

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED: LINKING RESEARCH, POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES¹.

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Abstract:

The intellectual path of Augusto Boal ran parallel with his own life. "A path made by walking", we can say using Machado's words. In my personal experience, working as an educator I discovered the necessity of a pedagogical framework to sustain the practice; thinking as educationalist I realized the importance of the political meanings of education; acting as a Theatre of the Oppressed professional I understood the importance of keeping links between theory and praxis, personal and academic research. To summarize, in this paper I try to connect some points between pedagogy, politics and research using the method of the Theatre of the Oppressed as a framework. The first part described the reasons of my interest in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (P. Freire) and then on the Theatre of the Oppressed (A. Boal). Later on, the focus is on the meaning of the words 'theatre' and 'oppression' to explain the aims and the roots of the Theatre of the Oppressed. At the end of the paper the project is presented: "TOgether", a European research-action path aimed at constructing a curriculum for the Theatre of the Oppressed trainer as well as experimenting with the aesthetic potential of the method.

Keywords: Pedagogy. Education. Theatre of the Oppressed. Augusto Boal. Paulo Freire.

1 INTRODUCTION. BIOGRAFICAL REASONS FOR ENGAGED RESEARCH

My first approach with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire dates back about 25 years to when I was a young university student and social educator in my home city of Bologna. At that time, I was looking for pedagogical approaches that would help me to establish my educational commitment in an ethical, utopian and political direction. In fact, my belief was, and still is, that to be involved in educational challenges goes beyond the taking care of or transmitting socially acceptable content

¹ This paper has been elaborated starting from the talk made by the author within the International Conference "Conessioni decoloniali. Pratiche che ricreano convivenza", 19th-21st May 2016, University of Verona, Italy.

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and behaviour to the pupils, and that the educational effort was to be interpreted as a search for new and original existential trajectories for the subjects and the political prospect of changing society.

For me was clear the importance of the connection between personal experiences and the research process in the field of education. Education, politics and social research are fields that are closely related to one another.

In my personal experience, working as an educator I discovered the necessity of a pedagogical framework to sustain the practice; thinking as educationalist I realized the importance of the political meanings of education; acting as a Theatre of the Oppressed professional I understood the importance of keeping links between theory and praxis, personal and academic research.

The fact that Paulo Freire was awarded with an Honorary Doctorate in Education from the University of Bologna (23rd January 1989) and the fact that for this reason his thinking was well-known and studied in my University, facilitated this meeting.

Thanks to this connection, I discovered an approach that interprets the educational practice as "care of the polis" and therefore as an eminently political practice.

In the *lectio magistralis* that Freire held at the University of Bologna on this occasion, he affirmed that the deep value of education lies not just in the utility that it has or should have for the young, but in the hope for change that pedagogical activity keeps alive for humankind as a whole.

Therefore, Freire's thought has the main value of emphasizing the meaning of utopia linked to education especially in contemporary society (*cf.* GADOTTI, 1995). In fact, the present crisis is not only economically addressed but is also a crisis of the dominant ideology, which is often hidden behind false myths of freedom and which is as pervasive and conditioning as the Twentieth Century ideologies, and at the same time is not balanced by alternative models.

According with Freirean perspective, the educational process is a constant "silent revolution", in which the oppressed give shape (form) to their own critical approach to current realities in order to be able to anticipate domination (*cf.* BELLANOVA, 1978).

I had always interpreted my entry into education as being directly connected with a tendency for change; and with Freire this attitude could be based on a proper pedagogical option. This allowed me to overcome certain frustrations that my idea was a marginalized utopian position that was generally not shared.

A few years after the approach with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, I started to practice and study the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO). I soon realized that Boal's intention for calling his method "Theatre of the Oppressed" was not simply to create an artistic form that would lead Freire's pedagogy into the field of Theatre, but was aimed at continuing and intellectually further developing the work of the Master of Recife.

This affinity between TO and pedagogical reflection has several aspects. In this paper, I will limit the discussion to some elements and suggestions to address further developments on the pedagogical specificity of Augusto Boal theatre.

2 'THEATRE' AND 'OPPRESSION'. TWO CONCEPTS AS BASE FOR PEDAGOGIC THEATRE.

In TO, the two words/notions that give the name to the method constitute a unitary concept, a programmatic and theoretical manifesto that guides the practice. Besides which, it is necessary to get deeper into the definition of "theatre" and "oppression" in order to avoid misinterpretations and to understand exactly what the two terms in the TO approach mean.

THEATRE

We know that the etymology of the word "theatre" is related to the place, the physical space where the representations are held. In fact, first of all the theatre is a place where actors and spectators meet, where a ritual is performed, in which a community comes together.

Even today we use the term "theatre" to mean the physical space where specific facts and events occur.

On the other hand, a second definition of "theatre" refers to "what is watching", "what draws attention" and is therefore something that interests the audience, stimulating admiration and engaging our concentration. In this sense, the core has

the position of looking to the form of our observation that transforms the object which we turn our eye to, which makes it worthy of attention (BROCKETT; HILDY, 1978).

In summary, the theatre can be interpreted as the place where the eyes are called upon to pay attention, in which the senses are present to the experience of the subject and in which an aesthetic experience is realized that involves the cognitive and affective dimension of the beholder at the same time.

In the "Poetics", Aristotle (BOAL, 1991) interprets the strength of stories, represented on the stage as tragedy, as a cathartic function inasmuch as the narration allows for the cleansing, lifting and brightening of the viewer's mood. The catharsis is therefore determined by liberating dispassion and violent impulses contained in the facts narrated in the play.

Aristotle intends the tragedy as mimesis, imitation of reality and he emphasizes its social function to appease the conflicting trends in the community. Catharsis serves as an antidote to the risks of violence and radical change of will in society (*Ibidem*).

Augusto Boal, the founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed, proposes an anti-cathartic kind of theatre in the sense that in his intention, taken from Brecht, theatre should instead be used to make the audience aware of the possibility, which might be hidden, of a change in the reality through a mechanism that we can call empowerment.

In theatre, the spectator has an experience of belonging to two distinct places that are simultaneously present: the space of stage fiction and the space of real life. This dual belonging was defined by Boal as '*metaxis*' and it refers to the state of complete and simultaneous membership of the subject to two different and autonomous worlds. The concept of *metaxis* dates back to Plato (*méthexis*) who described the human condition as structurally characterized by a suspension between polarities - eternity and time; unity and plurality; intellect and emotions; desire, need for novelty and security, making the often irreconcilable contradictions of reality itself evident (FRONTEROTTA, 1998, p.63).

Boal applies this concept to the specific field of theatre and in particular to the practice of the TO, in which this dual belonging allows the subject to experiment with the connection between the "evidence of change" in the "protected reality of the stage fiction" and the ability to activate the processes of change in real life at the same time

(BOAL, 2009).

While in conventional theatre the existing gap between the two worlds in which subjects are suspended has not been reconciled and instead they are pushed up to the realization of that catharsis, in the TO an osmosis mechanism between the two worlds (the theatrical fiction and the life) has been activated, through the direct involvement of the spectator. This Boal innovation allows a real pedagogical process of consciousness, designing and testing the change, thanks to the theatrical system. In this sense, theatre regained its pedagogical nature, not purely in a didactical direction, but in a hermeneutical and transformative dimension (*cf.* MEZIRROW, 2000).

In other words, the link between theatre and pedagogy in TO is not limited to the educational use of theatre and drama as a discipline or as a way to better involve the students, thus it lies in the convergence of the theatrical experience and education, having also a simulating function of change (MASSA, 2001). Theatre becomes a process of exploration of deeper and hidden meanings, providing an experience of “authentication of reality” (*Ibidem*), which becomes more understandable even in its conflict underlying the mechanisms. TO develops a concrete path of “conscientization” that allows individuals and communities to reflect and be protagonists during the dramatic action.

Situations in everyday life are deciphered with difficulty, often people are inhibited in the action because of the body and social mechanization, and the social masks that we are compelled to wear. Perhaps, this is where Boal’s greatest pedagogical achievement lies: the fiction of theatre makes us authentic through a simulation in which the possibility of accessing a more authentic dimension of what characterizes daily life has materialized (MASSA, 2001, p. 41).

By analogy, we can say that the educational process, as protected simulation of ‘real’ life, allows action on the reality using the principle of Metaxis and turns ‘action’ into ‘experience’ because action and reflective capacity during the action itself, transform every lived situation into a learning opportunity (CAPPA, 2016).

In education as in the TO, a field of action that enables the exploration and the understanding of the meanings of reality is established, suspending the flow of life and constituting a time and a space where the subject can give sense to the reality and anticipate its transformation.

To reveal the contradictions and hidden truths, it is necessary to side step (or

ascend tele-microscopic in the words of Boal) to enable us to perceive ourselves as simultaneously 'in' and 'out' of the context and to understand the motivations and the state of things caused as a result.

Boal affirms that to understand the reality means to transform it (BOAL, 2008).

It is important to underline that TO aims to build dramaturgies coming from the people's personal experiences. It means that TO does not work on pre-existing dramaturgies written by important authors, but it does allow everyone to be a playwright, director and protagonist of his or her own story. The dramaturgy in TO is the result of a collective production, rather than one person's work, which involves the whole group of participants at the theatre session. In this process, TO provides metaphors of reality that do not correspond to the reality itself, but interpret it starting from the participants' viewpoints, also explaining and showing the invisible aspects of such context.

We would say, to transform reality it is necessary to rework experiences from the flow of life. It means to understand the events putting ourselves in a position of learning from action.

TO proposes a path, where images are built as metaphors of a reality that can be acted on and then returned, by extrapolation, with new facts, to everyday life. We can affirm that Freire pedagogy establishes a consistent application in TO because, like in Freire's view of education, Boal's vision of theatre is not reduced to a sterile ritual or to a narcissistic mould, rather it is intended as a real empowerment process and liberation from social conditioning mechanisms.

As mentioned before, historically speaking theatre is the place of the life of a community for the purpose of communication. Tragedy and comedy were the ways through which community issues were transformed, allowing the audience to be cognitively and emotionally part of the narrative.

Faced with the strength that other iconic and multimedia languages have achieved in our society, on one hand we can notice that they have stolen space and meaning from theatre and, on the other hand they have reduced the area of influence of education. We need to reflect on the space of influence that theatre and education still have today, extending towards public opinion.

Previously, on the subject of the pedagogical value of TO, I stated that this method renews the original political potential and sense of theatre as well. In fact,

based on etymology, TO helps us to better understand the reality that we are exploring in the theatrical narrative, also reaffirming the co-presence of the audience and actors, united in the common destiny of the polis.

Therefore, it is clear that if theatre still has a purpose in complex society, it lies not only in the artistic value of a one-way communication between the observer and the observed, but in the political value; in the etymological meaning; in the meeting between the citizens who together develop knowledge and original interpretations of reality.

3 OPPRESSION

The debate on the correct definition of oppression cannot be solved quickly, in a few pages. For the definition of “oppression” I choose to look at the Boal’s explanation:

[...] a concrete relationship between individuals who belong to different social groups, a relationship that benefits a group at the expense of another. In this attempt of definition, oppression goes beyond individual relationships, not down to what the British call "one to one relationship" and always brings something extra (BOAL, J., 2010, p. 124-125)³.

Some time ago there was a popular joke about how aliens might interpret the causes of a fire. Analysing the phenomenon of fires seen from the space, aliens noticed that where a fire occurred there was always another feature: the presence of firefighters. Such evidence carried the aliens to the unequivocal conclusion that firefighters were the cause of these fires. What in this reading led to a mistaken evaluation, was the lack of understanding of what remained hidden in the perception of events. What is not visible, but is present in the relationship between the two factors (fire, firefighters) is absolutely necessary to understand this reality. The same happens with situations of oppression: the relationships between individuals can be understood only within the context, often invisible.

We cannot understand the relationship between a worker and an owner without trying to understand capitalism, nor the relationship between a white and a black person regardless of racism, or the relationship between a man and a woman without considering patriarchy. Oppression was a widely used term during the 70's. Today we see the proliferation of other expressions, such as “victim” [...]. What do they mean? The victim, in general, is presented as someone who is not opposed to the fate knocking to his door, as someone we need to take care of, feeling guilty or having remorse; never as someone with whom we can establish solidarity or who with we can

³ All the quotations are mine translations.

position ourselves as brother or sister in the struggle (*Ibidem*).

The victim is usually powerless. Used out of context, the concept of “victim” emphasizes the irrational aspect of life in society and removes responsibility from the oppressor groups. Conversely, the word oppression insists on the midpoint of injustice as the foundation of our society.

We must recognize that there is no revolutionary romanticism in the word oppressed. Being oppressed is a social position not a political strategy. Being oppressed is, sadly, a guarantee to rely on an appropriate strategy to fight against their oppression.[...] Ourselves, we can escape the oppression, go around it, negotiate with it, but never win. Since only a black can become president of the United States of America without racism ends, a woman can become the Prime Minister of England without patriarchy ends, a worker can become the president of Brazil without the ending of the exploitation. Winning oppression is not a task for a hero or a Messiah; it is a task of the community. And in this task the theatre can help a lot, but it cannot do everything. The actor must return to being an activist, leave the stage and go into the street. Like Augusto Boal, TO is a test for change, which means that it is not processing nor is it the revolution itself. How do we define who is oppressed, who is the oppressor? How do we establish strategies to achieve the opposite of oppression, emancipation? These questions are central to the TO and we cannot abandon them, because they are the ones that allow us to distinguish the oppressed as cultural entertainment for the excluded from an occupational therapy for victims (*Ibidem*).

The idea of ‘oppression’ leads us towards a vision of our commitment in education as a path for the reveal of what is hidden, to addresses the learning process to the development of a critical view of reality.

Our society is based on injustice, even if the consequences of this situation are not always so evident. In the heritage of Freire thought, education should be a way to understand the origins of the injustice, building process to overtake it. Theatre could be a useful tool in such challenge.

4 THE “TOgether PROJECT”. FROM CONSUMERS TO MAKERS OF AESTHETICS AND COGNITIVE CONTENTS

Thus, this new concept of "pedagogical theatre" foresees a strong link between educational and political aspects, since both areas are aimed at the emancipation of the subject (*cf.* FREIRE, 1971).

As expressed by Boal in his later works (*cf.* BOAL, 2008), to allow theatre to regain its political function it is necessary to bypass the separation between "makers" and "consumers" of aesthetic scripts. It means encouraging all subjects to re-

appropriate the awareness of their ability as makers of images, sounds, words, artistic and cognitive meanings.

Contemporary media society tends to homologate the way of thinking also through "the invasion of the brain" (BOAL, 2008, p. 15) by which subjects are reduced to the passive role of consumers of cultural products with the purpose of repeating the logic of consumption. Conversely, the 'Aesthetics of the Oppressed' and the 'Theatre of the Oppressed' as a whole, are led by the Freire idea that knowledge is something that all people have to build up autonomously, encouraged by the dialogue with the others. Knowledge is gained through the production of meanings of which the subject is itself a maker. Thus, knowledge is not something that has to be acquired through the practice of "banking education" (cf. FREIRE, 1971), which means that the blank mind of the pupils has to be educated by the educator pouring the contents into it.

If in school the real protagonist of the educational process can only be the student and no longer the teacher as it was in the past, the function of theatre and art in general must return to the original sense of being instruments available for all the subjects to explore reality and to give it meaning.

Theatre provides a critical interpretation of reality and is not a way to encourage a narcissistic contemplation of it. In Boal's vision, theatre becomes the process of searching ways, which allow to read and to transfigure reality, to reveal the archetypes, eschewing any hedonistic shortcut and giving back to the people the control of their path of understanding.

The Theatre of the Oppressed is currently a widely used method. Although, for a long time it has been a niche practice and not considered an authentically theatrical approach by experts and professionals. Even if the mass of popularity index does not represent a qualitative value in itself, the spread of TO, on the one hand, denotes the interest and, in some way, the success in terms of the effectiveness of the method. On the other hand, this spread of the method requires a good understanding of the purposes and objectives of Augusto Boal's theatre.

From these assumptions the European Project "TOgether" was born. Seven partners of experts with experience of application of the TO approach in community groups from seven European countries (Portugal, Germany, France, Croatia, Scotland, Spain and Italy), have been working for three years and the network is

currently active in the “TOgether” International Theatre of the Oppressed Company under the artistic direction of Barbara Santos.

This TO practitioners’ community (they call themselves “art-tivists”, a portmanteau blending the two words “artist” and “activists”) during the “TOgether” process have socialized the layered experiences, giving shape to a research network. This project was funded in the first three years from the Grundtvig program of the European Commission, and the first goal was to create a defined curriculum, shared among all members, to qualify the TO trainer (“kuringa” or “joker”). This unusual figure of engaged expert and researcher has also the task of directing performance of TO and facilitating training sessions, embodying the three souls of the method: aesthetics, politics as well as pedagogy.

To achieve this goal, the group experimented and contributed on the further development to the training program for Jokers elaborated by Barbara Santos in her twenty year experience of cooperation with Augusto Boal. Moreover, each group member of the “TOgether” network has developed projects at a local level, using TO applied to various contexts (schools, communities, women's groups, informal groups of teenagers, and more). These experiences represented the opportunity among the participants to reflect on critical issues, strengths, theoretical elements emerging from the practice in a perspective of grounded theory.

The third pillar on which the project was based was the aesthetic production of the Forum Theatre piece “Hotel Europa”. In this production process, TO has been used as a tool to investigate the economic crisis which has effected Europe since the year 2008 and that represents a threat for the European Union itself.

Every one of the partners were involved in a path that used theatrical instruments and potentialities to explore the, at times hidden, different meanings of the economic crisis and the social consequence of such an emergency with its affects on all the citizens of the Union.

Thus, “TOgether” Project (TP) was also a participatory research-action path (Pourtois, 1984) in which TO experts have investigated possible uses of the method.

On the one hand, TP has been a pilot project having as first goal the elaboration of a TO Training Qualification Program.

On the other hand, it aims to stimulate and strengthen the groundwork for the transformation of reality through setting up exchanges between community groups.

To achieve these goals, the initiative has been structured in alternating periods of training (workshops and seminars) and multiplication (practical application in local contexts) and monitored by evaluation processes (written and visual reports, discussion groups, monitoring visits, conferences, artistic and theoretical productions).

In this way, the Project attempts to provoke a critical and productive dialogue in which the training activities influence the course of practical work and the practice helps to identify the theoretical gaps and the skills that training requires.

The point of contact between these two aspects is the production of a Forum Theatre play, with an international cast. Then, this artistic production has converted into a practical application of theoretical concepts explored within the training process. The Forum Theatre play has the function of a reference matrix for the multiplication process and it takes inspiration from the training modules. The theme chosen for this aesthetic research is the economics and social crisis in Europe.

Through this dynamic of reflection-production-reflection, participants of the TP seek to improve their competences as Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners (artists-activists), ratify their commitment to work for the transformation of reality in their local initiatives and advance the aesthetic work in the artistic productions of their community groups.

The process of evaluation of TP has been developed as a collective work of self-assessment, with the supervision of the Department of Education of Bologna University.

The research methods used in the evaluation have been qualitative in order to give the participants the possibility to express their reflexions about the Project actions and to carry out from their viewpoints elements to address the process itself.

For these reason, the tools for the evaluation have been self-reflection modules, interviews, focus group sessions, participant observation, world-cafe sessions.

Moreover, TP provides many materials, which documented the activities, as video, photos, meetings report, records of the training sessions. Such material will be the base for an international publication edit by Bologna University.

The evaluation process was designed not only and primarily to assess the competences achievement of the participants; but mostly to carry out and enlighten the outcomes in terms of:

1. how to use TO in the community as a tool for empowerment;
2. to define aspects of the TO curriculum as non-formal education (training process);
3. to assess the play production process in terms of methodological and aesthetical outcomes;
4. to contribute to the networking process with the aims of improve exchange of practice and knowledge between the European groups.

Focusing on the concept of “THEATRE” the group analysed and experimented the aesthetic possibilities connected with the research potential of this apparatus of expression. Then, the discussion on the concept of “OPPRESSION” helped the group to define a common base from which start with the work path.

Between the partners, starting from “what we think” was defined “how to do” in a common way, to empower themselves as Jokers, and to develop TO skills in a better and efficacy way.

Thus, TO has provided an environment of action and reflection on an issue with different nuances depending on the country, also giving the chance for a synthesis between the viewpoints. Different visions constituted the base for a common aesthetic production focusing on a social issue, presenting a political perspective and being developed through a pedagogical framework. In this sense, we can say that the Theatre of the Oppressed is a “learning by doing” approach, in which the theatrical device is used in a continuous research view.

However, the “TOgether” aesthetics and learning process is still a work in progress since TO is first and foremost a questioning of reality theatre, rather than a theatre that provides answers. Addressed by approximation to the response proposing questions, the goal is not to get a single right answer, but to get all the people involved into the revolutionary process of approaching new understandings on reality.

5 BEING THEATRE

Into the TO framework, "human being means being theatre" (BOAL, 1991, p. 73).

According to the Boal lesson, a human's peculiarity is the "three dimensionality" constituted by the ego acting in situation, the self that is observed and the other looking at us and in which we identify ourselves, like in a mirror. These three typically human dimensions are the essence of theatre (BOAL, 1991, p. 43).

Human existence itself is theatre since it incorporates its own double and simultaneous membership of two separate places. We are, in essence, actors and spectators of our own acts. We act and at the same time we see ourselves acting, imagining also the development of the action itself. For Boal, theatre is defined as a human language that all people use in everyday (*cf.* SANTOS, 2016). For this, human existence itself can be understood through theatre.

In the perspective of TO, the concept of "Essential theatre" refers to the human dimension, before it became an artistic form: "the theatre before the theatre" (SANTOS, 2016, p. 157).

In general, theatre has been associated with a physical space. It involves the use of specific instruments such as sound and light, of structures such as the stage and the audience, of materials such as sets and costumes, and media figures such as technical, musicians, the director and the assistant director, etc. All these facilities are aimed at the staging.

Different styles and authorial lines can be chosen. The production can be developed according to an experimental process or by following coded methods. The staging may propose a comedy or a drama, a surreal or absurd form. [...]

Taking into account distinct objectives and goals, you can have fun, entertain, provoke participation, anesthetize, or stimulate thought, to forget the reality, cause reflections on it, to get a message, and more.

It could be make theatre even when the actors and the audience meet in an alternative space, without a physical structure prepared.

Instead, the Essential Theatre refers to THEATRE before the concept of THEATRE, which precedes doing theatre, because it is based on the human ability to be actors and spectators of our actions. In this sense, separating ourselves into those who implement and those who observe the action, we increase our ability to understand our own action. Then, by dividing we multiply! (SANTOS, 2016, p. 158-159).

Therefore, the "essential theatre" regards our ability to perceive ourselves in action, during the action itself. We can also imagine the action and direct it during the action. As spectators we have the outside perspective of our own actions and we can take advantage of this privileged position to analyse and evaluate what we are doing

and adjust the direction along the way. “A business meeting, a romantic encounter, the announcement of an important decision for the family: how to dress, what words to use, how to move? Life is theatre! To put it in Boal: everything is theatre! (SANTOS, 2016, p. 162).”

In our daily lives, we use the same dimensions we use on stage. “In our daily dramatic action we select costumes, define text, choose the style and also do rehearsals before acting” (*Ibidem*).

To be aware of theatre skills means to be prepared to act on the stage of life. TO addresses the exploration of the communicative possibilities and strategies for action, such as the first step of the training itself. The human ability to understand and value what is being said, what others mean, and above all what is implied in the relationship with what is external to us is closely connected with our theatre competence.

Due to the fact that we are theatre, we can make theatre, thus further developing our attitude to being theatre. As human beings, we are able to represent reality by recreating pictures of it in order to understand our existence and foresee our future action (*cf.* SANTOS, 2016).

6 CONCLUSION

In these few pages, the attempt was to point out the main aspects that make the Theatre of the Oppressed a pedagogically interesting field of research.

“Anyone can do theatre, even actors. Everywhere theatre can be done, even into the theatre”, Boal used to repeat (BOAL, 1991, p.49). He used that phrase to underline that the theatre attitude does not only belong to actors or drama professionals. Regaining the aesthetic attitude for everybody means firstly returning the right to use all the languages of our expressive potential to people.

To aims to help people discover theatre as human potential to better understand the world in which we live, as well as being a mirror of the mind inside us. Moreover, approaching reality with a practice, which helps develop critical thinking and expressive capacity, has to be considered as an important factor for the educational process. Despite this, theatre is a learning path that is not yet sufficiently

explored in the educational sciences, or at least not considered as a fundamental discipline in school curriculum.

My personal experience as an educator and researcher has lead me to consider how important methodologies focused on the global development of the subject are, instead of specialized focalization only on disciplines separated from the others.

Helping people to discover human theatricality as an instrument of knowledge, TO gives back to the person his/her leading role in the theatrical action of everyday life.

In his last public talk, held at UNESCO in Paris in March 2009, on the occasion of his appointment as Ambassador of the World Theatre, a month before he passed away, Boal reaffirmed his belief:

All human societies are spectacular in their daily life and produce shows in special moments. They are spectacular as a form of social organization and produce shows like this that you are attending. Even when it is unconscious, human relationships are structured in a theatrical form. The use of space, body language, choice of words and voice modulation, the confrontation of ideas and passions, everything that we do on stage, we also do in our lives: We are theatre!

There are no weddings or funerals without a dramatic framework, and daily rituals also exist which, for their familiarity, are not perceived as such by the consciousness of the subject. There is no breakfast or good morning, timid love affairs or big passionate conflicts, a session of the Senate or a diplomatic meeting unless there is theatre. EVERYTHING IS THEATRE.

One of the main functions of our art is to bring back to consciousness this spectacular dimension of everyday life, where the actors are themselves spectators, the stage is the audience and the audience is the stage. We are all artists: doing theatre we learn to see what it is plain to see, but that we are unable to do so we are used to perceiving it distractedly.

What is familiar to us becomes unseen: doing theatre, on the contrary, we illuminate the stage of our lives.

Seeing the world beyond appearances, we see oppressors and oppressed in all societies, ethnic groups, genders, classes and castes, we see an unfair and cruel world. So, we have an obligation to invent another world because we know that another world is possible. But it is up to us to build it with our hands, entering the scene, on stage and in life.

The Theatre is not just an event, but is a form of life! The actors are all of us. The citizen is not the one who lives in a society, but one who by his own action transforms it... (SANTOS, 2016, pp. 162-165).

TEATRO DO OPRIMIDO: PESQUISA DA LIGAÇÃO, COMPROMISSO POLÍTICO E PERSPECTIVAS PEDAGÓGICAS

Resumo:

A trajetória intelectual de Augusto Boal correu em paralelo com sua própria vida. "Um caminho feito a pé", usando as palavras de Machado. Na minha experiência pessoal trabalhando como educador, eu descobri a necessidade de uma estrutura pedagógica para sustentar a prática. Pensando como educador, eu percebi a importância do significado político da educação. Agindo como um profissional do Teatro do Oprimido, eu compreendi a importância de manter ligações entre teoria e prática, a vida pessoal e a pesquisa acadêmica. Para resumir, neste artigo eu tento conectar alguns pontos entre a pedagogia, política e pesquisa utilizando o método do Teatro do Oprimido como estrutura. Na primeira parte descrevi as razões de meu interesse na Pedagogia do Oprimido (Paulo Freire), e em seguida, no Teatro do Oprimido (Augusto Boal). Posteriormente, o foco é no significado das palavras "teatro" e "opressão" para explicar os objetivos e as raízes do Teatro do Oprimido. No final do artigo o projeto "TOgether" é apresentado: a trajetória de uma pesquisa-ação europeia destinada à construção de um currículo para o formador do Teatro do Oprimido, bem como experiências com o potencial estético do método.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia. Educação. Teatro do Oprimido. Augusto Boal. Paulo Freire.

TEATRO DEL OPRIMIDO: CONEXIÓN ENTRE INVESTIGACIÓN, COMPROMISO POLÍTICO Y PERSPECTIVAS PEDAGÓGICAS

Resumen:

La trayectoria intelectual de Augusto Boal corrió en paralelo con su propia vida. "Un camino hecho a pié", usando las palabras de Machado. En mi experiencia personal, trabajando como educador, descubrí la necesidad de una estructura pedagógica para sostener la práctica. Pensando como educador, percibí la importancia del significado político de la educación. Desempeñándome como profesional del Teatro del Oprimido, comprendí la importancia de mantener conexiones entre teoría y práctica, la vida personal y la investigación académica. Para resumir, en este artículo, intento conectar algunos puntos entre pedagogía, política e investigación, utilizando el método del Teatro del Oprimido como estructura. En la primera parte describí las razones de mi interés en la Pedagogía del Oprimido (Paulo Freire) y, seguidamente, en el Teatro del Oprimido (Augusto Boal). Posteriormente, el foco se concentra en el significado de las palabras "teatro" y "opresión" para explicar los objetivos y las raíces del Teatro del Oprimido. Al final del artículo, el proyecto "TOgether" es presentado: la trayectoria de una investigación-acción europea, destinada a la construcción de una currícula para el formador dentro del Teatro del Oprimido, bien como experiencias con el potencial estético del método.

Palavras clave: Pedagogía. Educación. Teatro del Oprimido. Augusto Boal. Paulo Freire.

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