



Truth on Stage, Truth in Life: Boal and Stanislavski

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ABSTRACT – Truth on Stage, Truth in Life: Boal and Stanislavski – In light of the concept of *scenic truth*, this paper discusses the influences of the Stanislavski method in the early experiments of the Arena Theatre of São Paulo, and also shows traces of the Russian master's principles in the Poetics of the Oppressed of Augusto Boal. The primary objective of the article is to encourage the construction of Forum Theatre, which uses physical rigor and Stanislavski's psychological breakdown as points of departure. This work can be developed as the actor's internal logic during the phase that precedes the creative process, before the intervention of audiences, and within professional staging of Forum Theatre with more long lasting results.

Keywords: **Forum Theatre. Truth. Stage. Affective Memory. Physical Actions.**

RÉSUMÉ – Vérité sur scène, Vérité dans la vie: Boal et Stanislavski – S'appuyant sur le concept de *vérité scénique*, cet article traite de l'influence de la méthode de Stanislavski lors des premières expérimentations au sein du Théâtre Arena de São Paulo et met également en évidence la marque du maître russe dans les principes de la Poétique du Théâtre de l'Opprimé d'Augusto Boal. L'objectif principal consiste en stimuler la mise en place de spectacles-forum, à partir d'un travail stanislavskien basé sur la rigueur physique et la précision psychologique. Ce travail peut être développé durant la logique interne du processus, phase qui précède tout produit de création, avant l'intervention du spectateur, ou dans la préparation de montages professionnels de théâtre-forum, au cours de projets à plus long terme.

Mots-clés: **Théâtre-Forum. Vérité. Scène. Mémoire Affective. Actions Physiques.**

RESUMO – Verdade na Cena, Verdade na Vida: Boal e Stanislavski – À luz do conceito de *verdade cênica*, o presente artigo discute a influência do método Stanislavski nos primeiros experimentos no seio do Teatro Arena de São Paulo e também aponta rastros do mestre russo nos princípios da Poética do Oprimido de Augusto Boal. O objetivo primordial consiste em incentivar a construção de espetáculos-fórum, partindo de um trabalho com rigor físico e detalhamento psicológico stanislavskianos. Trabalho este, que pode ser desenvolvido na lógica interna do processo, na fase que precede a todo produto de criação, antes da intervenção do espectador e no âmbito de montagens profissionais de teatro-fórum, em projetos mais duradouros.

Palavras-chave: **Teatro-Fórum. Verdade. Cena. Memória Afetiva. Ações Físicas.**

Stanislavski's struggle to restore the theater from the base entertainment and ephemeral consumer product that it had been transformed into to its true craft inspired Augusto Boal and the artists of the Arena Theatre, who in the late 1950s and early 1960s were creating their theatrical interpretation laboratories. In addition to the work within the Arena Theatre, we find traces of the principles of Stanislavski in Poetics of the Oppressed, particularly in the arsenal of games, exercises and the technique of Forum Theater. The main objective of this essay is to reconstruct this exploratory path by looking at the early experiments of the Stanislavski method within the Arena Theatre, pointing out the characteristics of the Russian master in the principles of Poetics of the Oppressed, and highlighting their need to revisit the work *An Actor Prepares* with the purpose of creating more impactful and demanding performances from the aesthetic point of view.

By claiming a political and popular theater, Augusto Boal (1931-2009) challenged the system by which the city placed and still places a trap for the spectator. Whether working in the context of conventional theater or breaking with convention, Boal is constantly thinking of the spectator: in their *activism*, their awareness and their participation. Boal attaches so much importance to the person and character that his practice cannot be contemplated without taking into account these two facets of the human being. The desire to transform the individual and the collective, coupled with the concept of *specta-actor*, legitimizes a more systematic comparison of the trajectories and systems of Augusto Boal and Constantin Stanislavski¹. It is necessary to make the comparisons relative, though, as Boal invites us to consider his system from a political perspective, although from his early plays and scenarios, one cannot make the political without the full engagement of the viewer. Over time, this essential concern deepens and culminates in a system that the author baptizes as Theatre of the Oppressed. At the heart of this system is the *spect-actor*: their training, their games and their interpretations will be the methodological and philosophical priorities of the vast system that this Brazilian theater master would conceive. And, it is in the systematization of the principles, the arsenal of *games and exercises*², and the work with the person and the character that Stanislavski becomes a necessary step to make Brecht! The concept

of the *alienation effect* is necessarily preceded by that of *personal identification*.

Stanislavski, in turn, was also convinced that the actor who was more likely to deeply touch the audience their emotions and thoughts would be the one who behaved like a complete human being. If we go beyond the experience with the Arena Theatre group of São Paulo in the context of the Theatre of the Oppressed in the 1960s, when Boal pursued these thoughts, we recognize that the reflection of the *spect-actors*, and the echoes and similarities become incorporated. Boal says that becoming emotional is inherent in human beings; we cry because we see each other crying, and we are afflicted by the affliction of others. For this Brazilian theater artist, the real work of the actor is to access the complex reflection of the individual's environment and, in the case of Forum Theatre, go beyond this access, and cause the spect-actor's reaction (Boal, 2009b, p. 61). To better know the similarities between the methods and theories of these two theater masters, the following summarizes briefly both their trajectories.

Augusto Boal

Augusto Boal was an artist, active militant, president of the Centres of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro and Paris. Varying the approach of the Theatre of the Oppressed project based on the needs of the spaces, the circumstances, the oppressed and their other demands, he preserved intact the two main goals of his poetics: “[...] transforming the viewer, a passive and depositary being, into the protagonist of dramatic action; never be content to reflect on the past, but to prepare for the future” (Boal, 1998, p. 12).

In its origin, considering the Latin American context, the Poetics of the Oppressed invested in combating the double oppression (individual and collective), exercised in theater and society. “By releasing the viewer of their viewer condition, they can free up other oppressions”, says Boal (2009a, p. 35). Both the discovery as well as the evolution of this poetic followed in the footsteps of the trajectory of its inventor: Augusto Boal. Born in Rio de Janeiro, he was a chemical engineer and held a graduate degree from Columbia University in New York. In the mid-1950s, he gave up science to pursue a career in theatrical arts. Upon returning to Brazil, and

working as a playwright and theater director, Boal became one of the first to implement a popularization of a Brazilian theater project. The biggest distinction of this project was to portray the image of the Brazilian people on stage, and to restore the spoken word to this forgotten or folklorized people in the name of decadent bourgeois values and the intellectual stagnation of the time. Boal's trajectory, like many revolutionaries, was built gradually in obedience to a logic of theatrical creation that vehemently refused art as isolated from life.

In 1956, Boal went on to direct the Arena Theatre of São Paulo. The central concern of the group of actors who made up the Arena Theatre was to escape the North American theater-making fashions without falling, however, into a mere imitation of the European theater. From 1958 to 1967, Brazil had discovered parts of the North American, Brazilian, and European repertoire, and almost simultaneously, Stanislavkian (naturalistic interpretation method) and Brechtian (*alienation effect* technique, *Verfremdung*) theater making. After the exile in Latin America and Europe, Boal became known as the father of the Poetics of the Oppressed, and particularly as the inventor of the Forum Theatre technique, emblematic of the technical arsenal spread worldwide³. At this very point of discussion, we touch on the privileged object of this essay: the method of naturalistic interpretation and the meeting of Boal and Stanislavski via Lee Strasberg and Elia Kazan's Actor's Studio, (1951-1982).

Constantin Stanislavski

Stanislavski, born in 1863, was the son of an actress and grew up naturally imbued within the world of art. In a kind of game of continuity, the future director of the Artistic Theatre of Moscow became the leader of the troupe, and remained in charge for fifteen years. Three key meetings had enormous importance on the fate of Stanislavski and allowed him to come to terms with his historic endeavor. First, there was Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, a trainer of actors whose vision of theater was very close to that of Stanislavski's, and, in a way, complementary to it. Together they founded the Art Popular Theatre in 1897 (originally named Artistic Theatre of Moscow); then came Morozov, who put his fortune and his expertise at the service of the Artistic Theatre; and finally, Anton

Pavlovich Chekhov came in and revealed himself as the providential author who Stanislavski had been waiting for. Initially, his conduct appeared essentially realistic. Later, when he was more experienced and self-assured, he undertook research around what he would later call *spiritual realism*, which permitted for greater experimentation and innovation. This course naturally transpired in his choices in terms of repertoire: after Chekhov, Stanislavsky would work with the texts of Ibsen, Goldoni, Shakespeare and Molière.

Regarding the legacy of Stanislavski in the work *An Actor Prepares*, Martim Gonçalves⁴ notes that, in the eighteenth century, Lessing, a German critic, made the following observation: “[...] we have actors, but we do not have the art of interpretation” (Stanislavski, 2013, p. 8). By questioning the manuals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries obsolete by their predilections to the oratory arts and regardless of the creations of the actor nor their scenic acting, Stanislavski launched into a major undertaking: systematizing intuitive knowledge of the great actors of the past and conveying this knowledge to contemporary actors, so that they could bring it to bear at the time of creation.

Also in the preface to the *An Actor Prepares*, M. Gonçalves insists that the actor’s work, in Stanislavski’s system, could not be conceived as a mere imitation or a repetition of the work of other actors. Indeed, this is an advanced research directed at an original creation. It is not a representation of style, but of a technique and therefore a means to and not “[...] an end in itself” (Stanislavski, 2013, p. 8-9). M. Gonçalves recognizes that Stanislavski’s system represents a break with the traditional way of teaching drama. Stanislavski is not an isolated phenomenon. His research has similarities with research of Artaud, Copeau and Craig, since they are anchored in the same concern: review of basic principles of drama, including, in the foreground, the problems of technical training.

In *An Actor Prepares*, Stanislavski dissects his method step by step. The construction of this work flagship of the Russian master is rich and dynamic, and is as far as possible from the cold formality of a training manual. Adopting an unusual procedure for a textbook⁵, the author comes into play in two different phases: the young Stanislavski *reporting* the teachings of Tsortsov twice the master and Stanislavski himself speaking in the prime of life and experience. This seductive

back and forth movement proves more effective than any exegesis, and allows us to understand the *almost religious focus* of Stanislavskian art, its exceptional nature and the deep-rooted respect for the man and his potential.

An even more exciting aspect of Stanislavski can be identified both in his professional dimension and in his life as a man, a dimension that is witnessed in his teachings. Stimulating creativity and spontaneity, the master rejects a cerebral art that does not match the movements of the soul, and evokes resentment and sorrow for those who value the intellect too much. Stanislavski attaches great importance to the total, global training of the actor “[...] intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional” (Stanislavski, 2013, p. 10). It is undoubtedly in assemblies of plays of Chekhov that Stanislavski outlines the first steps towards the *psychological realism*, in which emotion is the priority. The emotion must freely determine the final form of any product⁶! This dignity and passion in the way of conceiving drama won over Boal and the artists of Arena Theatre, who in the late 1950s and early 1960s, very inspired, created their theatrical interpretation laboratories⁷.

Theatrical Interpretation Laboratories

Stanislavski’s expressed goal to make the results of his research accessible to the actors and theater directors willing to follow the necessary training to perform their art contributed to Arena Theatre’s laboratories and investigations being dedicated to the detailed analysis of his method. The echoes of criticism of the resulting work from their dissection of the Stanislavski method are quite positive:

Look at the example of the actors from Arena. They are the most disciplined theater scholars I’ve ever met. Their passion for the theater – despite the unhealthy militancy that only time can heal – is devoid of all vanity and all commercial spirit (Wolfen, 1963, p. 1).

Working feverishly from the clues revealed by the Russian master, but noting that the sixteen chapters of the work *The Actor Prepares*, including theory and exercises (from action to imagination, through the concentration of attention to be concluded with *the subconscious threshold*) contained a smattering of psychology, the group adapted the Stanislavskian system to their goals: to stage

the reality of the Brazilian nation and at the same time avoid the tendentious psychology of a certain class! The emotional identification must be possible, but the necessary alienation to the critique of the represented reality was essential in the process of transmitting the group's ideology. As we shall see, upon review of Augusto Boal's writings and oral testimony, it appears that the Stanislavski system was only used in the internal logic of the process, at the stage that preceded the whole creative product.

Artistically, and as a fully committed theater ensemble, Arena Theatre thought as Stanislavski: a true actor should refuse any excess theatrical emotions, in the pejorative sense of the term. This warning was made in reference to all kinds of artificial or peripheral imitation, due to purely physical sensations, and externalized mechanically. Such mechanization results from the lack of internal and dynamic procedures. The purely physical sensations are expressed, often, by who represents and interprets feelings that have not been lived, felt deeply, intimately, or that raise no interest. Necessarily, one must search out an emotion that is the very basis of the *role being built from reality*. For the Arena Theatre, it was essential to know how emotions could manifest themselves through the actor's body, a mechanized, muscularly automated element. But will the discovery of a new emotion be free of this mechanical behavior?

The *De-mechanization* Techniques

Trying to answer these questions, the Arena actors were led to create a further schematic of the Stanislavski system, adopting a more objective and much less emotional procedure. From this perspective, in an initial phase of work, the social masks are dropped, and automation a result of the repetition of the same movements is considered in its purely physical form. In this regard, Boal notes:

The actor, like every human being, has mechanized feelings, actions and reactions, and so it is necessary to begin with their de-mechanization in order to break this down, and for the actor to be able to assume the mechanization of the character who they will play (Boal, 2009a, p. 61).

For the actor, however, to be able to take the automation of the character they will play, they should start by their own de-mechanization. They need to relearn how to perceive the emotions

and feelings of which they are no longer conscious. This work involves very precise steps/techniques, namely a) the *External Techniques*: first of all, the actors of Arena separated out from the Stanislavski method all matters relating to the construction of character and were dedicated to what they call *external techniques* through a rigorous preparation of body and voice consubstantial instruments to the artist's expression on the stage, and to their intimate and personal creation. Then they worked on creating characters, always in physical terms: the movements, gestures and mime, the voice, the tone, the pace of spoken text and all that's involved in or part of a character, which follows an ordered progression in the Stanislavski perspective⁸; b) the *Sensory Stage*: the second stage, called sensory, is to exploit the memory of the senses through games-exercises: remembering the taste of food, a smell, a rhythm etc.; c) *Memory*: then came the memory exercises, which required remembering or reconstructing a distant or recent event; d) *Imagination*: the stage of memory was complemented by a fourth phase comprising imagination exercises. The purpose here, unlike the previous three phases, was to create or invent stories or facts/events; e) the *Emotional Memory*: the above conditions are preliminary to emotional exercises, which primary objective is to reveal the emotional memory. This phase was crucial because it aims to destroy the actors's mechanisms and habits (vices and other automation) that were reinforced by the conception of the bourgeois theater of São Paulo (reference to the years 1956 to 1960), according to the Arena.

The main objective of this process was to bridge the abyss installed between the emotion felt by the actor and the final form of expression of that emotion. The actor should be able to flourish a character's traits while nullifying their own⁹. The group was launched into daily *emotional memory* exercises, which are rituals practiced anytime and anywhere. The discovery of things, when we venture into the experience of new emotions, proves to be fascinating, but these emotions *need to be rationalized*; remain vigilant in the face of the inherent danger in such an exercise; have the power to control them, thus avoiding falling into extremes, using as an example the symbiosis between the person and the character.

This presupposes not only the experience itself, but also the understanding of the lived experience: knowledge not only of

phenomena, but mainly the laws that govern it. In building character, this perspective requires, among other things, an effort of clarity and objectivity of the actor, so they can activate a recall of their personal emotions and at the same time, be able to describe them, overcome them in order to relive them, preserving in parallel a healthy back and forth between reason and emotion. This is the aim pursued by Arena Theatre, based on the analysis of the Russian master's system. Working with emotional memory is not, however, the ultimate goal. There is another important and final stage.

The Dialectic of Interpretation

This final stage hides a fundamental concept that could only be conceived as *dialectic of interpretation*, a concept anchored in the notions of *will* and *against one's will*: a) *will*: the fundamental concept for the actor, contrary to what one might think, is not *being*, but rather the *want* of the character. Indeed, the question *what does the character want?* is much more dynamic than *who are they?* The nature of the *will* (desire) is much more conflictive, and hence, dialectic. A will that is not arbitrary necessarily embodies an idea. Exercising a will means to desire something and to strive to accomplish it: “[...] if the actor enters the scene with abstract desires for happiness, love, power, etc., it will not help them [...]” (Boal, 2009a, p 75).; b) *against one's will*: if no emotion is pure and permanently identical to itself, the actor is required—if they want to play their character with truth and depth to find a counter-will that corresponds to each of their wishes: “[...] the internal conflict of will and reluctance creates a dynamic, creates the theatricality of the interpretation, and the actor is never equal to themselves, because they are in constant transformation [...]” (Boal, 2009a, p. 79).

The Arena Theatre Method and the Stanislavski Method

We can see from the above, that the changes and adaptations made in the Stanislavski system were not radical, and are even bland. The philosophy remains intact, and, most often, we are faced with identical content in both cases. Theoretically, there is no obvious contradiction between the original Stanislavski and the adaptations of Augusto Boal. In practice, the correlation between the different

types of exercise indicates that it isn't just a simplistic or superficial *appropriation*. At this very point of discussion, we reaffirm the object of this essay: the concept of scenic truth! While the early writings of Stanislavski accentuated an acceptance of total physical and psychological identification of actor with the character, the school that inspired Augusto Boal the Actor's Studio of Lee Strasberg assumes that the actor must give life to the character, making them able to really live the imaginary circumstances, appealing to emotional memory and answering the question: what really motivates me to do so? This is only possible through different exercises that recreate organically, through the senses, all that is necessary for the character to come to life. Or, even resorting to other practices such as *replacement*, *what if* or the psychological gesture, the actor should look inside themselves for emotions and feelings. This process gives the actor total freedom of artistic creation and gives rise to an organic performance, rooted in the concept of *truth*. The starting point is a deep psychological research by the actor.

As noted in the introduction, the comparisons between Boal and Stanislavski don't end with the experiences within the Arena Theatre of São Paulo. The purpose of this essay is to also trace a comparative map of Stanislavskian principles present in the Poetics of the Oppressed. It should be noted that the Brazilian playwright extended his adaptations and borrowings from the Russian master's method into the Theatre of the Oppressed and its arsenal of techniques¹⁰, which is not limited only to the forum theater technique. Nevertheless, it is due to our experience with the assembly of Forum Theater plays, the requirements of an *Aesthetics of the Oppressed*, coupled with the intense search for a *truth* in the construction of the *characters/spect-actors anti-model*¹¹, which has ratified the comparison of trajectories and methods of Boal and Stanislavsky and, at the same time, encourages working in the two paths. From this perspective, the following comparative framework allows a highlighting of similarities, and at the same time, raises other important questions.



Author		Text		Author		Text	
Stanislavski:		An Actor Prepares		Boal: Games for Actors and Non-Actors			
Theme/Stage	Exercise/Example	Theme	Exercises/Example	Theme	Exercises/Example	Theme	Exercises/Example
Action (p. 61)	<i>As if.</i>	Muscular Exercises (p. 62)	Walk like Dick, laugh with Jane.	Sensory Exercises and Memory (p. 63)	Take a spoonful of honey, a little salt, then sugar. Then recall the taste of everything.	Concentration (p. 192, 286 e 298)	Establish a circle of attention; the darkroom, the interrogation.
Imagination (p. 85)	Sense the taste of castor oil; imagine a place.	Rhythm and Breathe (p. 102, 147 e 160)	Massage and relax; relaxation of the head and body - horizontal and vertical lines; sculpting the other one's body.	Games with masks and Rituals (p. 197 e 204)	Imitate each other without caricature; reproduce masks, personal habits - sequential structure: masks, ritual and motivations.	Faith and Sense of Truth (p. 165)	Take care of the details to convince for scenic faith and integrity; acquire sense of measure; want something truly, physically.
Concentration of Attention (p. 105)	The circle of light; recall/reconstruct the day/workday.	Breaking Repression (p. 307)	Recapturing of a lived oppression; emotional transfer.	The Preparation of a Scene and Commentary: stop and think! (p. 297-299)	Consistency between thought, action and words; thought moving to structure each scene around the main action.	Emotional Memory (p. 201)	Emotional memory; the truth of the game, scenic faith; example: the line of behavior remaining in character.
Objects and Objectives (p. 147)	Exterior or physical object; inner or psychological object; elementary psychological object.	Interrelation (p. 197-200)	Actor Creation: creation of inter-relationship with others; the word communication between actor and spectator.	Develop a Subtext and Commentary: stop and think! (p. 297)	Thought is a continuous flow; waves and sub waves, conscious and unconscious.	Communion (p. 233)	"[...] even during the silences it is important to stay in touch with yourself, with each other, or with an object".
Faith and Sense of Truth (p. 165)	Take care of the details to convince for scenic faith and integrity; acquire sense of measure; want something truly, physically.	Rationalizing Emotion and Contrary Thought (p. 303-304)	Saying and doing the opposite of what one thinks; explore the phenomenon and its laws.	Adaptation (p. 265)	The word: "[...] starting point for new adaptation"; the invisible waves, irradiation.	Internal Motivating Forces (p. 287)	Feelings, the intellect, and the will play dominant roles in creation.

Continuous Line (p. 297)	Every creative act requires a continuous line; the actor and their role are live thanks to that line.	Reluctance Versus Will (p. 300-301)	What character wants (will) and against one's will - dialectical interpretation.
Internal State of Creativity (p. 309)	The action has to be credible; two concerns: to balance the game and life.	Recognition (p. 200)	Artistic creation is also rational: actor, action, text.
The Meta-Objective (p. 321)	Preservation of the main theme throughout the work; small goals converge on the big goal.	Scenic Rhythm (p. 307-311)	Slow motion; Double time; saying the text rhythmically; Cast integration with the objective structure of subjectivities.
The Borderlands of the Subconscious (p. 370)	"[...] We live on stage thanks to our affective memories". "[...] The creation of the actor is the expression of your subconscious".	In Search of Lost Time (p. 71)	[In art] to rediscover lost time is to live in memory ¹² .

The parallel between Boal and Stanislavski, from the early days in the Arena Theatre to the systematization of the Theatre of the Oppressed, highlights the notion of *scenic truth* and legitimizes the commitment that is the artistic creation and the real difficulties that form the basis of an aesthetically rigorous political work. We know, however, that the underlying Forum Theater technique is the paradox of the influence of *theatrical performance in real life* a Boal-esque insistence. Although the author explains that the theater is not superior to action (real), but a preliminary phase (Boal, 1988, p 186), we have the ambivalent nature of Forum Theater: far (in the audience) it marks the alienation effect allowed by the exercise from its designation; next (on stage) it invites the recognition (identification).

How to filter, then, this work that uses the Anti-model as its orientation, since, in such a context, the work proposes concrete action models? The real, even in a secondary status, always comes into question. This is an extremely ambitious project, since, in this system, the theatrical game is to prepare an action on the world, a transformation of reality. This procedure inevitably requires a distinct approach to theatrical art commonly used in literature and aesthetics. This practice questions not only the particular universe of the play (the experience of theatrical games), but also society and life. It allows, concomitantly, a thorough reflection on the poetics of theater.

Difficult to distill, the Theatre of the Oppressed never provides for the immediate designation of the viewer's role; on the contrary, the absence of limits leads to a labyrinthine relationship that is very problematic and questioning: actors and spectators *are and are not*; they constitute *one* entity, and at the same time are *multiple*. It is precisely in this relationship that lays all the complexity of a theater that simultaneously requires *identification* and *distancing*. As for the Stanislavski system, let us not forget that it is intended for professional actors and, not to mention research and dedication, it requires discipline and ongoing training. The Theatre of the Oppressed is intended for actors and non-actors and, in most cases, is at the service of specific interventionalist projects.

As some of the stark criticism of the Forum Theatre technique states—for its overly naturalistic and caricatured products the Theatre of the Oppressed neither assumes nor invites to work with the physical rigor and psychological detail recommended by Stanislavski. Elaborated in the immediacy of the oppression it discusses, the products of this theater, most of the time, sacrifice aesthetic rigor at the expense of the urgent need to find solutions to the issues raised. Nevertheless, there are groups who, like us, stage dramatic texts, like *A Day in the Life of a Nurse*, *Revolution in South America*, *Excavator*¹³, from a professional perspective, combining aesthetic refinement and political objectives. For these groups, exploring the traces of Stanislavski and his influence in the work and practice of Boal beyond the Arena Theatre generates more impact to the process of preparing the Boal-esque spect-actor; it deepens the dialectic of poetics of the oppressed and makes the system of the Theatre of the Oppressed more consistent. It is important to highlight the wealth of a theater in which a real man of real life undresses the man on stage, questioning the problem of their common destinies. After all, according to the Russian master, “[...] there is no interpretation worthy of this name, but irradiated by an intense inner life [...]” (Roubine, 2003, p. 116-118).

The method of simple physical actions comes from the constant search for the liberation of the actor. He goes further by requiring that the actor who plays a role dispose of any *a priori* idea of that role and that they forget what they know about the play and the character. It is the metaphor of the *zero procedure* or white sheet,

evoked by Toporkov and Kedrov in *Preparation of the Actor*. The method of physical actions presupposes, first of all, the division of scenes and the establishment of scores for the roles by the theater director. In other words, it implies consideration of each role in terms of elementary actions: the development of a role in different action chains, according to the aforementioned character of the through line of behavior. The primary task of the actor, to start from scratch, is to meet, body and soul, each step/link in this chain, without thinking of the actions that will follow throughout the play nor in the whole of the play; without even thinking in the character's nature. The job of the director, in this first phase of the work, is to tell whether the actor developed the proposed action or not.

Finally, when it comes to the construction of Forum-style performance, working with Stanislavskian physical rigor and psychological detail should be developed in the internal logic of the process, during the phase that precedes the creative product, before the intervention of the viewer, and within professional staging and longer projects. In this sense, work with physical actions implies, here too, the aforementioned steps/techniques: external technique, sensory stage, memory, imagination, emotional memory, dialectic of interpretation (will and against one's will) etc.

The Stanislavski system explores all the expressive possibilities emanating from the actor's body, and to consider his teachings in the context of the Theatre of the Oppressed will avoid a mechanical and forced action:

There can be no true art without life. It begins where the feeling takes on its rights. The mechanical action begins where the creative art ends. In the mechanical performance, there is no place for a living process, and when this occurs, it is only by chance. [...] To reproduce feelings, one must be able to recognize them by the experience [...] (Stanislavski, 1995, p. 53).

The Stanislavskian assertions are echoed and anchored in Boal's search for an aesthetic of the oppressed:

Art is the object, material or immaterial. Aesthetics is how to produce it and perceive it. Art is the thing; Aesthetics, in the subject and their eyes. There is knowledge that only Symbolic Thinking can give us; others, only the Sensory is able to illuminate. We cannot do without either of them (Boal, 2009b, p. 21).

Working in the context of the Poetics of the Oppressed, and reviewing and updating the Stanislavskian principles, is to work from the perspective of training the best viewers and enlightened and discerning amateurs, able to be transformed in *actors*. It is the affirmation of the theater as substantial dimension of the human being, the solar and lunar, Apollo and Dionysus, the clarity of spirit and the nocturnal depths of the being; theater as art that puts into play man in his body and in his spirit. Augusto Boal believed that the *human-viewer* could be the creator and destiny-master of the *human-character* and urges: “Do not tell! Come in and show us your vision of the world” (Boal, 1988, p. 11). If this worldview, however, comes with the requirement of *building roles that are constructed out of truth*, the theater, life and politics win, because to:

[...] express a very delicate and largely subconscious life, you must have control over an extraordinarily sensitive physical and vocal system, optimally prepared [...] (Stanislavski, 2013, p. 44).

Notes

¹ Although we limit ourselves here to the comparison between Boal and Stanislavski, it is necessary to point out the similarities and influences in the work of Boal and other theoretical and theater figures with outstanding performance in the first half of the twentieth century, such as Bertolt Brecht, Jacob Levy Moreno and Armand Gatti, among others. Therefore, I refer the reader to the articles of our own: *Boal e Brecht: a questão do espectador* [Boal and Brecht: the question of the viewer] (2000) and *Armand Gatti e Augusto Boal: formando e informando espectadores* [Armand Gatti and Augusto Boal: forming and informing viewers] (2003).

² Reference to the use of theater as a weapon and to the military dictatorship period, which in fact drives Boal to the creation of new theatrical techniques.

³ A Technique that involves the participation of the viewer in the representation of oppression. In the Forum theatre before the performance, the *joker* thoroughly explains the objectives of the Poetics of the Oppressed. By applying some games-exercises, the audience is lulled, and quickly moving from theory to practice, the joker encourages the viewers to become aware of the deep mechanization of the body. This ritual is followed by the presentation of the *Anti-model*, a play written on a single theme, oppression, the forms of which are numerous and varied. In the course of action, we witness the victory of the oppressors against the oppressed, even if the latter are also oppressors at other times of the show. Secondly, however, the viewers can replace the oppressed and propose alternatives to the problem discussed.

⁴ See *Preparing the Actor* (2013, p. 8). Emblematic name and inseparable from the history of the School of Theater of the Federal University of Bahia (ETUFBA), Eros Martim Gonçalves (1919-1973) was a theater director from the state of Pernambuco who, in 1955, accepted the invitation of the rector Edgard Santos to create and direct the ETUFBA, founded one year later, in 1956. In 1958, he founded the Teatro Santo Antonio, renovated and reopened in 2007 under the name of Teatro Martim Gonçalves. M. Gonçalves settled in Salvador and remained in the direction of ETUFBA until 1962.

⁵ The narrative method adopted by Stanislavski titled *démi-diction* in French is essentially to make Tsortsov one spokesman: he is Stanislavski himself, mature actor and teacher, while the young student who feeds his logbook is the young Stanislavski in full artistic maturity.

⁶ This finding will lead Jean Villar to state, in his preface to the French edition, that “[...] the dialogue of Tsortsov with actors is sometimes lost in thick clouds. The debate is unsuspecting to the unprepared reader here and there with such and such analysis. I see him almost getting lost along this unending maze of the system (1984, p. 5).

⁷ Concurrent with the interpretation laboratories, Arena Theatre implemented playwriting laboratories, which gave birth to authors like Gianfrancesco Guarnieri (*Eles não Usam Black Tie*) - and Oduvaldo Viana Filho (*Chapetuba Futebol Clube*) among other Brazilian playwrights. This phase is called *photo-realism*.

⁸ Boal clearly explains that the training should start with muscle exercises, with the purpose of raising awareness of the existence of all the muscles and the huge variety of movements

that they allow one to perform. Only after this *awakening*, the actor can work out the execution of movements as if they were another person (Hamlet's character, for example). Not trying to imitate Hamlet exactly, but internally trying to understand the mechanism of every move: *what makes Hamlet to sit this way? Why does he laugh like that?*

⁹ This is the implementation phase of the famous imagination exercises, aimed at the annulment of the actor's *personality* (his form, his mold, his mask) and should allow for the birth of the character's *personality*, which is necessarily another. See *Jogos para Atores e não Atores* [Games for Actors and Non-Actors] (2009a, p. 61-65).

¹⁰ The Theatre of the Oppressed also includes techniques from *Invisible Theatre*, *Newspaper Theatre*, *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, and *Cop-in-the-Head*, among others.

¹¹ Called the Anti-model because it only shows the oppressor's point of view. The ideal model, the release of oppression, is left to the viewers - indeed, *spect-actors* - who are there to replace the oppressed in the second moment of the performance.

¹² Boal establishes a comparison between the Proustian literary resources and the Stanislavskian interpretation method. See *Jogos para Atores e não Atores* [Games for Actors and Non-Actors] (2009a, p. 71-73).

¹³ *Um dia Na Vida de Enfermeira* [A day in the life of a nurse] was staged in 2004 as part of a scientific project involving students of the Bachelor in Acting and Theater Direction from the Theatre School of UFBA and was performed in Salvador until 2005. *Revolução na América do Sul* [Revolution in South America] by Augusto Boal, and *Máquina Escavadora* [Excavator], by Armand Gatti, were both mounted with the theatre group of the Empresa Baiana de Águas e Saneamento (EMBASA), the *Embasart*, as a result of the project *Formative Dimensions of Forum Theatre*, which was funded by SESI/SENAI/CNPQ, as a Theatre of the Oppressed with industrial workers, involving EMBASA employees.

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