This research project looked at the metaphorical conception of Voice in undergraduate women by using Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) methods. The project took place over a five-week period during the Spring of 2003. Participants took part in four weekly meetings and two 4-hour workshops on the final weekend of the project. During the project, various resources on feminism, Voice, and TO were read and discussed, and several writing assignments were given. The culmination of the project involved working on a TO Forum Theatre piece based upon the issues brought up in the readings and discussions. The project shows that Voice is a valuable research topic for Social Psychologists and demonstrates how TO methods can be used to gather qualitative narrative feminist data.
A FEMINIST SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY UTILIZING
THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED METHODS TO EXPLORE
ISSUES OF WOMEN’S VOICES

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
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A Feminist Social Psychological Study Utilizing Theatre of the Oppressed Methods to Explore Issues of Women’s Voices

This thesis has two main purposes, the first being to examine how issues of Voice, both metaphorically and literally, can be valuable social psychological topics relevant to understanding women’s experiences in the world of academics. Voice has been looked at somewhat in Developmental Psychology and, also, in Clinical Psychology, but has been vastly neglected by Social Psychologists. The second purpose is to integrate methods utilized in Theatre of the Oppressed work into a feminist, narrative, social psychological study. Because Theatre of the Oppressed uses interactive work, and is able to empower participants, it may prove to be a valuable methodological tool for doing feminist qualitative research. Houston, Magill, McCollum, and Spratt (2001) have already shown Theatre of the Oppressed’s usefulness in one of psychology’s sister disciplines, social work. They used Theatre of the Oppressed methods as part of a training program for the unemployed and to work with children in schools. To the best of this author’s knowledge Theatre of the Oppressed methods have yet to be used in studying Social Psychological phenomena.

In order to fully understand these two purposes behind this thesis, a variety of background information is needed. This will begin with a brief look at feminist perspectives, information about women in the field of psychology, the relevant definitions, previous research on Voice, feminist methodology, and, finally, Theatre of the Oppressed methods.

A Feminist Perspective in Social Psychology

Allport (1967, p. 3) defined Social Psychology as an “attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others.” This definition of Social Psychology is rather broader than many social psychologists would use to define their field today. However, it is with this broader definition that it is possible to see how the many varieties of research done under the heading “Social Psychology” fit together. In this way, it is possible to be reminded of what Social Psychology could be and how feminist qualitative research fits into that field. Feminist Psychology treats its participants as experts on their own “thoughts, feelings, and behaviors”, valuing the knowledge
participants can share with the researcher, not the “data” a researcher takes from a participant. In contrast to this feminist ideology is traditional experimental psychology. Traditional psychology views the researcher, not the participant, as the source of knowledge. This is closely tied into the idea of logical positivism which sees the world as objective, containing one Truth, a truth that cannot be gotten from asking participants to express themselves freely, but instead needs to be measured or tricked out of them. The form of Social Psychology used in this paper does not subscribe to the ideas of traditional psychology and logical positivism, but to feminist psychology and social constructionism.

Social constructionism is a perspective based upon the idea of “multiple truths. Gergen (1985) identifies social constructionism as "…principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live" (p. 266). Gergen goes on to say, "knowledge is not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together" (p. 270). This is in direct opposition to the logical positivist belief in an objective Truth (the goal of such research is, of course, to uncover the Truth). Social constructionists see all knowledge, and therefore all research, as value-laden and subjective. Berger and Luckmann (1966) see truth as “multiple, partial, subjugated, and context-dependent (cited in Jester, Harrick, Cressy, Bakker, & Fuehrer, 2002).” It is through beliefs, ideas, and perceptions that people view the world and develop their own “truths.” The meanings people apply to their experiences become their “social realities.” Thus, the focus in social constructionism is not the discovery of Truth, but in discussing the benefit and utility of those social realities. This is done in conversation between the participant and the researcher, and, of course, among the participants themselves. Good social constructionist research will “aim to analyze people and the relationships in which they are involved (Jester et al., 2002).”

Project Impetus

The choice of Voice as the topic for this project was originally inspired by my reading of Carol Gilligan’s In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development (1993). Though Gilligan herself is a developmental psychologist, her commentary on women and Voice is relevant for both Social Psychology and Clinical
Psychology. “The difficulty women experience in finding or speaking publicly in their own voices,” Gilligan writes, “emerges repeatedly in the form of qualification and self-doubt, but also in intimations of a divided judgment… (p. 16).” This begs the question as to why some women might have difficulty expressing their “own Voices.” Some answers to this question may lie in the social psychological research arena. Social roles, oppression, societal expectations, stereotyping, and issues of self are all topics of social psychological investigation that may influence women’s feelings of agency in expressing their Voice.

This project was also greatly influenced by a previous project involving the author. That project looked at empowerment, power, and disempowerment from a feminist perspective (Jester et al., 2002). The methods used for that project included several weeks of shared readings followed by writing and interviewing on those topics. The design and procedures for the current project were partially based upon the empowerment project.

The doctoral dissertation written by Jennifer Laine King-Cooper (1995) was also an inspiration for the design of this project. King-Cooper explored Voice with middle-aged women to look at adult psychosocial development. Her project involved readings on Voice and development, writing, and a 2-day workshop. That level of communication, through reading, writing, and conversing, seems to have generated a lot of information on issues of Voice for the women. King-Cooper’s project seemed like it must have been enjoyable and empowering for the participants. This current project intended to do the same for its participants.

Definitions

To say that Voice is a complicated topic is an understatement. Voice, with both a literal and a metaphoric component, can be interpreted in terms of anything from sound waves to a way of understanding the concept of agency. Voice as a literal means the sounds made through patterns of language. Voice as a metaphor means, for the purpose of this study, the way in which women express themselves, for example, speaking, writing, publishing, teaching, and working. Voice is therefore to be seen as an expression of a form of “self” for the participants. In order to understand the issues of Voice as they relate to women in this society, it is also important to understand the
term “Silencing.” Silencing occurs when women do not feel they have the agency to express their metaphoric Voice, when women are prevented from expressing their Voices by outside sources (such as the refusal to publish, the denial of women’s ways of knowing) and when, despite mighty efforts to express oneself, people ‘listen’ to a woman’s Voice without really ‘hearing’ what she is saying. Michelle Fine (1992) has a slightly different take on Silencing: “Silencing signifies a terror of words, a fear of talk (p.115).” In this way, Fine is hinting at the ways in which a woman’s Voice can be a threat to the status quo. Silencing is not limited merely to women’s Voices, but is also relevant for minorities, the elderly, individuals with physical disabilities and children. For the purpose of this paper, these topics will only be talked about in regards to women.

Absence of Women’s Voice in Psychology

While issues of Voice have not been a research topic until recent years, they have been “issues” for women in psychology. Psychology has neglected women’s views/issues/voices for years (see Bohan, 1992 for more information). Women were not awarded Ph.D.’s for the first 20 or 30 years of the field. Women were not participants in the research for many decades. It was thought that the male participants were representative of the norm, so women were deemed unnecessary “complications.”

The entire first chapter of Unger’s (2001) Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender is about women’s often-unrecognized place in psychology. Unger begins with the earliest female psychologists, those brave women who did the work for their Ph.D.’s but were never awarded their degrees because of sexist ideas about women, Mary Whiton Calkins, and Christine Ladd Franklin (Unger, 2001, & “Once behind the scenes, now in the fore”, 1999). Why aren’t the names of “Mary Whiton Calkins, Margaret Floy Washburn, and Leta Hollingworth taught to every first year psychology student? After all Calkins invented the method of paired associates learning. Her method has a major influence on the verbal learning research field even today (See Furumoto & Scarborough, 1986, and Scarborough & Furumoto, 1989, for more information about some of the earliest female psychologists).

Unger goes on to detail the changes that have occurred in the field over the last century in regards to women. Unfortunately those changes have not brought women as far as one may hope. This fact can be seen when looking at other texts that claim to
chronicle the last century in psychology, such as *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology: Explorations into the History of Psychological Research* and *Reflections on 100 Years of Experimental Social Psychology*. In the second edition of *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology: Explorations into the History of Psychological Research* only 7 of the 40 articles are first-authored by women (Hock, 1995). About an equal number of articles had women as second or third authors. The fact that so few women were represented in this book implies that women have not “changed” psychology all that much.

It seems that Rodrigues and Levine (1999) agree with this implied idea about women’s effect on psychology. In their 245-page book, *Reflections on 100 years of Experimental Psychology*, there are only three paragraphs on what they call “women social psychologists.” In their afterword, Rodrigues and Levine spoke about the absence of women in their volume, “The omission of women in this volume raises other questions about the development of the field. Although it may be arguable whether one or more important female social psychologists should have been included in this book, the fact is the field has been dominated by men …we look toward a future in which women and non-Caucasian American males have begun to play a commanding role…(p. 226).” Is it really that there weren’t any women or more “non-Caucasian American males” to include in this book, or is it that Levine and Rodrigues chose not to hear the Voices that are out there screaming to be heard? As Jennifer Laine King Cooper put it “…the pertinent issue for me was whether my words and my experience would be heard (page 2).” She was speaking, voicing her ideas and thoughts, but was being heard no more by those around her than the Voices of women in experimental Social Psychology were being heard by Levine and Rodrigues.

Philip Zimbardo wrote the other two paragraphs on women. In talking about changes in the field he said, “The old breed of psychology was also doomed when many talented women started taking over the field of Social Psychology in the 1970’s and 1980’s (p.139).” Despite what this statement indicates women were there all along, they just weren’t being heard. Zimbardo continued by saying, “…many of these female researchers are more focused on broader conceptual phenomena than in previous generations…areas of relationships, attraction, health psychology, gender stereotyping,
and equity issues, where it is the stuff of the phenomena – the dependent and
intervening variables rather than the independent variables – that intrigues them, not
merely using the concepts in a given domain to test causal hypotheses about inferred
theoretical process (p. 139).” So, according to Zimbardo, women are now, only in the
last three decades, involved in psychology, but not the same psychology as he is. The
women are relegated, in Zimbardo’s statements, to topics that are of “interest” to
women, such as relationships and attraction, and do not include his “true science” of
experimental study. The implications of these statements are astounding.

This absence of women’s Voices in Psychology is part of the decision process
behind the chosen participants. This study used undergraduate female psychology
majors, not merely because they are a convenient population, but because it is likely
that the history of Silencing in psychology has an effect on how undergraduate females
interpret their ability to express their Voices.

Previous Research on Voice

Some feminists have said that Voice is problematic to look at from a feminist
perspective because it is, supposedly, too individual with too little a focus on
positionality and context. This author disagrees; Voice can be easily looked at as
related to positionality, social roles, and oppression, along with other structural
dynamics. Voice has a political context and is relevant to the environmental dynamics
and role expectations that are felt by women as a whole. Also, as we’ve heard before
“the personal is political” and it is this author’s contention that the “political is
psychological.” It is the connection between politics and psychology that is often
explored at least implicitly in numerous projects in feminist Social Psychology and
Community Psychology. As we shall see later, the “political” helped to form the Theatre
of the Oppressed methods that will be used in this project.

So far, the topic of Voice has received little attention in the arena of Social
Psychology. What little has been done has utilized the literal definition of Voice and not
the metaphoric definition. Is the absence of the topic of metaphoric Voice an indication
that Voice is seen as a topic of interest to women more than men? If so, the words of
Bohan (1992) ring particularly true here. “Women, and women’s perspective, are
notably absent from psychology’s mainstream research and theory, from the discipline’s
self-presentation in curricula, from its histories, and from prominent professional and lay depictions of what psychology is and does (p. 2).” The Voices being heard in today’s psychology are often representative of the patriarchal society in which we live.

“Psychology as a discipline is itself a social system, a particular sociohistorically situated context that itself embodies the norms of the broader society. Assumptions about gender operative in society as a whole are reflected and reproduced in psychology’s endeavors (Bohan, p.1).”

It seems important then, based upon the ways in which women haven’t been heard in research, to make expression of Voice both the topic of this research and a general goal of a feminist research project. Rabinowitz and Martin (2001) eloquently explain the meaning of “giving voice” in psychology:

Giving voice to participants implicitly recognizes that some people are denied a voice and a place in psychology, and the field, as well as groups of people, suffer for it. Listening to people’s voice means hearing what they have to say on their own terms rather than testing preconceived hypotheses using preformed categories and the idiom of the researcher. It means taking seriously life experiences and conditions and people’s attempts to make meaning from them, elevating and examining everyday practices as well as everyday language and thinking. Giving participants voice means sharing the right to name categories and codirect the process of data collection (p. 36).

They go on to say, “…listening to voices does not mean that researchers are hearing truths, or that women’s voices or voices of poor people are more “truthful” than more frequently heard voices (p.36).” This statement recognizes the constructed nature of reality and the goal of understanding the process of “truth” rather than the discovery of “Truth”.

As mentioned earlier, it was not so long ago that women were not even included in research projects because it was thought that “men” would easily represent the average. However Voice, like participants, cannot be sufficiently represented by only one gender. As we need both male and female research participants, so do we need to make sure that multiple Voices are heard from within the discipline of Social Psychology. The question becomes one of “Who isn’t being heard and what needs to be heard?” For example, in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule’s (1986) book, *Women’s Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, women’s
views, needs, and ways of “knowing” were explored, if not for the first time but for the most recognized time. Yet mainstream psychology has still paid little attention to how such issues as gender and race may affect the ways in which research is interpreted and understood, by both participants and the populace in general. As with any research topic, before Voice can be seen as a good topic for the field in general, it first needs to be the topic of a single research project. It is the opinion of this author that Voice can be a powerful topic for research within Social Psychology. Below are some of the research on and commentary about Voice that have appeared in the psychological literature.

Michelle Fine and colleagues

Michelle Fine is one of the most prolific American writers on feminist psychological research. Her books and articles are used in psychology departments and women’s studies programs across the country. In speaking of her research project in public schools, Fine (1992) discussed the apparent administrative policy of believing a problem will go away if you ignore it and do not speak its name. Called “naming” by Fine, this is the process by which people believe that to name something gives it power and legitimacy. When Fine was seeking permission from the principals of public schools to come into their schools, she had the following exchange with one of them:

Principal: Sure you can do your research on dropouts at this school. With one provision. You cannot mention the words dropping out to the students.
Fine: Why not?
Principal: If you say it, you will encourage them to do it
(Fine, 1992, p.120).

In this way the principal believed that to name it in front of the students was to give the term power over the students. This Silencing is not just the action of administrators, however, but of teachers and fellow students as well. Fine (1992) details other incidents in which, in order to avoid discouragement, avoid being wrong, or to avoid challenging the status quo, both teachers and students self-Silence.

Fine has done many studies like the one mentioned above. Some include just female participants, while some include mixed groups. In their article, “Feminist Transformations Of/Despite Psychology”, Fine and Gordon (1992) explain some issues to keep in mind when doing research where gender is relevant:
1. *Power asymmetries* structure gender relations.
2. Gender always braids with social class, race/ethnicity, age, disability (or not), and sexual orientation, as well as social context to produce socially and historically constituted subjectivities.
3. The *meanings* of a social experience as expressed by women must be unraveled if that experience is to be fully analyzed.
4. *Contextualized research* is necessary to unearth women’s psychologies as they reflect, reproduce, resist, and transform social contexts, hegemonic beliefs, and personal relationships.

(p. 3, italics from Fine and Gordon)

Fine’s work on feminist methods does not always mention Voice specifically, but most of her work is relevant just the same. In talking about feminist methods, Marecek, Fine, and Kidder (1997) note the value of doing qualitative research without specified hypotheses about the subject matter. “A qualitative stance invites broad-based inquiry into spaces that are undocumented in other studies. Unlike a hypothetico-deductive stance, in which a fixed set of hypotheses constrains the field of investigation, a qualitative stance allows researchers to pry open territory about which they have only vague hunches (p. 633).” In this type of research “Participants become more than transmitters of raw data to be refined by statistical procedures. They become active agents, the creators of the worlds they inhabit and the interpreters of their experiences (p. 637).” Marecek et al. caution against restricting participants to terms imposed by the researchers, because this foists the idea that there is one way to look at a given topic onto the participants. They go on to explain that “…a qualitative stance involves listening to and theorizing about the layers of contradiction and uncertainty that emerge when people try and make sense of their lived experience (p.636).”

*Gilligan and colleagues*

As stated earlier, Gilligan (1993) really was the major inspiration for this project. It was while reading her *In a Different voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*, that the beginnings of this project were conceived. The idea that this rich topic, Voice, had been so neglected in an area of psychology that is particularly able to explore it, was both upsetting, and a wonderful opportunity. *In a Different voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* addressed a number of research topics of interest to Gilligan, such as Voice, adolescent development, gendered interpretations of the world, and lifespan psychosocial development. It is her focus on
Voice, both in this book and her other writings and collaborative work, that is of interest here. But also of interest are her numerous collaborators, whose comments on Voice are often overshadowed by Gilligan’s reputation,

In “Voice and Ventriloquation in Girl’s Development”, Lyn Mikel Brown (1998) described work she did with adolescent female focus groups in two different school environments. One of the things she noticed was a pattern by which the children spoke not their own Voices, but the Voices of the dominant group. Rather than speaking what they might feel or think they mimicked the cultural idioms heard around them. This is likened to a ventriloquist’s dummy; their mouths are moving and words are coming out, but in the truest sense, they are not creating those words. This is referred to as ventriloquation, and is one way in which non-dominant Voices are Silenced (See Bakhtin, 1981, and Wertsch, 1991, for more information on ventriloquation).

Another valuable contribution to the Voice literature came from a book chapter written by Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller, and Argyris (1994). This chapter detailed a method of reading narratives through interpretive lenses. This process will be used in the methods of this current paper. The lenses used in Brown et al.’s Reading Guide are reading for narrative, reading as the active self, reading for care, and reading for justice Voice. Each of these readings is slightly different in what the reader attends to. Jester et al. (2002) used a variation of the Reading Guide. Jester et al. read through narratives with the lenses of empowerment, power, and disempowerment, along with reading for narrative comprehension. The current project will use slightly different lenses for reading.

Brown also wrote a book chapter with Tolman for Unger’s Handbook of the psychology of women and gender. In the chapter Tolman and Brown (2001) wrote that, “Listening to voices is a pathway to psychological knowledge (p. 134). This statement, made so simply, speaks volumes about what feminist psychologists think is relevant, in comparison to traditional social psychologists. Tolman and Brown go on to discuss research they did surrounding adolescent women and their interpretations and reactions to the concept of femininity. It is during their education that girls either develop the ability to resist the trappings of traditionalist ideals, or become Silenced into accepting
those ideals. This is not to say that all ideas of femininity are bad, merely that girls are being “mis-educated” about their bodies, their lives, and their sense of self.

“Self” is also addressed in Gilligan, Brown and Rodgers (1990). This article looks at self in terms of Psyche, of which Voice is an expression. Gilligan et al. claim that to embed Psyche into the body, into the biological sex of the body, is to put it in a contextual place in time and history. In this way, the self is not an ethereal thing, disconnected with that which occurs in the world, in the life of the person. The self becomes a living, connected aspect of our world, with the Voice, being just that, a “Voice” or expression of those connections and contextualizations.

Gilligan and her collaborators are major contributors to Voice studies, but there are other valuable contributors to consider as well, such as Wilkinson, and Belenky et al. (1986).

Wilkinson

Wilkinson (2001) uses the term feminist experiential research to mean research that studies the individual experiences of the people being studied. Wilkinson claims that feminist experiential research is a way of dealing with how women’s Voices have been distorted, warped, or ignored in research. Feminist experiential research brings the women’s experiences to the forefront of research, along with the meanings made of these experiences by the participants, rather than the distortions made by researchers applying their own meanings to the experiences. Wilkinson (1997), in her assessment of the field of psychology, came up with the five following comments about the field as it has been and how it should be [italics are Wilkinson’s]:

Psychology is a poor science: it has mismeasured women.
The problem is not women, but women’s internalization of oppression.
We can gain a different perspective by listening to women’s voices.
We should displace the question of sex differences.
We should reconstruct the question of sex differences (page 254).

She goes on to speak of Gilligan’s work, using an oft-quoted statement made by Gilligan, “I picked up something you’re not supposed to pick up in psychology – that there was a voice, and I asked ‘Who’s speaking? Whose voice is this? Whose body and where’s it coming from?’ If you listen to the imagery of sexuality and separation...you realize this is a man’s body. This is a man’s voice speaking as if from nowhere.
"(Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1994 as cited in Wilkinson, 1997) This quote alights on the social constructionist idea that there is no one objective “truth”. All research is done from a perspective and from the very beginning of psychology that perspective, that “voice”, has been male-dominated. Wilkinson (2001) states “…psychology, with its male voice, has described the world from its own male standpoint which it has confused with the truth (p.21)."

*Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule*

Belenky et al. (1986) sought to “hear” women though an extensive interviewing process. They began without clear hypotheses, so that the participants could shape how they wanted to express their experiences, rather than how they would fit into hypotheses. Over the course of 5 years, their project wound up including the experiences of 135 women. While many of the participants were students, Belenky et al. also included professors and 45 women from family agencies (these agencies dealt with issues in parenting and family issues). Based upon the information given by these women, Belenky et al. were able to notice five epistemological perspectives being used by the participants, each one corresponding to a way of expressing Voice. These perspectives are Silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge. These perspectives are not a developmental process and can occur concurrently or individually.

Silence is “a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority (p.15).” ‘Silence’ is marked by feelings of inferiority, feeling “deaf and dumb” and disconnection from others. ‘Received knowledge’ is very similar to the concept of ventriloquation explored in Brown (1998). Women are capable of receiving and repeating knowledge, but not of generating it themselves. In contrast, ‘subjective knowers’ see truth as personal, private, and the result of intuition. Subjective knowers don’t, however, make the step of communicating this personal knowledge. ‘Procedural knowledge” does include this component of communication. Procedural knowledge involves the application of objective procedures to gain and share knowledge. It is in ‘constructed’ knowledge that women make the connection between the way in which they personally interpret the world, and the fact
that everyone else ‘constructs’ their world as well. Knowledge is seen as created and contextually, not rigid and under the sway only of authority.

These five perspectives are not to be viewed as truth “discovered” through research. Belenky et al. (1998) stress that these perspectives are not fixed, nor limited to the experience of women. These perspectives were based upon the observations and categorization chosen by Belenky et al. and could have easily been organized differently.

King-Cooper

In her dissertation, Jennifer Laine King-Cooper (1995) explored adult psychosocial development in terms of the concept of Voice. She took a group of 17 women and had them do a series of readings and writing assignments. After completing these assignments, the women took part in a 2-day workshop on writing about Voice. She gathered her participants from amongst the local middle-aged women who worked in fields relevant to the writing and reading of Voice and/or feminist ideals. The workshops involved discussion of the reading assignments, reading-loud of the writing assignments, and additional writing activities. While it was not her original intent, King-Cooper created a Model for workshopping as well as addressing her original interest in Voice and psychosocial development. Aspects of her work will be used both in the forms used for this study, and for the pattern of reading, writing, and discussing she developed.

Baker

Bernadette Baker is not a social psychologist, nor did she perform a research study on Voice. However, she is included here because her article, “What is Voice? Issues of Identity and Representation in the Framing of Reviews” (1999), is a well-written example of how traditional publications ‘contain silences.’ It is through what is left out, what is implied, that traditional ideas are valued above feminist, non-traditional ideals. Baker contrasts the ideal of Voice in writing with the reality. “In the latter twentieth century, Voice, identity, and representation have been considered cognate terms presumed to bear some relationship to the construction of knowledge and the circulation of power (Baker, 365).” Baker goes on to explore the fact that despite what is “presumed” in her previous quote, that it not how it really works. As she puts it, “…in
authorizing some discourse more than others (p.380),” the majority places some perspectives as the Truth, instead of a truth. While she was particularly speaking of those editors who choose which reviews of educational research get published, her idea is highly relevant to psychological research. Every time a feminist psychologist is rejected by a mainstream journal, the pattern of ignoring non-traditional views continues. By shutting out these feminist researchers, editors imply that anything that varies from the traditional is not good or valid.

*The Silencing the Self Scale*

Jack and Dill (1992) developed a scale called the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS). This scale was tested in a project focused on intimacy and depression. The STSS has four subscales, which Jack and Dill refer to as externalized self-perception, care as self-sacrifice, silencing the self, and the divided self. The ‘externalized self-perception’ subscale is meant to measure negative self-judgments based upon beliefs in external standards. ‘Care as self-sacrifice’ is a subscale which looks at connection to the needs of others. The third subscale, ‘silencing the self’, explores the ways in which individuals inhibit their own self-expression to maintain a status quo, such as to prevent conflict. Finally, the ‘divided self’ is meant to tie into the experience of depression. Examples of items from each of these subscales are, respectively: “I tend to judge myself by how I think other people see me””, “Caring means putting the other person’s needs in front of my own”, “I don’t speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause a disagreement”, and “Often I look happy enough on the outside, but inwardly I feel angry and rebellious” (Jack & Dill, pp. 105-106).

Several researchers have since used this scale in their studies. The purpose of these further studies seems to have been two-fold, first to see if the scale is valid and second to see how it stands up when used with other groups of people (see Remen, Chambless, & Rodebaugh, 2002; Stevens, & Galvin, 1995; and Gratch, Bassett, & Attra, 1995 for specifics on these further studies). Smolak and Munstertieger utilized this scale, and another, the Saying What I Think Around Others scale (SWIT) (Harter and Waters, 1991, as cited in Smolak and Waters, 2002) in a research project on depression and eating disorders. Smolak and Waters were interested in testing exactly what these two scales measured, and if scores on the scale varied by gender. They
found that it is possible the scales measure different variables for men and women, such as fear of intimacy in men rather than Silencing. While the research on this scale is highly interesting, it is not going to be used in the current paper as scales, in general, are incongruent with the perspective on feminist research held by this author.

Feminist Methodology

For the sake of this paper feminist will be defined as a belief in the value of ideas held by all people, with a goal of exploring, through research, the ideas, issues, and feelings of individuals who may not have been represented in mainstream psychology. Also, feminist psychological research should make as a goal to value the input from the participants as to the usefulness of the project. A feminist psychological study has worked best if the research looks to learn from the participants rather than about the participants. This views the participants as having knowledge, and should, hopefully, be seen as an empowering process by both the participants and the researcher.

Fonow and Cook (1991) discuss four themes of feminist research. The first theme, reflexivity, is characterized as a process by which the nature of the research process is examined critically. Such practices are employed through consciousness raising, collaborative scholarship, and by examining the typically unexamined stages of the research process. The second theme, an action orientation, addresses the fact that feminist research is aimed towards the goal of liberation. Specifically, the transformation of patriarchy and the empowerment of women should be the goals of feminist research. They claim that methodologically this theme implies the need for techniques to investigate everyday processes and to reduce the isolation between the researcher and participants. A third theme of feminist research is the need to pay attention to the affective components of research. Employed through "caring and emotionality," this theme pays specific attention to negotiating unpleasant feelings. The final theme noted by Fonow and Cook is the "use of the situation at hand" as a focus of inquiry. The authors claim that feminists are "particularly adept at recognizing the opportunities available in unforeseen settings to study otherwise-hidden processes" (p. 12) (this paragraph was also used in Jester et al., 2002).
Multiple-case Research

Rosenwald’s (1988) multiple-case method is designed to enrich knowledge theoretically and practically. Through this process, important information about the individual and society can be created. Consistent with the values of this project, multiple-case research is designed to understand individuals and our unique and shared experiences. Unlike other types of research, participants are not sealed off and alienated. Instead, our stories provide a range of vantage points that combine to provide a rich construction of the phenomenon in question. Individual nuances are respected and illuminated, and shared experiences are connected. Specifically, Rosenwald's (1988) aim is to create social knowledge by focusing on "the apt example and the cunning synthesis" (p. 261). In addition, multiple-case research does not attempt to define the "Truth" and describe what is the case, but to show "what may be the case" (p. 21). In summary, what the multiple-case study provides is not the parametric specification of 'at times,' but concrete, vivid illustrations of how such equivalencies and transformations can be mediated in specific cases so that others may more easily recognize them in their own experience (this paragraph was also used in Jester et al., 2002).

Theatre of the Oppressed

Augusto Boal began the work that led to the Theatre of the Oppressed more than four decades ago, though the term itself did not come about until after the 1970 publication of Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Through a combination of the theatre work Boal had been doing and the ideologies represented in Freire’s text, Boal's program and agendas were collected in his book, Theatre of the Oppressed (published in his native language in 1974, translated into English in 1979). The basis for Theatre of the Oppressed is that it is possible to do theatre so that it is a scenario based upon common life difficulties, which is then performed so that strategies of dealing with that oppression/problem are expressed. This process came about over a period of approximately 20 years between the 1950’s and the 1970’s (Boal, 2002). Boal was living and creating theatre in his native country of Brazil, at a time of great political upheaval. The country was taken over by several oppressive régimes. Boal began using his theatre work to express his activist ideas about society and politics. Boal
began by making slight changes to the European theatre techniques common in Brazil at the time. Gradually Boal began playing more and more with improvisation to explore the issues affecting the Brazilian general public. A problem developed, however, in that Boal was still using the same middle-class actors to explore problems they had never experienced. It was still the privileged telling the non-privileged how to do things. It was out of this contradiction in Boal’s work that the idea of having the spectators play a more active role in the theatre process through the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques developed (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994). So in this way, the “political” shaped and formed the theatre. As mentioned earlier, the political is also psychological. This, to me, strengthens the connection between Theatre of the Oppressed methods and feminist Social Psychological research.

Today Theatre of the Oppressed is used to work with oppressed groups and help them explore the limits of the oppression and their reactions to the oppression. This is done through several different types of theatre work, including invisible theatre, image theatre, and forum theatre (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994; Boal, 1994; and Boal, 1992). Something that is common among all three of these forms of Theatre of the Oppressed are the “games” or exercises that are used to begin getting participants involved in the “action” part of the process. Boal breaks the games into five categories based upon connecting the spectator to their own senses. Each of these categories are based in de-mechanizing the way we interact with the world, so that we can feel and view things in a different or new way. They also serve the multiple purposes of creating a community, encouraging trust amongst the participants, “warming” everyone up, and heightening awareness of our senses.

Boal’s (2002) first category of games is referred to as feeling what we touch. Games in this category are aimed at generating awareness of the body and the relationship with the movement of the body and our feelings. The second category of games is called listening to what we hear and serves the purpose of getting participants to use their physical voices to express themselves differently from normal, and to hear others in a new way. Next comes, dynamising several senses, which aims at the utilization of several senses at once. This third category focuses greatly on “blind games” which attempt to get the participants to see the world without using their sight.
The fourth category is *seeing what we look at*. These games attempt a “visual dialogue” between participants. This helps to establish that physical voice is not the only means of expressing oneself. The final series of games is *the memory of the senses*. These games focus on using our senses in connection to remembering things, and not merely remembering words.

Many of these games are based upon trust games, and expression games used in just about any theatre department or troupe in the world. However, it is important to remember that most of the individuals taking part in the forum theatre workshops, done by Boal and other practitioners of Theatre of the Oppressed, are not trained actors. These games are often the only ‘acting training’ that these participants receive (Boal, 2002).

Invisible theatre is performed in public spaces in which the observers have no idea that a pre-planned performance is occurring. The goal is to engage members of the general population in thinking and discussing relevant social concerns. The point is to not let the observing individuals know that they are seeing “theatre”, thus it is invisible (Boal, 2002).

Image theatre is a form of Theatre of the Oppressed where images are sculpted with the bodies of the participants to represent the instances of oppression that are being discussed. Image theatre is focused on “seeing” the oppression, rather than speaking about it. Discussion does occur after the images have been made, but speaking is not generally involved in the creation of those images (Boal, 1992).

Forum theatre is much closer to traditional theatre in its form. In forum theatre a scenario is created by the participants for a scene of oppression. Once the scenario has been run through once, it is run through again. The second time, individuals who had been watching the performance of oppression are invited to stop the scene and replace the protagonist. The goal of this is for the individual, referred to as a spectator, to change the behavior of the protagonist in some way so as to change the oppression. The spectators, as Boal calls them, are to be “engaged participants rehearsing strategies for personal and social change (Schutzman & Cohen-Cruz, 1994, p. 4)”. This involvement of the participants, as spectators, in shaping the outcomes is the major aspect of Theatre of the Oppressed that made it relevant for this project.
This project will not be the first in the social sciences to use forum theatre to conduct scholarship. Houston et al. (2001) utilized Theatre of the Oppressed to work with a group of unemployed individuals as part of a work-training program. In this program, they were to use theatre methods to explore an issue of oppression and then present this forum to local schools. Over the course of a weeklong training, the “troupe” developed a forum around the topic of bullying. This topic both emulated relevant issues for the troupe members, feelings of exclusion and powerlessness from being unemployed, and was something that the school students could relate to. While, in a number of ways, the current project is similar to the way in which Houston et al. used Theatre of the Oppressed, due to time frame differences, the exact setup is different. Namely, this project is utilizing college student and because of classes and meetings could not have a weeklong workshop like Houston et al. had, but instead is spread out over several weeks.

The Theatre of the Oppressed methods were chosen for this project for several reasons, the first being that it would, hopefully, gather more qualitative data for the thesis. The improvised images and forums themselves can be analyzed for themes. The second reason is that, through the use of the games and the images, the participants should become more comfortable expressing themselves, as many of these games require a development of trust and openness. Finally, the Jokering system used in Theatre of the Oppressed seemed like a good way to reduce power differentials in the research project. It should be mentioned that not all uses of Jokering achieve this goal and there has been some debate on whether or not the Joker just increases power differentials (for discussions of Jokering see; Spry (1994), Fisher (1994), and Schutzman (1994). An edited book on the topic of Jokering is also currently be worked on my Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz).

A Joker is different from a teacher, a researcher, or even a director, in the amount of influence a Joker has on the outcome of a project. A Joker explains the games, and guides the forums (Boal, 2002). A Joker attempts to avoid drawing conclusions, manipulating the group, or influencing the outcomes (Boal, 2002). This does not mean a Joker is unbiased or that this project is not without my own biases, Jokering is merely a way of drawing out group members without “taking over” or leading
too much. A Joker, unlike a researcher, asks the group to make decisions and to choose directions. A Joker’s job is to raise questions such as “did this work?” or “Is that likely to happen?” (Boal, 2002). Since I am both a teacher and a researcher attempting to discuss a topic, Voice, which is tied so closely to authority and control, Jokering is a way of reducing some of the power differences between myself and the participants. I am not “telling” as much as I am “asking.”

While I see Theatre of the Oppressed as a valuable method for feminist qualitative research, I must admit that I do not find all of Augusto Boal’s ideas, rules, and games to match up with my feminist goals of empowerment. I have found that at times, the work Boal does can be oppressive themselves. For example, Boal details a game entitled “Walk Like”, which involves walking like an animal or a group of people. When I participated in this game with Boal himself, he had us walk like Southerners and Italians. Most everyone portrayed stereotypes, often insulting ones, of these two groups, but rather than discussing this and using this opportunity to reduce stereotypes, Boal simply moved on to the next game. For me this just reinforces the stereotypes and is a form of oppression itself. Having said this, I feel that by carefully choosing the games and activities, one can avoid the repetition of negative patterns such as the one just mentioned. By keeping in mind my own goals of empowerment and reducing power differentials, I feel that I can adjust the Jokering process so as to benefit the feminist qualitative methods while reducing power differentials.

Representing the Other

When attempting to study an oppressed group, or any group, there can be a number of problems, one of the first being one’s own relationship to the group being studied. If the researcher is not a member of the group or community being researched, then it is necessary to analyze one’s approach as an outsider. This begs the question of “whether, and how, we should represent members of group to which we do not belong – in particular, members of groups oppressed in ways we are not (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996, p.1).” Wiley and Feiner (2001) refer to this as the issue of “representational authority.” They say the issue is one of “…who has the power to represent whom? And who should have the right to represent whom? (p.123).”
“Other”, a term used to refer to “women” as the other to men, also refers to any underprivileged or oppressed group including race, class, education, power level, sexual orientation. But, of course, Other is not just a dualistic concept, because we as people are not just one thing (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1996). I, for instance, am a woman, a psychologist, a teacher, a director, an American, a student and so on. Each of these identities have relevant Others. "Other" means a group that is underprivileged or oppressed in relationship to a dominant group of which they are not a member. As a woman, I am seen as Other to man (or conversely, I see men as my Other). As a teacher, students become my Other. As a researcher, participants are my Other. I am using these three particular identities as examples because they are relevant to the dynamics between myself and the women who participated in my thesis project.

Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1996; based upon an extension of Fine, 1994) give several suggestions for dealing with the problems of representing the Other:

(a) checking out with Others the validity of one’s representations of them; (b) listening to Others’ accounts of ‘us’ as a way of exposing the operation of Othering; (c) listening to members of the powerful group to hear the ways in which they construct Others; (d) finally (perhaps more in hope than in with any sense of current possibility) developing opportunities for dialogue between ‘us’ and Others (p. 16).

Another important thing to keep in mind is that, “Not all activist community art has been in support of progressive politics (Cohen-Cruz, 2002, p.2).” Art can also be used to propagate the majority norms and reinforce oppressions. This is something to try and avoid when using theater and research to look at oppressed groups.

I took several steps to make sure I am representing Others in a way that is fair and respectful to the wonderful women who took part in my thesis research project. First, I am giving the women an opportunity to read anything I publish or submit to a committee prior to publication and submission. This will allow them the chance to respond to questions of representation and misinterpretation. Secondly, I checked with them frequently during the process to access how well what we were doing related to their lives. This was done with some questions on relevance during the meetings, and through two feedback forms at the end of the project, one the last day of the project and one 3 weeks later. Finally, I gave them the opportunity to choose a pseudonym in case
they would feel exposed or violated if I used their own names. In these ways, I respect the ways in which they wish to present aspects of their own identities. Though this does run the risk of allowing them to over-adjust for the sake of positive self-presentation, that is a risk I find acceptable considering the alternative is to give the participants less control over their own words.

Goals

Though it is the hope of this project to not restrict the freedom of expression of the participants, there are some underlying issues relevant for the goals of this study. For instance, it is my belief that women, as a function of their membership in a socially constructed group called “women”, have role identities and environmental dynamics that affect these roles. It is also my belief that the social identity “woman” has oppressive aspects in a patriarchal society. One of these oppressive aspects is that women’s Voices (both metaphorically and literally) are not heard both in the general sense, society, and in the specific sense, a psychology department.

Over the course of this research project I had intended to explore what is meant by Voice through conversations with my participants and through a Forum Theatre piece. It is also my goal to examine how Voice is a topic worth studying in Social Psychology. To this end, I offer up the mixed use of narrative social psychological methods and the methods of Theatre of the Oppressed in order to gather qualitative data on the feelings, ideas, and meanings of female undergraduate psychology students on the topic of Voice.

Method

Participants

The participants were eight female undergraduate students in the psychology department at Miami University and myself, a 26-year-old interdisciplinary graduate student in psychology and theater. The undergraduate participants received one credit hour of independent study in psychology in exchange for their participation. These participants were recruited from several undergraduate psychology classes. The students were read a description of the study and asked to fill out a consent form and a schedule of availability if they were interested. Twenty-seven students responded. Eight of those respondents were contacted based solely on the fact that they were all
available at the same times each week. The undergraduate participants were all Caucasian psychology majors between the ages of 19 and 22, with an average age of 19.875 years. Five of the participants were sophomores, two were juniors, and one was a senior. For the purpose of confidentiality, the names of the participants have been changed when quoting them. The names used in this document are Kate, Kelly, Loren, Megan, Karen, Heather, and Ashley (I am using my own name, JuliaGrace).

Materials

It was necessary to audio and video tape the sessions so as to not miss anything that is said or done. Therefore, a video camera and a high quality tape-recorder were used, as well as a transcription machine.

The participants also needed copies of all the readings for the project. The purpose of these readings is to give the participants an understanding of the reasoning and ideas behind this project and to help them understand why they are being asked to do the games, prompts, forums, etc. After the first meeting, the participants were asked to read the Introduction, Letter to Readers, and the first chapter of Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* (1993). This reading was chosen because it was what inspired this project. This reading should help the participants understand why this project was developed. The second reading was from Boal (1982, pp. 18-28, 174-185, and 241-249). These sections of *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* gives some concrete examples of Theatre of the Oppressed work and explain both image and forum theatre. The third reading is by Gilligan, Brown, and Rogers (1990). This chapter explains a Reading Guide which shows how to read stories through a variety of lenses. After the participants read this, they attempted to read stories written by other members of the project through several lenses. The final two readings were Fisher (1994) and Fine and Gordon (1992). These two readings were given out during week four. The purpose of these readings is to look at feminism in Theatre of the Oppressed (Fisher) and Psychology (Fine and Gordon). This is to start making connections between the ideology behind both fields.

Several handouts were made for the participants. For clarity’s sake, these handouts are described in the procedures section within each week that they were given out.
Design and Procedure

Participants were recruited from classes within the psychology department. Once enough volunteers came forward to do the project whose schedules worked together, they were contacted and asked to attend the first week’s meeting. At the meeting they were asked to fill out the consent form and the demographic sheet (Appendices A and B, respectively). After they agreed to participate, they were given the rules for participation (Appendix C) and asked for copies of their schedules. We, the researcher and the eight participants, met for 2 hours a week for 4 weeks. During the fifth week, we held two 4-hour workshops on a Saturday and a Sunday. Several weeks after the project was completed, the participants were asked to fill out an open-ended survey about the project, specifically asking if the project affected their perceptions of anything outside of the project itself. During the first 4 weeks the participants were asked to engage in several reading and writing assignments (see Appendix D for the exact prompts for each week). Each week, after the session was completed, I wrote a researcher journal detailing what went on during that meeting and my impressions of the progress.

Before each meeting, I developed an outline of what we were to do that week. These outlines were roughly followed though not exactly. The week-by-week designs below do not include any games which were on the outline but which were not actually used that day.

Week 1- We began with a general introduction to each other. After that, they filled out the consent form and demographic sheet mentioned above and were given the rules for conduct handout. I verbally gave some explanations about Theatre of the Oppressed and the topic of Voice. We conversed on Voice for several minutes, then I had them begin the first meeting prompts. This prompt was for them to write their own definitions of Voice, including an example story (for the exact prompts used for each week of this project see Appendix D). We then did some exercises from Boal’s feeling what we touch exercises. Specifically we did the following exercises: circle and cross, circle and name, Columbian hypnosis, slow motion walk, and as you like it (see Appendix E for definitions of all the games used over the course of this project). The purpose of these exercises was to warm-up the participants and to begin developing a
safe space in which they could express themselves in a number of ways. After the exercises, we began making several images of Voice as they understood it. Before the participants left, they were given the aforementioned Gilligan chapters to read by the next meeting.

Week 2- We began by discussing questions or points of interest from the Gilligan reading. We then discussed the written definitions and the stories about Voice. We began with an exercise or two from the previous week, and then moved on to a few exercises from Boal’s *listening to what we hear* series. Specifically, we did the following games: slow motion walk, as you like it, walk stop justify, a round of rhythm and movement, the machine of rhythms, and the Peruvian ball game. Following the games we made several images of Voice, followed by a few images of Silencing. Before leaving, they were given the assignments for the following week: the Boal piece and prompts to define Silencing and write a story about a time they felt Silenced.

Week 3- We began by having a brief discussion on the Boal reading. We then discussed and shared their prompts about Silencing. We did a couple of exercises from previous weeks and added onto them from *dynamising several senses*. Specifically we did the following games: Columbian hypnosis, walk stop justify, noises, and the vampire of Strasbourg. We then formed images of Silencing based on their writings and our discussion. Before leaving they were given the Gilligan et al. reading and the third prompt, which was to “write a detailed story about an experience in your life that you think relates to this project.” They were asked to type this and to bring two copies of it, one a copy for my records, the other a copy to be highlighted for lenses.

Week 4- We began with a discussion of the Gilligan, Brown, and Roger's reading from the previous week. After that, I collected one copy of their prompts from the previous week, and we traded the second copy (so that everyone would be reading someone else’s story through lenses). We did not discuss these stories at this meeting because they were going to read them through lenses as part of the assignments for the next meeting. We then discussed what we wanted to use as our lenses for reading the stories. We came up with a list of possibilities and then voted for the following four: Voice, Intimidation, Respect, and Power. It was suggested by a member of the group that everyone write their own definitions of these four words prior to doing the reading.
These definitions were added to the assignments for the next meeting. Again, we reviewed some previous exercises and then did several from seeing what we look at. Specifically we did the following exercises: slow motion walk, slow motion walk variation, the vampire of Strasbourg, the plain mirror, mirror breaks, distorted mirror, narcissistic mirror variation (happy, sad, pain, giddy), one person we fear, one person is our protector, ball games, the sculptor touches the model, and the sculptors fashion a single sculpture together. We then began forming images of anything that came up in the discussions. Before leaving they were given the Fisher (1994) and Fine and Gordon (1992) readings for the next week.

Week 5- This week consisted of two 4-hour workshops held on a Saturday and Sunday. The schedule for these days was:

Saturday: We discussed Fine and Gordon (1992) and Fisher (1994) from the previous week. We then talked about the different definitions we all came up with for our lenses of Voice, power, intimidation, and respect. Then each woman read her story and we discussed the stories, in turn, and the ways in which the lenses applied to each. These discussions took up most of the session time so we only did two games, a round of rhythm and movement, and windmill.

Sunday: We began immediately with the games as follows: slow motion walk variation, vampire of Strasbourg, the plain mirror, the plain mirror variation, mirror breaks, distorted mirror, ball games, and remembering yesterday. At this point we took the time to play out one person’s “day” from the last exercise to get them used to acting out a scenario. We then did “remembering a day in the past” and followed that by playing out one person’s “day”. At this point we made a number of images and then voted on the one to turn into a forum. We developed a scenario for a forum and enacted several “solutions” to the problem in the scenario. Before leaving, the participants filled out an open-ended questionnaire about their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about this project (see Appendix F).

After the project was over, the participants were contacted via email and asked to fill out a final questionnaire about the project (See Appendix G). The purpose of this was to see if the project had an on-going influence on the women and to see what they thought of the project after they were distanced from it.
Analysis

This research project had two goals. The first goal was to show how relevant the topic of Voice would be to a group of women and as a valuable topic to explore in Social Psychology. If issues of gender, power, and group membership (women, students, psychology majors) came up in the content, this lends support to Voice as a Social Psychological concept.

The second goal was to use Theatre of the Oppressed methods as part of a feminist research methodology. To this end, it was important to explore the perceptions of the process held by the participants, my own observations on the process, and the depth of responses elicited through these methods. To explore these goals, I have divided the analysis into two sections, a content analysis to explore the topic of Voice, and a process analysis to explore the methods attempted in this project.

Content analysis

This portion of the analysis will look first at the two central concepts involved in this project, Voice and Silencing. I will begin with my reflection on aspects that related to Voice specifically, followed by aspects that related to Silencing specifically. Voice and Silencing, however, are not the only topics that came up. I will also explore power, intimidation, life in college, and issues the women felt were tied closely to their identities as women. The information in this analysis comes from the first and second week prompts, the images made at the meetings, the discussions we had and the definitions used for the reading through lenses activity. The purpose of reading through lenses was to see how these topics pervade every part of the participants’ lives. The results of those readings were not really a focus of this project. Also, the stories these women shared were very personal, but not always directly speaking about Voice, though I believe Voice could be seen in all the stories. As such, I will not be including excerpts from the stories written in response to the third week’s prompt.

Definitions of Voice

These definitions of Voice came mostly from the first week’s prompts but were added to from the lenses used during week four and from the verbal comments made over the course of the project. I interpret these examples as indicating the variety of ways in which we can think about Voice.
For some, Voice is about the people and places in their lives with whom and where they can feel comfortable.

Kate- My Voice is always heard with my really good friends. We have lunch together every week and it’s a place where I can say anything. It’s the best hour of my week. We just sit and talk. I can just be my true Voice.

Kate- comfort is also related to the expression of Voice.

For others, Voice is about a personal effort or action one puts forth to ensure that they are being “heard.”

Kate- My definition of Voice involves standing up and speaking about what you believe in.

Kelly- I’ve lost a lot from telling people how I feel. I don’t hesitate to tell anybody what I feel about anything.

Heather- Voice is expressing opinions and beliefs and point of views. It is a means of communication.

Susan- Expressing thoughts to others instead of keeping them to yourself.

Loren- The term Voice, to me, denotes a person’s presence, character, feeling, and their overall influence in a situation. A person’s Voice can be verbal, or portrayed through body language or actions.

Power, authority, and scope were all seen as being connected to the concept of Voice, through to a degree these concepts seemed to be used when referring to a type of Voice these women didn’t necessarily feel they had.
Karen- I wrote that there’s different levels of Voice, macro and micro. I have a Voice on a micro level with my friends and all. But I don’t have a Voice on a macro level, like say the president or someone in government or even the teachers here. They have more Voice on a macro level. I can’t even imagine having a more macro level Voice myself. Authority is related to macro level Voice.

Ashley- The first word that springs to mind is power. Voice is a way of empowering someone, and with that power, they can express themselves.

JuliaGrace- Voice is about agency, power, authority. Voice is both in the expression and hearing of ideas, thoughts, feelings, and perspectives.

Respect, recognition, value, and expression were seen as positive connections to Voice.

Kelly- Whether or not you feel you are being heard.

Megan- Expressing your opinion and being mutually respected.

Ashley- Voice does not necessarily apply to one person; it can mean a group of people with a common thought, feeling, or opinion who unite to express their Voice as a whole.

Kelly- Being able to exist and express myself, while having others actually recognize what I as an individual have to say.

Karen- If someone values your Voice then they value your opinions, although they may not agree with them.
These definitions also suggest how difficult it can be to define Voice in a simple sentence.

Kelly- I think I have a good understanding of it [Voice], but defining and explaining exactly what I mean is hard.

Kelly- There’s different types of Voice for different people.

These statements and similar statements made by other participants is one of the reasons why the stories and images were also important for understanding the concept of Voice. Voice is so complex, that “showing” it is often the only way to express it.

*Stories of Voice*

These stories come both from the first week’s prompts and from additional stories that came out as part of the conversations we had. I found it interesting that two of the stories focus on the women’s involvement in sports.

Megan- My senior year, on the second day of volleyball practice, I tore something. Even though I was out for half the season, maybe more, I was still voted captain. I thought that although I had that title, since I would be sitting on the sidelines during practices and games, my opinion would not carry as much weight. To my surprise, my teammates and coaches would still approach me for my opinion on team matters and usually took my advice. I loved still feeling like a part of the team, and when I finally returned to the court, I didn’t miss a step with my team.

Kelly- In high school, the gym class I was in allowed the girls to play flicker ball and the boys were able to play football. All of the girls wanted to play football because flicker ball was stupid. There was no reason for us not being able to play football other than the fact that we were women. I complained to the male department head. I told him that girls having to play flicker ball violated Title 9! I
was very angry and I think I scared him because the next day we were playing regular football.

Others told stories about how they feel able to express themselves openly with certain important people in their lives. These stories did not focus on a single story, but on the ways in which these people or situations always involve free expression of Voice.

Ashley- An example of a time when my Voice has been heard is when my extended family comes together for dinner and conversation. I have the power and Voice when I am able to either tell a story and have everyone’s attention and respect, or I can engage in conversation where Voice can be passed around and I could have it as well.

Loren- One recollection of this would be an ongoing story; it is my relationship with my psychologist. I feel like she listens to what I say but also that she can feel what I say. She can understand, empathize, and connect.

Other stories related concrete examples of times when their Voices were heard, which was often seen as a surprise to the participant or myself.

Karen- One time I feel I had a Voice was at a friend’s party when I got into a debate with a boy about going to war with Iraq. Even though we had differing opinions, I felt he was listening to my Voice instead of staring at my breasts. In this case, I felt he respected my opinions as they were coming from a person and not just a girl.

JuliaGrace- I once worked at a Staples. One day I was running the copy center and trying to teach a manager trainee how to run register. He refused to listen and it was obvious that he thought a female underling had nothing to teach him. He kept messing something up because he wouldn’t listen. When he finally figured it out, he demanded I listen to him tell me how to do it. I was so angry
that I told him to go to hell in front of customers and other employees. When the actual store manager refused to fire me for saying that to the trainee, the manager told the trainee that I was too important. After that, the trainee always asked me very politely to explain things to him.

Heather- I think my Voice was definitely heard during my Speech Class in which I gave a persuasive debate against cloning. I expressed my personal beliefs and backed them up with facts. Everyone was very interested and I persuaded most of the class.

Images of Voice
The discussions about the images of Voice began simply, with the identification of Voice in the image.

Kelly makes an image that looks like one person standing with three people in a semi-circle around her sitting Indian style and looking up at the standing figure. JuliaGrace asks, “So what do you guys see? Who has the Voice in this image?” Kelly says, “She does (points at standing figure)” Kate adds, “All the attention is on her.”

At times during the first weeks, the participants kept wanting to describe an image before making it. When this happened, I tried to guide them to form their image.

One image began with Susan saying she wanted to make an image of people arguing. JuliaGrace says, “Well, show us. Now if she was arguing what would she look like?” Susan makes Loren stand with her mouth open pointing in front of her. JuliaGrace prompts, “Okay, she’s yelling. Who’s she yelling at?” Susan points to Megan. Susan molds Megan with her hand up in front of her and her body leaning away a bit. Susan describes this as both “I didn’t do anything” and “talking back”. We discuss that those are kind of two different things so Susan adds Karen standing off to Loren’s right pointing at Loren. JuliaGrace asks “Now
what do you guys see?” Kate says, “She’s [Karen] sticking up for her [Megan]. She’s taking over her Voice by sticking up for her.” JuliaGrace asks, “Does that necessarily mean that she is saying what you want her to say?” Kate replies, “No she’s just expressing her own opinion.”

Oftentimes, we related one image to other images by asking about the differences. This image came directly after the image that was just mentioned.

Kate makes an image with Susan and Heather shaking hands. Susan’s mouth is open, Heather’s is closed. Susan says, “They are greeting each other.” Megan adds, “They are having a conversation, listening to each other.” JuliaGrace prompts, “Was anyone listening in that last one?” Kelly- “It was reaction, not listening in the last one.”

This image brought out that Voice need not be expressed in language only, something that was mentioned in their definitions.

Loren puts Kelly with her hands on her hips and everyone else standing around her looking at her. JuliaGrace asks, “We’re all in the image?” Loren nods. Several of the participants say things like, “she’s off by herself,” “aggressive versus passive,” “she has a point to make.” Loren explains that, “She doesn’t even have to talk to have a Voice.” JuliaGrace clarifies by asking, “So something about her is expressed without her needing to talk?”

Several times we took one image and made minor changes to it. The one above was changed slightly and the power dramatically changed for the participants.

Karen moves Kelly to the floor and opens her mouth with arms on her legs. Everyone else is in the same position as the last image. Susan points out that, “Now everyone is looking down at her.” Megan says, “But we’re all still paying
attention to her.” Karen adds, “We have power though.” JuliaGrace asks, “What if we were on the floor too?” Kate says, “Then she’d have the power.”

Definitions of Silencing

Some of these definitions viewed Silencing as an internal process, or as Self-Silencing.

Susan- A person who is Silenced may want to keep their views and ideas to themselves. To want to be Silenced is to not challenge oneself to speak out against authority.

Kate- when a person’s Voice is not heard. They are unable to Voice their thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Mine is kind of more an internal thing, not blaming anyone.

Loren- Not voicing your own thoughts.

Some of the definitions indicated an external force as Silencing an individual.

Karen- To oppress someone, either physically or mentally or both. It is when an individual does not care to hear your opinion or respect it, thus not respecting you as a person.

Heather- Silencing is not listening to others. By not allowing others to express their Voice, they are being put down.

Kelly- My dad is kind of inherently sexist. No matter what I do he doesn't see me as anything because I’m a girl. He never made my brother do anything [tells story from prompt]. My dad is just one big Silencing experience.

Ashley- One’s “Voice” is ignored, shot down, or just not permitted to be heard.
Not all the definitions of Silencing were seen as being automatically negative in nature.

Megan- Silencing is not always bad. Sometimes if you are going to say something stupid and a friend stops you, they Silenced you, but it was for your own good.

Kate- Silencing can be a look, action, or statement.

Megan- To me Silencing can be either a good or bad action- good when you…Silence yourself in order to save face, and bad when someone else does it and does not allow you to be heard.

The women connected Silencing with other concepts, such as power, oppression, and authority.

In telling her story of Silence, Karen keeps mentioning tradition as a Silencing factor for women.

Loren- Silencing seems to be synonymous with oppression.

Susan- A person who Silences has a sense of power and authority about themselves over other people.

Stories of Silencing

These stories of Silencing come both from the prompts and from the discussions we had during the meetings. Several of the women mentioned how they feel Silenced when they are with numerous people at the same time. Megan’s statement elicited a number of stories showing agreement, including these two stories from Ashley.
Megan- At home, there is a group of seven of us. Individually we can talk to each other, but when we’re all together, it is mass chaos. Everyone interrupts and you can’t get your Voice heard. Everyone is trying to get their Voice heard at the same time, so no one’s gets heard.

Ashley- same thing with my friends. I’m mostly friends with guys, don’t know why, and these guys are funny and all. But when I try to be funny with them, it doesn’t get heard.

Ashley- Times when I feel that my Voice is not being heard is in larger groups, such as when I am with a lot of friends, and everyone is so busy trying to have their Voice be heard. When this happens, I feel a little Silenced because I feel that people with “larger Voices”, such as males and more outspoken or loud people, have the Voice and I do not.

Karen’s story below related well to the topics of authority and tradition and tied into the discussions we had about how Silencing is both external (tradition) and internal (not walking out).

Karen- Whenever I go to visit my cousins I feel that my Voice is not heard. They are Hasidic orthodox Jews who have beliefs much different than mine, a reformed Jew. It is traditional for the orthodox to have a separate section in Temple for the women to sit. I remember the first time I went to Shul (temple) with them, I was shocked! Although I knew of this practice, I was surprised when I walked in and realized that the women had to sit behind a wooden screen off to the side where they could hardly even see the rabbi. This made me very uncomfortable, but when I spoke up to my aunt and my cousins (all female), they shushed me and told me not to question authority. Instead of leaving, I sat back in Silence throughout the service.
Several of the stories related to issues the women have with their parents. There were actually many stories of this type; I have chosen two as examples.

Heather- When I think of Silencing, I think about being young and getting in trouble. I had been caught lying to my mom before and after that she never trusted or listened to my explanations of what happened.

Kelly- My father happens to have a Porsche, I asked him to teach me how to drive it when I became old enough. He took me out once and concluded the lesson with, “I don’t want you near this car.” I asked him over and over to try again with me, even after I had learned how to drive stick on another car. He didn’t care. When my brother turned 16, he learned how to drive it and was allowed to take it to homecoming and prom. I am 21 now and still have never driven that stupid car.

Images of Silencing

Some images came up repeatedly on different days. These seemed to be the images that held the strongest feelings of Silencing. Below are two images which were made 2 weeks apart. Both seemed to symbolize the idea of Silencing as being ignored, unseen, or invisible.

Megan places Karen and Ashley facing the wall leaning into one another “talking” with Kelly behind them by several feet. Kelly is leaning forward and has her index finger pointing in the air and her mouth open. Megan says, “She’s trying to talk but they are turning their backs to her.” Heather adds, “She’s not being heard or acknowledged.”

Kelly puts Karen and Ashley next to each other with their backs turned to Loren who has her hands in the air. Kelly says “It is very visual because they actually have their backs to her. A lot of times that doesn’t happen so directly. It’s very representative of people blocking you out. Then they don’t hear you, you feel like
they’ve turned their backs on you.” And Heather says, “She’s also using her hands to show she’s got something to say, but they can’t see her.”

A number of the images showed the Silenced person as small, weak, devalued and afraid. Below are two examples.

Loren makes an image with Kate kneeling with her face in her hands and Susan standing and looking away from Kate. Kelly says, “She doesn’t matter (meaning Kate) and she knows that.” Kate agrees, “I kinda feel like I can’t say anything. I’m so oppressed in this. I feel like I’m being punished in the corner. And covering my face is Silencing me more. People can’t see who I am.” Megan- She’s (Susan) turned away and won’t even acknowledge her (Kate). Ashley- She’s smaller than the other one.

Karen puts Kelly in the fetal position on the floor with Susan stepping on her. Karen then invites the rest of us to step on Kelly also. Kate says “it’s about authority and picking on this person who is small and vulnerable.” Kelly says, “I’m also reacting to it very poorly. I’m afraid, I’m not jumping up or fighting back.”

The participants really seemed interested in discussing Voice and Silencing in the classroom. We made an image of a classroom and then made some adjustments to it. It seems to be something they could all relate to. This had a lot to do with the Silencing they’ve felt as students.

Loren sets two desk/chairs side by side. Karen is placed in the right chair with her hand raised. Susan is in the left chair just sitting there. Heather is standing in front of them pointing at Karen. Loren says that Karen is representing a male student. JuliaGrace says, “So you are putting Karen as a male. So whose Voice is being heard?” Kate responds, “His is. And the teacher is choosing to recognize the male or more dominant Voice.” JuliaGrace asks, “What else? Can
anyone change this image just a little?” Megan comes in and makes Karen put her hand down and slouch, and Susan is placed leaning forward with her hand in the air. Heather is left pointing at Karen. Megan adds, “They are still the same gender they were in the last one. JuliaGrace asks, “How is this different?” Megan responds, “She [Susan] wants her Voice to be heard but she’s a girl. And he [Karen] doesn’t want his Voice to be heard but he gets the attention anyway. The teacher is calling on him.” Kate changes this image slightly by making them both raise their hands and changing nothing else. Kate explains, “They both want to share their Voices but still only the guy…”

Several times, the stories were reflected in the images we created. Below are two images which were based on the stories of trying to get your Voice heard when with other people.

Kate puts JuliaGrace and Ashley on the floor kneeling back to back with arms folded across their chests. Megan observes, “They probably had Voice at one time and were talking”. Kate explains, “She can’t talk to her so she feels she can’t talk to her. It’s a cycle. They both can’t talk to each other because originally the first couldn’t talk to the other.”

Megan puts everyone in a circle facing in. She mirrors for all of us to put up our right hand at chin height and extend the index finger up. Kate says “Everyone is trying to get their Voice heard. It’s not like anyone is Silencing us. It’s just with everyone trying to be heard, it’s hard to get your Voice out.” Megan adds, “It’s like we’re all equal, but we’re all vying for power.”

Being a Woman
The participants had a lot to say about life on a college campus as a woman. They made a special point of mentioning that they felt some of these issues were tied to this specific university and were not always about universities in general.
Karen- It’s hard to have your Voice heard on a college campus, like, if you’re a girl.

Kelly- I have never been in such a stifling environment in my life. I’m transferring next year because I hate it here so much. Ohio to me is like a foreign country. I can’t even fathom this place.

Several of the women say Guys on this campus just don’t take women’s ideas seriously.

Kate- I feel like when I am talking to people here so much is fake, even me. You sugar coat everything. It’s like Silencing yourself by being fake and perky and…

Kelly- How is this higher education? [Referring to the lack of diversity and respect for other people]

Karen- I’m uncomfortable here because I’m Jewish. It’s like if you’re not a white male here you have no Voice.

The participants wondered why they, as women were often Silenced. They saw no innate reason for their Voices to not be heard as much as men’s. The conversation below was one of the ways we discussed how societies’ labels can be Silencing to women.

Kelly- I want to know why women are thought of as a minority when globally we aren’t in the minority.
JuliaGrace- Why do you think we are called that?
Kelly- We were or are oppressed. We don’t have a Voice in some situations.
JuliaGrace- So “minority” doesn’t only have to do with numbers. What else does it have to do with?
The Lenses

During the fourth meeting, we chose lenses through which to analyze the stories the women wrote. The lenses we chose were Voice, power, intimidation, and respect. Each person received another woman’s story which she was to read looking through the lenses in the manner of Gilligan et al. (1990). We decided as a group (Karen’s suggestion) that we should each use our own definitions rather than coming to a consensus on what each of these lenses means. We each wrote up our own definitions as a part of this activity. The definitions of Voice as a lens were added to the written definitions from the first week and the verbal definitions given the second week. The definitions of the other three lenses are explored here.

The definitions of power were often about exuding influence or control over others.

Susan- Forceful strength over another person. Being superordinate and not letting anyone else have a Voice.

JuliaGrace- Power-over, anytime, someone had the ability or thought they had the ability to control another person.

Kate- The amount of impact a person has on another person or a group of people. Power results from being listened to...

Karen- The ability to influence someone else’s decisions or actions.

Megan- Authority over others.

Other definitions seemed to talk about one’s own ability to express and be heard, without having power-over another person.
Ashley- A feeling that one has commanded attention and is being heard.

Loren- The ability to affect.

Kelly- The ability to control emotions, events, and actions.

The definitions of intimidation often mentioned the fear associated with people who have power.

Megan- Making others fear you based on your power.

Susan- Scared or frightened in a certain situation, terrified of your surroundings.

Kate- When one is fearful of another person or event.

The concept of threat, both implicit and explicit came up in the definitions of intimidation.

Ashley- When one feels out of control and threatened by others.

JuliaGrace- attempts to use power-over in a threatening way, ultimatums, violence, aggression, withholding resources or support

Kelly- Threat. A feeling of personal weakness while up against another person who you fear in some way.

Respect was closely tied to being heard in the definitions. The lenses of respect and Voice often overlapped for the women.

Susan- Accepting others’ opinions and listening to others.
JuliaGrace- listening to and being listened to by another person, truly “hearing” and being “heard”, caring and appreciative of each other.

Kate- When someone takes the time and effort to see another’s point of view.

Respect was also closely tied to a sense of being admired and valued as a person.

Karen- When someone respects you, they value you as a person. Their actions should reflect this by them listening to you.

Ashley- When one has a high opinion of someone, or admiration.

Respect, in general, was tied to a variety of positive thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Loren- Consideration. Listening to someone’s Voice with openness.

Megan- A feeling of awe.

Kelly- Compassion, understanding, empathy.

Process Analysis

This project integrated both common methods of qualitative research, such as story-telling, conversation, and the use of prompts, with Theatre of the Oppressed methods. As such, the analysis below is not exclusively exploring the Theatre of the Oppressed methods, but instead examines the advantages and disadvantages of the process as a whole.

The process analysis will begin with the participants’ perspectives. An open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix F) was given on the last day of the project. A second questionnaire (see Appendix G) was sent out three weeks later. The comments
below came from these two questionnaires and comments made during the course of the project.

After the participants’ reflection, I will present my own observations and comments about the project, supported by examples from the participants’ quotes and actions.

Participants’ Observations

Overall reflections on the project

The overall reactions were abundantly positive. The women said they had fun, enjoyed themselves, and would do it all again. Several of them thanked me for having them involved in the project. A couple of them mentioned small confusions and hesitations, most of which were dealt with as the project progressed. Because these reactions do not divide well into subtopics, I am presenting them as they are.

Karen- Overall I enjoyed the project very much. I felt that I was really able to participate in it and I feel that my opinions about the project were taken into account.

Ashley- I thought it was well-planned and well-thought-out. I really thought this topic was interesting and also important to women. My overall experience with this was awesome.

Megan- I really enjoyed doing this project- I was kind of confused about the meaning of some of the games and such, but overall I actually looked forward to our weekly meetings and was sad when they ended. Overall, I would say this was a great experience and something I will surely reflect on over the years to come.

Heather- I was very impressed by the project. I have never before explored any aspects of theatre and was amazed to find out that even simple emotions could be expressed in dozens of ways. It was very interesting to learn about all the
ways in which Voice can be expressed not only through words but also silent poses. It was truly an enlightening experience.

Kate- I had a great time doing this project. At first I was somewhat hesitant and I really did not know what it was going to be like. The other girls in the project were great and I feel that we were able to learn and grow together while becoming more comfortable and aware of ourselves. I feel that this was such a great experience for me.

Susan- I felt that it was enjoyable and I learned a lot about myself and other people that are like me. I really enjoyed myself. Thank you for the experience.

Kelly- I thought that the project was well planned, interesting, and a lot of fun. I learned a lot about other women, especially women on Miami’s campus. I thought that the topic was very original and relevant. This was a wonderful experience. It should be a required study for every woman at Miami. Thank you for letting me participate.

Loren- From my own point of view I found this project to be successful. I certainly feel that it was an experience that I gained knowledge from. This knowledge is something that I feel I can apply to my everyday situations, perspectives, and feelings. I think that it is important that such issues, as those that we discussed, be brought up in order to bring about awareness, alter our perceptions, and increase reflection. I like that the project is so open-ended and that we can interject and add on to what other people say makes it really great.

This project as empowering

The term empowering came up in several of the conversations we had about Voice and this project. Because of this, I included a question on the final survey asking the participants if they found this project empowering. The response was a resounding yes from everyone. Below are some samples of their responses.
Susan- Yes I felt empowered. We basically controlled what we wanted to do and create our own images and forum. I felt like I have a different outlook on my surroundings.

Megan- Being surrounded by eight women inherently empowered me because usually I am around guys and in the minority, so this gave me a chance to really relate to women who were going through the same experiences and had the same feelings as I do.

Kelly- Each session was incredibly empowering. I was able to comfortably share many stories and incidents in my life and felt justified by expressing them to the other women in the group. I was empowered by the fact that the group of us came together to discuss really important issues in all of our lives.

Karen- I felt VERY empowered by the project. Many girls, especially at Miami can be competitive with each other and it was empowering to sit down with a group of women who were able to talk without competing. It was also very refreshing that other women felt the same way I do about the lack of females’ “Voices” at Miami’s campus. Knowing that you are not alone in your views is always empowering because it makes you feel that you are not fighting a losing battle. After every meeting I always felt so sure of myself and very confident with who I am.

How this project affects other aspects of life

All of the women agreed that they have taken away from this project knowledge that they can apply to other aspects of their lives.

Ashley- Yes it has, but in ways I somehow can’t describe. I think it made me see myself as more of a strong woman and it really helped me realize how oppressed
women really are, and to not just let myself fall into that. It made me feel more “womanly” I guess.

Heather- I think it changed the way I deal with first impressions. If I see someone who has a sour look on their face, I don’t automatically think they are rude or mean. There are many different ways to interpret every situation and we shouldn’t jump to conclusions on the first impression.

Megan- This project made me look at some of my beliefs and reexamine them to see why I thought what I thought. Some of the girls were so opinionated that I felt as though I need to begin to take a stance on issues rather than just always sitting back and accepting others’ ideas. Also, the fact that we could really open up and talk with each other so freely after only knowing each other for a short time really gave me more faith in the women at Miami and showed me that they are not all simply snobby bitches.

Kate- It has made me realize how lucky I am to have such a supportive and open-minded family. It has also helped me to realize my own Voice and to speak up to things that I might not have before. It was a very empowering experience.

Loren- For me, having the opportunity to discuss my feelings and views with others makes my views more concrete; they crystallize in a sense. Having the chance to interact and bounce ideas off of one another (each person bringing unique experience and knowledge) really benefited me. What I learned from this project is something that I can and do carry over to my everyday life and certainly aids me in my progression toward further development of my Voice.

Participating in future qualitative research

I wanted to know what these women felt about a feminist qualitative project such as this one, so I asked them if they would ever consider being a part of qualitative research again. They all said yes, they would.
Ashley- Yes I would, I think I would prefer it actually [as compared to quantitative research].

Karen- Not only would I feel comfortable I plan to seek one out for the next project I choose to participate in!!!!

Megan- I definitely would love to participate in another experiment again similar to this. I felt incredibly comfortable and able to open up to the rest of the group.

Heather- Definitely. At first I was intimidated by the project of Voice and Theatre of the Oppressed because I am not a very outgoing and talkative person in new situations. However, I found out that I had fun and I think qualitative research on average is probably more interesting than quantitative.

Kate- Yes, definitely . It was a great experience, I had a good time and I feel that I learned a lot about myself and how I was both similar and different from the other girls in the group.

Games the participants liked

Overall, the participants loved playing the games. All the women said how much they loved the vampire of Strasbourg game.

Ashley- My favorites were playing basketball/volleyball/softball with the invisible ball; and when we each were “playing” with an invisible ball then we “passed” it to another person and then seeing how each person translated it; VAMPIRE!; the mirroring; and on the last day, when we got in pairs and told a detailed story of an event and the other person had to remember it and act it out (not sure if that was a game).

Susan- I liked the vampire game and the forum. I liked the mirror game too!
Kelly- Vampire, Imaginary Kickball, Images

Loren- I shared in Katie’s love for the “Vampire game”. I like to have my eyes closed and wander around aimlessly, for some reason it was relaxing, perhaps because out of all of the other games this one had the least pressure to perform.

Games the participants didn’t like

When asked to respond on what games they didn’t like, several of the women said there were no games which they didn’t like.

Karen- I really liked when we acted out the night before and I loved the forum! There aren’t any games that really stuck out that had a very positive or negative impact but I feel that they really helped to loosen us up with each other.

Kelly- They were all enjoyable

The only game that more than one person didn’t enjoy was the slow motion walk game. They seemed to enjoy it the first time or so, but I think we may have done it a bit too often.

Ashley- I did not really enjoy the slow-motion walking.

Kate- They were all okay. I didn’t not find much patience for the slow walking one

Megan- I did not enjoy seeing how slowly we could walk across the classroom, or when we had to pick a particular body part and follow it.

Favorite part of the project
The women seemed to really enjoy the comfortable atmosphere and the freedom of expression that this project afforded them. Several commented that this was the first time they felt so free to speak their minds since they had come to this university.

Ashley- I would have to say the overall effect it had on me. I learned so much about this topic of women and oppression and theater and I had really not even thought about these issues at all before. Also, I truly truly truly felt bonded with JuliaGrace and the other seven participants, and that helped tremendously I think.

Kate- I really liked being able to talk and to hear other girls talk. It was such a comfortable environment. I felt like I could say anything and not be judged. I also liked writing a story that pertained to the topics that we were discussing in the project.

Susan- Having the freedom to speak your mind.

Kelly- The second to last day I felt we all bonded a lot. When we discussed our stories.

Other participants picked out specific activities or events as their favorite aspect of the project.

Karen- The forum! It was so interesting to see how different people will react in different situations.

Megan- Discussion was my favorite part- I enjoyed being able to sit around and discuss any issues that came to mind with pizza and snacks all around. I almost felt like we were having “girl talk,” and I also feel like a lot of important information came out of that time. All the times when we were interacting with each other
really made me feel like it brought us closer. Another part I liked was when we
reenacted each other’s stories.

Heather- My favorite part of the project was when we told others our stories and
then they had to recreate them with actions and actors. It was very fun and
showed a window into someone’s Voice told through others.

Least favorite part of the project

The participants did not have very many negative comments about the project.
The only thing that more than one woman commented on was the length of the final
sessions.

Megan- I did not like how we had to meet for 4 hours at the end- I would have
rather had that split up into at least 3 sessions. That’s really the only part I did
not like- most of the other things about the project were great

Susan- The long hours, it was sometimes difficult to concentrate.

The other negative comments were mostly a matter of personal preference and
were not felt by multiple members of the group (except, again, for the slow motion
game).

Heather- My least favorite part was missing the first weekend day because I was
sick. When I came back, I found out I had missed the reading of everyone’s
personal stories. Although the one I wrote wasn’t very deep or enlightening, I felt
I missed an important aspect of the project.

Karen- I really didn’t have one. I didn’t really like the game where we saw who
could walk the slowest because it got boring.

Kate- The reading assignments.
Several of the comments about the least favorite part really showed how much the participants enjoyed the project.

Kelly - I would do it again in a heart beat.

Loren - Besides moving chairs back after each session, probably that the project didn’t span over a longer period of time.

The readings

During the final weekend I asked them to assess the readings so that I could know which ones to use again and which ones to avoid using. All of the readings were seen as useful, though there were suggestions made as to the order they were presented in and the portions of the readings which were used. Some of the comments were about specific readings.

Karen - The readings were good but I think we should have had more background information on Theatre of the Oppressed at the beginning. I wish we would have read this one (Fisher) earlier in the project rather than in the fourth week. It was a good overview article. Also, I liked the Boal reading because it was really specific examples and was easy to understand.

Kate - I really like it right here where it (Fine and Gordon) says if you really want to know something about someone, do not put participants in a laboratory or hand them a survey. That’s on page 16. I feel it says some of the research is too impersonal.

Karen - The introduction and letter to the reader in Gilligan’s book didn’t make sense to me, but the first chapter of it was good.
Other comments were about the use of readings in general, including the length, the usefulness, and the background information they supplied.

Loren- By addressing issues in specific situations, while at the same time reading handouts from others who are educated on the subject, really enhanced my learning.

Kelly- The readings were excellent.

Heather- The readings were sometimes quite long and we didn’t seem to discuss them that much even though they did provide good background knowledge for the activities that we did together.

On making images

The women repeatedly commented on how much they enjoyed making the images. Here are two examples of those comments.

Kate- I like how we put people into positions to show Voice. I thought it was better that way. Because if I tried to just explain what I was thinking, it would have been less of what it really was. When I would show it, it made me realize what I thought about Voice more than if I just said it.

Loren- It’s kind of like you have this innate feeling about something but words can’t describe it the same way. Images can.

Researcher Observations

Overall comments on the project

During week one, at first the women seemed a bit reluctant, but once they got into the games they began giggling and apparently having fun. Several of them even mentioned it being fun. I really do think the games helped them begin to get into the images and start expressing themselves. I say this because they all seemed so
embarrassed and reluctant at the start of the games, but by the time we got to making images, they were much more into it.

At times during the process, I was concerned because some of the women spoke quite a bit more than the others and I worried that this might be Silencing to the quieter ones. During the final weekend, when these women shared their final stories with the group, I was amazed at how articulately these women expressed themselves in the written format. Their final reactions to the project showed that they enjoyed the project and felt like they were heard. If this project was based solely on the discussion, I would have drastically misunderstood and misrepresented the experiences of these women.

Reducing the power differentials

There were a number of issues which made it difficult to reduce the power differentials, mostly because I could not change the fact that we were in a classroom and that I am a teacher and a researcher. I tried to do a variety of things to lessen these power differentials. One of the things I did was to try to dissuade the image that the assignments were homework because although this has a lot in common with a class, I don’t want to mimic the power structures that are found in classrooms.

Another method of reducing the power differentials was to try to break them of habits formed in their classrooms. At one point in the project I realized that they kept raising their hands and looking at me for “permission” to talk. I didn’t want this to feel so “class-like” so I had the following conversation with the participants:

JuliaGrace- I’ve noticed you guys have started raising your hands and calling the prompts “homework” and while I am giving you assignments and you are getting course credit…okay, it does sound like homework. I really want you to just speak up, comment on each other’s things. Don’t look to me to get permission to use your Voice.
Kate- That goes against everything they’ve trained us to do since kindergarten.
Kelly- In high school, all my AP classes were discussion classes.
JuliaGrace- Okay, what stories do you guys want to share about times you’ve been Silenced? [looking at Kelly] You raised your hand!
Kate- I know, I know. I told you it was going to be hard for me. JuliaGrace- Okay, I’m not going to look up. Someone just needs to start speaking. [they begin speaking without raising their hands]

After this conversation, the participants no longer raised their hands and the conversations seemed to flow much smoother than they had been.

When we got to “vampire of Strasbourg” during week three, I let one of them start the game out so I was a ‘victim’ along with everyone else. As each victim was claimed, I realized that I was the last one left and they all ‘bit’ me at the same time. It was a wonderful feeling of connection and camaraderie that they felt they could joke with me like that. It felt really good, like the power dynamics were lessened.

Representation and Power

The participants and I had much in common in that we were all females who study psychology at a mid-western university, but there was also much that we didn’t have in common. On average these women were 5 years younger than myself so this project involved an age difference between the participants and myself. I had not originally considered this to be a problem, but as the project went on, I found that just a few short years can create a whole different frame of reference in regards to technology, pop culture, and personal life’s issues.

Another difference was in education level. I as a graduate student had read a great number of things relevant to this project that they had not. But the major differences came down to issues of power. I am the graduate student and the researcher and the leader of this project, and as such these women did not always see me as one of them. I was Other, and I was Other with power. I said what we did, when we did at the meetings. I chose the prompts for the writing assignments. I chose the readings. This helped to perpetuate myself as Other. However, during the third week of the project, one of the women asked me if we could play a “name game” so she could learn everyone else’s names. This was the first time they had taken initiative to have power in this project, something I had been hoping would occur. This to me was a pivotal point in the project because they had begun to take the lead and had begun to behave in ways that indicated a lessening of the power-barriers that divided myself from
them. This was particularly important to me because in order for them to really express their thoughts on Voice, they needed to feel free from the constraints of my power and not seek my approval or permission (which they attempted to do in a number of ways including raising their hands when they wanted to speak; I squelched this by closing my eyes and just letting them talk).

The forum topic/story they chose seemed unrealistic to me, but they all seemed to respond to it. It was a story about a girl and a boyfriend in a bar and how he got drunk and jealous. I thought some of the stuff they were doing was out of character, but they swore to me it wasn’t. Here is a good example of an outsider not deciding what “magic” is because I would have been wrong. “Magic” is when the given solution is unlikely to occur or even impossible given the character being portrayed, such as a maid pulling a gun on her boss, or someone suddenly knowing karate who didn’t a minute before (Boal, 2002).

Collaboration with the participants

Karen came up to me prior to the third meeting and asked if we could do a “getting to know you” exercise so she could remember the names of the others in the group. Karen even came up with the idea for the game. We did a “spot the not” game. Everyone told their name and then told 3 things about themselves, 2 were true, one was made up. I took notes on what each person said. After each person listed their 3 things, we voted on the ”not” and then we told the truth. Then everyone began asking each other questions on their “truths”. This was really one of the first times that one of the participants realized she could affect the way in which the research sessions would go.

The third meeting was also the first time the participants started really expressing preferences for certain games over others. During this meeting I asked them to tell me what games they wanted to do. I think this made them feel like that had more control over the process. After this week, the participants made comments more often about what games they did and did not want to play. This extended also into them bringing up topics and issues that were not a part of my original agendas.

Another time when the participants exerted their influence on the project occurred during the fourth week of the project. The questions of what definitions we
were using for the lenses came up. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Karen suggested we each come up with our own definitions for the lenses. This became an additional assignment that the participants placed upon themselves.

On being a Joker

This project was my first attempt at Jokering for more than a few minutes at a time. This required identifying not only my own ideas and goals as a Joker, but understanding the needs and interests of the women in the project. Salverson (1994) refers to this as “Identifying Ourselves and Our Interests” and “Naming Issues.” Since Jokering and Theatre of the Oppressed varies based upon the group and context in which the work is being done, each Theatre of the Oppressed undertaking needs to be adjusted to suit the needs of the group. For instance, the games and methods of Jokering used for a group of male convicts would be very different from the games and methods of Jokering used with victims of domestic violence.

In order to plan how to Joker with this group I needed to know who the women were, what they were interested in, and what oppressions they felt in their lives. I also needed to know how I fit or didn’t fit into the same categories and needs as these women. As the weeks progressed I noticed that they had a lot to say about Silencing and Voice in terms of their families (mostly Silencing), their education, and their friendships. They didn’t speak much of Voice and Silencing in their romantic relationships, though the topic did come up on occasion. These women also expressed a lot of information about themselves. For the most part their families were financially stable and of the upper-middle class (a point at which I differ from them, having grown up in a blue-collar family). Several of the women were in sororities, and several didn’t like sororities at all. This was something that I feared might make them uncomfortable with each other, but they seemed to form friendships and bonds regardless of sorority issues. I myself was never in a sorority. They also spoke about their individual professors, the parties they went to, and their favorite forms of communication, namely email and instant-messaging, none of which I could personally relate to. Because the group, myself included, had some things in common and others not, I often asked the women if what we were doing interested them and was helpful.
I also needed to understand my own goals and biases as a Joker. First, I wanted to Joker in such a way that the women would feel they had choices in what we were doing. To accomplish this, I had them vote on games to play after I had introduced them to some of the games. I also had them come up with the Lenses through which we read the stories during the fourth week of the project. Secondly, I wanted them to feel comfortable and empowered. I had them lead games at times, briefly take over Jokering when it came time to analyze images, and made sure they knew they could opt out of anything that made them uncomfortable. An example of my attempts to do this occurred during the first week. I was concerned that they might have been uncomfortable with games and activities that required them to touch each other, so I told them they didn’t have to do anything that involved touching and that they could mirror all their images if they wanted. It turned out this was an unneeded concern as the women started physically molding and touching each other during the first day. Though my caution was ultimately unnecessary, the statement matched my goals of encouraging a safe and comfortable environment. Finally, I hoped to get at issues of Voice and Silencing in their college classes and their personal relationships. I also knew that I didn’t want to limit them to the topics I was interested in, so I tried not to directly ask them about school and romantic relationships, and instead attempted to step back and allow them to look at Voice and Silencing in whatever areas they wanted. This stance worked well because I had not anticipated the wealth of stories and comments the women had on the topic of family. Through understanding my own goals and biases going into the project, I feel I was better able to recognize when I should guide the work and when I should stand back and let it unfold.

*Forming a community*

Over the course of the project a number of things happened which made it seem like the women were forming their own community within the project. For example, during week three we took a 5-minute break, during which the women mostly stayed in the room and really began engaging each other in conversation (mostly gossip and class stuff). This was different from the first week when they didn’t talk.

Also during week three, Karen made her request that we do a getting to know you exercise. It was also during week three that they began making little inside jokes,
like constantly asking to play the vampire of Strasbourg game or trying to make Kelly laugh because she snorts when she laughs and everyone found that funny.

I think the final examples of the community-building aspects of this project occurred during the last weekend. Because these workshops were very long, we decided to have food and drinks at them. I was really touched that Karen brought in a cookie cake with the words “Happy Research Day” on it. Also during this final weekend, one of the participants asked everyone else in the group to go out with her on her 21st birthday (a very important birthday to college students). After the project ended, the participants continued to invite each other out for meals and outings.

*The forum*

The forum that was developed on the last day did not tie in with the rest of the project in the ways I had intended on it connecting. We began by making a number of images and then voting on one of the images to act out in a scene. The vote chose an image of one person raising her hand to another. This sort of violent oppression was not one that we had explored in our conversations at all and I believe it was chosen for the theatricality of the image.

That image was turned into a forum in which a young women was out at a bar dancing with a male friend. Her boyfriend enters the bar and flirts with another girl before noticing his girlfriend is there. Despite the fact that he was flirting, he becomes jealous and accuses the girl of cheating. He then attempts to drag her out of the bar.

All of the women in this project struck me as being highly independent, intelligent women, and it seemed unlikely to me that they would ever find themselves in a situation similar to this one. They kept reassuring me that they have seen this happen and that this is a common occurrence for college women.

Once the scene was established and we tried to find “solutions” to this problem, I became concerned by their initial “solutions.” They kept trying to replace the male friend and have “him” fix the situations. It began with the male friend placing himself physically between the girlfriend and the boyfriend, and continued with threats of violence against the boyfriend. These responses struck me as particularly masculine reactions to the situation. This surprised me considering the weeks of work we had
done on women’s voices being silenced by others, including men, and the degree to which these women had expressed desires to empower themselves.

After convincing them to try to fix the situation from the perspective of the girlfriend, the first couple of solutions actually made the situation worse. They resulted in the female being dragged from the bar, or hit in the bar. These “solutions” were focused much more on reasoning with the boyfriend character and talking him down, rather than the physical responses attempted when the women replaced the male friend. In subsequent “solutions”, the “girlfriend” tried to explain that she was not flirting or cheating, then she tried to explain that the boyfriend was drunk and was not thinking straight, another offered an ultimatum about sobering-up before discussing the issue, and a final one began screaming obscenities at the boyfriend.

I think this is one part of the project that could be greatly improved upon in future projects. I feel the difficulties with the forum are related both to my limited experiences with forums (though I have gained more experience since this project ended), and to the way in which we chose the image on which we based the forum. I feel the forum would have gone better if we had used one of the images of Voice that we saw repeatedly during the project. I also feel that forum work should be done gradually in future projects so that there is time as the weeks progress to deal with any problems that come up.

Discussion

I had two goals for this project. The first goal was to establish the value of Voice as a research topic. I feel that the content of this project indicated how powerful this topic can be for women. In my opinion, these women felt strongly about the Voice, explaining both the ways in which they’re Voices were both heard and Silenced. They talked about Voice in terms of whose is heard and whose isn’t heard, when people are heard, under what conditions. For example, most of these women felt they were heard when with their closest friends, but almost none of them felt they were heard in the classroom, especially when they compared themselves to male students. These women felt Voice differently based upon the personal identity they were talking about, as either students, or women, or daughters. As I interpreted this project I saw these women as exemplifying the ways in which Voice and Silencing can mean different
things to different people, something that was very apparent in the images they chose to make about Voice (e.g. the three different images of the classroom the women made, showing different ways of being Silenced).

The second goal for this project was to explore the use of Theatre of the Oppressed methods as a qualitative measure. The amount of information gained by using Theatre of the Oppressed amazed me. These methods empowered the students and made it an enjoyable and valuable project for everyone involved. The women loved the vampire of Strasbourg game, for instance, which allowed them both the freedom of trusting others because their eyes were closed, and the power to have an effect on others when they were vampires. Exploring Voice through images elicited so much more than could ever have been merely “said” by the participants. Several of the women said that they felt they couldn’t explain themselves verbally as well as they could visually. For instance, saying Silencing someone is “putting them down” does not have the same impact as an image of a women in the fetal position being stepped on. In this way Theatre of the Oppressed acted as both a valuable data gathering tool, a source of empowerment and expression for the women in the project.

All of the women felt that they’re Voices were heard in the project in ways that they had not been heard before. I feel strongly that Voice research should be done in social psychology with other groups of women or other out-groups. I also feel that Theatre of the Oppressed methods could be integrated into feminist psychological research, an area which values the Voices of its participants and seeks to give back to the participants. My project did both, I listened to the women, they were really heard by myself and the other participants, but I also helped them have an experience which was empowering, fun, and educational for the women. To me this says a lot about the value of a qualitative project for which Voice is both a topic and a goal.

I found this project to be greatly rewarding and a wonderful way of gathering qualitative data while empowering participants. I look forward to doing future projects combining Theatre of the Oppressed and Social Psychology. For example, as one of the women suggested, a project similar to this one could be done with incoming freshman. This group is coming from high school, where they may not have been encouraged to use their voices in classrooms very much. Freshman also come from a
variety of backgrounds and may not understand both the similarities and differences they have with one another. The work I have done in this project could be done with them in order to both help them express their voices and understand each other.

Future research on Voice and Theatre of the Oppressed can also be done with groups of women who have experienced certain types of oppression and stigmatization. I would like to work with victims of spousal abuse, victims of sexual abuse, pregnant teenagers, and obese women. I would also like to attempt projects that involved men, seeing as we cannot reduce sexism and violence against women without men and women working together on these problems.

It would also be valuable to conduct research comparing a project done both with and without the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques so as to determine if the increases in complexity and openness were related to the Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, or to the general passage of time over the course of the project.
References


research (pp. 115-138). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.


Appendix A

Consent form for participants in JuliaGrace Jester’s Voice Project

Please read the following. If you agree to and understand the instructions, please initial after each paragraph to which you consent and sign the reverse side of this form.

You are being asked to participate in a study of women who are exploring the concept of “Voice as women in higher education”. Part of this study will be to use Theatre of the Oppressed methods to gather qualitative data on Voice. As such, you will be asked both to join in conversations and Theatre of the Oppressed games/activities. You will not be required to perform for anyone outside of the research project. The participants themselves decide the topics discussed. Sensitive topics may come up but you are not required to discuss anything you would consider to be of a sensitive nature. _____

The written material you will share with me as a researcher will become part of my thesis, and may be quoted in written reports in sum or in part. By signing this consent form, you agree that I may use your written materials in my thesis. This material will, of course, be anonymous in the written reports by substituting a pseudonym for your actual name. All participants will be given the option of reviewing any of their own words, which will be used in the thesis, or any other publications, prior to submission of the paper. _____

As it will be impossible for JuliaGrace Jester to both participate in the activities and keep notes on what is being said, the sessions will be recorded, either audio or video. Neither type of recording will be shown to anyone other than individuals involved directly in this project. By signing this consent form, you give permission to be audio and/or video recorded during your participation in the project. _____

The time commitment involved would be 2 hours per week for 4 weeks and then 8 hours over the course of a single weekend. The process will involve some independent reading, generally of one or two articles per week. This means a total commitment of 16 hours plus reading time. For this participation you will receive one credit of Independent Research in Psychology. It is hoped that the project will be enjoyable and education for both the participants and myself. _____

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at any time. In order to still receive the one credit of independent study, a withdrawing participant will be offered to work as a research assistant with JuliaGrace Jester for the same number of hours as continued participation would have entailed. Participants who wish to withdraw and do not want to do research assistant work will be given a withdrawal pass for the one-credit hour. _____
By signing this form, you agree to participate in this study, as specified above. Again, you may withdraw from this study at any time. Please sign below and initial at the end of each previous paragraph.

____________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Participant signature       Date

________________________________________   __________

Researcher signature

________________________________________   __________

Phone number and email address where you can be reached:

________________________________________________________________

Any questions about the project, the topic, the time commitment, or the results of the project can be asked at any time. These questions should be addressed to JuliaGrace Jester by email at j_j_jester1@hotmail.com or by phone at 529-3135. Participants may also call the Office for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching (513-529-3734) for questions about their rights as participants in this or any other research project.

[This form is based upon a similar one used by

Jennifer Laine King-Cooper (1995)]
Appendix B

Demographic Information Sheet

Please complete the following information so I can accurately describe the women who took part in the study. I will NOT read these until after the 5 weeks of the project are completed, so it will be your choice whether or not to reveal any of this information during the project.

Name:
___________________________________________________

Chosen Pseudonym (if any), first name only:
___________________________________________________

Racial and Ethnic background:
___________________________________________________

Age    Year in School:
________________  ______________________

Major:
_______________________________________________

Socio-economic class you grew up in [use the categories of upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, working class, or other (please specify)]:________________________________________________________

[This form is based upon a similar one used by Jennifer Laine King-Cooper (1995)]
Appendix C

Proposed Ground Rules for Voice in Psychology Project
Conducted by JuliaGrace J. Jester

The Purpose of the Project

- is to reflect on ourselves, our Voices, what it means to be women, especially in terms of being in higher education
- is to help me gather information on Voice for my thesis and for future research
- is not to critique the writing or performing abilities of others
- is not to provide therapy even if sensitive issues become relevant.

In that Context, I propose the following rules:

- Confidentiality in the group- everything said within the group remains within the group. This includes information about participants and their characteristics.
- Confidentiality in my thesis- it will be up to each participant whether she wants me to use her real name or a pseudonym in writing my thesis. You may change the name you’ve chosen up until my thesis defense.
- Respect for ourselves and others in the group by owning your own Voice (I hear anger, rather than you were angry in that performance/writing), being appreciative when others share with the group even if your own ideas/feelings differ, and by taking time out if you need a break from the topic or the activity.
- Feel free to comment on the process at any time during the project. This is an evolving project and adjustments can be made to better suit the group involved.

[This form is based upon a similar one used by Jennifer Laine King-Cooper (1995)]
Appendix D

First meeting Prompts
Give your personal definition of the term Voice.
Tell a story about a time when you were aware that your Voice was being heard.

Second meeting Prompts
Give your personal definition of the term Silencing.
Tell a story about a time when you were aware that your Voice was not being heard.

Third meeting Prompt
In a word document, write a detailed story about an experience in your life that you think relates to this project (try to make it at least a page long). Bring in two copies of this to next week’s meeting. We will talk next week about reading these new stories in terms of the Reading Guide Described in the Gilligan, Brown, and Roger article. We need not use the lenses they suggest (justice, etc.), but instead we will make up our own next week.
Appendix E

Definitions of the Games Used

All definitions are from Games for Actors and Non-actors (Boal, 2002) with the exception of “windmill”.

“Feeling what we touch” Exercises-

*Columbian hypnosis*- One participant “hypnotizes” another participant by placing the palm of her hand in front of the other participant’s face. The hypnotist then moves her hand around with the other participant following the hand. After a while, the participants switch roles. This game is varied by hypnotizing more than one person at a time and by using other body parts besides the hand as the focal point.

*The cross and the circle*- Participants are instructed to make a circle using their right hand. That is stopped, and the participants are asked to make a cross with their left hand. The participants are then asked to do both at the same time. This game is varied by sitting down and switching to the feet, making a circle with one foot while writing their name in the air with the other foot.

*Slow motion*- It is a race across a room in which the last participant to reach the finish line is the winner. Feet should be raised to knee level when walking and participants may never move backwards. This game can be varied by suggesting that the room is filled with honey and trying to cross it with that in mind.

*As you like it*- Begins by walking in a normal gait around the space. Participants are then asked to change their walk in some way.

“Listening to what we hear” Exercises-

*The machine of rhythms*- All participants gather in a circle. One person goes to the center of the circle and begins making a sound and a motion as if a piece in a machine (i.e. moving right hand in a circle and making a ‘whirring’ sound). After a few moments, another participant adds a sound and motion to the machine. This continues until all participants are a part of the machine.

*A round of rhythm and movement*- One person in the middle of a circle begins making a sound and a motion which everyone else in the group begins doing as well.
The person in the center then challenges someone to change the movement and sound by moving in front of that person. This person then goes into the middle and begins making a sound and a motion. Everyone then switches to follow the new leader.

_The Peruvian game of ball-_ Each person plays with an imaginary ball, then they pick a partner and observe. After a few moments they switch balls with their partner. New partners are chosen and the process is repeated several times. After several switches, everyone is challenged to go find who has their original ball.

_Walk, stop, justify-_ Everyone walks around room in strange way. Then the joker says “stop”, and everyone must “explain” their position they are frozen in.

“Dynamising several senses” Exercises-

_Noises-_ Some closes their eyes and becomes “blind”. The blind person follows animal sounds made by a partner around the room, avoiding obstacles and choosing directions based upon the sounds made by the “seeing” partner.

_The vampire of Strasbourg-_ Everyone closes their eyes and begins walking around the room. The joker then pinches someone on the neck and makes a “vampire”. The new vampire opens her eyes and screams, and then tries to make another vampire. This game continues until there are no more potential victims.

“Seeing what we look at” Exercises-

_The plain mirror-_ Participants get into two lines facing each other. One line becomes the “subject”, while the other line is the reflection of that subject. Each “subject” moves body and face slowly but continuously. It is the goal of each “reflection” participant to match her “subject” as closely as possible in both bodily and facial movements. This requires a great attention to detail to mirror the other participant (p.130). This can be varied by requiring everyone on one side of the mirror to hold hands and move together.

_The mirror breaks-_ The mirror breaks and the participants no longer need to stay in the lines. The pairs move off together while trying to maintain the same relationship.

_The distorting mirror-_ The subject does normal actions and mirror makes them as a funhouse mirror might look, distorted.
The narcissistic mirror- The subject makes a series of happiness images to be mirrored. A variation is to do other emotions besides happy, such as sad, angry, and giddy.

The sculptor touches the model- This is sculpting with no mirroring allowed. Everything must be sculpted and the “sculptures may not move of their own volition at all.

The sculptors fashion a single sculpture together- Several sculptures form one sculpture together following the same rules as the sculptor touches the model

Ball games- Participants play an imaginary ball game (any game which involves a ball). All rules for the particular ball game are observed.

One person we fear, one person is our protector- Everyone moves around the space, and chooses one person to fear and one person who they think will protect them. They then try to keep as far away from the feared person as is possible while staying as close to the “protector” as is possible. Participants should not say who you are afraid of or who their protector is.

“The memory of the senses” Exercises-

Remembering yesterday- After a moment of silence, the participants are asked to remember what occurred the night before. The goal is to remember not just the events, but the tastes, sounds, smells, etc. of the evening. As the participants remember the evening, they start moving as they had the night before, attempting to connect to everything they sensed the night before (i.e. remembering eating, the participants would move their mouths as if chewing and attempt to recall the smells and tastes of that meal).

Remembering a day in the past- Similar to remembering yesterday but instead the participant describes a day from her past to a “co-pilot”. The participant tries to recreate everything about the day, especially attempting to remember all the senses. It must be an important day.

Windmill- This game did not come from Boal. It is a game I knew from other theater work. I thought it would relax and center them. Everyone starts by bending forward from the hips with their arms dangling in front of them. Everyone then slowly
starts swaying from side to side. This swaying begins moving up and up until arms are going in a full circle.
Appendix F

Name:____________________________________________

Do you want to change to a pseudonym? If so what?
____________________________________________

Address where you will be at in 2 or 3 weeks

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

____________________________________________

Please just write your over all impressions of this study. Comments on readings, process, games, writing prompts, etc. are al well come. Feel free to use the back of the page:
Final Questionnaire

Please respond to this questionnaire in regards to your participation in JuliaGrace Jester's project on Voice and Theatre of the Oppressed.

Overall what were your impressions of this project?

Did you feel empowered by the project?

Has this project changed the way you view other aspects of your life?

Would you feel comfortable participating in qualitative research again in your life?

What particular games did you enjoy?

What particular games did you not enjoy?

What was your favorite part of the project?

What was your least favorite part of the project?