

Introduction to “Oppressor vs. oppressed”

by Birgit Djupedal, made in a workshop with Anthony Burr and fellow students

In the piece “Oppressor vs. oppressed” the players need to find out whether they belong to the oppressor or the oppressed. This can be done on stage in front of the audience or in rehearsal.

One person, who can be one of the players, reads up the statements here below. The players are standing in one line in the middle of the room so they have a possibility to walk backwards and forwards. Feel free to add statements to the list that are relevant for the players or to leave some out.

1. If you are white, take a step forward. If you have a different skin color, take a step backwards.
2. If you define yourself as a man, take a step forward. If you define yourself as a different gender, take a step backwards.
3. If you are heterosexual, take a step forward. If you have a different sexual orientation, take a step backwards.
4. If you grew up with two parents, take a step forward. If you grew up with a single parent, take a step backwards.
5. If you work full time, take a step forward. If you're unemployed or work unwillingly part-time, take a step backwards.

Oppressor vs. oppressed

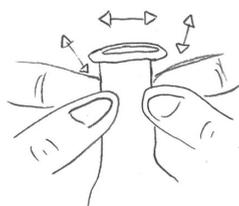
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Minimum two players. The players are divided into two teams, the oppressors and the oppressed. Everyone is representing the social group they belong to in society based on their gender, skin color, nationality, etc. and that's how the members of the two teams are decided. The two teams are standing in two lines, facing each other, each one competing with the person they are standing directly opposite.

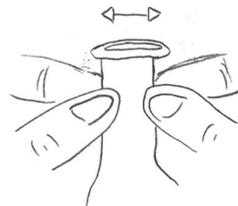
Instrumentation is one balloon for each player, and the two teams have different colors.

The piece is divided into four sections. One player, not decided beforehand, starts playing the next section and the rest follow. This should happen organically. The timings are suggestions. Feel free to dwell longer if it's suitable.

	The oppressed	The oppressors
	<i>Everyone blows up the balloon synchronized and the piece starts</i>	
Section 1 approx. 40''	Is speaking into the balloon. Switch between the words <i>no</i> , <i>don't</i> and <i>stop</i> .	Try to silence the oppressed by making a high pitched, floppy sound (drawing 1). Blow the balloon up when it's emptied.
Section 2 approx. 20''	Let the balloon hang in your mouth and breath in and out through it.	Follow the oppressed ones breathing by making high pitched sounds on every exhale (drawing 2).
Section 3 approx. 30''	Blow the balloon up until it's quite large and let it hang in your mouth.	Threaten to blow the balloon up with a needle. Blow the balloon up in the end.
Section 4 approx. 30''	Standing tall.	Takes the opening from the popped balloon of the oppressed, or one that's already made, and mocks the oppressed by blowing through it.



Drawing 1. Pull to the side, but also open up a little.



Drawing 2. Pull to the sides, only a little bit.