plan to attend, seeks to address the question: How does one seek justice when oppressive initiatives are presented as virtuous? Below is the abstract I wrote to address the question. My abstract was accepted, and I plan to use my time to present on the following:

This essay is an auto-ethnographic case study that reflects the author's ongoing development and practice of an interdisciplinary based, theatre intervention aimed at equipping marginalized communities seeking justice within an apartheid America. To demonstrate how this liberatory practice works, the author draws on his experiences as the co-founder and co-artistic director of a nonprofit community-based theatre company whose mission is to amplify voices of those within marginalized communities. Working with various marginalized communities over the past six years by way of his theatre company, the author combined different theoretical and embodied approaches to create an emancipatory theatre practice of his own.

To that end, this essay draws on the author's experience workshoping this theatre intervention to a group of Black men and women at Princeton Theological Seminary's Black Theology and Leadership Institute (BTLI). Embedded in this practice are the interdisciplinary theoretical underpinnings of history, national and transnational social justice movements, theatre, and liberation theologies. Data sources utilized for this essay include the author's own journal reflections, video recordings of the theatre sessions, the author's lesson plans, and participants completed evaluation forms.

The author foregrounds his theatre intervention in the creative bravery observed in Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (1974), along with the rhythm and movement of Black Theatre techniques as observed in Dr. Cristal Chanelle Truscott's SoulWork method, and the righteous indignation expressed in Black and Womanist theologies. The intent of this qualitative autoethnographic case study essay is to reflect and explore ways in which the author's devised theatre intervention seeks to help oppressed people emphasize their voice as an inherent tool of power available to the disinherited.