

Considerações acerca do conceito de emancipação em Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal e Jacques Rancière

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RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é aproximar o conceito de emancipação tratado em obras de Jacques Rancière, Paulo Freire e Augusto Boal. O estudo integrou a pesquisa de Mestrado Profissional em Educação sobre possíveis cenas de emancipação produzidas no encontro entre teatro, educação não escolar e adolescentes. A reflexão permite observar que Freire, sob a ótica de Marx, assinala a importância da educação como uma prática de liberdade pautada no ideal da transformação social. Boal, explora, pelo teatro, um meio para refletir sobre as opressões das classes desfavorecidas. Rancière, busca, na experiência de um pedagogo francês, chamado Joseph Jacotot, pensar o princípio da igualdade das inteligências como condutor da emancipação intelectual. O estudo permitiu traçar reflexões sobre posturas e ações pedagógicas que são tão importantes quanto os próprios conhecimentos implicados no aprendizado, deslocando o conceito de emancipação para as relações possíveis no aqui e no agora dos processos educativos e artísticos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Emancipação. Educação freiriana. Educação não escolar. Teatro do oprimido.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to approach the concept of emancipation discussed in the studies of Jacques Rancière, Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. The study was part of the Professional Master's in Education research at the State University of Rio Grande do Sul on possible scenes of emancipation produced in the encounter between theater, non-school education and teenagers. The reflection allows us to observe that Paulo Freire, from Marx's perspective, highlights the importance of education as a practice of freedom based on the ideal of social transformation. Augusto Boal, like Freire, explores, in the theatrical tool, a means to provide answers to social questions and reflect on the oppression of disadvantaged classes. Jacques Rancière, in turn, seeks, in the experience of a French pedagogue, called Joseph Jacotot, to think about the principle of equality of intelligence as a conductor of intellectual emancipation. Finally, it is noteworthy that the study allowed us to draw reflections on pedagogical attitudes and actions that are as important as the knowledge involved in learning, shifting the concept of emancipation to possible relationships in the here and now of educational and artistic processes.

KEYWORDS: Emancipation. Freirean Education. Non-school education. Theatre of the Oppressed.

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RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es abordar el concepto de emancipación discutido en obras de Jacques Rancière, Paulo Freire y Augusto Boal. El estudio formó parte de la investigación de la Maestría Profesional en Educación sobre posibles escenarios de emancipación producidos en el encuentro entre teatro, educación no escolar y adolescentes. La reflexión permite observar que Freire, desde la perspectiva de Marx, resalta la importancia de la educación como una práctica de libertad basada en el ideal de transformación social. Boal explora, a través del teatro, una manera de reflexionar sobre la opresión de las clases desfavorecidas. Rancière, busca, a partir de la experiencia de un pedagogo francés, llamado Joseph Jacotot, pensar el principio de igualdad de inteligencias como motor de emancipación intelectual. El estudio permitió extraer reflexiones sobre actitudes y acciones pedagógicas tan importantes como los conocimientos involucrados en el aprendizaje, trasladando el concepto de emancipación a posibles relaciones en el aquí y ahora de los procesos educativos y artísticos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Emancipación. Educación Freireana. Educación no escolar. Teatro del Oprimido.

Introduction

This text is part of a study developed for the Professional Master's Degree in Education, entitled Possibilities of Us: Theater, Education, and Emancipatory Scenes, affiliated with the Graduate Program in Education – Professional Master's Degree at the State University of Rio Grande do Sul (UERGS), based in Osório/RS. The main objective of this article is to bring together the conceptions of emancipation and educational contributions proposed by theorists and thinkers Jacques Rancière, Paulo Freire, and Augusto Boal, in order to foster one of the many possible readings of these authors. It also seeks to reflect on the practical implications of the concept through theatrical practice with adolescents, aiming to develop a productive interpretation that can contribute to current debates in the fields of education and theater.

The research was carried out in 2023 in a non-school educational setting, located in the Cavallhada neighborhood of Porto Alegre/RS, within a social project that serves children and adolescents aged 6 to 14 during out-of-school hours. It is important to highlight our choice to use the term *non-school education* instead of the more commonly used *non-formal education* (which, although occurring outside the school setting, is still intentional and formative) or *informal education* (which happens in everyday life through interpersonal and worldly interactions). We understand that the terminology used often imposes hierarchies and levels within educational practices and different forms of teaching and learning. That is, our aim is to emphasize the importance and the potential of education developed in non-school times, spaces, and forms, in defense of both school and non-school education different, yet complementary (Vianna et al., 2020, p. 586). Additionally, such non-school educational processes can also be considered *extracurricular spaces* (Bello, 2016).

The initial choice of these authors stems from their relevance to the performing arts, particularly in the case of Augusto Boal and his methodology of the *Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)*. A prominent thinker in progressive theater, Boal has had a significant influence on what is known in Brazil as “political theater” due to its ideological and political nature. Paulo Freire is included for his legacy and contributions to the discourse on liberating and humanizing education. A foundational reference for social movements, Freire remains extensively studied in academic research both in Brazil and internationally. According to a study conducted by the Paulo Freire Chair at PUC-SP, Freire was cited in 1,852 graduate-level works in Brazil between 1991 and 2012 (Saul, 2016). Walter Kohan (2019) notes that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is the third most cited work worldwide in research within the field of social sciences. Completing this triad is Jacques Rancière, a contemporary thinker whose

reflections contribute to broadening discussions on education across the arts, particularly through his writings on aesthetics and politics.

Deepening the concept of emancipation takes into account the importance of this theme for theatrical practice and, specifically, for the investigation carried out in the writing of this dissertation, which aimed to develop reflections based on the encounters between the Theatre of the Oppressed and adolescents. It helps identify those encounters that may be considered meaningful experiences and lived moments what we understand as “possible scenes of emancipation” for both individuals and the collective.

Theatrical practice with adolescents defined a significant space for the group analyzed in this study, revealing certain shifts and openings in their interactions compared to how they behaved prior to participating in the theatre classes. We understand that these non-formal practices allowed the group to become aware of how they perceive and act upon situations triggered by theatrical games, the new sensations and thoughts they develop about themselves and others, and the positive resonances that were verbally reinforced during the sharing of experiences, in dialogues, written reflections, and other forms of expression. In the completed research, this space of openings created by the encounter between adolescents and the Theatre of the Oppressed is what we refer to as possible scenes of emancipation.

Perspectives on the Concept of Emancipation in Freire, Boal, and Rancière

Jacques Rancière⁴ is a French philosopher regarded as a major contemporary thinker, whose extensive body of work has contributed to discussions in fields such as philosophy, politics, education, and the arts. Born in Algeria in 1940, he moved to Paris in 1945, where he still lives and serves as Professor Emeritus of Aesthetics and Politics at the University of Paris 8. A former student of Louis Althusser, a key figure in Marxist theory, Rancière was part of a group of young communists who collaborated in the production of *Lire le Capital* (Reading Capital) in 1965 his first publication alongside fellow students from the École Normale Supérieure. His works are marked by a style of thought that blurs disciplinary boundaries and disrupts academic conventions, especially by challenging the notion that subaltern voices are mere "raw material" that only gain meaning through the mediation of intellectuals and academic production.

⁴ Rodrigues Netto's (2022) doctoral dissertation provides the foundation for the biographical account of the philosopher.

Paulo Reglus Neves Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher, was born in Recife in 1921 and passed away in 1997. Actively engaged in social movements, he is a global reference in the field of education, known for advocating a liberating and humanizing approach to education through his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He gained recognition for systematizing a method of literacy for youth and adults. Although criticized for his idealism and even for having a utopian outlook, Freire defended an education of hope as a means to confront the false hopes generated by neoliberalism, which commodifies and rigidifies life. For Freire, educational action utopian and revolutionary would bring the future into the present through the human being's commitment to the construction of their own history (Peroza; Schiffer, 2008, p. 11).

Augusto Boal was a theatre director and playwright born in Rio de Janeiro in 1931, who passed away in 2009. He systematized a theatrical methodology known as the Theatre of the Oppressed, using the stage as a medium to denounce the social issues affecting the population and establishing theatre as a political tool in the process of raising awareness. He firmly positioned himself in favor of a theatre that did not belong solely to a portion of society the elite.

To approach the concept of emancipation, we turn to the etymology of the word. Emancipation comes from the Latin *emancipare*, meaning “to declare someone free,” formed from *ex-* (“out”) and *mancipare* (“to deliver, transfer, sell”), derived from *mancipium* (“ownership”), and ultimately from *manus* (“hand”) (HOUAISS, 2015). In the field of Law, for example, emancipation is a legal term referring to the acquisition of rights and responsibilities by one individual previously under the authority of another. The most common example is the emancipation of children from their parents (Brazil, 2002).

There is a common starting point among these three authors that aligns them: the foundational influence of Karl Marx's work. Although Rancière later distanced himself from Marxist conceptions and even proposed critiques of Marxism, recognizing this shared point of departure allows us to contextualize how each of them thought especially in their dissatisfaction with the ways in which social structures are organized and function in various domains.

Augusto Boal, with the Theatre of the Oppressed, and Paulo Freire, with the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, began with the understanding of a society divided into classes, where some hold privileges because they control the means of production, while others are exploited through labor, as that is the place assigned to them within a divided and asymmetrical structure. We understand that Freire and Boal stood in opposition to the competitive capitalist model, believing that education and theatre, respectively, are means by which the codification of the world structured for the material and

symbolic accumulation of the few can be unveiled. Hence, both sought ways to transform conditions of exploitation. In our view, education and theatre allow for the articulation of the world's structure and governance: by recognizing it, people simultaneously become subjects and agents in the making and remaking of their own world (Marinho, 2014).

Distancing himself from Marxist thought, Rancière reevaluated his theoretical and political conceptions following the events of May 1968 in France, marked by student and workers' mobilizations. He thus challenges what he sees as a defining feature of the Marxist model: the idea that human emancipation should be conceived according to the expectations of a particular intellectual class. He rejects the division of knowledge and intellectual hierarchies an issue that permeates his thinking up to his most recent writings.

In the works of Augusto Boal, there are few direct references to the concept of emancipation. For this reason, we draw upon interpretations of Boal's thought, as well as those of other authors such as Julian Boal, the playwright's son, and a scholar and practitioner of the Theatre of the Oppressed, and José Soeiro, a sociologist and researcher of the same method who offer pathways for understanding emancipation within the theory of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The very name Theatre of the Oppressed reveals how Boal viewed the structure of society. This was one of his most significant contributions to the development of a theatre that was genuinely Brazilian and Latin American, grounded in territories deeply marked by colonial legacies.

In this context, emancipation was understood as the opposite of oppression, though not solely in economic terms. For Boal, oppression extended beyond visible inequalities; it manifested in practices that reinforced fixed social roles, anchoring people's identities and shaping their experience of the world. For this reason, he was attentive to the social hierarchies that construct distinctions between oppressor and oppressed distinctions that, when treated as absolute, fixed, and immutable attributes, tend to privilege the oppressor. Emancipation, then, would be understood as a process of resisting oppression by "demechanizing" the solidified identities that confine people to prescribed social roles. To use Boal's own terms, resisting oppression requires the demechnization of bodies and the shedding of social roles that restrict and circumscribe individual freedom within capitalist society. Julian Boal and José Soeiro (2019, p. 101) offer an analysis of emancipation as understood in the work of Augusto Boal:

emancipation can be defined as the disruption of the distribution of roles, spaces, and positions to which we are assigned, destined, or confined. This is precisely what Augusto Boal proposes in his writings and exercises involving masks, rituals, and the demechnization of the body: that we be liberated from the markings imposed on us by the social division of labor. Nothing in Boal's reasoning prevents us from extending this notion to other "rituals," "social masks,"

or “mechanizations” imposed by different structures and divisions within society such as those based on gender, race, or sexuality which also constrain our being and must likewise be overcome.

Hence, we understand that the markings and divisions of social roles hinder emancipation, because fulfilling a social role is precisely the result of a mechanized body. In the book *Theatre of the Oppressed and Other Political Poetics*, Boal states that the emancipatory process is a continuous pursuit, an unending struggle, given that all individuals are, at different levels and at different times, both oppressed and oppressors since these are practices that have been naturalized and internalized, and that are constantly being rearranged (Boal, 1991).

Paulo Freire also addresses the oppressor–oppressed relationship from the perspective of popular education and the search for a path toward consciousness and liberation, for “oppression exists when it becomes a prohibitive act against the fuller being of human beings,” rooted in the ongoing dehumanization and devaluation of the existence of the other. (Freire, author's emphasis) (1987, p. 24):

It is enough that human beings are being prohibited from becoming more for the objective situation in which such prohibition occurs to be, in itself, an act of violence. A real violence regardless of how often it may be sweetened by false generosity because it wounds the ontological and historical vocation of human beings: that of becoming more..

Having offered this overview of how the authors analyzed here formulate theories and practices related to emancipation, we now propose a more situated discussion to illustrate some of the connections between the ideas of Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, and Jacques Rancière and the practices developed in the non-formal theatrical activities carried out with the group examined in this article. The aim is to build upon what has been written thus far, while opening up space to reflect on the connections made possible when the concept of emancipation is, in a certain way, applied—and when something is constructed collectively through group practice.

Implications of Emancipation in Non-Formal Theatrical Practices

In the context of the research conducted, the adolescents participating in the social project belong to what is commonly referred to as a marginalized group individuals who experience oppression on a daily basis. These forms of oppression affect not only their access to basic material rights such as housing, food, culture, education, and leisure fundamental rights for any citizen but also impact their very existence by reinforcing conditions of invisibility and inferiority. The

“ontological vocation to become more,” as discussed by Paulo Freire, is therefore constantly denied today in concrete situations such as poverty, social inequality, labor exploitation, racism, and the erasure of the other’s existence.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire proposes and defends a pedagogy in favor of collective emancipation, which “only makes sense if the oppressed seek to regain their humanity and carry out the great humanist and historical task of the oppressed—to liberate themselves and their oppressors” (Freire, 2002, p. 30). Freire associates the concept of praxis with education, emphasizing that the Pedagogy of the Oppressed only takes place in a theory–practice relationship guided by dialogue, reflection, critical consciousness (*conscientização*), and concrete actions aimed at transforming reality. This becomes meaningful insofar as “critical reflection on practice becomes a requirement of the theory/practice relationship, without which theory becomes mere blah-blah-blah, and practice, mere activism (Freire, 2007, p. 22). Thus, the realization of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed is only possible through the action of the oppressed themselves, for

[...] it must be forged with them and not for them—as individuals or peoples—in the unceasing struggle to recover their humanity. A pedagogy that makes oppression and its causes the object of reflection for the oppressed, from which will arise their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation, a struggle in which this pedagogy is both made and remade (Freire, 2007, p. 20).

Freirean thought understands the emancipatory process as fundamental, achieved through the overcoming of oppression. To this end, it proposes an educational project oriented toward freedom, in direct opposition to the model of education ingrained in our society, which Freire referred to as the “banking education”. In his words,

In the ‘banking’ concept of education that we are criticizing where education becomes an act of depositing, transferring, and transmitting values and knowledge this overcoming does not and cannot take place. On the contrary, reflecting the oppressor society and constituting a dimension of the ‘culture of silence,’ ‘banking education’ maintains and reinforces the contradiction (Freire, 1987, p. 82).

In place of a verticalized relationship that denies the learner’s voice and treats the pedagogical process as the mere transmission of knowledge, Freire proposed a humanized and critical educational practice—a problem-posing education. The liberating nature of a pedagogical process in which both learners and educators promote themselves as human beings in communion established Freire as an educator who believed in education as a pathway to social transformation, even while recognizing that historical processes include moments of regression and that education, indeed, cannot achieve everything.

Throughout his life, Freire developed significant work in the field of popular education, especially in

youth and adult literacy such as the experience in Angicos, Rio Grande do Norte, in 1963, his coordination of the now-defunct National Literacy Plan, and his role as Secretary of Education for the city of São Paulo between 1989 and 1991 (Kohan, 2019). Through his works, ideology, and pedagogy, he left a lasting legacy in defense of an education capable of transforming the state of things.

In this liberating educational practice, educators and learners become subjects of their own process, overcoming alienating intellectualism and the notion that knowledge is something to be transmitted by those who know to those who know nothing as if it were a deposit or a transfer of values and knowledge. Dismantling this banking logic of education requires a praxis (the analysis of reality in the production of transformative action) within a pedagogy of hope, in which

One of the most important tasks of critical educational practice is to create the conditions in which learners, through their relationships with one another and with the teacher, begin to experience, in depth, what it means to assume themselves. To assume themselves as social and historical beings, as thinking, communicative, transformative, creative beings, as dream-makers capable of feeling anger because they are capable of loving (Freire, 1996, p. 23).

Freire does not dismiss the importance of curricular content; rather, he proposes alternative ways of teaching and learning in which the learner's autonomy is respected and their knowledge is embedded in the content studied—that is, content becomes a vehicle for what is being learned. A critical educator, one who reflects on their own practice and is committed to ongoing professional development, can transform the educational process from a technical or content-based training into a process of human and ethical formation, grounded in the awareness that we are unfinished beings, always in the process of change and learning.

For this reason, the educator's role becomes significant when they understand that “it is part of their teaching task not only to teach content but also to teach how to think rightly” (Freire, 2004, p. 15).

The expression “to think rightly” refers to the subject's willingness to reflect on themselves and their own practice. A teacher who thinks rightly, therefore, “lets it become clear to the learners that one of the beauties of our way of being in and with the world, as historical beings, is the ability to, by intervening in the world, come to know the world” (Freire, 2004, p. 16). In a way, there is a Freirean hope for the repair of the world, which acts as a catalyst for reflection on our pedagogical practices as educators, especially in the teaching of theatre to adolescents. As Freire (1989, p. 4) asserts, if “education is not the key, the lever, the instrument for social transformation,” it is precisely

because it cannot do everything that it can, in fact, do something. Hence his enduring warning about the dangers that still surround education today: “we must not fall, on the one hand, into the naïveté of an all-powerful education; nor, on the other, into the opposite naïveté that of denying education’s potential” (Freire, 1989, p. 6). Freire calls for the constant reflection and reinvention of our pedagogical practices, regardless of the institution in which we work.

In contrast, Jacques Rancière dissociates the debate on emancipation from the “oppressor versus oppressed” logic and from social emancipation. What emerges in his discussions is the distribution of the sensible that is, politics is grounded in a form of division and sharing of common experience. This distribution of the sensible operates as a system of perceptible evidences:

“[...] which makes visible who is allowed to participate in the common, based on what they do, and on the time and space in which this activity is carried out. In this way, having one occupation or another defines one’s competencies or incompetencies regarding the common” (Rancière, 2009, p. 16).

At the beginning of his academic trajectory, the philosopher was closely linked to Marxist studies within the research group led by Louis Althusser. Rancière began distancing himself from the Althusserian vanguard under the strong influence of the May 1968 uprisings a movement that rejected social hierarchies and vertical divisions between labor and intellectual knowledge, mobilizing students, workers, teachers, and artists. According to Rodrigues Netto (2022, p. 15), the 1968 movement “was able to reinscribe the discussion of equality as a principle related to politics, or as something capable of initiating politics in the gap where it conflicts with the established order.”

This rupture stemmed from the understanding that both Marxist science and its extension in the communist party as a political and union apparatus operated hierarchically in relation to workers. Moreover, it presupposed an intellectual elite capable of revealing the truth of exploitation to the working class, acting as a kind of spokesperson for historically marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Thus, in the 1970s, his interest turned to pamphlets, newspapers, and letters written by workers materials that would later constitute his doctoral thesis, culminating in the publication of *The Nights of Labor: The Workers’ Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* in 1981, a work in which workers make history through their own words. In an interview given in 2021, the philosopher recounts:

At first, when I delved into the workers’ archives, I encountered a reality that had nothing to do with a ‘voice from below’ being liberated. What I saw, on the contrary, was that the circulation of words, the crossing of discourses, and all the ways of appropriating the words

and culture of others were at the very core of the processes of emancipation. What I realized at the time was that there is no such thing as the intellectuals' discourse and the people's discourse. We are all intellectuals. These workers also use their heads; therefore, they are intellectuals (Rancière, 2021, p. 7).

At the moment in which everyone is considered an intellectual, we can approach, within Rancière's notion of emancipation, the idea of the equality of intelligences.

In *On the Shores of Politics* (2014), equality is exemplified through the demands of French workers in the mid-1800s. Although the French constitutional charter mentioned equality, it was not practiced, as workers were not seen as equal to men of the upper classes, and their claims were not addressed. Proposing a different way of thinking, Rancière argued that emancipation "consists in the play of practices guided by the presupposition of the equality of anyone with anyone else and by the concern to verify it" (Rancière, 2014, p. 69).

Emancipation, then, means taking equality as the principle of relationships—not as a goal to be reached through a struggle between unequal, hierarchical categories. Hence, the need to overcome the logic of inferiority and superiority:

Emancipation is the exit from minority, but no one leaves social minority except by their own means. To emancipate workers is not to present labor as the founding principle of a new society, but to lead workers out of the state of minority to prove that they truly belong to society, that they truly communicate with everyone else in the common space; that they are not merely beings of need, who complain and cry out, but beings of reason and discourse, capable of opposing one rationale to another and giving their actions the form of a demonstration (Rancière, 2014, p. 67).

In this sense, the theatre classes we experienced throughout this research intended to create conditions for our emancipatory scenes sought to act as possibilities for exiting the state of minority to which the group of adolescents in the social project is often relegated by external perceptions. New relationships were able to emerge within the educational space, while also opening other ways of thinking about our existence as both collective and individual potential.

Leaving the state of minority through theatrical practice thus meant lovingly embracing the sensitive events we witnessed in our sessions, striving to distance ourselves from any moral judgment regarding such occurrences. It also meant attempting not to operate even discursively or theoretically according to a representative and explanatory logic of the world and events; one that is causal, linear, and consensual, seeking to classify, name, organize, and reinforce dominant orders.

In this research, therefore, the sensible and sensibilities are not understood merely as what is positive, good, or emotional, but rather as ways of triggering understandings and re-creations of the

world through logics other than rationalization and representation as the capacity to be affected (by both joyful and painful affects) through experience.

In our encounters and theatrical educational practices, we were able to engage with new perspectives and sensations regarding our own bodies and the bodies of others. Breathing exercises and theatrical games prompted us to be present in the here and now in ways that differed from our everyday experiences drawing attention to what is often overlooked amid daily agitation and the overwhelming flow of information we constantly receive.

Our goal was not to measure or quantify what was or was not emancipatory or meaningful for the group; rather, we perceived that those moments involved practices of knowing our bodies and caring for ourselves and for the collective. Such practices are often distant from us, yet became meaningful moments in our classes moments that revealed a possible alternative to what we already knew.

In our sessions, we sought to establish a mode of theatrical practice that embraced, intensified, and expanded the relational dimension of educational processes, grounded in respect, ethics, care, dialogue, and trust. We realized that, in the context of theatre within the classroom, more can be accomplished collectively than in isolation like throwing oneself into the air and not hitting the ground because one is caught by others. Being open to the theatrical encounter means being open to the mystery of the other, in a challenging exercise of alterity that implies an ethical and political stance.

Our collective practice did not imply absolute harmony, nor was that our goal, since coexistence is an unstable zone relationships are delicate events and also sites of tension and dispute. The challenge was to find ways of negotiating with our own and others' vulnerabilities, needs, sensitivities, and problems, in a dynamic of balance amid collective movements.

In the book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (2007), a widely known work among educators and education researchers, the concept of emancipation is further developed by Rancière based on the ideas of the French teacher Joseph Jacotot in the 19th century. Jacotot's experience demonstrated that intellectual emancipation and the equality of intelligences could take place when a teacher taught a subject he himself did not know. Jacotot's experience took place in Louvain, a city in Belgium, where, in exile, he was appointed professor and faced the challenge of teaching young people who did not know French, while he himself did not speak Dutch. To establish a minimal connection with the students, he chose to use a bilingual edition of the book *Télémaque* and, with the help of an interpreter, instructed the students to study the text in French, supported by the Dutch translation. In the end, even without detailed

guidance aside from the bilingual text the students performed remarkably well. The experience challenges an entire pedagogical logic one that assumes the need to explain or teach something to those who are presumed to be ignorant. For Rancière, Jacotot's experience was

A proposition, undoubtedly controversial in its formulation, since under the aegis of a certain pedagogical myth, deeply rooted in the collective imagination teaching presupposes a hierarchy of intelligences, and therefore one can only teach what one already knows, never what one ignores. One intelligence transfers its knowledge to another, explaining it to someone else (Rancière, 2002, p. 54).

This “intellectual adventure” opens a new perspective on the relationship between teacher and learner one that traditionally begins with the student's supposed incapacity or ignorance, prompting the teacher to act so that the student may learn and leave ignorance behind. It is precisely here that the equality of intelligences functions as the starting point of the educational relationship, and where intellectual emancipation is realized, since one intelligence can follow its own path of inquiry provided it desires to do so.

In the activities carried out with the group, we drew on the collection of games and exercises systematized by Augusto Boal in the books *200 Exercises and Games for the Actor and the Non-Actor Who Wants to Say Something through Theatre* (1982) and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (2007), engaging with theatre as a means to become more aware of our “muscular alienation.” This collective practice, in which the educator participated alongside the group in the proposed exercises, aimed to foster collective experimentation and to cultivate classroom dynamics grounded in listening, community, and the engagement of everyone involved in the educational process.

We were not interested in acquiring a new specialization such as that of an athlete or acrobat but rather in exploring the possibilities offered by theatrical practice. These experiences will certainly serve the interpretation of characters, but also contribute to the development of alterity, care, and self-knowledge. Augusto Boal (2007, p. 89) observes that “in the battle of the body against the world, the senses suffer, and we begin to feel very little of what we touch, to hear very little of what we listen to, and to see very little of what we look at.” This points to the need to reactivate our senses, to perceive them fully and with intensities we are no longer accustomed to. It was in these singular experiences of theatrical doing that we found our emancipatory possibilities.

The equality of intelligences does not impose a hierarchy of knowledge, since it is hierarchy itself that creates the distance between knowing and not knowing a distance that can never be overcome. If everyone possesses intellectual capacity, it is proportionally linked to the desire to know

and to the awareness of a shared human nature, which “[...] is called emancipation, and it opens the way to every adventure in the land of knowledge. For what is at stake is daring to venture forth not learning more or less well, or more or less quickly” (Rancière, 2002, p. 38).

Thus, knowing is a matter of adventure. This may be why the intention is not to systematize a new educational method or teaching-learning approach, but to affirm and verify the equality of intelligences through pedagogical experiences or feats in which the teacher’s intelligence and that of the students remain free before a common object of observation and study.

The sensitivity displayed throughout the research, developed through creative work with theatre and adolescents, is remarkable. It is also worth noting that, alongside the activities with the youth, a podcast *Traces of a Restless Educator* was created as the artistic-professional product resulting from the investigation. The various voices and, consequently, their presence and all that is implicated in their conditions of existence composed a polyphony of memories, sensations, and human desires capable of offering new ways of being and acting in the world, even if only for a brief moment (as in theatrical games or podcast episodes). The sensibilities and senses activated through theatrical and educational practice, along with the ethics embedded in the construction of this polyphony, directly contributed to the creation of spaces for possible scenes of emancipation understood as practices that break with the capitalist logic of dehumanization.

Final considerations

In this study, we sought to approach the concept of emancipation through the works of Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, and Jacques Rancière, using as a backdrop an investigation conducted in a non-formal educational context involving theatrical practices. The reflections presented here are grounded in the idea that to think about emancipatory scenes in our daily theatre classes means to make room for sensibilities for creation, invention, sensitive thinking, subjectivity, questioning, expression, and new ways of seeing. The conceptual aspects discussed throughout the article were integrated into the final reflections in order to spark new thinking. For this reason, the first part of the text explored the authors’ approaches to the concept, while the second part aimed to show how theatrical practices developed in a non-formal educational process guided by those authors inspired us to think of our emancipatory scenes as singular and sensitive events emerging from our everyday classroom experiences.

In our practice with the Theatre of the Oppressed, we observed that the adolescents were able to explore these possibilities and create a space of openness and dialogue. This revealed to us that emancipation is a continuous process of discovery, experimentation, and reconfiguration. Upon

revisiting the goals of this writing, we realized that educational and theatrical practice in the context of non-formal education is not limited to specific techniques or content, but constitutes an experience capable of reshaping the way we look at ourselves and the world.

The reflection that emerges as we conclude this work points to the strength of the reflections found in the authors' writings. Such reflective energy is neither impersonal nor detached from us it is not something we merely critique, but a living source that leads us to rethink pedagogical practices and our ways of doing education. Conducting research in a social context marked by inequality and violence challenges us to remain implicated in that reality, to be open to attentive and sensitive listening, and to remain vigilant to the complexity of the networks of human interaction.

Taking equality as a guiding principle in educational relationships allows us, as a collective, to detach from the unequal roles that socially distinguish and hierarchize us, so that the educational process may become a time for speaking, reading, studying, and in this case doing theatre, rather than a means for acquiring competencies of submission, execution, or command.

To conceive an educational process grounded in the principle of the equality of intelligences, to pursue a theatre education as a practice of freedom, and to mobilize theatrical language to create emancipatory possibilities with the collective means, first and foremost, that the teacher must look within, recognize this desire, and find ways to put it into practice. Above all, however, it means activating a political will to subvert the logic of inequality by proposing and welcoming the creative expressions present in these spaces expressions tied to the possibilities, interests, actions, and knowledge of the participants.

Teaching and learning as an exercise involving the intelligences and desires of both teacher and learner without one being hierarchized over the other resembles a mutual agreement that sets curiosity in motion in the construction of meaning and relationships, so that students may trace their own intellectual paths. In this way, we understand that emancipatory scenes in non-formal theatre education must take place in everyday life, and we believe that reworking concepts to explore the possibilities of the present enables emancipation not as a goal to be reached, but as a process to be initiated and practiced in every class together.

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