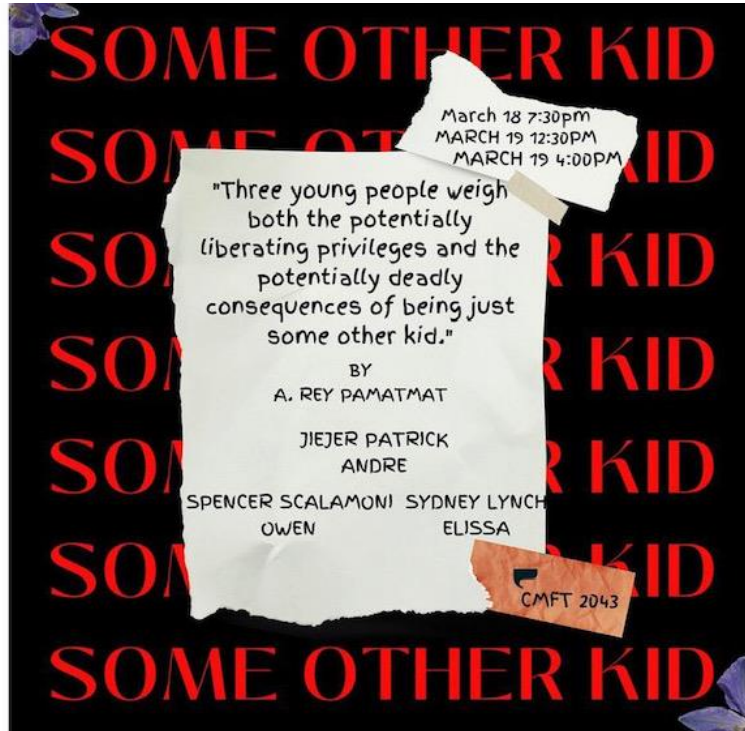


Some Other Kid by A. Rey Pamatmat:

Performance Activism



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Submitted to the Board of Theatre & Performance
Conservatory of Theatre Arts
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Bachelor of Arts

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Purchase College
State University of New York
May 2022

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Actor's Goals

My senior project at SUNY Purchase is acting in *Some Other Kid* by A. Ray Pamatmat. The ten-minute play tells the story of three teenage kids, Andre, Elissa, and Owen, entering adulthood. The character I play for this Performance is Andre. The play takes place in Andre's home with the soon-to-be young adults rehashing the good old days before everyone departs. Each character has a monologue talking to the audience about their perspective on life. Towards the end, a shocking event changes the character's perspective on life. The short ten-minute play is part of a collective in The New Black Fest. The New Black Fest commissioned six very diverse playwrights to write 10-minute plays on the topic of Trayvon Martin, race and/or privilege. In my opinion, *Some Other Kid* does a good job showcasing the struggles African Americans face, such as police brutality and social status.

My primary artistic aim for this project is to hone my acting skills. My secondary aim is to use theater to raise awareness on current social issues, such as racial profiling and gun control. My third aim is to create a world where the audience can find themselves drawn to and connecting with the character. I plan to do this by making my character three-dimensional and relatable. By doing this, I will work on the physical and psychological aspects of Andre. When the audience sees me, they shouldn't see me portraying the character but becoming the character himself. This will take getting familiar with the character I am playing by building a relationship with him, by doing this I will have to some in depth work with character Andre. I will have to start learning his history The play is not to make the audience uncomfortable but to inform and raise awareness on current issues that it's addressing. I also look at it as a wake-up call. In today's generation, most of us, if not all, tend to look the other way when racism or police brutality

happens. We seem to see it and acknowledge it, but after that day or a week, we focus on something else. This play is a reminder that this happens way more often than you know. My role as a black person, not just an actor, is to not just empathize with this piece but treat this play like it's part of my life because, in some way, it is.

Some Other Kid is based on Trayvon Martin's case. Trayvon Martin was a teenage kid who was fatally shot by George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida in 2012. Trayvon was visiting his dad and his dad's fiancé in a nice neighborhood. He was walking from the store with a pack of skittles and a bottle of tea. Zimmerman saw him as a "threat" shot the teenage boy. Similarly, in the play, my character Andre lives in a nice neighborhood and wouldn't suspect that walking at night would be dangerous for him. Unfortunately, he meets his demise by a gunshot. A. Rey Pamatmat created this to keep the issues of racial profiling and gun violence part of the national conversation. My job as an actor is to make sure his message about black lives has meaning across in *Some Other Kid*. Pamatmat doesn't just want the actor to internally know what they are thinking, but also the audience. Andre, one of the characters, delivers a whole monologue how about today's society. "Everything is stupid. That's what people don't get. No one is a better person...No one's life is better or more important than anyone else's." (*Some Other Kid* 33). Prior to this moment Owen, Andre's friend gave a speech how he feels less than him. This leads Andre to break the fourth wall and speak directly to the audience. Pamatmat is using this monologue to remind people how black lives aren't any less or better than others.

On the first day of class of Black Performance Theater, our professor Lavonda Elam asked us "What is black theater?" Most of the class responses were "Truthfully black," "Black Experience," "Breaks down barriers," and "Black artists," but LaVonda never really gave us clear definitions of it. Looking back now, I think that she wanted us to know there are so many

qualities that make up black theater. The class stated that “Truthfully black, preserving black history, and black artists having creative control” are key ingredients that make black theater. One thing I remember LaVonda telling us is that before taking on a role you must know your work. What is the history behind the play and its setting? Where did it take place? What’s the playwright’s early life story and what made them write this play? How can you as an individual relate to this play? It’s very critical as an actor to know what you are performing. If you lack knowledge of the story that you are telling, then the piece won’t seem authentic to the audience.

One of the tools Lavonda taught me is body exercise, finding ways to step into your character's physical stance and emotional mentality. We did this by listening to certain types of music and thinking of ways our character would move to that type of music. Another tool is doing the educational work, such as figuring out the history behind the character you portray. What's the history of where they live, and how do they interact with that? Using the tools LaVonda has taught me, I can overcome the lack of understanding of my character and his perspective on things. I can also begin to develop empathy for him and understand his feeling when he is facing personal issues, such as being looked at to change the world. In the end, I can embody Andre and tell his story truthfully.

Andre is a perfect role for me to learn who I am as an actor because of the frustration, tiredness, and sadness in his dialogue and monologue. Roles I seem to connect with are the ones that cause the audience to think about the subject the character is addressing and ones that always grow through points of the story. Andre is brutally honest and can be very vulgar with his words. The reason this could be difficult is because I am not like this. I can see myself having difficult times transforming my brain into Andre’s brain. A question that lingers in my head is, as the actor, you know your character's fate, but how do you play at a character unaware of his fate

until that time comes? Andre is an honor student, and he plans to go to college. He has a sense of pride in his work and capabilities, but there's humbleness about it. As an actor, I think it isn't easy managing these characteristics because they both are opposites of each other. There are moments in the play where Andre is prideful and smart-tongued with his friends, but there are certain moments where he can show humility. For example, Andre's best friend Owen has a crush on Elissa, his other best friend. Owen at times gets smart with Andre, but Andre rebuts by giving him threats hinting to tell Elissa about his crush, but Andre never does, knowing how serious it is for Owen. He reminds his friends that he's no one better than who they are, even if they think of it. Andre is nothing special but a productive human being in a society like others. That's what stands out to me with Andre. There are moments when I think I must be the best actor and I start to compare myself to other actors' skills. But when it comes to it, no one is better or special than the other person. People have different strengths about them and use them to their advantage.. Relating the moment with Andre when he keeps it secret that Owen likes Elissa. I know there have been times I know a secret about a friend. Like Andre, I teased them with it, but I always value their privacy and never revealed it.

My second goal is to use theater to raise awareness about racial profiling and gun violence. Gun violence is violence committed with a firearm, and racial profiling assumes someone committed a crime because of their race. I feel like Andre, along with the other two characters, are aware of these issues, but they never faced them on a personal level. Elissa, one of the characters, shares characteristics of being an activist trying to save the world. She is fond of making JPEGs and stickers defining their meanings. For example, when you see a black fist image, most initial thoughts are black power. Elissa introduces power, love, and dream stickers lets the audience know what they mean. Elissa knows she wants to save the world and spread

positivity. On the other hand, Andre is looked at as the person who's going to make a change in the world. There is an issue with that, though; he doesn't want to make a change. Andre is so reluctant to take this role because if he does, it makes him special or important. To approach this, I'm going to have to dig into Andre's mind psychologically and try to understand why he feels this way. I'm intrigued to figure out why because it may reveal a new aspect of me that I didn't realize. "I'm not changing shit. I just want everyone to have a little fun." Andre says this line from the play showing that he is not interested in changing things, but he wants to live his life. I'd like to challenge myself as an actor to understand what enjoying means life to Andre.

Amiri Baraka, also known as LeRoi Jones, is known to use theater for activism. He would like to call it revolutionary theatre. Revolutionary theater should force change and be the change. "All their faces turned into the lights, and you work on them black nigger magic, and cleanse them at having seen the ugliness and if the beautiful see themselves, they will love themselves" (Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, Revolutionary Theater). This quote stands out to me because it explains what this form of theater is trying to do and is part of what activism theater is. It is supposed to cause the audience to either reflect and change their way of living or be proud of who they are. This is what I aim for with my work in *Some Other Kid*. I want the audience to feel uncomfortable and if they are I want them to reflect on that. I want them to question themselves on racial profiling and gun violence. As an actor, I can further these goals by showing the authenticity of these issues by revealing Andre's death on stage in front of the audience. You hear about gun violence or racial profiling in the media but experiencing it in person is different. The reason I am drawn to this quote is because it sends messages not just to me, but to all black artists to embrace being black.

The audience that *Some Other Kid* reaches out to is young adults. Today there is an ongoing discussion about racial issues and how this generation plays a part in these issues. One of the ways that people play a role in these issues is through the Black Lives Matter movement. Black Lives Matter is a decentralized political and social movement that seeks to highlight racism, discrimination, and inequality experienced by black people. The movement began after George Zimmerman killed 17-year-old Trayvon. Obviously, the story of what happened is well-known and unforgettable, but it seems to me we have not yet learned from that. Today many black lives are lost at the hands of gun violence and racial profiling.

Speaking with a few colleagues on campus, we still feel that every black life lost isn't justified. No one is learning from their mistakes. How many times do we have to march? How often do we have to scream and yell for rights that have already been given to us years ago? Black Lives Matter may be looked at as "aggressive" or saying that black lives are more important than others, but that's not it. The organization highlights the unjust crime done to black lives, and we reiterate that Black lives matter too and need to be treated like They do. I believe the audience I am reaching is everyone, but on a deeper level are those who don't understand the lives of black people. This play points out how someone so normal and just a kid can leave the world in a split second because they are black. In my opinion, not just as an actor but also as a black person, it's important to keep conversations like this going and handle it like it's my life, because it is, and at any moment I could be the next person that ~~th~~ people will have to march for to get justice.

The Results Are In

The acting experience in *Some Other Kid* has been challenging, but I learned many lessons during the production. At the beginning of the production, I didn't realize how much work it would take. Though this was my acting project, I felt like I wore many hats, such as helping produce the project and assisting with the direction of where I wanted the play to go. This process started as excitement for my senior project, but somewhere along the way, it turned into lessons I needed to learn to grow as an actor. There were days I was mentally and physically drained. Lots of changes happened throughout the process. I was even falling behind on paper assignments for class such as Toni Morrison and my Personal and social relationship essays.

The process began with me looking for collaborators. After taking time and looking into people that I could collaborate with; I wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a performance piece. I decided that I wanted to be part of *Some Other Kid*. The work is part of a collective called *Facing Our Truths*. *Facing Our Truths* was formed by six playwrights: Dominique Morriveau, A. Rey Pamatmat, Dan O'Brien, Quetzal Flores, Tala Manassah, Marcus Gardley, Winter Miller, and Mona Mansour. *Facing Our Truths* consists of multiple plays addressing racial struggles, and mainly for black lives. After auditioning for *Some Other Kid*, it was a week later when I found out that I was part of the project, and I was able to make it mine, too.

The audition was a little difficult for me at the time because it was over Zoom. I didn't particularly appreciate acting over Zoom because I felt constricted. I was happy that the director, Laura Simpson, was understanding; she did everything she could to make it comfortable. I then started getting involved with the casting process, and I recommended one of my friends for a role. The reason behind this wasn't just to help a friend connect with other people, but because

she felt that there weren't a lot of pieces written or performed by black people going up. That stood out to me because it's the truth. I think that's what many casting directors face when wanting to stay true to the story. Some roles are limited to people only because the story had to remain faithful.

One of the factors when going into the production of *Some Other Kid* was building a solid relationship with the cast. Even though a close friend was cast, I wasn't familiar with the other actors. I wanted to change this because, in the production, the cast had to play a group of friends. However, it could have been acted. I wanted to keep this production as authentic as it could be. I talked with the director, and she was on the same page as me before diving into any script and analysis workshops. The director decided to play some get-to-know-you games, which I found beneficial. One of the games involved finishing each other sentences to see how others think of one another. I also felt like it was helpful if you ever faced any issues where one of your castmates missed a line: You're able to keep the performance moving. Another way we tried to keep the relationship authentic with each other was by attempting to hang out outside of rehearsal. We would have personal conversations with each other and voice our insecurities. This was helpful, in my opinion, because of the insecurities everyone shared. Everyone was able to help each other through it and help grow from these insecurities.

Another bonding factor, besides keeping the relationships with each other genuine, was honesty. Everyone in the group admitted that we wanted to be honest with each other even if we didn't agree. A truthful relationship with each other is what we wanted to build. So, Laura had each person go up in front and perform their monologue. This way, instead of just hearing the director's notes, we could hear the cast's notes, too. We could listen to each other and give honest opinions without worrying about hurting each other's feelings. I appreciated having that

type of relationship with the cast because you won't get a cast that fully gets along and can be honest with you in every production.

When working on Andre, my character, outside of rehearsals, he seemed to always be on my mind. Andre is a valedictorian student who has an early admission to a school. Everyone looks at him as the next person to make a change in the world. Personality-wise, he has a smart tongue, he's intelligent, and enjoys life. I thought about how he walked and reacted to the situation. What would he be scared to do versus what wouldn't I be afraid to do? What group of people do I see him hanging with? There were times when I would switch into his mannerisms and see how it would feel walking in his shoes. Upon learning that *Some Other Kid* is based on the Trayvon Martin murder. My perspective on Andre changed, and I began to care for him like he was part of my family. I started diving into Trayvon Martin's history and learned how his death occurred. I then compared his story to Andre's story, and both were very similar. That was part of how I was able to form a background story with Andre. Trayvon Martin was over at his father and his stepmother's house in a nice neighborhood. Trayvon Martin met his demise by an American man named George Zimmerman.

Most of the play takes place at Andre's home. Pamatmat does not provide a very detailed set so, using my acting creative skill and brainstorming with Laura, we decided to build off that using background information and including personal items from me to make the space more home-like. In the play, it isn't quite specified who shot Andre, but because of the subtle hints, we can infer that Andre's life is based on Trayvon. These hints include the black hoodie and going to the 7-Eleven for Sour Patch Kids and iced tea. The only difference is that Trayvon went to the store for Skittles instead of Sour Patch Kids.

Andre's monologue made me drive this character to be very realistic and connect with the audience. Andre has a whole monologue talking to the audience about how no one is better than the other person. Everyone's life is just the same; no one is disposable. It affected me emotionally when I recited these lines with the death soon to follow. I indeed and one hundred percent agree with what is being said: "Everything is stupid. That's what people don't get. No one is a better person...No one's life is better or more important than anyone else's" (Some Other Kid 33). Though I am speaking as Andre I am saying it, too, emphasizing what he is saying to the audience. I did, at times, have a conversation with the cast. They were all supportive, making sure my mental health was okay. I never really did deep work like this before with a character. It felt encouraging doing the deep work and I was more confident in my acting abilities. It was a lesson I learned, and it's a process I will always carry with me.

It may seem like the actor's only job is to memorize their script when acting in a production, but there was more to it for me. Since this was also my senior project, I decided that I wanted to take part in the show behind the scenes. Laura sat me down and discussed what Andre's house would look like in my eyes. What I imagined was a large sofa and a love seat. There was supposed to be a recliner too. I then imagined a coffee table in the middle with books on top. I wanted the feeling of being in the living room to be authentic. I thought back on my goals, and one of them was pulling the audience into my world. I even thought about how my character would interact with the objects around him.

Unfortunately, we came into a roadblock. The furniture I requested was too big to fit in the black box, our theater space. I was upset about it, but more upset because it was two weeks away from the play's premiere. Luckily, there were some leftover props left in the black box from last semester, and we were able to use them. We requested benches and brought sheets to

give them a soft feel. Laura brought pillows from home and placed them on the benches. Boxes were used as tables, and the cast brought materials from home to give the living room more of an aesthetic look. I was impressed that everyone came together and obtained an item from their home. I believe that's what played a part in having each character more comfortable. There was an object that belonged to them on stage.

The first full dress rehearsal didn't go as well as I had hoped it would. This is because we didn't have a lighting technician to control the light cues for our show. We had to run with just sound for most of the tech rehearsal. I and the rest of the cast didn't like this because we weren't fully rehearsing, we felt like we wouldn't be prepared for opening night. We needed the lights to give the full effect of the gunshots and certain moods for scenes. For example, when my character gets shot, the lighting is red, to show that my life is slowly slipping away from me.

On the day of the performance, the cast was nervous. This is because of the lack of rehearsals we had with the light. We were afraid that the lighting technicians would miss their cues. The cast calmed one another and gave each other pep talks to ease the nerves. We all got into places and stepped on stage when the show began. After the first performance, many people came up to me praising how well I did in the play, and they didn't expect the play to end like it did. I expected that feedback because I know the ending would be triggering, leaving a sour taste in some people's mouths. I explained to a few people that I wanted to bring the realness of what it may be like experiencing see someone getting shot. It isn't comforting, but I only wanted that because people experience that in real life and must deal with that for the rest of their lives.

There was little cost to this production. Besides paying for the rights of the play, everything came was free for us. We didn't have to worry about paying for costumes. I want to highlight the difficulties of the show. There were times when we couldn't do a full rehearsal

because our lighting and sound operators weren't present most of the time due to other commitments. This was due to the limited number of people who know how to operate these technologies, occupied by other projects. It was also challenging to find a stage crew because everyone at the time was busy or didn't bother helping. This caused us to have to scavenge for people to operate the sound and lighting. Fortunately, we were able to find people to run sound and lighting in the end. They didn't know how to use the lights, but they learned it, and I genuinely appreciate them.

Performing *Some Other Kid* has been a lesson learned for me. Through the ups and downs, I had on this journey, I learned about perseverance. When things seem to get rough, there is always a silver lining. From not having a full tech rehearsal till the day before and getting a good response, I'll be proud of my work. Looking back at my goals, I believe I reached them. I challenged myself and grew as an actor by learning the material and studying history. My character was relatable and loved by the audience. The audience was captured by the world. I was able to build a relationship with Laura, so there could be an understanding. Acting in *Some Other Kid* has inspired me to direct something of my own one day.

Performance Activism in Theater

Performance activism embodies a new modality that draws upon the human capacity to play, create, and perform. The premise is that people, even if and when their economic, social, or political interests conflict, can create new relationships, activities, and ways to move forward together. It has been repeated that theater is like a mirror held up to the real world. *Some Other Kid* by Rey A. Pamatmat can be considered a form of performance activism. The show centers on how people tend to place some people on higher pedestals while excluding others making them feel less. *Some Other Kid* also addresses gun violence and racial violence. “It is such a relevant issue of our time and I think we are going to have to look back at the time we are dealing with and need to know how to deal with it,” actor Rose Kingfisher who is part of *Facing Our Truths* collective pointed out. Kingfisher made a good point in their statement. The issues that the play addresses are still relevant today with police brutality and minorities being unjustly killed. Years later down the line, people are going to have to look back on the events. The reason behind this is that history always repeats. The Trayvon Martin case isn’t the only case where a black boy was killed for no reason, and he won’t be the last. To avoid situations like this, gun, and racial violence must be faced head-on. Performance activism has a number of branches and theater is one of them. Within theater you have different forms such as political, experimental, and educational theater.

Political theater is a term that has a myriad of meanings and reference points. Dan Friedman and Lois Holzman stated “Most relevant in regard to the emergence of performance activism, is political theatre as a mass amateur activity which emerged in the years immediately following World War I and the Russian Revolution in both Germany and the Soviet Union with

the support and encouragement of the communist movement” (Performing the World: The Emergence of Performance Activism 2) . Agit-prop¹ troupes were made up of people in the community who created and rehearsed short plays. Troupes traveled to various places such as Moscow with little props or costume pieces and consisted primarily of choral recitations. They also choreographed mass movements and stocks, cartoon-like characters. The group mainly performed at political rallies, union and community meetings, and on the streets. They became very known in Germany, the Soviet Union, and other countries in the mid-1930s. According to *Performing the World: The Emergence of Performance Activism*, “While they didn’t survive the repression of the Nazis or Stalin’s shifting cultural policy, the significance of the agitprop movement regarding this discussion is that it established that performance and theatre were creative activities that ordinary people could actively participate in” (Friedman and Holzman 3). Though the Troupes that were formed in Germany and the Soviet Union didn’t last long because of the repression of the Nazis or Stalin’s shifting cultural policy. The groups left an impact by showing that one didn’t need intensive, specialized training to act or create original theater that embodied its creators' lives, concerns, and politics.

¹ Agitation and Propaganda



(Maity)

The pictures above involve a performer part of the troupe. This takes place in Germany around the 1920s. The performer is interacting with a random civilian on the street making them part of the performance. The woman is unaware that she is part of this performance. <https://literaryocean.com/discuss-about-agitprop-drama-its-origin-and-importance/>.

In the 1960s, when political views and culture begin to become an issue, political theater once again started to reemerge. To address social issues, college students in the unites states started to use it as a tactic-in public spaces-streets, student unions, and rallies. One example is at the University Cal Berkeley when students were rioting for the freedom of speech movement. “The first of these sorts of protests, that of 1964, is now known as the

"Free Speech Movement." University of California President Clark Kerr long insisted that the University wouldn't interfere with student's lives off campus, but, by the same token, that students must keep their political activities off campus. In the fall term of '64, the administration asks students to stop their political activities on the "Bancroft Strip," in front of Sproul Plaza" (Berkeley in the 60s). Students weren't allowed to vocalize or showcase their political views and this sent many students into a riot.

During this time, another group that pointed in the direction of political theater were Guerilla theater. Guerrilla Theater originated in 1965 by the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Guerrilla theater consisted of staged conversations or actions done in public. The audience are unaware that they are watching or may be involved in the performance. An example of this is mentioned in the article by Holzman and Friedman: "for example, holding a loud performed conversation about the Vietnam War on a crowded subway car" (3). Guerrilla Theater blurs lines between daily life and theatre performance.

To relate Political theater in today's society with performance activism, it is recognizable that forms of political theater are shown very often within the activism world. Political theater is used when addressing social issues such as Black lives, the LGBTQ+ community, and women's rights. When people come together for a protest, it is looked at as a form of activism, but what is not known is that it is a form of political theater. A protest is an event or action where people gather with others to express their opinions about something happening in society publicly. In 2020, a man named George Floyd was suffocated by a white police officer while repeating the saying, "I can't breathe." The police officers ignored what he was saying, and soon George Floyd lost his life that day. After, people from all around the world got together to march for Floyd's justice. That didn't just stop there; it also caused

action on social media. People had a day where it was called #Blackouttuesday. This moment was for people to stop posting anything but Black awareness. This could mean uplifting Black businesses or art, pushing the black creators to forefront. Political theater tackles political views through performances, making it Performance activism. Though some of these examples given may not seem like political theater, as stated before, political theater sometimes means not being aware that you are part of the performance.

Experimental theater is a type of theater that doesn't follow the normalcy of theater, such as having certain rules, a constructed and solid script, and most of the time not including the audience in the play. It usually brings up innovative ideas that weren't incorporated into the theater and tries them out in public to see how the audience would perceive them. Before calling it experimental theater, another term for it was Avant-garde. Christopher Innes, a professor of English at York University, Ontario, Canada, explains in his book *Avant Garde Theater 1892-1992*, "At its simplest, the term is sometimes taken to describe what is new at any given time: the leading edge of artistic experiment, which is continually outdated by the next step forward. But 'avant-garde is by no means value-neutral, as such usage implies.'"

Borrowed from the military terminology by Bakunin, whose short-lived anarchist journal *L' Avant-Garde* was published in Switzerland in 1878, the label was first applied to art by his followers. Their aim in revolutionizing aesthetics was to prefigure social revolution. This led to the development of experimental theater that helped lay the groundwork for the performance to turn into activism in ritualization theater. Though all theater in some way is ritual, what is being referred to here are the efforts by the Living theater and others to change the dynamic where the actors perform with the audience instead of for them. The actors operate more as shamans, which means they are the first storytellers, they sometimes control the puppets. "Just as the shaman's role

is to act as a bridge between the worlds” (The Shamanic Actor: Playback Theatre Acting as Shamanism). They assist the community that is also part of the performance through songs, etc. For Shamanism, the challenge depends on the shared belief structure within the group, not on the audience for that night, which means if the group shares the same beliefs.

The experience in this type of theater can be traced back to the writing of Antonin Artaud. Artaud is mainly known for his work in the Theater of Cruelty, a form of experimental theater. Artaud, influenced by symbolism and surrealism, along with Roger Vitrac and Robert Aron, founded the Theatre Alfred Jarry in 1926. The men presented programs, including August Strindberg’s *A Dream Play* and *Victor* by Roger Vitrac. Around 1931 and 1936, Artaud formulated Theater of Cruelty in a series of essays he published. The theater of Cruelty can be seen as a break from traditional western theatre, in which artists challenges the senses of the audience.

“For contemporary observers in the 1920s, or even in the 1960s, what is central was often obscured by the rhetoric of manifestos claiming uniqueness for different aspects of the general movement. But from today’s perspective shared concerns stand out clearly because they recur. And this recurrence is even more significant since, although it is obviously a response to the ethics of the age, it by no means reflects popularly accepted ideas or the dominant ideological assumptions” (Ines 2).

This Statement is meant to clarify that Theater of Cruelty is for the people viewing it. Highlighting that this type of theater isn’t going to address accepted ideas or popular current issues, but more so address issues people aren’t aware of or challenge the accepted views.

These demonstrations of Experimental theater show how much it plays a part in performance activism. Examples of this are Mass performances enacted in the streets, like Agit-prop troupes. This engendered a spirit of community among the like-minded people through the

ritualized performance of chanting, singing, and confronting police authority. Relating to performance activism, these experiments help clarify that non-actors do this and tie this conviction to a progressive public.



(Surrealism-plays)

The right picture is Ernst Toller's Expressionist Play *Transfiguration* staged in Berlin in 1919. The soldiers on the battlefield had skeletons painted on their costumes. Characters were frequently presented as fragments of a unified consciousness. The left pictures show an experimenting by including the audience. <https://www.surrealism-plays.com/theatreimages.html>.

Another theatrical stream flowing into the emerging parts of performance activism has been educational theatre. Similar to political theater, educational theater has many manifestations and meanings. Overall, educational theater has referred to both the use of theatre as an educational tool in schools and the use of theatre to educate the audience outside formal educational institutions.

“In this latter sense educational theatre has given birth to Theatre for Development, a term used primarily in Africa and Asia, to describe explicitly didactic theatre produced to educate communities on subjects ranging from birth control and HIV/AIDS to agricultural techniques to gender violence, etc. Often this theatre work is funded by European based NGOs

or religious organizations that see theatre as a tool in the arsenal of helping the poor country to “develop,” hence the label.” (Friedman and Holzman).

Educational theater is used in countries, such as Africa and Asia to provide lifestyle educational information that isn't accessible to them. Subjects that range from birth control, HIV/AIDS, and gender violence (Friedman and Holzman 5). Organizations usually use this type of theater to help developing countries rise to better development. Educational theater is related to the theater for social change. Theater for social change is a label commonly used in wealthy countries such as the United States. Theater for social change describes its goal, which is striving for social change. In some ways, it's the contemporary version of the agitprop and street theater traditions of the 20th century. Though it is looked at as a modern version of agitprop, the difference is that educational theater is usually created by trained artists who bring the theater-making process into communities from the outside.

Theater of the Oppressed is also part of this current stream in educational theater. Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal developed the Theater of the Oppressed during the 1950s and 1960s. Theater of the Oppressed's goal or idea is to stimulate observations and representation of reality, envisioning the production of consciousness and concrete actions. Theater of Oppressed is viewed as Boal's most contribution to performance activism. “Boal's most radical contribution relative to performance activism is the designation of audience members as “spec-actors,” who are encouraged to intervene in the performance. While the Theatre of the Oppressed does not go as far as bringing performance off the stage into daily life, it does encourage the non-actor to take the stage” (Friedman and Holzman 5).

Another type of theater in the current mix of educational theater or theater for social change is Playback Theater. The theater was founded by Johnathan Fox and Jo Salad in 1975.

This type of theater group is active in fifty countries. The purpose of playback is to improve bring real-life experience on stage. This could either be domestic relationship issues to inequality issues. This usually involves the actors asking the audience members to share personal stories from their lives and reach them out. This usually leads to an educational discussion.

Over the past years, there have been many ways within educational theater and theater for social change. Theater of the oppressed and playback theater are a few examples. Educational theater overly can play a part in performance activism and are ways you can execute it.



(Ghosh)

The picture on the left shows a picture of someone who is in higher power degrading people lower than them. One the right, it shows how actors and the audience can sit down and discuss what makes them oppressed. The actors will act out a scene similar to what the audience's response is. <https://alchetron.com/Theatre-of-the-Oppressed>.

It seems that there are many branches of performance activism. Theater is one of those branches, but theater itself has different types that lead to performance activism. Educational theater, Political theater, and Experimental theater are the most common types of theater that are mostly seen today in aspects of performance activism. Political theater is used when a political belief or social status needs to be challenged or changed. Educational theater educates others on a subject that's not taught to the majority of the community. Educational theater is used as a learning experience for the actors and non-actors. Experimental theater addresses unpopular issues and has the audience experience those issues. Experimental theater also doesn't follow regular theater rules. *Some Other Kid* by A Rey Patmamat could fall into Political theater because the play addresses gun violence and racial profiling, which are part of political issues

Performance Link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zg_n8qHtpDjKEaYWvcuQAjGIGPkRPqhk/view?usp=sharing

Work Cited

Baraka, Amiri. "The Revolutionary Theatre – National Humanities Center." *The Revolutionary Theater*, 1965,

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai3/protest/text12/barakatheatre.pdf>.

Amiri Baraka discuss what Revolutionary theater is and what it's supposed to do. The essay is filled with words from himself talking about using Revolutionary theater to empower and make a change. Shining light on issues that need to come to light.

Floodgate, Simon. "The Shamanic Actor: Playback Theatre Acting as Shamanism."

Playbacktheater.org, 2006, http://www.playbacktheatre.org/playbacktheatre/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Floodgate_Shamanism.pdf.

Simon Floodgate discusses what is Shamanism and how to act as one. He discusses the religious aspect of Shamanism and connects to actors in theater.

Friendman, D., & Holzman, L. (n.d.). *The performance turn in Social Activism*. Performing the World: The Emergence of Performance Activism. Retrieved May 10, 2022, from <https://www.danfriedmannyc.org/the-performance-turn-in-social-activism>

The authors provide information in this chapter about the emergence of performance activism. In each paragraph, the authors talk about types of theaters that plays a part in performance activism.

Ghosh, Supriya. “*Theatre of the Oppressed - Alchetron, the Free Social Encyclopedia*.” *Alchetron.com*, 21 Sept. 2021, <https://alchetron.com/Theatre-of-the-Oppressed>.

The history Theater of Oppressed is discovered in this article. It broken down into different periods of time and talks about an artist who used this type of theater to acknowledge the current issue.

Innes, Christopher. *Avant Garde Theatre*. 2nd ed. Taylor and Francis, 2003. Web. 25 Sept. 2021.

Christopher Ines examines the development of Avant Garde from the 1980s to the present day. Ines exposes the paradox of modern theater by looking into Artaud, Strindberg, Brook, Mnouchkine and seeing what they have in common.

Maity, Supriya. “*Discuss about Agitprop Drama: Its Origin and Importance*.” *Literary Ocean*, 7 Mar. 2021, <https://literaryocean.com/discuss-about-agitprop-drama-its-origin-and-importance/>.

The author of this article talks about the rise of the Agit-prop troupe and what was the reason behind it. They also highlight the struggles they faced, but also the changes they made in history.

Morgan, Steven. "Days of Cal: Berkeley in the 60s." *Days of Cal | Berkeley in the 60s*, 1997, <https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/CalHistory/60s.html>

Steven Morgan publishes the history of Cal Berkeley and how students caused a riot because they were fighting for to the freedom to vocalize their political views. It was part of the Freedom of speech movement.

-Plays, Surrealism. "Surrealism-Plays." *Avant-Garde Theatre Images*, n.d., <https://www.surrealism-plays.com/theatreimages.html>.

These websites give information about Avant-Garde theater and information on the surrealism of plays. The website layouts the development of Avant-Garde. It even includes artists such as Ernst Troller and others in the early 1900s.