

Analytic Image - Theatre for Peace & Justice

- [A PeaceAware.com](http://PeaceAware.com) exercise

Analytic Image is an exercise we adapted from Augusto Boal that we sprinkle with a bit of Bertolt Brecht.



Photo 1: Image Theatre Workshop at Food Not Bombs Event 8-23-03

Act I - is selecting stories of Homeland oppression to tell to the audience. The audience selects a story by voting, and the protagonist (storyteller) picks a partner to be their antagonist. The director (facilitator) gives some orientation in improv body sculpture and verbal interplay. **Scenes:**

1. **Volunteers** - Have several volunteers tell their personal story of an event where Homeland Security, U.S.A PATRIOT, or War on Terror. A story is told that affected personal life space. It must be a specific event involving an unresolved conflict between themselves and another person. Theatre is conflict. Pick a conflict situation that is not clear or resolved, as to who is oppressing whom. Pick just one scene we could play out. It is unresolved for you and you have not come to terms with it. The point is with every conflict you can step back and see the systemic oppression behind it.
2. **Telling stories** - Three of you tell a story and we will choose one that has resonance in the life experience of this group. Invite three audience volunteers to briefly tell their personal story of one scene that has conflict between themselves and one other person. The

storyteller is the protagonist and the other is the antagonist.

Examples:

- A teacher is told by a principal to take down an anti-war poster
 - A person has a bank loan turned down unless they agree to provide a copy of their ID to be sent to Homeland Security
 - A resident was turned into Homeland Security by a postal employee for having a Peace sign in their yard
 - You are in City Council and the Mayor refuses to hear your Civil Liberties petition to withhold support for the U.S.A. PATRIOT act
 - A shopper is arrested by a security guard at the mall for wearing a peace symbol
 - A Peace Vigil person is flipped off, 'go home peacenik,' yells a motorist, who then spits on them, as the altercation escalates.
3. **Voting on a story to perform** - Repeat the list of story conflict themes and ask the audience to raise their hand to vote for the one they would like to see acted out. The idea is to pick one conflict that relates to most people in the audience. It is not a vote for the person telling the story, it is a vote for a story people can identify with. Raise your hands as much as you want. If there is no resonance, it means it is not touching you; there is no echo in you.
 4. **Choosing the Antagonist** - The elected storyteller comes to the stage, and is asked by the facilitator to pick any person from the audience who represents their antagonist. Choose the person to be your antagonists.
 5. **Character Inquiry** - Tell your antagonist what you want. The person invited to be the antagonist can ask questions of the storyteller (protagonist) to understand the conflict, and be clear about the person being played. e.g. What was their facial expression? What did they say? What was their motivation? etc.
 6. **Monologue Rehearsal** - The facilitator instructs the pair in improvization. Please close your eyes and imagine the body pose and one or two lines your character is saying. When I clap my hands I want you to both face the audience, and at the same time strike an exaggerated character pose, and repeat your lines to the audience. Think out loud the monologue of your character.
 7. **Audience Instructions** - Now instruct the audience - The spectators (audience) are not to approve or disapprove or laugh or show reaction. They are to let the antagonist and protagonist react to each other, not to the audience.
 8. **Dialog Improv** - After the characters are warmed up, and have

their body pose and lines ready, the facilitator directs them to begin the scene. Each must hold their body pose, but are encouraged to move about the stage as they engage in improvized dialogue. Let them dialog for two or three minutes. Once started, they cannot stop and ask questioners. They are to accept the other's portrayal, and act and react in improv.

Act II - Analytic Images From the Audience - All the non-actors, you are not just spectators, you are speactor plus actor, or spectactors. I want you each to find a small element in one of the characters that made an impression on you. You will invent a character with that element. Catch an image only you are going to see. It is not making a character of what already existed. Pick some element that you see that noone else does. Go beyond what you have seen and heard. Explore the absurdity, the irreality of the image; the image is a filter. Scenes:

1. **Decide if you are going to be Antagonist or Protagonist** - Who did you identify with, the protagonist or the antagonist? Imagine some trait in the character that is hidden, and forget the rest of what you saw up here. I want you to reveal your image with your body and show us the hidden. Ask the audience members to close their eyes.



○ **Photo 2: Striking a Pose in Image Theatre training Aug 18 - 03**

2. **Strike your pose and hold it** - Please strike a pose, a body sculpture that is the hidden element. It can be symbolic,

metaphoric, but not an imitation. Make your image and go say and repeat one line of your dialog. Strike your pose now, and Simon Says, "freeze" and be "silent."

3. **Match Antagonist to Protagonist** - Director, with input from the spectators, the original storyteller and first volunteer -- matches and pairs up the new antagonist with protagonist volunteers. After the pairs are formed, they will act out. They are to invent their impresison, not repeat or imitate what they have seen.
4. **Rehearsal** - Now that the pairs are formed, let them improv their scene in simultaneously rehearsal. Tell the conflict to each other and get clear on the conflict to be acted out. The pairs are to hold the body pose, e.g. a motorist flipping off a peace person, and say their lines, reacting and acting to what is said. It is improv, but the character holds their attitude in the conflict.
5. **Analytic Theatre** - Invite several volunteer pairs on the main stage to act out their scene. The point is reflect the invented image, the insight each had into the original storyteller's (protagonist's) portrayal.

Act III - The original storyteller (the one the audience voted on earlier) is brought back to center stage. In this next exercise, the protagonist (storyteller) will do improv scenes with three to six antagonists paired to their protagonists from Part II.

1. **First Antagonist Scene** - The analytic image pairs will act out their scene, and the director will invite the original storyteller to imitate the body poses and movements of the protagonist. When the director thinks the storyteller has it, they tap the protagonist on the shoulder, and swap in the storyteller. Have the protagonist partner become a coach at stage left, giving signals when they want an image enhanced or emphasized. The storyteller uses the same words and body pose for a minute or two, until the director says they can either continue or change the lines and pose.
2. **Continue with the Rest of the Pairs** - Each remaining pair does their scene on stage. The storyteller swaps with the protagonist. The protagonist moves to stage left to become a coach.
3. **All Together in Antagonist Group** - All the antagonists are brought on stage with the storyteller. The antagonists repeat their poses (animated & moving) and their lines, simultaneously. The storyteller (protagonist) goes from one to the other and interacts with each.
4. **Enter the Protagonists** - The protagonist partners go to stage left. They act as coaches to the storyteller. They can signal the

storyteller to put more of their image character into the scene. The storyteller stands stage right facing the coaches and the group of antagonists.

Act IV - Repeat the above for the storyteller's original partner, the antagonist. The storyteller becomes a spectator, the antagonist is center stage. Each pair comes to center stage and does their scene. The original antagonist swaps with each antagonist. Then the group of antagonists acts as coaches as the antagonist acts with the storyteller.

Act V Finale: Both Groups on Stage - The protagonists are stage left, the antagonist partners are stage right. The storyteller with their original partner are center stage. They act out their scene, but change it as the direction of their respective coach team members catch their attention. In the finale the director invites the storyteller and original antagonist to improve using any combination of moves and lines they have imitated or invent new reactions.

Post-Act- Debrief - In debrief there is a discussion with the spectators (audience).

1. Did the character unmask?
2. What insights did you attain from the exercise?
3. What is the nature of such oppression in our community?

Theatre for Peace & Justice is a group of PeaceAware people who put on short plays for classrooms, community events, and Peace Vigils.

In *Dialectic Theatre*, a continuation of Brecht's Epic Theatre, we try to get the audience out of their passive spectator role and into an intellectual and reasoned social critique of oppression. **If you would like to request a *Theatre for Peace & Justice* group put on a play for your group or just train your group to do their own skits, please contact David Boje, Ph.D. peace@peaceaware.com**

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