

RAINBOW OF DESIRES – STUDY MATERIAL



MTÜ Foorumteater
VAT Teatri Foorumgrupp

DEAR READER,

It is a pleasure to let you know that you are holding the study materials of *Rainbow of Desires* in your hands. This book is an expression of gratitude towards Iwan Brioc, NGO Forum Theatre and for VAT Theatre Forum Group, who all put a lot of heart and effort into the making of this material - especially, because this is the first of its kind in Estonia.



„It gave me an understanding about being, about myself and how the method itself works” - participant

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FORUM THEATRE IN ESTONIA

Forum theatre has been practiced in Estonia since 1999 thanks to two men from Finland – Jouni Piekkari and Micke Renlund, who started to train those who were interested in VAT Theatre, later these people evolved into VAT Theatre Forum Group.

Three forum theatre festivals have been held in Estonia. In addition to Tallinn there are active forum groups in Narva, Viljandi and Tartu.

But still we don't have a lot of knowledge about the other wonderful methods of the Theatre of the Oppressed, like newspaper theatre, invisible theatre, legislative theatre and also Rainbow of Desires.

That was the reason why NGO Forum Theatre in co-operation with VAT Theatre Forum Group decided to organise an international training to introduce the Rainbow of Desires method. From the 4th until the 12th of December people from Great Britain, Portugal, Romania, Italy and Estonia gathered in a small place called Kloogaranna near the Estonian seaside. Our teacher and guide through this week was a man known to the Estonian forum theatre fans – Iwan Brioc from Wales.

This training was called „Free our Mind“, and it was made possible to happen with the funds of Youth in Action Estonia.

This material has been made relying mostly on the knowledge and methods we learned from the training, giving a perspective to Rainbow of Desires through the participants of „Free our Mind“.

VAT THEATRE FORUM GROUP

VAT Theatre Forum Group is the oldest forum theatre group in Estonia. It has been active since 1999, when the first forum theatre stories were presented in a youth culture festival. The primary audience has been students, social workers, prison workers etc. The topics have included violence, drugs, theft and discrimination. Now, in 2011, the first members have turned into teachers and mentors for the new members. The target group and topics are mostly the same but new goals and activities have been included. There is a new depth to everything. Regular plays have been replaced with organising festivals, giving trainings, workshops and also self-education. A lot of effort has been put into promoting forum theatre in Estonia.

NGO FORUM THEATRE

This NGO was created in April, 2011 with the aim of developing forum theatre in Estonia, through workshops, trainings, plays, translating and distributing of materials and introducing other TO methods to Estonia. The target group are youngsters and people working with youngsters. NGO Forum Theatre is collaborating with other forum theatre practitioners – VAT Theatre Forum Group, The Youth Council of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare and other forum groups in Estonia.

AUGUSTO BOAL

Augusto Boal (16 March 1931 - 2 May 2009) was a Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician. He was the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal served one term as a *vereador* (the Brazilian equivalent of a city councillor) in Rio de Janeiro from 1993 to 1997, where he developed legislative theatre.

He took an interest in theatre at an early age but he did not become involved in the theatre until after completing his master's degree. After graduating from the UFRJ, Boal went to New York in 1952, where he studied at the School of Dramatic Arts at Columbia University while also pursuing his master's degree in Chemical Engineering.

Among Boal's theatre professors was John Gassner, he introduced Boal to the techniques of both Bertolt Brecht and Constantin Stanislavski, and encouraged Boal to form links with theatre groups like the Black Experimental Theatre.

In 1956 Boal was asked to work with the Arena Theatre in São Paulo, southeast Brazil. Boal was in charge of directing plays along with other dramaturgs such as Jose Renato, who was also the founder of the Arena Theatre. It was here that he began to experiment with new forms of theatre never before seen in Brazil, such as Stanislavski's 'system' for actors, with which he became familiar during his time at Columbia and when involved with the Actors Studio in New York.

Boal adapted these methods to social conditions in Brazil, taking a leftist approach on issues concerning nationalism.

Boal's teachings were controversial, and as a cultural activist he was seen as a threat by the Brazilian military. In 1971, Boal was kidnapped off the street, arrested, tortured, and eventually exiled to Argentina, where he stayed for 5 years. During those 5 years, Boal published two books: *Torquemada* (1971) and his much acclaimed *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1973).

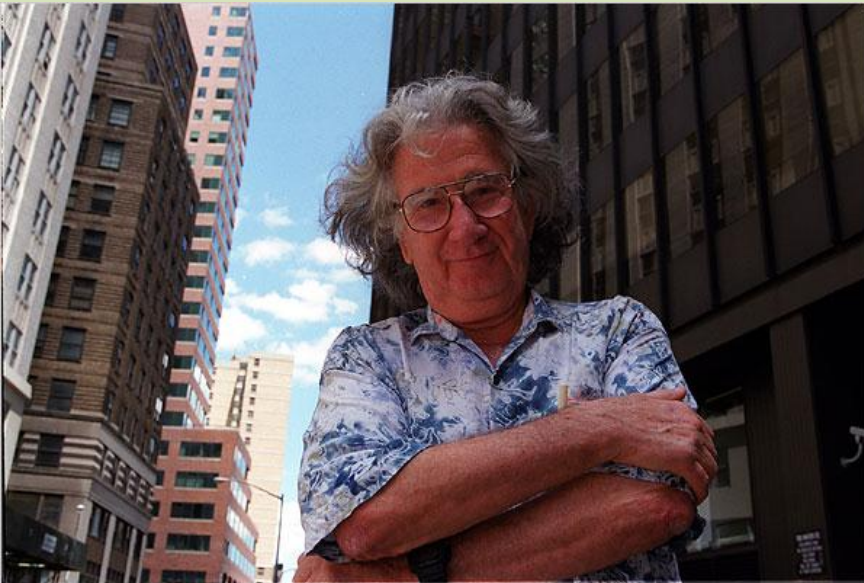
In *Theatre of the Oppressed* he introduces his method that seeks to transform audiences into active participants in the theatrical experience. Boal argues that traditional theatre is oppressive since spectators usually do not get a chance to express themselves, and that a collaboration between both parties, in contrast allows spectators to perform actions that are socially liberating. The method, as Boal liked to explain, seeks to transform spectators into "spect-actors."

How to become a „spect-actor“ –

- 1) Knowing the body (by body he means both the individual 'body' and the collective 'body' in a Marxist sense)
- 2) Making the body expressive
- 3) Using theatre as a language
- 4) Using theatre as discourse

After the fall of the military dictatorship, Boal returned to Brazil after 15 years of exile in 1986. He established a major Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro (CTO Rio), whose objective was to study, discuss and express issues concerning citizenship, culture and various forms of oppression using theatrical language. Boal's work in the CTO made way for the approval of a new law that protects crime victims and witnesses in Brazil.

His belief that theatre lets us create rather than just wait for the future, has inspired people all over the world to use his techniques.



„It gave me a lot. Both for the week itself and both for the people I met (..). I think it was very good. Now I'm eager to know what comes next! I'm gonna study TO (Theatre of the Oppressed), of course, and I wanna do something with the people I met „ - participant

RAINBOW OF DESIRES

Rainbow of Desires comes from the time when Augusto Boal ran from South-America to Europe. At first sight Europe seemed as a land that was free of oppression but after a while he realized it is not like that at all. The oppression Europe suffered under was not the kind of physical tormenting that happened in South-America, it was an inner oppression. That was proven by the fact that the suicide rate was very high.

Doing a research about the internal or inner oppressions made Boal think out of a new method in theatre – Rainbow of Desires. This method contains techniques that concentrate on identifying a person's psychological and emotional oppressions, to find solutions to make them disappear. This means that the inability of a person to succeed, be happy and successful comes from the inside, from the head, not outside from someone else. The inner oppressors can be the person's thoughts, fears and attitude.

This makes the techniques of Rainbow of Desires the perfect tools to help a person develop both socially and personally. This method is used to make people analyse their inner oppressions, to inspire and give strength to take control and be responsible of their actions, decisions and choices. A person can take control over his life again.

"It is not the place of the theatre to show the correct path, but only to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined."

- Boal, 1985

EXERCISES

Now, we give an overview of different exercises, techniques and games, carried out throughout the training “Free Our Mind”. Some of the exercises are from Augusto Boal and they are believed to be directly the exercises of “Rainbow of Desires” and some are added by Iwan Brioc.

JOURNEY TO NOW

Materials needed: a candle, colourful papers, wool, cloth, etc (some handicraft materials).

The participants are sitting in a circle, a candle is placed in the middle (to avoid fire hazard, have the candle placed on some kind of a stand). The burning candle represents the present moment and the place where they are sitting, their birth. From the existing materials, create a path from your birth to the present moment (towards the candle). Some soothing music could be played in the background and time should be given according to need, but not more than an half an hour.

When finished, everyone can have a walk around the circle and explore the paths of others.

The exercise gives a good chance to rethink one’s path of life – which are the most exciting moments and periods of life, or vice versa, which have been the most depressing moments. According to that, one can use different materials, colours. The exercise gives a chance to show how the usage of different materials and things can have a different meaning.

„Want to be safe? Go lie in the corner and wait for your death. Or don’t fall in love“ – Iwan Brioc

HOW TO MAKE A FORUM PLAY?

The group creates two images –the image of the future most feared and the future most desired.

Then the group creates the image of “the crux” – where opportunity and danger collide – ad an image of “now” in order to expose the seeds of the situation which could go both ways. These series of images are then shown to the others and the spect-actors say what they see.

The next stage is that each group then turns the scenes into forum theatre – where the outcome is the future most feared and there are interventions from the spect-actors, to move the outcome towards the desired or what they would desire it to be.

COLOMBIAN HYPNOSIS

You will need: according to need, some music.

The participants go into pairs. If possible, the partners should be more or less the same height, but that is not the most important thing.

Pairs decide, who is A and who is B.

The As start, by placing their palm in front of their partner’s face. The distance from the face should be about 30 centimetres. Bs are now like hypnotized by the hand. The hypnotizers, As, start a series of movements with the hand – up and down, right and left, backwards and forwards, hand vertical in relation to the ground, then horizontal, then diagonal, etc. – the partner, B, must control his body in every way possible to maintain the same distance between the face and the hand, so that they remain parallel. It is important to maintain the partner’s safety.

Later, partners exchange – B becomes the hypnotizer and A is led by the hand.

CREATING CONTACT

People are walking around in the space. In the beginning no contact what-so-ever with others is needed, people are as if alone in the room. There are four levels in this exercise.

1. Walking around the space, people start creating eye contact with others. That should be done for a few minutes.
2. Walking around the space, people make eye contact with someone. After passing each other (after about 3 steps), they have a choice – either to look back towards the person or not. That should be done for a few minutes.
3. Walking around the space, people make eye contact with people. After passing each other (after about 3 steps), they have a choice – either to look back towards the person or not. If the person chooses to look back, they have another choice – either to turn their bodies towards that person or not. That should be done for a few minutes.
4. Walking around the space, people make eye contact with people. After passing each other (after about 3 steps), they have a choice – either to look back towards the person or not. If the person chooses to look back, they have another choice – either to turn their bodies towards that person or not. If the person chooses to turn his body towards the person, another choice could be made – either to hug the person or not.

This process is carried out by an instructor, who says when the next level is added.

Comment: during the third level, people start avoiding each other.



NAME GAME “DERE”

People are standing in a circle, facing the inside. One of the people in the circle (A) says someone’s name, who is also in the circle (B). Whose name is called, replies “Dere”, which makes the first person (A) to move towards him (B), but does it in a monstrous way (with sounds and movements of a monster). The person, in who’s direction is moved (B), has to call another name (C), before the first person (A) reaches him. The new person (C) has to reply “Dere” before the previous person (B) can start moving towards him.

The important thing is that the person cannot move before he has called out another name and gotten a “Dere” for a reply.

IMAGES IN PAIRS

People get into pairs. Pairs create three images:

1. Who I want to be
2. Who I do not want to be
3. Who am I now

First person shows his/hers images, moving from the first image to the second and to the third, the other person observes. After that they exchange and the other person shows his/hers images, while the first one observes.

IDENTIFYING THE BLOCK

Participants are in pairs. First person (A) walks around the space while his partner (B) observes his walk. The partner (B) tries to identify some kind of a block in his partner’s walk and where it could be located (i.e. one of the shoulders of the person is lower, his hips do not move, his dragging his legs, etc.). If the block is located, the partner (B) tries to apply the block (physically holding on to some body part, applying pressure on shoulders, standing in the way, pulling him back – depends on the block) on his partner (A)

while he continues to walk. During this, partner (A) thinks what could be the cause of the block. After that they exchange – partner (B) starts walking and partner (A) tries to identify the block.

When both partners have identified their blocks they return to the three images done before (who I want to be, who I do not want to be, who I am). First person (A) moves from his first image to the second image and then to the third. While doing that, his partner (B) applies the previously identified block. When this is done, they exchange. Partner (B) does his three images, while partner (A) applies the block. The block is applied throughout all three images.

24 HOURS



Participants are told to imagine their regular day. What are the activities that they do, where do they do them, etc. The instructor starts counting the hours of the day, starting for example from 3 AM (followed by 4 AM, then 5 AM, etc.), until all the 24 hours are counted. While the instructor is calling out the time, the participants are trying to express the activities done at that time, on a regular day. As if they are living the 24 hours of their most regular day right at that moment. No words are needed; the exercise should be done in silence. It is important after calling out each hour to give the participants a few moments to carry out their activities.

When this is done, participants can discuss in pairs how they felt during the exercise or some other things they noticed.

Also, this exercise can be carried out in pairs. One of the partner

does his 24 hour schedule, while the other says out the thoughts, what the person doing the exercise, is thinking. For example, when the person is acting out the time when he is doing some work on the computer, the partner might say “oh, I wish I could finish this report faster – my day would be so much easier!” The exercise is more effective when partners know each other better.

Later, partners change sides. The person, who was saying the thoughts, will then act out his day, while the other one says the thoughts.

CREATING THE WORLD

Participants are all together in the room. The only thing that exists, is the space they are in, there is nothing beyond. The task is to use all of the things, materials in the room, to create a new world that would be pleasant for the participants to be in. The materials could be some handicraft materials (wool, papers, and cloth) and also the furniture in the room could be used (moved, flipped, etc.) No words or contact with others can be used. There might be some music in the background.

If the world is created, each participant finds three places in the space: a place that is the best for them, where they would most likely be; a place that is the worst, where they would least want to be; a place where they are at the moment, in their life. When these places are chosen, the participants add images (made in the previous exercise “Images in pairs”) to them. While being in the best place in the created world, the participants make the image of what he wants to be; in the worst place the person makes the image of what he does not want to be and in the place where he is now, he makes the image of who he is now. Now, participants move from the worst place to the “where I am now” place to the worst place in accordance with the images.

If this is done, a voice is added to each image (the voice should fit the image) and the movement from one place to another (with the image and the voice) is done again. After this, participants get into pairs (the same pairs who did the three images and identified each other’s blocks) and all that has been done is put together. First person (A) moves from one place to another, doing the images and voices while the partner (B) applies the block which was identified from the walk. Then, positions are changed.

COUNTER IMAGE

One person (A, choice based on volunteering), picks another person (B) from the group, to whom he is going to tell his story. The others cannot hear it. The story must be about oppression and while A is telling the story to B, both of them must have their eyes closed. After the story is told, both (A and B) will separately (so the other could not see it) create an image about the situation. The image is created by using people from the group and both (A and B) have to be in their own images as protagonists.

Then, the protagonist has three (or more) wishes (movements, changes in the images), to escape from the given situation to an ideal situation. They are forced to test their ideal against what is possible in these circumstances when the antagonists resist the change and they must use what power they have to do what they can.

After this, A and B change their positions in the images. Person A goes to the image created by B and vice versa. Now, being in the other person's image, they test the same as done before (while being in the original images).

The person to whom the story was told (B), can choose himself how much his image originates from the story he has been told and how much of his own ideas he puts in the image. The same goes to the people, who were chosen from the group and were placed in the image.

RASHOMON

One person from the group gets to choose people to whom he is going to tell his story of oppression. The people chosen are the characters in the story. After the story is told, it will shortly be played for the group.

After the story is shown, the protagonist will sculpt an image of each character, based on how his own character sees them. If all of the characters are in an image, the story will once again be played. The characters should try to remain their images and play the scene according to it, but of course, moving and talking is allowed.

After showing the story from the protagonist's point of view, another character will sculpt the others based on how his character sees and perceives them. It is important to take into consideration how he as a character perceives them, not as he personally sees the story. If all the characters are in the image, the story will be played again. This will be preceded, until all of the characters have had the chance to create images of others.

This exercise gives a good opportunity to show to the group and also to the protagonist himself, how people can perceive the situation, so clear to himself, very differently.



SCREEN IMAGE

Stories, based on one-on-one communication, are needed. Four people from the group choose themselves a partner, to whom they are going to tell their story. The rest of the group cannot hear the story and intuitively divide themselves into four groups. Four stories, four groups.

After the stories are told to the partners chosen, they go to one of the groups. The story will be improvised to the group.

Then the protagonist sculpts an image of how he senses the antagonist in the situation and vice versa – the antagonist sculpts an image of the protagonist, according to how he senses the protagonist. If someone from the audience feels connected to the image sculpted, he replaces the person in the image. (The final result would be that both, the protagonist and antagonist, are replaced with someone new from the audience.)

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Now, the original protagonist and antagonist stand behind the substituents. The scene is played again – the original characters are whispering to the substituents what they should say.

At some point, the original antagonist and protagonist move away from the images. The two people, who stay in the scene, play it again, according to the original scene. After a while, the original protagonist and antagonist go back to the scene, taking back the images of the substituents. The other two people leave. Now the original characters try to “fix” the damage done.

Then, the person who first replaced the protagonist now takes the image of the antagonist and the antagonist goes into the place of the protagonist. They create new images, according to how they see it and play the scene again.

After this, the person who identified himself with the antagonist (with his image), and places himself into the image of the protagonist (now portrayed by the antagonist). The antagonist goes back to his own original image. They play the situation in their own way and in the end, the image has changed again. They again, try to fix the damage done. Everyone has the opportunity to change the situation.

Now, the original scene (with the original characters) is played, but the protagonist now has the chance to do something different (when he got some inspiration from the substituents and scenes played by others). The antagonist can only change his behaviour when the antagonist does it. Otherwise he stays the same.

The oppression in these situations usually is not created by the antagonist or the situation, but from the lack of communication. It would be good, if the problematic situations used in this exercise would be real and actual for the protagonist at the moment. In this case, the scenes would be better and if there's no real decision made, it gives the protagonist more opportunities.

It is important to pay attention that the reality of the situation is left out. Because when we start dealing with the reality, people start giving advice and that's critical.

„Sometimes we assume we know, what people want“– Iwan Brioc

CIRCUITS OF RITUALS AND MASKS

A person from the group is chosen. The person must have had situations in his life, where he has worn masks – situations where he has not really been himself. About 4-5 situations should be needed. The person now can choose people from the group to play the characters in these situations (scenes). There can be as much people in the scenes, as needed, but it is important that there is some group left. Every scene has its own place in the room.

The person, who explains the situation, tells each group who and what they are representing (people at work, at school, at home, etc.) and according to this, a short scene is improvised. It is important that the person himself has to embody himself in the scenes and the situations should be taken from real life. The task of the group is to observe and to understand which mask, in each scene, the person is wearing.

If all the explaining is done, the scenes are played one by one. The person conducting the exercise can shout “stop” in the end of the scene, which could be a signal to go to the next scene.

After all the scenes are seen, the protagonist goes back to the first scene. The group can now suggest what kind of masks they saw the protagonist wearing in these scenes by sculpting an image of him. There can be many suggestions and they can be combined. It is important to notice that the image would represent the mask being worn, not the character itself. Also, it should be kept in mind that the mask should not become a feeling – the purpose of the mask should be a cover to them. Each scene should have a mask, in a form of an image.

Now, with these masks, the scenes are played once again. The protagonist must use the image (mask) that he was given. He should keep the image as it was suggested and sculpted (for example, when in some images his mouth was sculpted shut, he must try to speak with the mouth closed).

After this is done, the scenes are played again, but this time with only one mask – the one developed during the first situation/scene/group. The protagonist goes through all of the scenes, using only one mask (starting from the one from where the image is from). Then the same is done with the second mask/image (then third, fourth, and so on). During this process, the poses of the protagonist might seem strange for the situations and characters in the scenes. The protagonist should in this case try to explain, why he is like that, while still trying to say the same things as in the original scene.

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RAINBOW OF DESIRES

This technique is suitable in situations when people do not know what they want.

One person from the group (A) chooses himself a partner (B), to whom he is going to tell his story and with whom he is going to improvise it.

After performing, the protagonist (A) makes images of his emotions and feelings in the given situation. If someone from the group can recognize the image (feels like it was in the story), one can go and make the same image himself. There are as many images as the protagonist wants. When the protagonist has no more images, the group can suggest some. If the protagonist (A) can recognize the image, it stays (with all the previous images) on the stage. With these images it is important to keep in mind that the images should be based on what the protagonist feels and senses not what he really wants.



All of the images should be put in a line and be checked that there is only one image for each emotion or feeling. When it is needed to emphasize a feeling, images with the same implication, could remain. But each image should represent something.

When all the images are checked, the protagonist goes one-by-one to each image and tells them: “You are like me, like when I feel ... (and according to the image, what the protagonist feels in that concrete image)“.

Then the images replace the protagonist (A) in the original case. The protagonist gets to choose himself, in which order the images go. The scene

is played as many times as there are images, while the antagonist (B) always stays. Before the scene starts, it is important to clarify the exact pose of the image (for example, which direction it faces).

Now, the protagonist places all of the images in a bigger image with the antagonist (B). He chooses how far the images are placed from the antagonist, taking into consideration what kind of emotions arises with antagonist. When all this is done, the protagonist places himself also into the image.

After the image is created, the scene is being played, but the antagonist is not participating. The images cannot move, but they can speak when they think it is suitable (they speak what the protagonist said to them in the beginning, but they can add some things if it is suit the situation).

The next step is for the protagonist to create an ideal image of the situation, by replacing the images. The images should remember their places in the ideal picture.

The images go back to their original places and the scene starts. After a signal (given by the instructor of the exercise) all of the images start to move towards the ideal image. At the same time the protagonist stands behind the antagonist. When the protagonist feels strong enough, the antagonist is removed from the scene – the protagonist and the images of his emotions remain. The images keep moving towards the ideal image, strengthening their speech, pose and tone of voice.

After this, the images go back to their original places. The protagonist goes from one image to the other, convincing each one to go to the ideal image. The images can choose, whether it fights back or not. This gives the impression as if the protagonist is taming his emotions and feelings.

Then, images go again to the original places. Now the images start communicating to each other and they become one. The image is trying to move towards the ideal, through which the image itself can change. The images are communicating to each other, as if it was a battle of emotions. They are trying to involve others and to convince them to “come to their side”. There is no protagonist or antagonist in the scene, only the images. The protagonist can choose to listen to some of the conversations between the images.

In the end, the protagonist and the antagonist replay the original scene.

COPS IN THE HEAD

This is a good technique to discover internal oppression. The story needed for this, has to be a situation where the protagonist would like to do something in his life, change something, but he does not, because there is something stopping him. As if there are “policemen” in his head.

A person from the group (the one who has the story, the protagonist), chooses people to his story (according to the situation he wants to show). A short scene is played. There is an antagonist, but he is not oppressor, not oppressing in a bad way, but rather a motivator, trying to help the protagonist to achieve what he wants. The scene played, should be intense for the protagonist – he understands that he needs to change something, but he has no courage or he is too shy for that.

The protagonist can choose people from the group, who would represent the fears in his head. It is important that although the fears of the protagonist, are not physical, they come from a real person. And that is why the people chosen to represent the fears should actually represent real people from the life of the protagonist. According to this, the protagonist sculpts images of the fears – representing someone from his own life.

All of the images created are placed in the scene previously played. If the spect-actors feel that there is some “internal fears” missing, they can suggest more. If the protagonist sees that that image can represent someone from his life and it is important to the scene, he can accept the image and place it in the scene.

Now the protagonist gives a name to each image (very concrete, for example brother, mother, teacher, etc.) and explains how they affect him (for example “remember, you once told me that I was stupid and because of that I now have low self-esteem. The image does not react, but takes in the information.

The scene is played again, now with the images. If the protagonist feels that he wants to move the images (throughout the scene, for example placing them further), he can do that, but the images have the opportunity to move back to their original place. As the images are just as if thoughts in his head, they can talk to themselves, but they always move when the protagonist move (they are always with him). And even when the protagonist moves the images further, they come back (just like thoughts).

When the time is suitable, the instructor can call “STOP!”

Every image can now be heard one-by-one, so the group can realize who he is dealing with – though, the images will not tell who they are (“I’m his mother), but say how they have affected him (for example: “he IS stupid!”, “he has not enough knowledge, skills!”, etc.)

The scene is played again, but now the spect-actors have the opportunity to replace the protagonist. The replacements should go one-by-one, without pauses or stops, depending on how many people wish to go and replace the protagonist. The instructor controls the replacements – he has the power to decide how long the replacements last (depends on the idea, the strength of the replacer, etc.). The spect-actors raise their hand if they have an idea and the instructor calls them to the scene. While doing the replacements, the scene does not stop but goes on and on.

In the end, the protagonist plays the original scene, but with the images. He can use the solutions tried out by the spect-actors or try something new.

ANALYTIC IMAGE

Again, a volunteer is needed (A), who shares his story to someone (B) he chose from the group and they improvise a scene. The spect-actors, not knowing the story, must look for some hidden elements from the story to create images about the protagonist and the antagonist.



After seeing the scene, the spect-actors start suggesting images (either about the protagonist or the antagonist). The protagonist (A) chooses the images in which he sees himself. About 5-6 images are needed. The images about the antagonist are chosen by the spect-actors. The images could be modified a bit, depending on the need. But both sides – the side of the protagonist and the antagonist – should have an equal amount of images.

The images go into the scene. The images of the protagonist should find themselves a partner from the images of the antagonist – pairs of protagonists and antagonists are formed. The decision of the partners should be made according to how the images suit with each other. The original protagonist (A) and the antagonist (B) are not involved at the moment. To find the partners, a scene is played, where the images can make a sound that they feel that fits the image – this can help to find the partners.

When all images are in pairs, the spect-actors are given a chance to have a closer look at them. The images should remain as they were created, making their sounds. It is important to try to understand what the images are trying to say.

Then, the protagonist (A) will try to test the poses. He goes to each image, takes the same pose as the image. In a while, the image itself moves away and the original protagonist (A) stays. When he feels the need he can change his pose, his image.

In that way, the protagonist (A) tries out all of the images (the ones that represent him, the protagonist) and as said before, when needed, changes the pose.

Then, all of the original images (not in pairs yet) are placed in the original scene with the protagonist himself (A). The protagonist goes to each image, reacts to them alone. The original antagonist (B) is not involved. After all the images are gone through, the images can move. Images of the protagonist move towards the antagonist (B) – surrounding him.

After this the original scene is played again, with the original protagonist (A) and antagonist (B). The images are standing further away and as they notice that the protagonist (A) starts to become weak and surrender they say “MKMM!”. This is a signal to the protagonist that he needs to be stronger. The images remain the same throughout the scene, which makes it easier to understand when he is starting to become weak (for example starting to move to one the image). This way, the scene is played.



„Personally, it was very important, as I discovered many things about myself that will be useful. It was also great to meet people who I will try to maintain contact in order to create joint projects“ – participant

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WORKSHOPS DONE

In the last few days of the training, all of the participants had the opportunity to try out instructing the exercises, techniques and games. For this they needed to choose a congenial technique or exercise and co-ordinate with the trainer Iwan Brioc. As it was such a good chance and there were a lot of people who wanted to try it out, all of the small workshops had two instructors. All of this being a challenge to the new instructors, it was also a challenge for the trainer, who went from one workshop to another – observing and giving guidance when needed. For the people in the workshops, he was like a sign of safety – making sure that all was going as it was supposed to.

Also, after the training, the core-team of the project carried out a workshop. By this moment, one of the planned two workshops is done. It took place on the 14th of February, on Valentine's Day, and the method used was Rashmond. There were about ten people participating and it was carried out by Piret Soosaar and Gertha Teidla.

Instructing a workshop on “Rainbow of Desires” in Estonia is a priceless experience. All the more, that this kind of workshops have never been done before. This made us feel the need of sharing these methods and techniques that we have learned.

The second workshop is planned to take place in the beginning of May, when there is an event for Forum Theatre friends. This is an excellent time and place for it, because this event brings together Jokers and forum theatre activists from all over Estonia and gives a good opportunity to share the method.



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PARTICIPANT FACILITATION EXPERIENCE:

IRINA (RO):

I facilitated Cops in the Head with Alexandra.

It's difficult to set the rhythm of the exercise, because the facilitator is the one responsible for that. And by knowing how to do that, you earn the confidence of your participants as well.

The fact that I sometimes felt the need to look into my notebook made me feel stupid in front of the others. This time it was fine, because we all knew each other and had been at that same training, so it felt like team-work. This should not happen in real life, though. I wonder how much I would have respected Iwan in the end if he had kept being indecisive and emotionally influenced by everybody's problems. And one more thing, I got carried away by the protagonist's story. I sometimes ended up being a spectator, instead of a facilitator. That's a tricky one. :)

But all in all I loved it. I hope we'll get the chance to facilitate at The Incubator soon.

ALEXANDRA (RO):

I co-facilitated the "Rainbow of Desire" technique, together with Irina. I enjoyed the exercise very much.

I felt that the improvisations with the antagonist vs. the images were very strong. Before beginning, the steps were very clear and logical in my head; however, given the intensity of emotions, it was much harder when I actually had to say STOP to the scenes.

When Iwan came to assist, I relied on him for details to the steps (because I feel confident on doing the technique alone, yet I wanted everyone – including me - to benefit most from his presence). The feed-back I got was that it felt safe and warm, but that it was felt when I relied on Iwan.

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All in all, I was surprised by how much emotion I felt (I am normally quite cerebral and can control my emotions well), but I liked that. I think it means I resonated with the role of the Joker :)

ALESSANDRO (IT):

About the facilitating of the "Cops in the Head", I found it difficult because I have had a short time to arrange the run with my partner. It seems to me that the technique has worked for the protagonist, but surely we could have done better.

We followed the steps of the technique by Boal. I have tried to introduce some modifications to the technique presented by Iwan. For example, originally I did build the aesthetics of the scene to the protagonist. In addition, to avoid being too intrusive with respect to the history of the protagonist during the first interaction with her COPS, I tried to enter the replacement of the protagonist from the public at this stage. I think another problem is that the group was too small and maybe their attention was divided between the look at the work between of the facilitators and the empathic attention to the protagonist.

It remains for me some issues how can you change the practice of "Cop in the Head" according to the needs of the protagonist of the story and the situation without "betraying" the technique itself? How to work effectively on individual history, making explicit the social dynamics that affect us all, and instead not only the protagonist?

However, for me it was an interesting and educational experience and I think that thanks to feedback from Iwan and other people, I learned a lot.

INÊS (PT):

My first experience doing facilitation with Rainbow of Desires was quite positive. We did screen image, which is not one of the most complex. Maybe that`s why the session developed in a very tranquil way. Initially I was kind of insecure and it took a while to assume the "facilitator" role, instead of participant.

For me, Rainbow is a very special technique. It's not enough to know the exercises and execute them literally or in a perfect order, more important is to have the sensibility to do in the right way. There are a lot of mixed emotions and we have to be very careful in the way we explore it. The word "respect" is very important, respect the person, the story, the thoughts and feelings, being very careful with advices or judgments. There is a boundary between what's personal and intimal, and what the person wants to share. And one of the roles of the facilitator is to take care of this and make sure that all the participants understand this boundary.

With this technique I think the most important thing is to create a secure and reliant environment. Truly want to help someone, feeling the problem as a little bit ours, not as an intruder, but as a friend and an outward eye. I think that was achieved during our facilitation.

IAIN (UK):

I ran a workshop with Ines, screen image. It was a very simple technique that allows for less spect-actor involvement than other techniques we looked at.

It was simple to run, a straightforward process that was easy to stick to and made sense.

It was made all the easier because the group had already gelled, and everyone was committed to the process and to each other and our mutual wellbeing. We didn't have to do any work on that front.

We did make one mistake, but that didn't break the activity.

At the end of the exercise we allowed the protagonist to see the drama through to a conclusion three times. The first two times we allowed the protagonist to resolve the drama we then checked if they were satisfied with the conclusion - we checked at the end, we didn't interrupt the drama while it was resolving - and both times the protagonist realized that she had not got what she wanted. So we sent her back each time to play the drama out again until she found the resolution she wanted.

I think that was easier to do because we all were comfortable with each other.

I am still struggling to find a way that I can incorporate these techniques in the work I do at the moment - perhaps I need to change what I do :)

JOANA (PT):

I'm Joana and I tried to facilitate the Masks and Rituals during the last day of workshop in Estonia! It was a very nice experience – I felt very connected with the person who was leading the workshop with me. We both gave space to the each other and communicated a lot during the technique. We made a relaxing exercise in the beginning and that could facilitate the coming out of creative ideas during the technique and for the masks of the quotidian. It was very easy to remember all the steps after watching Iwan making it and after reading Boal's "Rainbow of Desires" book. The people we've worked were respecting very much our leading process and we were able to keep a very good "timing" in the sequence of the technique.

It was a surprising success, after a fantastic week of learning with Iwan and everybody, with the best partner I could have, and a nice story. We could really see the differences on the protagonist and the exercise brought some clarity to the person and some lights on other's relations as well.

MARCO (PT):

I have tried the "Circuit of rituals and masks" with Joana.

In the preparation we decided to divide the session, for each one of us to try different parts of the technique. But just after we started, things happened in the opposite direction. It was very excited to explain something to the group and feeling good while Joana interrupted me or the reverse. We were smiling and feeling very comfortable with it. It felt that we have been working together for years. We also transmitted confidence in the group with our feeling. We manage very well to do it without any kind of crashing or run over ourselves.

It was flowing and smoothing.

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The technique itself is very tiring and exhausted for the protagonist and also for the group. Physically very demanding as well and with a strong need for focus and commitment. Working with emotions, personal relations and problem solving using our bodies and mind was very powerful for me. I was using forum theatre for some years but always with some comfortable distance and respect and not imposing or crossing over the limit.

After the facilitation and evaluating the session the feeling was that in that precise moment we and the group could do it again. This was not talked using words but just felt, in a way different for each one of us, but at the same time very strong connected for all. We were much more aware in and out.... and this was "just" a training to "free our minds"!



INTERVIEW WITH IWAN BRIOC BY NGO FORUM THEATRE MEMBER NIKOLAI KUNITSÕN

CAN YOU TELL US IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE BACKGROUND OF ROD?

One of the wonderful things about TO (Theatre of the Oppressed) is how the main developments in this field came about as a response to new circumstances, rather than from invention for the sake of invention which is often the case in the arts. It is like a Swiss army knife that grows an extra tool whenever it encounters another problem to fix. And TO continues to evolve even after the passing of its genius inventor, Augusto Boal.

Nevertheless, Boal still has the best stories, and these epiphanies show the poetic reasoning behind each of the branches in the tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The branch of Rainbow of Desires sprouted, I believe, in the mind of Boal during his long exile from Brazil in Europe in the late 80's. While up until then, working in South America, when he asked a group what oppressed them, they would report how the police had dragged them out of bed in the middle of the night and beaten them. Meanwhile, in Paris, London and Stockholm he was more likely to hear answers such as - 'I can't seem to communicate with my wife' or 'I'm oppressed by this feeling of emptiness in my life.' At first Boal was dismissive of these bourgeois concerns but a turning point came when he learnt that Scandinavia at the time, with examples of the most advanced social system and egalitarian democracy in the world had a suicide rate higher than the whole of the southern hemisphere. He recognized that a system of techniques needed to be developed to work with the internal oppression, those 'cops in the head' that make you do things you don't want to or stop you doing the things you most desire. So with CTO Paris and it is suggested the expert advice of his wife and psychotherapist Cecilia Thumim he developed a range of techniques to bring those cops out into the open and deal with them.

WHAT IS IN YOUR OPINION SO SPECIAL ABOUT RAINBOW OF DESIRES(ROD)?

What is most special for me with the techniques I think is that they make use of and are deeply rooted in an ethical dimension which affirms that these cops, oppressive notions, idée fixe, implicit laws whatever you want to call them – have been implanted in

the psyche by parents, teachers, culture society etc. The headquarters of these 'cops in the head' are outside and they have been internalized. Because we more or less share common exposure to culture and society, when through the processes we start to share and externalize our cops it doesn't feel at all like a therapy session focused on individual personalities. It feels more like one of those deep and meaningful conversations where you discover some common truths but, and this is really the icing on the cake, these truths are realized in every cell of the body not just the mind, because RoD is a conversation in the total language of theatre.

CAN ROD ACTUALLY CHANGE ANYTHING?

Change is inevitable, but living a life through habit in order to avoid change is not. Perhaps more than ever in history people are living mindlessly trying to make the next moment better than the one they are presently occupying. Capitalism thrives and promotes through continual re-enforcement this sense that there is something lacking right now which consuming something will satiate. This politician, this new lifestyle, this new gadget, this show.

Up to now we have for the most part willingly played along because going from one satiated desire to the next is comforting and change and in particular a change in perception can be frightening because we have a lot at stake in how we see the world and our place in it. That place is very often projected forward into the future into what we are becoming and not what we are being: what we will change into rather than what we really are. Staying with what we really are without seeking to change it is to my mind the first step in RoD, and that is a big change!

But as you can see with this groundswell of public protest around the world – that whole movement is thankfully grinding to a halt in the minds of so many people. The capitalist machine's momentum is strong and will continue to grind its teeth, but I think people can no longer stand the hollowness of our mass culture any longer and want to confront reality head on. RoD, I believe, is one of the interventions among many others that is helping with this reckoning.

WHICH IS THE MOST BIGGEST FORM OF OPPRESSION, THE DIFFICULT ONE I MEAN, TO DEAL WITH?

Gravity. It's a bugger! Joking aside, it is a most pernicious kind of oppression that we are not educated to ask for what we really want but for what we have been told we can hope to get. It is the grasping kind that succeed in our society and then dictate what it is that you and I should aspire to. I think everyone has a vocation or a natural calling and it is often contorted from a very young age by these globalized and localized implanted desires which tell us what it is to achieve and to fail. But such is the force of this conditioning that it is as powerful as gravity, holding us in a place where we think we have to negotiate continuously with the outer world to maintain a certain position and to get by. But I think humanity can do so much better than get by, we could get on for a start. That would be an achievement.

YOU HAVE SAID, THAT OPPRESSION IS LACK OF AWARENESS. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS ONE?

I don't want to get too metaphysical on your arse here! BUT! I might also say oppression starts with awareness. When we are infants all there is is everything. Then we become aware of a mother and a separation occurs. There are two, and as Boal explains in the prologue to Games for actors and Non-Actors, it is at this point when the human is invented that so is theatre. Theatre therefore depends on this awareness of self that if not uniquely human has reached its apogee in this species. From there autobiographical memory starts, because now there is a self to which things that are happening occur.

Once that the idea that there is someone to which things are happening becomes a fact then oppression is inevitable. Why? Because we have a deep physical memory of the time when we were everything and we WANT everything again! The problem is that it appears to us that there are other people who also want EVERYTHING and that is just impossible. Boal's gift to humankind, I think, is not so much to a political cause as many in the TO world would like to think. That is such a

diminution of the power he has unleashed. He changed the way we can participate in theatre. You see, theatre is a metaphor for consciousness and he changed the metaphor so that when we practice TO we also change our consciousness. Consciousness becomes more fluid and dialogue can happen. By dialogue I mean a 'flow of meaning' and while in that flow we can sometimes encounter communitas – this is a kind of trans-personal feeling of wholeness, a bonding together which is a taste of that which we continuously sense is lacking. Of course, while there is someone there experiencing this communitas then there is still a separation but it makes oppression more difficult to practice.

AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF SHOWING PEOPLE THE REAL OPRESSION? AREN'T YOU AFRAID OF THE RESPONSIBILITY YOU TAKE WITH THIS?

Not sure I understand the question. It's really tempting isn't it to get turned on by the fight against the oppressors, against injustice and the destruction of the environment – to be galvanized by it. What I like about the Occupy movement is that they have been galvanized into inaction. Into just standing together in a street and shouting STOP! Inaction is the most positive action in that sense because they really don't know what they want yet, just that things cannot go on as they are. And for me this is really exciting because it means confronting reality together naked. Which means something really new has to happen.

What I love about TO and in particular RoD is that if facilitated in a way that is not prescriptive it can bring about such creative and new actions. But occasionally it brings about really astonishing inaction which changes entirely our perception of reality. My responsibility is to hold the space in a way that gives that a chance of happening and that is not something I fear at all. In fact, it is where I feel most at home.

BY THE PREVIOUS QUESTION I MEAN THAT, AS YOU SAID BEFORE – ONE OF THE BIGGEST OPRESSIONS MIGHT BE NOT ASKING WHAT WE REALLY WANT. SO MY QUESTION IS – YOU MIGHT SHOW WITH RAINBOW OF DESIRES TO PEOPLE WHAT THEY REALLY WANT. AND IT MIGHT BE SCARY - YOU KIND OF HOLD RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT.

Responsibility can be defined as 'where the buck stops' - who is to blame or to take credit for what happens. But I don't buy into that because it creates such distance and fear. I make quite clear that each participant is responsible for themselves by that definition. Nevertheless, we are all in this together, trying to work out what is happening and what can be done or not done about it.

As a facilitator I prefer to define responsibility as my ability to respond (rather than react) and that depends on a lot of factors but most of all on respect and compassion. The root meaning of the word 'respect' comes from the Latin 'to be seen' and 'compassion' comes from 'willing to suffer with.' So I want therefore to really 'see' the people I work with and for them to see me and that means never coming to a conclusion about someone, always being curious and supportive in my attention. It also means not hiding behind the 'mask' of the facilitator, or at least wearing it lightly. If I can stay mindful, open and in solidarity with the group, and the group for each other then we can work together as equals, not just in principal which is worthless in the end, but in actuality. Actual equality, I think, is connected to compassion: to a solidarity based in allowing ourselves to share together this mysterious sensation of being alive in all its comedy and tragedy.

THANK YOU

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