5.1 Collective Embodiment in Service Interfaces

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5.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Services are always human-to-human interactions, and humans interact with each other primarily through their bodies, even when other materials mediate their interactions (e.g. physical artefacts, hybrid environments, digital devices, etc.). As we have found in past research, phenomenologically speaking, the body itself can be experienced as a material for Service Design (Secomandi and van Amstel 2023). Gestures, postures, voice tones and movements enacted to enact a service interface are all integral parts of designing. However, we did not explore how such enactments are shaped by the collective bodies individuals are part of. This is a fundamental aspect of Service Design that we wish to clarify here.

Before developing our perspective, we acknowledge Miso Kim's relevant contribution to positing collective embodiment as the essence of service. Kim demonstrated, in relation to services, 'how people can autonomously relate to the whole' (2018: 47), and find their role in 'a system of collective action of parts connected to the whole for the purpose of achieving a shared goal' (31). According to her, this essence of service has appeared in different forms throughout human history, from objectified labour of enslaved people to contracted assistance between free people. She suspects that, in contemporary Western societies, industrialization brought us back to the predominance of an objectified form of labour. Indeed, this is supported by sociological studies of interactive (face-to-face) service employment (e.g. McDowell 2009). Arlie Hochschild (1983), remarkably, coined the term 'emotional labour' to analyse commodified emotions, as in the case of flight attendants who must always provide 'service with a smile', irrespective of their actual feelings.

In this chapter, we look at how this phenomenon plays out in the design of service interfaces. The concept of 'interface' has a long history in Service Design research (Secomandi 2024). Our use here stems from an approach within the philosophy of technology called post-phenomenology (Secomandi and Snelders 2013). This approach explores how human understanding of the world is mediated in non-neutral ways by material artefacts. In the case of service interfaces, these materials do not just include physical and digital objects but also the bodies of human and non-human animals.

We seek to build on and expand this post-phenomenological take on the service interface with the dialectical-existential perspective developed by Gonzatto and van Amstel (2022) in human–computer interaction (HCI). These authors have shown how oppression in the design of computers can be explained in terms of a contradiction between the collective bodies of designers and users. By combining these two perspectives, we hold that individual humans who interact through designed interfaces do not just become part of a collective whole; the collective whole also become part of their individual bodies. In other words, as soon as a body is (re)produced in a service interface, collective differences are ascribed to the body and social relationships are immediately

invoked. These differences establish whose bodies are generally produced to *serve* (in Western history, the poor, immigrant, Black or women bodies) and whose bodies are to be served (rich, citizen, white or men bodies). That is why white customers mistakenly ask non-white customers for help in shops as if they were serving instead of being served – a mistake that reveals the racialized production of such service interfaces.

Racialization is not an isolated phenomena; it is one of the many processes associated with the social production of bodies. These processes originate from the contradiction of oppression, which manifests in design as 'prejudice against, cultural hierarchization, objective exclusion, physical violence, social silencing and subjective domination of specific social groups that have gone through historical processes of negative differentiation and consequent dehumanising' (van Amstel et al. 2022: 1). Service designers who do not critically reflect on their positionalities tend to reproduce this contradiction in the service interfaces they project upon users (van Amstel et al., 2025).

To start unpacking this issue, we reflect on how we, as Service Design researchers and educators, are developing critical consciousness on this matter. We both grew up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a city that draws many boundaries between racialized, gendered and capitalized bodies. Very early, we must have become acutely aware of different forms of discrimination between humans based on their embodied condition, whether that happened through our domestic relations with housemaids or in relation to service providers in other settings, such as restaurants, schools and sports clubs. Because of these experiences, among other reasons, we got accustomed to thinking of ourselves as being on the privileged side, most of the time, in comparison to many others with whom we interacted. These others, in return, never failed to demonstrate to us that oppression existed as a fundamental contradiction of our society. Over time, our bodies became socialized as white cis men of the Brazilian white-collar working class. Later in life, we had the experience of being socialized as Latino knowledge immigrants in academic workplaces in the Global North.

Having dedicated our doctoral theses to the Service Design field several years ago (van Amstel 2015; Secomandi 2012), we progressively realized that this field might benefit from considering the concept of oppression. Students, peers and authors who put us in closer contact with the social struggles of workers, feminists and Black people, among others, made us realize the relevance and urgency of this topic. As a result, at the same time that we strove for greater representation of design researchers from peripheral countries internationally, we opened up our academic positions to realize some of the objectives of these movements. To name just a few engagements, the first author appropriated Theatre of the Oppressed (T-O) as a method to develop critical consciousness in design (e.g. Saito et al. 2022), whereas the second author articulated an institutional vision over design justice in technical universities (van de Poel et al. 2024).

From this shared positionality, we set out to explore T-O's potential in shedding light on collective embodiment in service interfaces. T-O has already been explored in Service Design to interrogate ethical controversies relating to health care (Penin and Tonkinwise 2009). Here we unearth the contradictions behind the controversy of ride-hailing services like Uber. We start by characterizing oppression as a contradiction of body, linking the concept to its dialectical and existentialist backgrounds.

5.1.2 OPPRESSION AS A CONTRADICTION OF BODY

Brazilian dramaturg Augusto Boal (1979) developed T-O as an 'arsenal of theatrical weapons' that can be taken by anyone interested in fighting any kind of oppression. T-O aims at preparing the oppressed to take over the means of cultural production and use them for liberation. Boal's understanding of oppression can be traced back to 'The Communist Manifesto' by Marx and Engels ([1848] 2004), which was

among the many readings discussed in the Dramaturgical Seminar of Arena Theatre coordinated by Boal between 1958 and 1961. Famously, the Manifesto used *oppression* to qualify the existential condition of workers under capitalism. Existentialism (Sartre 1956), anticolonial (Freire 1996; Vieira Pinto 2020; Fanon 2008), feminism (Beauvoir 2010) and civil rights movements (Young 1990) would later expand the oppression concept to encompass the intersubjective production of differences among collective bodies based on race, gender, ethnicity, culture, nation and ability.

At the intersection of dialectics and existentialism created by Frantz Fanon (2008), oppression is a process of historical negative differentiation between collective bodies, like the racist pseudoscience of Black body inferiority and the Nazi-fascist claims of white body superiority. Negativity inscribes a sense of unfulfillment in the oppressed body: a lack of health, strength, beauty, intelligence, reason and the like. Positive differences, i.e. what the oppressed body has that the oppressor body doesn't have, are strategically ignored. The oppressor induces negative differentiation to morally justify assisting, guiding, exploiting, surveilling or punishing the oppressed body. This is a contradiction of body because these differences are induced to bodies, not produced by them; they are the products of an ideology that segregates bodies to keep social groups more or less homogeneous and, thus, manageable by the elites, as the phenomenological Marxist Henri Lefebvre has noted (1972).

Nevertheless, even if targeted by such ideology, the oppressed body can always revolt against their oppressors and turn negative into positive differences (Vieira Pinto 2020). Marx ([1867] 2004), for instance, analysed at length how impossible it was to transform human bodies into labour machines completely. He believed that workers commodified by labour markets would inevitably become conscious of their exploitation and, therefore, organize the workers' collective body (the *proletariat* class) against the capitalists' collective body (the bourgeoisie class). Marx's belief was realized by several social movements of his time and, later, by women, Black, disability, LGBTQIAP+ and other civil rights movements. Instead of reverting the polarity of negative differences and replacing the oppressor with the oppressed or, alternatively, dissolving body differences into egalitarianism (i.e. 'all bodies are equal before the law'), these movements sought to affirm differences positively (i.e. 'all bodies are different in a different way, and that's okay').

In tune with this *differentialist ideology*, as Lefebvre (1972) called it, Augusto Boal developed a dramaturgical schema that explores the embodiment of oppression as a counter-will installed from outside the body that neutralizes any internal will to act for the self (Boal 2021). In simple words, it is the imposition of an external desire. In dramaturgical terms, the oppressed is the protagonist who possesses an unfulfilled desire, while the oppressor is the antagonist who averts the fulfilment by prescribing thoughts, gestures, rituals and masks to the protagonist (Boal 2013). T-O's cultural arsenal harnesses this contradiction of body through artistic expression and social organizing. Its ultimate goal is to rehearse the transformation of the oppressed reality so that the oppressed can freely fulfil their desires and live a dignified life.

5.1.3 COLLECTIVE EMBODIMENT IN THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

The deflagration of this contradiction is not the apex of T-O dramaturgy as it is in classic theatre; the peak of T-O dramaturgy is the interpretation of this contradiction in the discussion that follows the play – the forum. This moment is characterized by the *ascension to the socio-historical context* of the contradiction (Santos 2016). Ascension is complicated – not facilitated – by a joker, a seasoned practitioner who has already played many roles in other works and can improvise freely. Newcomers tend to focus on amenable issues and unessential details, leaving the social-historical context out of the equation. It is the joker's job to complicate matters in the forum by bringing

the participants back to the concrete issue at stake (ibid.).

This role grew out of the joker system, Boal's (1979) original dramaturgical system that enabled any actor to play any character. In its subsequent iterations, the system enabled audience members to replace actors, embody characters, join the troupe and become jokers themselves. To be precise, Boal (ibid.) called any newcomer to T-O a *spect-actor*. In addition to breaking the invisible 'fourth wall' between actors and spectators to engage in a forum, the joker system lifts the 'curtain' between front- and backstage, requiring troupe members to rotate tasks and characters. By developing critical consciousness on individuation and specialization of roles, the joker system enables spect-actors to realize that oppression is not felt by a single individual but by several individuals who share the same collective body. Even when spect-actors are not part of the oppressed body, it is still possible for them to understand the situation through an analogy with other oppressive situations (Santos 2016).

In line with our discussion in the previous section, T-O enables spect-actors to develop critical (body) consciousness of oppression. It also equips them with reaction strategies, plans and public policy suggestions to liberate their bodies. According to Boal (1979), the main barrier to achieving critical consciousness is 'muscular alienation', in allusion to Marx's ([1867] 2004) analysis of workers' estrangement from their work products. As the workers do their labour, their bodies are also produced by their labour to perform repetitive movements in increasingly efficient ways. Workers gain some abilities and lose many others throughout this process. The ability to organize in a different way the capitalist wants, for example, is a common lost one. Muscular alienation is tackled by playing dramatic games that activate these rarely used muscles. In these games, spect-actor bodies must synchronize their actions and operate as a collective body to achieve the game's goal. After bodies are warmed and less alienated, T-O proceeds to the techniques phase when the concept of oppression is fully explored. The original Boalian five techniques are Newspaper Theater, Image Theater, Forum Theater, Legislative Theater and Rainbow of Desire.

Through games and techniques, T-O enables spect-actors to reconceptualize their bodies from individual to collective bodies. According to Kelly Howe (2019), there are five major conceptions of the body in T-O: (1) the body as speech; (2) the body as concrete material carved by external forces and relations; (3) the body as a stranger to be met; (4) the body made by doing; and (5) the body as a way of knowing. In this chapter, we operationalize these conceptions, respectively, as five lenses to identify and develop critical body consciousness: (1) the linguistic; (2) the materialistic; (3) the estranged; (4) the objectified; and (5) the epistemic. These lenses will be used as analytical foci for an interaction analysis (Jordan and Henderson 1995) performed on a T-O workshop that addressed a particular Service Design challenge: enacting and redesigning the interface of a well-known ride-hailing service after the introduction of a new feature that allows riders to set their preferences and enjoy their trips without interacting verbally with drivers.

5.1.4 A THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED WORKSHOP ON RIDE-HAILING SERVICES

The workshop herein described aimed to disseminate T-O as a critical embodied design practice (van Amstel 2019) and experiment with the issue of oppression in Service Design. The workshop took place in Brazil and all the workshop participants were Brazilians. None of them had a theatre background, except for the first author, who played the joker and design researcher roles, complicating and documenting the process as it unfolded. The second author did not participate but assisted in the interaction analysis. The workshop generated qualitative data stored in photographs and audio recordings, which were later catalogued, transcribed and reviewed amongst the authors.

The interaction analysis that follows is based on our interpretation of these data, guided by the collective embodiment lenses mentioned above.

First, we report on the games played. T-O games usually do not have an explicit win condition that motivates a competitive attitude, although most stimulate players to observe and try to outperform others. The first game played in this workshop, 'Colombian Hypnosis' (Boal 2021), for instance, invites players to challenge each other's agility. Players are requested not to use spoken language during the game and to rely instead on body language, facial expressions and spatial motion to communicate. The hypnotized must comply with the posture specified by the guide, eventually activating rarely used muscles in routine Western urban life, e.g. those required for squatting. By putting the body in discomfort, this game aims at activating the **material lens** over the body. After some minutes, the joker gives a 'swap' command and the hypnosis is reversed. The hypnotized now becomes the hypnotizer, and the former hypnotizer now realizes through his or her embodied actions the responsibility and power of shaping another person's body. Swapping happens many times until the joker asks for both players to hypnotize each other simultaneously. In this way, players' intentions progressively become embedded and explicit in their body movements, thus feeding into the other player's actions. This is when players usually notice that it is possible to hold a rich bodily dialogue without speaking; thus, they become aware of the **linguistic lens** over their embodied actions.

Other games played were: 'The Smell of Hands', 'How many "As" in a Single "A"?' and 'Remembering Yesterday', also coming from Boal's book, plus 'Metoca' and 'African Mosquito', from Barbara Santos' book (2018). For the sake of space, we will not describe them here. After playing these games, participants entered the technique phase, divided into 'Newspaper Theater' and 'Forum Theater' (Boal 1979). The first technique consisted of critically reading preselected tech news. The joker shared seven news items and participants had to select one to dramatize. They have chosen the following news report on a ride-in-silence service innovation:

> According to *Estadão* [a national newspaper], Uber plans to offer Uber Comfort as of November, an option that will replace Uber Select, the intermediate service category. With it, the user is guaranteed newer cars and drivers with good ratings, but the cost is slightly higher than an UberX ride. With Uber Comfort, it will be possible, in addition to requesting a silent ride from the driver, to ask him in advance to turn on the air conditioning or to keep it off. In this way, social interaction is reduced to a minimum.
>
> (Santino 2019)

'Newspaper Theatre' was the first T-O technique developed by Boal and it remains the simplest one. A participant reads parts of a news item out loud while the others act on what is being read, trying to convey what is written 'between the lines' or omitted from the text. Some variations of this setup are introduced to increase the understanding and expression of the oppressive situation gradually. In our case, workshop participants experimented with reading the news item melodically – singing it as if it were a song – while performing parallel actions – actions implied in the text alluding to the social context.

In the first rehearsal, the news was read out loud with a background music rhythm that provided some contextualization of the service situation, in this case, a favela funk beatbox loop. This music style stems from a Brazilian urban periphery tradition of producing differences out of imported cultural products, in this case, African American Funk and Electronic Music. Singing or reading the news out loud in this style prompts the body to follow its strong rhythm. The beatbox loop provided a non-verbal language to frame the critical reading of the tech news while arousing the body to counter mindless cultural imports. By adopting this **linguistic lens** over the body, the spect-actors framed the silent-ride feature as an imported design feature that challenged established cultural norms of cordiality of ride-

hailing in Brazil, where drivers and riders have the tendency to chat.

In the second rehearsal, reading stayed the same and acting was done to emphasize the between-the-lines and omitted content. Fashion accessories worn by spect-actors enabled them to see their bodies through the **estranged lens**. By releasing the body from the usual characters played in everyday life, unusual characters could be pulled out of the spect-actors' repertoire (Boal 2013). By shifting perspectives from one character to another, the participants became spectators of their own bodies, eventually amazed at what they could do as actors.

These characters tried to convey the essence of the new silence-in-ride feature described in the newspaper article. Thus, the person playing the design researcher covered the driver's mouth with her hand to guarantee that the rider could enjoy the ride in silence (Figure 5.1.1). At this point, participants assumed the **objectified lens** by noticing how their actions made the driver feel like an object lacking the agency to decide whether to talk to the rider while driving.

After this first technique, participants moved to the 'Forum Theatre' technique, the most popular one (Boal 1979). In this technique, the play is presented to an audience which is invited to discuss and eventually replace actors onstage. Before new spect-actors come in, the existing ones create and rehearse the play, relying mainly on improvisation without textual scripts. The dismissal of scripts and the need to memorize what others have written newcomersdismantling power structures that hinge on dramaturgic authorship (Boal 1979, 2013). The following paragraphs describe the final 6-minute-long play created on the occasion.

The play starts with a rider using the existing ride-hailing service before introducing the new ride-in-silence feature. During an entire trip, the driver tries to engage the rider in a friendly conversation, but the rider refuses the attempt. The driver constantly reaches out to offer resources from the car panel, played by an actor

Figure 5.1.1 Application of the 'Newspaper Theatre' technique for introducing a new feature to a ride-hailing digital service. The spect-actor (standing on the left) mutes the driver (sitting at the centre) in favour of the rider's privacy (sitting on the left). The car panel (standing on the right) reacts only to the driver's actions.

SOURCE: FREDERICK VAN AMSTEL.

sitting on the ground. In one of these interactions, for example, the driver asks whether the rider would like her to turn on the air conditioner and the rider replies 'yes'. Furthering the **objectified lens** over the body, the driver pushes a stick held by the car panel actor, who responds by changing his head accessory from a helmet to a shower cap. This chain of actions expresses the spect-actors' initial understanding of the crucial role played by human bodies in designing service interfaces. Through dialogue and gestures, drivers and riders designed a way to control the car environment.

After getting to his destination, the rider bumps into a friend and complains about the annoying talkative driver he has just faced. The friend tells him about a news item he had read describing a new 'silence' feature just introduced. Both manifest an interest in it and leave the scene. When leaving, the friend decides to try out the premium feature in his own return ride. The driver now wears a skull mask and does not utter a single word to the second rider, who is equally indifferent to the presence of another person in the car. The spect-actors want to convey a sense of awkwardness when deviating from typical Brazilian ride-hailing habits.

The 'dead silence' ends when another passenger unexpectedly joins the ride: the design researcher working for the ride-hailing service (the woman with the tall hat featured in Figure 5.1.2). The researcher asks right away what the rider thinks of his ride experience with the new ride-in-silence feature, to which he answers positively but in an unimpressed manner. The design researcher concludes that the rider wants even more privacy, so she pushes the driver out of his seat and installs an automatic driver – played by another spect-actor– thereby turning the vehicle into a self-driving car. The play ends with the rider stating how satisfied he now is with the memorable experience.

Figure 5.1.2 'Forum Theatre' play of the ride-in-silence feature. The design researcher (centre) asks whether the rider (left side) is still bothered by the driver's presence, even if she is silent (on the right). The car panel (sitting in front) now reacts directly to the rider's actions.

SOURCE: FREDERICK VAN AMSTEL.

After the play was over, the joker opened the forum and promoted a debate among the audience, with questions like: Which kind of attitude towards others is nurtured by these digitally enabled services? Is it ethical to sell another person's silence as part of a premium service offer? People watching the play were mainly informatics students who stood near the workshop venue and were invited to join. Two spect-actors raised their voices to justify the premium Service Design and defend the company's interface design, while most positioned themselves against the feature. One of the spect-actors questioned the design researcher's attitude, who, according to her, did not consider the driver's experience and opinion. The joker then invited her to join the play and replace the spect-actor who played the design researcher.

As usual for first-time spect-actors, the person refused the invitation immediately. However, the joker further motivated her participation by bringing forth the **epistemic lens**, explaining that in T-O, the body is not just an objective image that we produce to convey an idea but also a way of feeling and knowing the world. Her ideas would develop differently depending on whether she stayed in the audience or moved onto the stage because one can assume completely different standpoints in either position. After agreeing to enter the stage and seeing her concrete embodiment as a source for producing new knowledge, the spect-actor joined the play and performed marvellously. She first interviewed the driver and rider separately and heard their interests. The rider wanted to arrive at his destination with minimal effort and cost, while the driver wanted to keep her property intact and be recognized for her service. The design researcher then promoted a codesign dialogue in which she managed to meet an agreement between rider and driver: the rider would stay in peace, but the driver would be allowed to fixate a sign on the back of the seat to ask the rider to take care of her car. All these actions were improvised on the spot, in front of the other spect-actors.

The 'Forum Theatre' workshop had to end after discussing some implications of these actions due to the time limitations. Overall, participants and the audience agreed that the ride-in-silence feature could feel oppressive to drivers, although that could be compensated by offering them some perks. None of them were completely satisfied with the compromise made to mend the contradiction of body at the end. As is usual in T-O plays, oppression is not over yet, as it requires sustained social action beyond the forum (Santos 2016).

5.1.5 CONTRADICTIONS OF BODY IN THE DESIGN OF SERVICE INTERFACES

In this section, we reflect on the contradictions raised by the play. After the informatics students had left, workshop participants debriefed their experiences. They generally agreed that the driver's will was largely ignored for the rider's benefit as if what had to happen in the service interface (i.e. a trip without verbal interaction) was already prefigured by the underlying contract established through the digital app. The rider expected to be served without having to provide anything in exchange besides money. He was not willing to be cordial, talkative, or nice to the driver because he did not recognize the driver as a fully embodied human user but as a semi-automated car interface that allowed him to reach his destination in peace. When an automated driver replaced the human driver, the rider finally expressed happiness because he got relief from both worrying that the driver might bother him and from the guilt of treating the driver as an object. Instead of further humanizing humans, as new technologies might be expected to do, this technology dehumanized both riders and drivers by formalizing negative body differences in the service interface.

While participants' characterization of rider-driver relations was somewhat clear-cut, their understanding of the contradiction of oppression required digging deeper in the social-historical context. This can be seen in the following workshop transcription segment (spect-actors are identified by their roles):

> **Driver:** When you [the joker] proposed this theme [ride-hailing], I was asking myself: who is the oppressed, who is the oppressor, is the user the oppressed or is the designer the oppressor? Is it the other way around? Is there really an oppressor? In fact, does technology oppress everyone? I don't know how to answer this question, and I don't think I need to answer it now, but I know my students will ask me. So, okay, who is the oppressed and who is the oppressor?
>
> **Joker:** . . .
>
> **Design researcher**: I just commented that 'who is the oppressor' varies a lot. I think sometimes the oppressed is the passenger, and sometimes it's the driver.
>
> **Second rider:** Yeah, I think in this specific case, the oppressor is the company and the business model it is building.
>
> **First rider:** Yes. And there is still a notable oppressor, which is the taxi driver [not yet in ride-hailing platforms], for example.
>
> **Second rider:** Once there was the taxi driver, now it is the [ride-hailing] driver, sometimes it is the passenger. But we know that their [company] vision is to get away with the driver. They have been announcing this for a long time. So the great oppressor is, in fact, the company. I don't know if the designer has that much responsibility.

Thus, participants managed to tell who the oppressor was for them – the ride-hailing company – and that the oppression in question was based on class relations. The new feature of the digital app, which puts the driver into the position of a manipulable car interface for the rider, obscured the human labour involved in producing that interface. The driver's body was not treated as a concrete worker body, but as objectified labour that could be abstracted away from its face-to-face service relations and marketed through the app's digital interface. By making the driver feel like an entrepreneur app user operating in a two-sided marketplace, the company could make the service work invisible to workers themselves. Thus, through this new interface feature, they can capitalize on the driver body and sell their silence for a profit.

Interestingly, the participants did not reflect on the role of the designer, despite the dramatic interventions of the company's design researcher character on at least two occasions: first when shutting up the driver with her hands and, second, when pushing him out of his seat. They largely ignored the historical division between users and designers established in the HCI field (Gonzatto and van Amstel 2022), which led them to assume the privileged position of designing *for* others while not being equally immersed and entangled *with* others in designing. In other words, by taking the critical body consciousness lenses of T-O, participants could explore the contradiction of oppression in the ride (i.e. the service actualized in the interface) but not in the Service Design of the ride (i.e. the interface design actualized by the workshop). They did not consider, for example, that the silent-ride feature (and the rest of the ride-hailing Service Design), designed in the US, might have clashed with standard collective body interaction rituals in Brazil.

Likewise, workshop participants (including the joker) failed to address relations of oppression based on other factors beyond class, including gender, race, sexual orientation and ability. In Brazil, where almost half of the ride-hailing drivers are low-income, Black or Brown men (Bessa 2021), this is undoubtedly a missed opportunity. Moreover, in the workshop, women's bodies produced the manual and caring part of the service interface in the roles of driver and design researcher, whereas men's bodies played the automated part of the interface in car panels and driverless system roles. It is widely known that women have historically played the role of skilled service interface producers in many industries beyond ride-hailing, despite not being adequately recognized (e.g. McDowell 2009; Lavee and Kaplan 2022). As for men, they have historically imposed themselves as bodies to be served, a trend confirmed by having two other male actors playing the rider role. These gendered differences weren't discussed. Still, they stand as evidence that oppression relations are reproduced through barely visible social structures, in this case, the participatory cast negotiation during the workshop rehearsals.

5.1.6 DISCUSSION

To influence how humans produce service interfaces, service designers often rely on tools like bodystorming, service drama, full-size cardboard mock-ups and improvised videos. Beyond the creative gains afforded by such tools, they also offer an opportunity to address overlooked issues of structural oppression that mark human bodies and societies. In this chapter, we have conceptualized these issues as contradictions of body and offered five lenses to identify and develop critical body consciousness. By adopting these lenses and practicing T-O, service designers can identify and problematize negative body differentiation in the design and production of service interfaces.

There are many possible further uses of T-O in Service Design. It is by no means another way to assist the oppressors in becoming even more effective in keeping their privileges, for example, capitalist bodies earning larger profit margins from enhanced worker body exploitation. Hence, it would not make much sense to integrate T-O into commercial Service Design practices unless these are genuinely committed to challenging structural oppression. When this is true, T-O can be a powerful ally to turn Service Design from a privately owned to a public deliberation process. Held in public, Service Design can contribute not only to emphasize the public nature of public services – even if privately operated like ride-hailing digital services. Most importantly, Service Design can contribute to rehumanize human bodies historically oppressed in and through service.

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