

The intellectual kinship between Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal and the fight against multiple oppressions¹

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RESUMO

O presente ensaio baseia-se na investigação sobre as similitudes existentes entre a proposta educativa da Educação Libertadora, de Paulo Reglus Neves Freire, e do Teatro do Oprimido, de Augusto Pinto Boal. Por considerar que as práxis freireana e boaleana apresentam posicionamento ético-político de transformação social, pelo viés da educação e da cultura, consideramos pertinente um estudo que ressalte as aproximações ideológicas entre tais campos de atuação. Com isso, pretendemos construir reflexões acerca do “parentesco intelectual” existente entre esses dois autores, o qual é argumentado em função de suas convergências e complementaridades, com base na apresentação de conceitos que expressam proximidades entre Freire e Boal no que se refere à luta pela reumanização dos seres humanos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Humanização. Opressão. Conscientização. Libertação

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ABSTRACT

This essay is based on the research about the similarities between the educational proposal of the Liberating Education, by Paulo Reglus Neves

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Freire and the Theater of the Oppressed, by Augusto Pinto Boal. Considering that the Freirean and Boaleana praxis present an ethical-political position of social transformation, through education and culture, we consider pertinent a study which emphasizes the ideological approximations between these fields of action. Therefore, we intend to build reflections about the “intellectual kinship” between these two authors, which is argued in terms of their convergences and complementarities, based on the presentation of concepts which express proximity between Freire and Boal with regard to the struggle for the rehumanization of human beings.

KEYWORDS: Humanization. Oppression. Awareness. Liberation.

Teatro y educación: el parentesco intelectual entre Paulo Freire y Augusto Boal en la lucha contra las múltiples opresiones

RESUMEN

Este ensayo se basa en una investigación sobre las similitudes entre la propuesta educativa de Educação Libertadora, de Paulo Reglus Neves Freire, y el Teatro del Oprimido, de Augusto Pinto Boal. Considerando que la praxis freireana y boaliana presentan una posición ético-política de transformación social, desde la perspectiva de la educación y la cultura, consideramos pertinente un estudio que resalte las similitudes ideológicas entre dichos campos de acción. Con esto, pretendemos construir reflexiones sobre el “parentesco intelectual” que existe entre estos dos autores, el cual se argumenta en términos de sus convergencias y complementariedades, a partir de la presentación de conceptos que expresan similitudes entre Freire y Boal respecto de la lucha. para la rehumanización de los seres humanos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Humanización. Oposición. Conciencia. Liberar.

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Introduction

This essay is based on an investigation into the similarities between the educational proposal of Paulo Freire's Liberating Education and Augusto

Boal's Theater of the Oppressed. Both were convinced thinkers and fighters who made fundamental contributions to the fight against multiple oppressions.

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (Recife, September 19, 1921 - São Paulo, May 2, 1997) was a Brazilian educator, pedagogue and philosopher. He is considered one of the most outstanding thinkers in the history of world pedagogy, a statement that can be attested to by the 29 *honoris causa* doctorate degrees he received from universities in Europe, the United States, Latin America and Brazil, where he was also recently named Patron of Education (Law no. 12.612/2012). Freire also received several awards, such as the UNESCO Peace Education Prize in 1986.

With a wide range of books, letters, interviews, articles and essays, Freire's work remains a reference for different researchers in the Human Sciences. His praxis opposed banking education and stood out in the formulation of a "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", based on the need to build the critical consciousness of people belonging to the popular classes, who are generally violated in the economic, social, political, cultural and educational spheres. In this context, Freire's praxis proposes raising the awareness of the oppressed in relation to their condition within the social structure, enabling the critical awareness that is indispensable for social transformation.

Freire died of a heart attack on May 2, 1997, at 6:53 a.m., at the Albert Einstein Hospital in São Paulo, due to complications from surgery to unclog arteries. The Brazilian state, through the Ministry of Justice, at the 2009 World Forum on Professional Education, held in Brasilia, asked for a *post-mortem* pardon for the widow and family of the educator, assuming the payment of "economic reparation".

Augusto Pinto Boal (Rio de Janeiro, May 16, 1931 - Rio de Janeiro, May 2, 2009) was a Brazilian theater director, playwright and essayist, as well as one of the great figures of contemporary international theater. Boal received more than 30 world awards and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his work with the Teatro do Oprimido (Theatre of the Oppressed), a

theatrical methodology that aims to problematize everyday situations through games, exercises and theatrical techniques that lead the subject to reflect on oppressions and discover their paths to liberation. Boal's praxis spread around the world notably in the last three decades of the 20th century (there are Theatre of the Oppressed groups in 77 countries) and is widely used not only by those who understand theater as an instrument of political emancipation, but also in the areas of education, mental health and the prison system. In March 2009, Unesco named him "World Ambassador for Theater". He died at the age of 78 in his native Rio de Janeiro on May 2, 2009, coincidentally or not, the same day and month that Paulo Freire died.

Committed to breaking with the prevailing order, Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal sought resources in diverse fields such as philosophy, psychology, the social sciences, and were also touched by Marxist thinking. Each in their own field, they built and systematized methods that, more than teaching the mastery of reading and/or the stage, enable human beings to rediscover their ontological vocation, which is supported by the "dream of humanization" (Freire, 2016a, p. 136).

Although each author's thinking comes from a specific historical context, it is possible to identify the existence of an "*intellectual kinship*" (Freire, 2014b) between the educator and the theatrical artist, in terms of the counter-hegemonic sense of their thinking, whose intellectual production shares the struggle against multiple oppressions. This expression "intellectual kinship", used by Paulo Freire, refers to the proximity possible between people who are strangers to each other - that is, who have no blood ties - but who are connected by an affinity of perspectives, in the "similarities in the way of appreciating facts, understanding them, valuing them." (Freire, 2014b, p. 294). More than an intellectual affinity demarcated solely by a common epistemological path that unites these subjects, this type of kinship is also revealed by shared subjectivities, affection, respect, intercultural communication, recognition and admiration between one thinker and another. Therefore, it allows:

A pleasant atmosphere in which intercommunication takes place easily, with minimal disturbances. In which the topics being talked about are grasped through similar experiences of epistemological approach to them. In which affectivity, 'softening' 'rough edges' in subjects, helps them in their relationships, rather than hindering them (Freire, 2014b, pp. 294-295).

The "intellectual kinship" between Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal is analyzed here to argue the complementarity of their contributions to the constitution of liberating educational practices that have as their perspective the overcoming of the oppressor/oppressed relationship, through the process of conscientization based on a critical-reflexive view of social reality. For the authors, by "problematizing reality, we become aware, discovering gaps and ideologies; this awareness gives us the power to transform social relations of domination, a power that leads to freedom and liberation" (Guareschi, 2009, p. 147).

Based on the theoretical-methodological references of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, this essay analyzes the "intellectual kinship" based on a study that considers the concepts of humanization, oppression, conscientization and liberation - which are the foundations of each author's thinking - to glimpse the similarities between their praxis. Furthermore, as it is of a critical reflective nature, this study aims to make contributions to the field of educator training in terms of updating references for the constitution of emancipatory educational practices.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Theater of the Oppressed: Cousins-siblings with the same surname

According to Comparato (2019), Freire's work and Boal's work are often almost automatically correlated as a matter of terminology, specifically the

notion of the "Oppressed". Despite the obvious connection between the names given to the books/methods of both, the story behind the choice of the title for Boal helps us, once again, to demystify the direct relationship that many attribute to the work of the two thinkers.

In an interview with Teixeira⁴ (2007, p. 118), Boal pondered that his "methodology incorporates thinking from Freire's methodology, as it does from other methodologies. He admires and respects Freire's work, because both methodologies work with the vision of oppressed and oppressor". In an interview with *Revista Fórum (Fórum Magazine)* (2008, p. 9), Boal revealed that the Theatre of the Oppressed was named after Paulo Freire and his most famous book, *A Pedagogia do Oprimido (The Pedagogy of the Oppressed)*. An excerpt from this interview can be read below.

Yes, that was a tribute I paid to him. Because three or four years earlier Paulo Freire had written Pedagogy of the Oppressed and I had loved the title, I thought about naming my book A Poética do Oprimido (The Poetics of the Oppressed). But my publisher, who was Argentinian - because it was 1974 and I was still in exile - argued that it couldn't be that title because the booksellers said they didn't know where they were going to put it, on which shelf. Whether they should put it on the poetry or theater shelf... It was Daniel Diniz, the publisher, who suggested Theater of the Oppressed. Now, our relationship doesn't mean that the Theater of the Oppressed originated from the pedagogy of the Oppressed.

This account shows that we can't make a direct association between Freire's and Boal's entire theoretical-methodological framework just because of the nomenclature, because each one has its own specificities. Whether on his own initiative or on the editor's recommendation, Boal wanted to pay

⁴ The thesis by researcher Tânia Márcia Baraúna Teixeira (2007), entitled *Dimensões Educativas do Teatro do Oprimido Paulo Freire e Augusto Boal (Educational Dimensions of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed)*, is a pioneering study of the similarities between Freire's and Boal's praxis.

tribute to Freire, because he was, not only for Freire, but for many militant intellectuals in exile during that period, an inspiration in the struggle and fight against all forms of oppression.

Boal (2000) says he got to know Freire's methodology during his time in the Northeast, through the Popular Culture Movement⁵, and in Peru, in 1973, where he had been invited to coordinate the Popular Theatre Sector of the Integral Literacy Program (ALFIN), directed by Alfonso Lizarzaburu, with the participation, in the various sectors, of Estela Liñares, Luis Garrido Lecca, Ramón Vilcha and Jesus Ruiz Durand, among others, in the cities of Lima and Chacacayo. The literacy method used by ALFIN was, of course, inspired by Paulo Freire (BOAL, 2014, p. 122). Although he had this contact with the method, there was only one opportunity for Boal to work with Freire:

In fact, I've only worked with Paulo Freire once, and that was in the United States. There is an organization there called the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference, which meets in a different city every year. That year, the year before he died, in 1996, we worked together. [...] we were very good friends, but we had never worked together until that day in Nebraska, when we sat at the same table and answered the same questions. (Boal *apud* Rovai and Ayer, 2008, p. 9).

Even though they only worked together once, Freire and Boal were good friends during and after their exile. This is highlighted in the following account:

⁵According to José Rudimar Constâncio da Silva (2015), the Popular Culture Movement (MCP) was formed in May 1960 in Recife by university students, artists and intellectuals, in a joint action with the city hall, which at the time was occupied by Miguel Arrais. It was extinguished by the political-military movement of March 31, 1964. The MCP's aim was to raise the political and social awareness of the working masses in order to prepare them for effective participation in the life of the country.

We saw each other a lot in the exile, after the Amnesty [in 1979] we started to see each other at many events here in Brazil, but we only worked together then. There's a curious story I experienced with Paulo Freire when I received the song "Meu Caro Amigo" by Chico Buarque. We were having lunch together, Paulo Freire, his first wife, Elza, and their group that was going to Africa. Before going to Africa, they passed through Lisbon and had lunch at the house. Darcy Ribeiro was also there, and my mother arrived in Portugal that day and, in front of them, gave me the tape with the song "Meu Caro Amigo". She handed over the envelope with the tape, saying it was a letter from Chico. And we all listened to it together for the first time. It was a letter to me from Chico Buarque with Francis (Hime) on the piano. I had written two or three letters to Chico and he hadn't replied. So when my mother handed me the envelope saying it was a letter from Chico and I saw that it was a cassette tape, I thought it was very funny. (Boal apud Rovai and Ayer, 2008, p. 9).

Freire also had an enormous fondness for the theatrical artist, which is expressed in the book flip of Augusto Boal's autobiographical book (in Spanish), *Hamlet e o Filho do Padeiro (Hamlet and the Baker's Son)*.

I met Augusto Boal in the 1960s, when he was still very young. Even then, I had great admiration for the genius he announced in the theater, for the seriousness with which he lived, for the coherence with which he reduced the distance between what he said and what he did (Boal, 2000, p.01).

In various interviews, Boal let his admiration for Freire show, which was so great that he made it public by writing a beautiful text for the educator, which was read during the speech in which he received the Pedro Ernesto Medal of Merit, in a historic and solemn event in his honor, at the Rio de Janeiro City Council, in August 1994. The request for the medal was

made by Councillor Augusto Boal himself. In his speech, he reaffirmed his esteem for Paulo Freire:

With Paulo Freire we learn how to learn. In his method, as well as learning to read and write, you learn more: you learn to know and respect otherness, the other, different. My neighbor resembles me, but he is not me; he resembles me and I resemble him. By dialoguing, we learn, we both win, the teacher and the student, because we are all students, and teachers. I exist because you exist. To write on a white page you need a black pencil; to write on a blackboard you need chalk of a different color. For me to be, they must be. For me to exist, Paulo Freire must exist (Boal, 2020, p. 189).

Unfortunately, this same text would soon be reprinted after Paulo Freire's death. Boal would republish his tribute with a few additions, under the title *My Last Father*.

Paulo Freire is dead. But he will always exist, like my other parents, all now deceased. Like José Augusto, who taught me to live and work, and to live by working; like Jonh Gassner, who taught me dramaturgy; like Nelsom Rodrigues, who gave me a hand in theater. With Paulo Freire, my last father died. Now I only have brothers and sisters (Boal, 1997, p.3).

The emotional bond between the two, as described above, testifies to the "intellectual kinship" between the educator and the theatrical artist. Boal certainly considered Freire to be one of his fathers, because Freire considered him to be one of his sons, because "no one becomes a relative of another if the other does not also recognize him as a relative." (Freire, 2014b, p. 296).

Linked by affection and admiration during their lives and, even today, as inspirations for all of us, we have learned to learn from Freire and Boal. In

the next section, we will point out connections between the liberating praxis of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, related to the cause of the oppressed, by analyzing the main points of support for these theories. Both coincide with the authors' existential concern with the most diverse social oppressions.

Theoretical-methodological similarities between Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal.

The human being: a subject with a vocation for humanization

When we establish the interrelationship between Freire's and Boal's theories, we see points of approximation in relation to their visions of what the human being is. We can see that, for them, the human being is a project to be realized, because they discover themselves to be unfinished, and this unfinishedness puts them in a constant process of search, not a one-off search for this or that, but an absolute search, which can lead to the search for our own origin, the search for our ontological vocation. For Freire, the ontological vocation of the human being consists of the quest to be more. The ontological vocation to be more "characterizes the human being as a project (Freire, 2015, p. 139). Being a project enables human beings to have an authentic existence, that is, we human beings are responsible for the process of creating and recreating our own nature.

According to Boal (2009b, p. 85), the human ontological vocation consists of human beings being creators and not mere consumers of culture, "because culture is the human being, it is what is most human in being". Furthermore, "Culture as a Vocation is the way in which human beings relate to each other and to nature, how they transform it and how they transform themselves". (Boal, 2009b, p. 152). Therefore, for Freire and Boal, the ontological vocation is supported by the "dream of humanization" (Freire, 2016a, p. 136).

According to Freire (2016b) and Boal (2020), the process of humanization can only come about to the extent that women and men become aware of their role as protagonists of their own stories. They become subjects as they respond autonomously and creatively to the countless challenges that life imposes on them. In responding to these challenges, they create culture.

Culture is what defines us as human beings. By creating culture, the "human being accomplishes the feat of becoming human" (Boal, 2009b, p. 152). In Freire's conception, culture is the creator and creative contribution of women and men to what is natural, in other words, Culture is the result of praxis, of human action-reflection in the world and with the world. In line with Freire's thinking, Boal states that "to make culture is to invent the world so that it responds to our needs, our desires, our dreams" (Boal, 2020, p. 192).

Throughout their works, the authors warn that this search by women and men for the ontological vocation of being subjects only makes sense if it is done in communion, because, as Freire (2014a, p. 34) states, "man is not an island. He is Communication", and without communication, life would become "hallucinatory". Becoming human presupposes this: interacting with others and with the world. And in order to interact, we need dialogue, which is the condition for human existence; with it, human beings show solidarity, reflect and act together as protagonists in the world they want to transform and "in this way the animal becomes a person" (Freire, 2014b, p. 58). For both, the existence of the other is a condition of possibility for our realization as human beings. The other gives meaning to our humanity, because we share it: our humanity is inextricably linked to that of the other person, because "when we are able to say we, we discover our true self" (Boal, 2009b, p. 163).

In Freirean and Boalean anthropological views, women and men are in a process of continuous search for self-realization. This means that they are beings who want to be more. However, history shows that for various reasons and in different ways they are prevented from fulfilling their own ontological vocation of being the protagonists of their own stories. When this vocation is impeded, the phenomenon of dehumanization occurs.

According to Freire (2016b) and Boal (2009b), dehumanization is a historical reality and a denial of the human ontological vocation. It is the expropriation of the humanity of women and men, it is the theft of the humanity of women and men, it is the distortion of the vocation to be more. These authors believe that the great vocation of women and men is humanization and not dehumanization: "if we were to admit that dehumanization is the historical vocation of men, we would have nothing to do but adopt a cynical attitude or one of total despair" (Freire, 2016b, p. 63).

Still for them, dehumanization is a concrete fact in history, not a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order generated by oppression and which generates more oppression and violence. In the relationship of oppression, in which some oppress and others are oppressed, there is a denial of the human being and, consequently, the impediment to the development of the subject, in which it is not possible for men and women to be the protagonists of their stories. But how do Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal define oppression? Who are the oppressors? Who are the oppressed? How does the relationship between oppressors and oppressed come about?

Oppression as a distortion of human vocation

In relation to the category of oppression, we can see a strong approximation between the thoughts of Freire (2016b) and Boal (2009b). They see it as "a crushing control", an unjust "order" that generates violence and prevents human beings from being the protagonists of their own history. Oppression as a necrophilic action "generates an unjust order that generates the violence of the oppressors" (Freire, 2016a, p. 63), who dehumanize themselves by dehumanizing others. This distorts the true ontological vocation of women and men to be more. According to these authors, for there to be oppression, there must be two poles: on the one hand, the oppressors; on the other, the oppressed.

A careful reading of their early writings leads one to believe that both treat the terms oppressor and oppressed in the light of the thinking of Marx and Engels, who summarize the class struggle as being, in general, an opposition between oppressors and oppressed.

The history of all societies existing to this day is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, baron and serf, guild master and companion, in short, oppressors and oppressed, have remained in constant opposition to one another, engaged in an uninterrupted war, sometimes disguised, sometimes open, which has always ended either in a revolutionary transformation of the whole of society or in the destruction of the contending classes (Marx and Engels, 2006, p. 51).

It is therefore possible to consider, based on the early works of Paulo Freire (2016b) and Augusto Boal (1988), that the oppressor and the oppressed are representatives of polarized social classes. Although some of the terms used by Marx and Engels in their works, such as "free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, baron and serf", are not present, these polarities can be perceived between boss and employee, illiterate and literate, actors and spectators, stage and audience, landowners and landless, for example.

The oppressors are classified by them as those who oppress, exploit and violate because of their unbridled quest for power. According to Freire (2016b), the desire for possession is the only bond they have with the world. That's why they want to transform land, goods, production, creation, culture, other people and the time in which people live into objects of their domination at all costs. For the oppressors, "what counts is having more and more, even at the cost of the oppressed having less or nothing at all. To be, for them, is to have and to have as a class that has" (Freire, 2016b, p. 86). The oppressor is the individual who "imposes his vision of the world on the oppressed, so that they are obeyed and his peace reigns". (Boal, 2009b, p. 106).

According to Freire (2016b), the oppressed are all those who have been robbed of their right to humanization and have been placed on the margins of history. For the teatrologist, the oppressed are those subjects from whom "the right to speak, to dialog, to their territory, to their free expression, to their freedom of choice" (Boal, 2009b, p. 174) has been taken away. They have also been robbed of the right to "produce their art and culture, and the creative exercise of all forms of Sensible Thought" (Boal, 2009a, p. 15).

Over time, Freire and Boal broadened their views on their conceptions of oppression, the oppressor and the oppressed. Both understood that the issue of oppression can be seen beyond class issues. According to them, we cannot jump to conclusions and consider that humanity is divided into good, angelic and suffering beings (oppressed) and wicked, evil beings dominated by the evil one (oppressors). Thus, they warn that "oppressed and oppressors cannot be confused with angels and demons. They hardly exist in a pure state, neither one nor the other" (Boal, 2009, p. 23).

In various excerpts from the works of these two authors, we can see that there are oppressors in the midst of the oppressed or several oppressors who oppress. Boal, in his last public speech in Paris, at the headquarters of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), in March 2009, when he was appointed UNESCO World Ambassador for Theatre, stated that:

Seeing the world beyond appearances, we see oppressors and oppressed in all societies, ethnicities, genders, classes and castes, we see the unjust and cruel world. We have an obligation to invent another world because we know that another world is possible. But it's up to us to build it with our hands on the scene, on stage and in life (Boal, 2019).

As well as being present in all layers of society, the oppressor and the oppressed are within each of us. In this regard, Freire (2016b) states that the

oppressed is a dualistic being, who is constantly fighting within himself between antagonistic forces, one that leads him to be more and the other that leads him to be less. In line with Freire's thinking, Boal (2009b, p. 254) points out that "the human being is a binary being: predatory and supportive. We have to free the human being from his predatory instinct, an animal remnant". In these words, it is clear that we are oppressors when we choose to let this desire to conquer and dominate grow in us without caring about the other; and oppressed, when we choose to fight for their liberation and show solidarity in the struggle for the liberation of others. According to (2009b), the oppressed differs from the depressed, which is the one who has no will fight.

When the oppressed become aware of the "shadow of the oppressor within themselves" (Freire, 2016b, p.70) and/or the "blindfold"⁶ (Boal, 2014, p.25) and engage in an organized struggle to extroject these figures, they will then begin to believe in themselves more. In this way, they will overcome their adherence to the oppressor and, by their own hands, build their own stories, gradually restoring the ontological vocation of being a subject. In this way, they will free themselves from the suffering caused by countless forms of dehumanization.

It is against all forms of dehumanization that Paulo Freire (2016b) and Augusto Boal (2009a, 2009b) insisted so much on the importance of social practices that help in the process of conscientization: a process of liberation, of intervention in the world, of recovering the human vocation, which is to be a subject in the world and with the world, and not an object of domination.

The process of conscientization and liberation in Freire and in Boal

For Freire and for Boal, every human being is capable of engaging with the world in which they live, transforming themselves and reality, making culture, making history and taking responsibility for it. It is therefore

⁶ Terms used by Freire and Boal to portray the dominant ideologies internalized by the oppressed.

necessary to make awareness the first objective of all social practice: first and foremost, to provoke a critical, reflective attitude that compromises action.

According to Freire (2016b), an education that is concerned with helping people become critically aware is a cultural action that liberates rather than domesticates, and this enables men and women to act in their contexts, reflecting on them and transforming them. Boal believes that theater can and should be used as a critical awareness tool to read and transform society, "it can help us build the future, instead of meekly waiting for it" (Boal, 2014, p. 11).

This reflection on contexts allows us to become aware of our role in the world and, at the same time, that no one is alone, but in a permanent relational process in which people become subjects through their historical-cultural actions. Therefore, for these educators, a liberating social practice cannot be limited to a practice that does not penetrate the phenomenal essence of things, which is to, that does not critically unveil reality. In other words, it is not enough just to become aware, which implies only a spontaneous perception of reality, basically characterized by common sense. It is therefore necessary for this awareness to reach a process of conscientization, which means overcoming the perception of reality through common sense by an epistemological position of apprehension of reality.

Within the Freirean and Boalean conceptions, conscientization is a process of improving human consciousness and only happens through liberating practices that develop the innate capacity to make culture, think, deliberate and decide with autonomy and responsibility. The function of these practices is therefore not to reproduce the dominant ideology, but to collaborate in the reflexive organization of the thinking of the oppressed, proposing ways to overcome naive visions of reality and replace them with critical visions, denouncing and taking risks, of course. For both authors, it is impossible to create without taking risks.

As critical awareness is not separate from action, it defines an *ethos*, an attitude in favor of freedom and the resumption of the ontological vocation

of human beings. It is reflection aimed at changing reality against any form of oppression. Freedom is the end and the means in Freire's and Boal's thoughts. As an end, the concept directs attitudes in practice. As a means, freedom lies in the path adopted.

Freirean and Boalean educational practices aim at criticality instead of naivety, at action and reflection instead of inertia, alienation and mechanicity. These practices make it possible for women and men to be transforming agents, protagonist artists, spect-actors⁷ (Boal, 2013), and not vessels or objectified beings, depositories of the knowledge of the dominant, the forgers of the culture of silence, who call the oppressed assisted and marginalized (Freire, 2016b).

The Freirean and Boalean methods focus on communication and not on "announcements", on confrontation and not on adapting and adjusting subjects to the culture imposed by the dominators. These methods aim to overcome the dominant culture imposed by what Freire (2011) calls "cultural invasion" and what Boal (1979, p. 96) calls "cultural colonialism".

According to Freire (2011 p. 149), "[...] cultural invasion is the penetration that invaders make into the cultural context of the invaded, imposing their worldview on them, while curbing their creativity by inhibiting its expansion". For Boal (1988, p.96) "cultural colonialism is the imposition of one country's cultural values on another". According to the teatrologist, the purpose of cultural colonialism is to devalue the standards of life of the popular masses in order to mold the invaded to new standards, new ways of life, "instituting the culture of the dominated classes as unculture". (Boal, 1988, p.95)

Freire and Boal propose cultural action for freedom as an essential way of combating the dominant culture, because it places oppressed peoples as the protagonists of their cultural process, rather than simple consumers of other

⁷ In Boal's theater, the spectator is called the spect-actor, precisely because he is the protagonist of his existence and responsible for the consequences of his actions. The spect-actor is the playwright, the scriptwriter of their life trajectory.

people's culture. For them, cultural action for freedom is done with and by oppressed peoples, and not on them:

It doesn't bring culture to the people, but offers them the aesthetic means necessary for their own culture, with their own means and goals. It not only educates in the essential elements of what can be done, but pedagogically encourages participants to seek their own paths (Boal, 2009a, p. 166).

Cultural action for freedom (Freire, 2011) is characterized by elements that contribute to building the humanization of women and men, as well as being based on communion between people as an alternative to overcoming the condition of domination and oppression in which they find themselves. The cultural action for freedom proposed by Freire and Boal is a counter-hegemonic cultural action, a cultural action that, by problematizing culture, contributes to the formation of autonomous historical subjects, with the capacity to break away, to decide, to direct, to be active and performing in the face of the problems of their time.

Another similarity between Freire's and Boal's praxis lies in the format of the Culture Circle and the Forum Theater. The former was one of the defining experiences of popular education in Brazil between the 1950s and 1960s, "a time when the country maintained its desire to destroy previous hierarchical models and to democratize the word, with action and the collective and consensual management of power". (Viana, 2016, p. 104). For Freire, the Culture Circle was a place where teaching and learning took place dialogically, in which there was no room for the transfer of knowledge, but rather for the construction of the learner's knowledge with their hypotheses for reading the world:

So instead of the school, which seems to us to be too passive a concept, given our own upbringing (even when we give it the attribute of active), contradicting the dynamic transition phase, we

launched the Culture Circle. In place of the teacher, with strongly "giving" traditions, the Debate Coordinator. Instead of a discursive class, dialog. Instead of the student, with passive traditions, the group participant. Instead of "points" and alienated programs, compact programming, "reduced", "codified" into learning units (Freire, 1967, p. 111).

Forum Theatre, on the other hand, is "an organized theatrical assembly that presents themes of oppression linked to the reality and interests of the community." (Viana, 2016, p. 105). This Boalean theatrical technique aims to represent the conflicts of a community as well as the proposals agreed in assembly. In this way, the conflict and its possible solutions are discussed by everyone and put into practice through improvisations carried out on the spot. According to Boal (2014, p. 32),

The aim of the forum is not to win, but to allow us to learn and exercise. The spect-actors, by putting their ideas on stage, train themselves for action in real life; and the actors and the audience, who are also acting, learn about the possible consequences of their actions. They learn about the arsenal of the oppressors and the possible tactics and strategies of the oppressed. The forum is a game, it's playful - a rich way of learning from each other.

In both the Freirean Culture Circle and the Boalean Forum Theater, all subjects have the right to express themselves, which makes mutual learning possible. Freirean and Boalean praxis advocate dialogue and cooperation between subjects in the quest to problematize, understand and transform reality. Dialogue, for Freire and Boal, is seen as the basis for emancipatory relationships, because it is through the word that people free themselves. When only one person speaks, the character of the dialog is lost, because it is necessary for each subject to reflect on their reality based on their experience. The word, as well as the act of reading, is liberating, because

both provide reflection, which is the starting point for any change, especially with regard to relations of oppression (Freire, 2016b).

According to the two authors, for true dialog to take place, mutual recognition and openness on the part of those who participate or will participate in the dialog are fundamental. They must be in a position to let something go against them. It implies mutual openness, which only comes about on the basis of belonging, because without this mutual openness, there can be no real human bond either. Mutual belonging always means, at the same time, being able to listen to each other, because in dialogue "all opinions are possible, all thoughts permitted. When there are two and not just the One, Absolute Thought, creation is possible. Dialogue is democracy" (Boal, 2009b, p. 33).

The dialogues provided by these praxis make it possible to unveil reality. "The more the popular masses unveil the objective and challenging reality on which they must focus their transformative action, the more critically they insert themselves into it" (Freire, 2016b p. 77). And, "By achieving, in common reflection and action, this knowledge of reality, they discover themselves as its permanent remakers". (Freire, 2016b p. 101).

In line with Freirean principles, Boal believed in the importance of transforming the individual into a constructor and transformer of reality. This gave rise to the understanding that the scene can present social problems, and the debate it promotes can provoke reflection and practical action to overcome the problem presented.

In Boalean praxis, the figure of the joker⁸, as envisioned by Boal, is the same as the figure of the educator, as envisioned by Freire. In both cases, these individuals must act as provocateurs and facilitators of discussions, never centralizing or imposing positions on the participants. This is because it is important for people to be understood as individuals with different

⁸Augusto Boal called the people who facilitate the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) as "Joker": artists with a pedagogical role; practitioners, scholars and researchers of his Method. One could define Joker as a specialist in a constant learning process. Also, as someone who must know the set of techniques that make up the Tree of the Theatre of the Oppressed, a representation of the pedagogical structure of the Method, made up of coherent and interdependent branches, the result of discoveries made from the need to respond to the real demands of reality.

worldviews, who can contribute to building a dialog on various topics and actions.

Freire's and Boal's praxis start from the principle that education and theater are not neutral activities; they are the fruit of political positioning in the face of reality, with the aim of transforming it. Both refused to accept the social and economic situation of the population as a predetermined destiny, which is why they encouraged problematization, criticism, respect for difference, the democratization of the word (for students and spectators) and of cultural means for the people, as well as the opening up of dialogue as a strategy for humanization. According to these authors, choosing neutrality is always choosing the side of the oppressor.

From the above, the Freirean and Boalean methodologies were "developed by and not for oppressed people, exercising practices that enable the critical awareness of oppressed people to fight for their liberation" (Teixeira, 2007, p. 122). The educational praxis of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal highlights the importance of cultural action for freedom as a prerequisite for cultural revolution in order to break with the hegemony of the dominant culture. The following excerpt, although written by Augusto Boal, also represents Paulo Freire's idea of cultural revolution:

When revolutionary change takes place, it revolutionarily represents a change in the relations of production, a change in the relations of power between the classes, towards a classless society. (...) when revolutionary change takes place, the liberating classes must also liberate themselves from the dominant cultural values imposed on them by the dominant classes. To do this, it is necessary to assume popular culture as "the" culture, as the only culture, and to deny the values of the ruling class. At most, it can be given the status of "*bur-lore*" (knowledge of the bourgeoisie) or "*oligo-lore*" (knowledge of the oligarchy). The values of the ruling class culture can be rescued, but only after they have been destroyed. Like the

Vietcong, who rescue the 'good things' of the B52 super-strongholds after destroying them" (Boal, 1988, p. 95).

For these two militant political educators, only a cultural revolution can restore human beings' capacity to dream. This should be the proposal of every liberating practice: to dream and act for the emergence of a just society, in which human beings, nature, society and culture are reintegrated in favour of the humanization of human beings. Finally, the rapprochement between Freirean and Boalean praxis on the urgency of a cultural revolution is yet another argument for the intellectual kinship between the authors' thinking.

The *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and the *Theater of the Oppressed* reflect the educational practices of two revolutionary thinkers who dared to "cross the line" and understand how education and culture could be seen from the perspective of oppressed people. Although they use different languages, both the Theatre of the Oppressed and Freire's Pedagogy link their methodologies to the struggle of the oppressed, encouraging them to reflect on the fact that every action the subject takes in the world changes reality a little, as it also changes man himself, becoming increasingly critical, inventive and creative in/of his culture.

Final considerations

This study sought to argue the similarities between the educational proposal of Paulo Freire's Liberating Education and Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed. The result of this study is a reflexive critique of the concepts of humanization, oppression, conscientization and liberation, which are the foundations of each author's thinking, a fact that testifies to the "intellectual kinship" between these scholars. This kinship shows that the path to freedom for men and women is based on humanization, which belongs to them by right, in Freire's and Boal's view. Humanization as man's vocation is the

object of being more, which, on the other hand, has to overcome the possibility of dehumanization.

According to the authors studied in this essay, in order for the oppressed to recover their ontological vocation to be more, they need to develop their own consciousness and stop being hosts to the oppressor's consciousness. The educator and the teatrologist conceive of education and art as instruments of struggle for the liberation of body and mind, in order to provoke in men and women the desire to transform society in commitment to the social context in which they are inserted.

The "intellectual kinship" between the authors shows that Freire's and Boal's praxis provide a pedagogical approach in which the oppressed become capable of perceiving the world, reflecting on the world and expressing themselves in the world through problematizing education. In the problematizing education proposed by Freire and Boal, educator and students work together to discover and rediscover what is in the world. The knowledge that occurs in this process is critical and creative, since it is constructed reflexively, in a constant attempt to problematize reality, taking a more critical stance towards it. This critical stance encourages us not to remain silent in the face of the countless injustices that exist in society. In the name of the universal ethics of the human being, it is our duty to react with indignation and anger towards any order that denies the human being their right to *be more*.

In view of the reflections presented in this study, we can say that Freire's pedagogy and Boal's theater are still relevant today. It is enough to look at the countless oppressions that exist in our society, especially in Brazil, such as: the apology for violence, the praise of authoritarianism, the propagation of racist, sexist and homophobic hatred, the reactionary discourses articulated by a right-wing moralism that reaffirms and naturalizes hierarchies. That's why, together with Freire and Boal, we reaffirm that transforming concrete situations of oppression is an ethical imperative, "if there is oppression, it must be ended!" (Boal, 1988, p. 18).

Undoubtedly, the propositions of each of the authors are relevant and, in a complementary way, help us to make theoretical and practical progress in the fight against multiple oppressions. With Paulo Freire, we learned that this struggle must be sustained by the fuel of hope, because without it "the struggle weakens and falters. We need critical hope like a fish needs clean water" (Freire, 2016, p. 14); and from Boal (2009a p. 148), we learned that "A new world is possible: we have to invent it!"

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