

## Re-envisioning Theatrical Paradigm: A Metamodernist Reading of Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed'

Nesrin Ibrahim Ibrahim Radwan\*

قسم اللغات الأجنبية (انجليزي) - كلية التربية - جامعة طنطا

nesrinradwan056@gmail.com

### Abstract:

In repressive regimes, traditional theatrical performances do not adequately address the aspirations of oppressed masses or provide a platform for voices to fearlessly debate injustices and atrocities. These conventional performances are typically one-sided and ideologically biased, presenting a reality that serves the interests and privileges of the powerful. The characters portrayed in these performances often echo the hegemonic discourse of the oppressive system, creating a divide between the audience, who represent the subaltern marginalized, and those in power.

In his effort to challenge and subvert objectification and authoritarian relationships, Augusto Boal created a revolutionary non-scripted theatrical approach, which he outlined in his seminal book *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2000). Boal aimed to empower people by giving them the tools of artistic production and by restoring their agency as active and dynamic human beings, rather than passive recipients of a predetermined worldview. This study will examine how Boal transcended the traditional boundaries of theatre in the context of metamodernism. As a metamodern concept, "Beyondness" is evident in Boal's work through the elimination of texts in performance, the blurring of boundaries between spectators and performers, and a reimagining of the form and physicality of theatrical space and time.

### Keywords:

oppressed, theatre, revolutionary, metamodernism, spect-ator, beyondness, performance

Received: 01/04/2022

Accepted: 24/05/2022

Available online: 30/12/2023

Can the theatre exist without costumes and sets? Yes, it can.

Can it exist without music to accompany the plot? Yes.

Can it exist without lighting effects? Of course.

And without a text? Yes; the history of the theatre confirms this.

But can the theatre exist without actors? I know of no example of this.

Can the theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance. (Grotowski 32)

## Introduction

In repressive countries such as Brazil and Argentina, traditional theatrical performances fail to meet the aspirations of the oppressed and provide them with a platform to voice their grievances and to protest political injustices. This is because traditional performances are inherently one-sided and ideologically biased towards the powerful, who manipulate reality to serve their own interests. Thus, performers in conventional theatres reinforce the hegemony of the powerful over the marginalized audience.

Augusto Boal (1931-2009), the Brazilian playwright, theorist, and political activist, sought to challenge and subvert this stereotypical objectification and authoritarian relationship. Boal was a genuine revolutionary dramatist who suffered through the horrors of exile and torture. He writes, “the coercive system of tragedy can be used before or after the revolution ... but never during it” (*Oppressed* 46.) To that end, he developed non-scripted theatrical techniques to encourage the marginalized to embrace practical poetics and actions that would empower them in their struggle against repressive governments. His seminal book, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (2000), exemplifies Brazil's culture of protest. It was inspired by the global movements of decolonization and anti-imperialism in the 1960s and 1970s. It also drew on pedagogical movements of the period, such as Paulo Freire's critical *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) and Enrique Dussel's *Philosophy of Liberation* (1985). Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* share with the other works similar concerns. It is an in-depth analysis of how the oppressed can regain agency as active and dynamic humans, rather than passive recipients of a predetermined worldview. Based on such a premise, the study undertakes to examine, through the critical lens of meta-modernism, Boal's work, and its endeavor to go beyond the boundaries of traditional theatre.

Traditional theatres, operating within the postmodern paradigm, have failed to address the complex issues of political and socioeconomic instability in the twenty-first century. Postmodernism does not offer any alternatives to ethical uncertainty, dialectical thinking, and the dissolution of the self

and the group. This confusion has prompted a "move forward out of the postmodern" into the paradigm of modernism described as metamodernism (Vermeulen and van den Akker, "Notes" 5). Unlike postmodernism, metamodernism seeks to restore human concern with ethical commonalities and imperatives, such as compassion, empathy, altruistic love, the protection of the innocent and disempowered, forgiveness, and respect for difference, originality, and ingenuity (Dumitrescu 18). Metamodernism goes beyond divisions and boundary lines to promote new potentials and notions of critical thinking, dialogic interaction, and multiple subjectivities. Thus, this study focuses on the notion of 'the beyond' rather than the 'in-between, highlighting how Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* transcends the text, the performers, theatrical structures, and the physicality of space, and time.<sup>1</sup>

### **Beyond Spatial Physicality of Traditional Dividing Walls**

In his reflections on the role of artists in society, Augusto Boal muses that "in stable countries, artists know where they stand – serene and unperturbed. They know what they want and what is expected of them" (*Hamlet* 2). He further confers that "in a Brazil cast adrift, everything was and is possible: we asked where we were, who we were, where we wanted to go" (*Hamlet* 2). In stable countries, artists know their place and what is expected of them, while in a country like Brazil, where instability reigns, artists question their identity, purpose, and direction. This notion of a free and stable space is evident in Boal's account of the history of theatre. He observes that traditional theatre originated from the impassioned songs of free people at festivals, feasts, and carnivals, where artists performed in the open air. However, the freedom of the space and the people have been eroded by the ruling class, who have turned theatre into a commodity and built walls to divide actors from spectators and protagonists from the masses. In Boal's words, they "divided the people, separating actors from spectators; people who act and people who watch ... among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass" (*Oppressed* 95).

In fact, Boal does not diminish the significance and impact of location considerations, such as lighting, audience formation, smells, and comfort/discomfort, on the audience's experience and performance. However, he formulates his own conceptualization of space by musing that theatre is not solely reliant on location. For him, theatre is "the art of looking at ourselves" (*Games* 15) and "a form of knowledge" (*Games* 16). Therefore, it is more than just a physical space or a building because a performance can exist without characters, plot, costumes, script, or sound. Commenting on Boal's specificity of space, Andy McLaverty-Robinson writes, "Theatre requires a separate aesthetic space to enable a reflexive seeing or listening distinct from immediate life". Despite the fact that Boal embraces

the relative chaos of the community, he seeks punctuality and concentration to maintain a balance between structure and flexibility.

Boal's goal is to break down the walls that divide and oppress people, and to create a new, experimental revolutionary theatre that is “responsive to ordinary people and their stories, local settings and Priorities” (Prentki and Preston 9); responsive to the stories, settings, and priorities of ordinary people. To achieve this, he removes the conventional dividing walls, seating, and location, and blurs the lines between performers and spectators. In this way, the theatre becomes a conceptual space that reflects everyday dilemmas, and the artistic process creates a participatory theatre that does not induce necessary responses, but rather encourages listening and participation.

As James Calderwood argues, the theatre of the oppressed becomes “a kind of anti-form in which the boundaries between the play as a work of self-contained art and life are dissolved” (4). The theatrical space takes on a ‘telemicroscopic’ quality, where everything, including words, gestures, and movements, becomes magnified and clearer, as if under a microscope. This adds a new aesthetic dimension, bringing dichotomies closer together and blurring hierarchical boundaries.

Boal's approach creates a dialectical space that challenges traditional notions of theatre and the separation between performer and audience. By breaking down these barriers, he creates a space that encourages participation and engagement, and that is responsive to the needs and concerns of the community. Ultimately, Boal's work changes theatre into a transformative and liberating force that empowers individuals and communities to challenge oppression and create a more just and equitable world.

In Boal's view, the truly revolutionary intent of the theatre of the oppressed, should be to “transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them” (*Oppressed* 98). The theatre is a weapon of the weak and disempowered who should wield it to serve their aspirations and hopes of democracy. Living in perplexing and mystifying times, Boal argues that it is the right time for theatre to lead by example and practice real democracy by involving the audience in the process. He explains “Let us be democratic and ask our audiences to tell us their desires, and let us show them alternatives” (*Games* 276). This maneuver serves to convince or force leaders and governments to adopt a similar approach by encouraging their audience to voice their hopes and desires without fear. The ultimate aim is to make the world a happier place to live in.

Correspondingly, Boal's revolutionary speculations originates in his adamant belief in democracy. In an interview, he declares, “I believe in democracy, but in real democracy, not a phony democracy in which just powerful people can speak. For me, in a democracy where everyone speaks”

(qtd. in Boal, "Dynamize" 43). In view of this conviction, Boal undertakes a theatrical structural change that aims to dynamize and empower the spirit of activism and creativity of the populace in general and in particular the Brazilians in their face-to-face encounter with oppression.

### **Beyond 'Conversational Parlance': Emancipated Spect-Actor**

In Aristotelian and Brechtian theatre, the spectator does not have an adequate space to think for himself because theatre is regarded as a "tool for domination" (*Oppressed* xxiii). In the former, Boal argues that the spectator does not "consider the possibility of transforming the already existing inequalities, but simply accepts them" (*Oppressed* 20) and "delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him" (*Oppressed* 97). This condition underscores the occurrence of a catharsis. In the Brechtian theatre, the spectator retains the right to think freely and often in opposition to the performer, which provokes critical consciousness. In his deliberations on the differences between traditional theatre and his epic theatre, Brecht states,

The dramatic theatre's spectator says: Yes, I have felt like that too ... The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are inescapable – That's great art; it all seems the most obvious thing in the world – I weep when they weep, I laugh when they laugh. The epic theatre's spectator says: I'd never have thought that – That's not the way – That's extraordinary, hardly believable – It's got to stop – The sufferings of this man appall me, because they are unnecessary – that's great art: nothing obvious in it – I laugh when they weep, I weep when they laugh. (71).

Obviously, Brecht celebrates theatre itself. His main incentive is merely to stir the spectator to react logically rather than emotionally to the performance. Consequently, he does not blur the lines between the dichotomous realms of the performer and the audience. On the contrary, this technique reminds the audience of their role as spectators who are watching a performance rather than taking part in it. In respect, no space for dialogic and interactive structure can be traced in both Aristotelian and Brechtian theatres.

In contrast, the space of the spectator within the spectrum of Boal's theatre is that of an active witness whose body and mind are free to take on the role of an "emancipated spectator" as coined by Jacques Rancière. It focuses on the action that provokes change to and transformation of an existing status-quo. The spectators do not imagine change but they actually practice it. On another plane, the new role of the protagonist is that of someone who "in a lived scene, was subject-in-situ, here becomes the subject who is observing a situation in which he is the actual subject: himself yesterday. The 'I-

today' can see the 'I-yesterday,' ...[namely] the protagonist becomes subject of himself and subject of the situation" (Boal, *Rainbow* 26). In other words, the lines between disparate polarities are blurred as they are "brought closer" (Boal, *Rainbow* 27). Thus, a liminal and plastic space prevails in the performance. Conventional monologic drama is transformed into a dialogic participatory theatre wherein resonance and improvisation between bodies and feelings of the protagonist and the spectators dynamize interaction and activism between humans.

In the foreword to David Bohm's *On Dialogue*, Lee Nichol elaborates on the dynamic dialogic interaction with the spectator that subverts the passivity of the traditional representational norms and forges a simultaneous intersection of the roles of the spectators and actors as human beings. Nichol regards dialogue as "a multi-faceted process" (vii) that goes beyond the conventional notions of conversational exchange and parlance. The reason is that it involves a vast range of human experiences such as the "closely-held values; the nature and intensity of emotions; the patterns of our thought processes; the function of memory; the import of inherited cultural myths; and the manner in which our neurophysiology structures moment-to-moment experience" (vii). In light of Nichol reflections, the dialogue encompasses collective assumptions, sustains the communication and openness which are conducive to new potentials and enhances humanity with respect to "culture, meaning, and identity" (viii). Regarding the aspects of dialogism and pedagogy, Boal comments, "While some people make theatre ... we all are theatre (qtd. in Paterson). In *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (2002), he further argues that "Theatre of the Oppressed is theatre in the most archaic application of the word. In this usage, all human beings are actors (they act!) and spectators (they observe!). They are spect-actors" (15). Embracing such dialogic notions instigates original active participatory characters who celebrate their aptitude and humanity as independent dignified persons who look at their problems in a different light. In so doing, the spectator undergoes a deeper social change and transformation and stops living vicariously through the experience of the protagonist. For Boal, such transformation, by and for the people, is integral to the transformation of the socio-economic system. Boal concisely highlights the notion of the "spect-actors" as follows,

The members of the audience must become the Character: possess him, take his place – not obey him, but guide him, show him the path they think right. In this way the Spectator becoming Spect-Actor is democratically opposed to the other members of the audience, free to invade the scene and appropriate the power of the actor. With their hearts and minds the audience must rehearse battle plans – ways of freeing themselves from all oppressions.

(*Oppressed* xxi)

By occupying the space of the character, spectators in Boal's theatre take on a "protagonistic" role that empowers them to freely comment on the action, understand and voice their individual and social struggles, and collectively act to resolve them. Rather than merely imagining change, they actively practice it. Boal's theatrical theories clearly challenge the passivity of audience members in conventional mainstream theatre. As Boal succinctly argues, "To change people-"spectators, passive beings in the theatrical phenomena into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action... [by focusing on the action] spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place" (*Oppressed* 98). On the contrary, the spectator himself takes on the role of the protagonist, changes the dramatic actions, and trains himself for real actions for alternatives and solutions. In this sense, Boal's theater is not revolutionary in itself, but it is definitely an exemplary of a rehearsal for the revolution.

Accordingly, Boal's theatrical paradigm opens up an experimental spectrum. His paradigm addresses the spectators' desires, hopes and dreams. It also attempts to restore the spectators' possession of their cognizance and their activity. The spectators are no longer mere passive onlookers since they become "agents of a collective practice ... [who are] conscious of the social situation that gives rise to it and desirous of acting in order to transform it" (Rancière 8). Furthermore, they "play the role of active interpreters, who develop their own translation in order to appropriate the 'story' and make it their own story" (Rancière 22).

The poetics of theatre of the oppressed are fundamentally about liberation. Unlike traditional theatre, the spectator is no longer passive, and does not delegate power to the performer to act on their behalf. Instead, the spectator participates in socially liberating actions against systematic exploitation and oppression. Frances Babbage elaborates on Boal's conceptualization of the spectator's new interactive role, arguing that it is not just an artistic performance but a transformation of the "people spectator's passive being" (97). This transformation engages the spectator in a creative theatrical sphere that is "socially... life-affirming... in a climate of extreme repression" (151). The resulting freedom and emancipation blur the divide between the spectator and performer, debunking what Rancière calls the "stultifying" process of pedagogy that reinforces a hierarchy between the knowledgeable and the subaltern. This creates a state of social egalitarianism, in which the spectator can interpret and critically analyze their world and conditions and work towards transformation.

One of the basic principles of theatre of the oppressed is the dialogic interrelationship that emerges among diverse audiences and actors in a single space and context, without any class, cultural,

or racial barriers. This fosters a venue-based theatre in which individuals who have experienced trauma can express their varied perspectives and share their traumatic stories.

#### **Four Stages: A spect-Actor Enacting for a Change**

In order to promote a dialogic interrelationship between performer and spectator, Boal has identified a systematic progression consisting of four stages: "Knowing the body," "Making the body expressive," "Theatre as language," and "Theatre as discourse" (*Oppressed* 102).

In the "Knowing the Body" stage, connecting with oppressed groups such as peasants, workers, and villagers through theatrical performances is a daunting task. This is due to the "ideological discourses" (*Oppressed* 126) propagated by the elite oppressors, which repress revolutionary impulses and legitimize the "muscular alienation" forced upon the oppressed through economic exploitation. The use of frivolity and sentimentality by television and traveling circus groups further exacerbates social distortion, lulling the populace into complicity and passivity, disconnecting them from their actual crises.

To rouse the oppressed into action and foster awareness of their distortions and deformations, Boal asserts that the initial step involves inviting them to explore their corporeality. This is achieved through a series of "disjunctive" exercises and games designed to help them become acquainted with their limitations and potential for rehabilitation.

In *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal provides detailed descriptions of interactive exercises and games aimed at familiarizing actors with their bodies and sensory experiences in the first stage. He notes that in daily life, people often fail to truly feel what they hear or see very little of what they look at (*Games* 49). To address both physical atrophies and hypertrophies, Boal divides the games into two types that aim to invigorate participants' senses, enabling them to touch, hear, and see more acutely (149).

Moving to the second stage, "Making the body expressive," participants are challenged to utilize a series of games to express themselves through their bodies, attempting to convey their internal states or external events through improvisation. The third stage, "Theatre as language," involves more specific techniques and practices, emphasizing the use of theater as "living and present language, not a finished product displaying images from the past" (102). This stage consists of three parts: "Simultaneous dramaturgy," "Image theatre," and "Forum theatre" (102), each representing different levels of direct spectator involvement in the performance. Through these techniques, spectators begin to take on active roles as subjects rather than passive objects, working towards a complete transition from passivity to activity.

The first degree, "Simultaneous Dramaturgy," is a participatory rehearsal technique that allows spectators to become involved in the performance without being physically present on stage. The audience is given the opportunity to freeze or stop the performance and offer their thoughts and views to the actors in an attempt to find solutions to a problem. Through this active participation, the audience gains a live view and insight into the possibilities of knowledge and active learning through action. By turning the theatrical stage into a platform for addressing social injustices and oppression and devising solutions to overcome them, participants are able to engage in meaningful dialogue and work towards positive change.

Unlike "Simultaneous Dramaturgy," "Image Theatre" allows the audience to directly intervene in the performance by speaking through images created with the actors' bodies. This technique involves the creation of bodily "Tableaux" of "living sculpture" and "images" through a series of exercises and games that break away from spoken language. Participants use their bodies to rehearse real-life situations and reflect on their inner feelings and subconscious desires.

The process begins with a volunteer enacting a lived experience of oppression or a problem, followed by expressing their strongest inner feelings and desires related to the problem. Based on the protagonist's non-verbal directions, one of the spectators freezes those desires into an image. Other frozen and usually contradictory desires are also expressed as images generated by the bodies of the spectators. At the end, one desire is chosen from this entire spectrum of desires to be acted upon.

An insightful and skillful decoding and analysis follows the images, revealing the inner attitudes towards the problem. Through this process, "Image Theatre" provides a powerful tool for self-expression and reflection, enabling participants to gain a deeper understanding of their own feelings and those of others.

Boal utilizes "Image Theatre" as a method to explore internalized forms of oppression, rather than solely external physical oppression. This technique aims to encourage individuals to confront and solve personal problems and crises. One example of this is the "Rainbow of Desire" or "Cop in the Head" technique. However, it is important to note that this form of therapeutic "Image Theatre" should only be practiced within a small and intimate group where the protagonist feels completely safe and comfortable. Furthermore, its effectiveness may be compromised if the participants are not fully engaged and responsive.

Regarding the third degree, "Forum Theatre," Boal developed it to encourage the audience to engage with concrete unresolved issues and create a space for negotiation between them. Boal believes that "it is more important to achieve a good debate than a good solution" and that the reactions and

actions generated by the play are more significant than the play itself (*Games* 259). In "Forum Theatre," participants are invited to criticize, suggest, explore, and experiment with alternative solutions for their real-life problems through elaborate improvisations. The scene begins with an exposition of the situation that creates an antagonism between the performers, who play the role of oppressors, and the spectators, who play the role of the oppressed. The scene is then repeated, and the spectators are encouraged to stop the performance. Anyone from the audience can intervene to rehearse a possibility for change and resistance, guiding the characters or taking the place of one of them.

In their quest for a better outcome, the spectators have the freedom to change the situation in various ways, propose alternatives, and resist the relentless efforts of the oppressors to make their lives difficult, as in reality. This process can be repeated multiple times, with the remaining characters refining their responses, guided by a facilitator known as the Joker. If the spectators are not satisfied with the Joker, they have the option to replace him with another character.

Emphasizing the significance of the Joker function, Boal explains that all theatrical possibilities are founded upon the function of the Joker as a "master of ceremonies, raisonneur, kurogo" (*Oppressed* 159) on stage. He goes further and adds that the Joker is "magical, omniscient, polymorphous, and ubiquitous" (*Oppressed* 159). All the characters accept the magical realist role of the Joker as a directional motivator and facilitator of the forum game and interventions from the spectator, and it illustrates the core of each solution proposed by the spectators. It offers the possibility of inducing more critical awareness of societal structures in the performance, as it highlights the correlation between individual situations and social structures.

Moreover, like the cards, the Joker is multi-skilled and has the merit of mobility, as it plays various roles within different contexts on and beyond the stage, running everything subtly and smoothly. If the Joker wants to fight, it uses a weapon; if it wants to ride, it invents a horse; if it wants to kill itself, it thinks of a dagger that is not actually available. Accordingly, it is not only a facilitator or a motivator but can also take on the role of a director, leader, and referee. Consequently, the 'Joker System' creates a kind of interrelationship and/or a great social network between performers and the audience.

Elaborating on such interrelationship, Jerzy Grotowski states that it is essential to eradicate the space between actor and spectator by "eliminating the stage, removing all frontiers. Let the most drastic scenes happen face to face with the spectator so that he is within arm's reach of the actor, can feel his breathing and smell the perspiration" (41). Like Boal, Grotowski proposes a new form of theater that goes beyond stage-auditorium conventions.

The forum concludes with the spectators accepting the suggested alternatives as desirable and promising, leaving it open for further debates and varied solutions. This open-ended approach demonstrates the democratic ethos of "Forum Theatre" and enriches the spectators' knowledge and experience in dealing with problems. The audience not only offers theoretical suggestions for problem-solving but also engages in a dialogue about oppression, seeking alternatives. "Forum Theatre" has proven to be effective in various settings such as schools, factories, community centers, homes for the aged and disabled, racial or ethnic minority groups, and others (Katyal 5).

Metamodernism, as a cultural and philosophical movement, highlights the importance of going beyond the divisions of race and class, seeking to restore human concern for ethical commonalities and values such as empathy, altruistic love, and inclusiveness of multiple subjectivities. Forum Theatre, in this sense, crystallizes this idea, striving to create a space for a diverse range of people to come together and engage in collective problem-solving, breaking down barriers and building connections.

The fourth stage of Boal's plan to break conventional social barriers and encourage the audience to become active participants is manifested in the concept of theatre as "discourse." Boal describes this stage in his book, *Theater of the Oppressed*, as "simple forms in which the spectator-actor creates 'spectacles' according to their need to discuss certain themes or rehearse certain actions" (102). He believes that theatre as discourse is an exciting forum for revolutionary theatre (179) because participants are free to engage in live discussion and debate about the unpleasant status quo and develop practical steps to rehearse for real-life situations.

Boal suggested various methods for theater as discourse, such as "Newspaper theater" and "Invisible theater." The former involves transforming daily news items or any other non-dramatic material into dramatic performances using various techniques, including improvisation of the news on stage to explore its variants and possibilities (*Oppressed* 121). The latter, "Invisible theater," is a crucial poetic that exemplifies Boal's continuous efforts to challenge and interrogate oppressors and repressive regimes, particularly the Brazilian one.

Unlike the 'Forum' and 'Image' theatres that require a close-knit community, the "Invisible Theatre" is much more realistic. It involves the staging of a real scene without the knowledge or consent of the public: the people are real, the responses are real, and the situations are real. This invisibility and unselfconscious simulation of reality epitomize the power of "Invisible Theatre." In his discussions on "Invisible Theatre," Boal argues that it incites passionate public debates on current political issues in public spaces such as a street, a market, a restaurant, a public transportation, or a line of people. The scene usually highlights an eccentric behavior in society, inducing impassioned

reactions, comments, and responses from passersby who become engaged and involved as spectators. During the performance, these individuals must not have the slightest idea that it is a 'spectacle', as this would make them mere 'spectators' (Boal, *Oppressed* 122). The actors intermingle and engage with the spectators, keeping the debates on social oppression and injustices ongoing, which echoes that life and humanity are processual and incomplete. By engaging the performers and passersby in an improvised dialogue, Boal not only provokes alternative perspectives but also creates a "rehearsal for real situations" (Schutzman and Cohen-Cruz 236). At the end of the enacted scene, the characters disperse, and the arguments continue among the spectators.

## Conclusion

In the context of metamodernism, Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* transcends the divisions and structural boundaries of traditional theater, including those related to texts, performers, theatrical structure, physicality, and materiality in terms of space and time. Through this approach, Boal seeks to establish a dynamic arena for the oppressed to generate fresh ideas, possibilities, and perspectives in terms of critical thinking, dialogic engagement, autonomous action, and diverse subjectivities.

In his quest to create a space for creativity, Boal has developed various theatrical techniques and methods. Among these foundational techniques are "Image Theatre," "Invisible Theatre," "Forum Theatre," and "Newspaper Theatre." Boal's approach fosters an endless and ongoing process of games and exercises that have much in common with those found in societies. However, unlike repressive societies, Boal's creative theatrical games and exercises are designed to enable creative freedom, to break down the barriers of the oppressed, and to engage them in impassioned debates that not only allow them to voice their socio-political problems but also to suggest solutions. Furthermore, these techniques are not intended to be competitive or to cause pain or depression. On the contrary, they aim to promote not only a deep understanding of socio-political crises and problems but also transformative creativity and effective solutions.

## Notes:

1. Etymologically, the prefix 'meta' describes going beyond diametrical extremes. In this regard, the study focusses on 'beyondness'. The term was coined by the scholar Mas'ud Zavarzadeh in the mid-1970s and became popular in the 1980,1990s and 2000s in response to the global crises. In 2010, the cultural theorists Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker utilized it as a move "forward out of the postmodern" and described as swinging between modern and postmodern tenets in their essay "Notes on Metamodernism." In "Ten Basic Principles of Metamodernism" (2015), Seth Abramson incorporated some new elements based on dialogic over dialectic, collapsing distances, and simultaneity.
2. Among the eminent writers whose work reflect on metamodernism are Augusto Boal, Konstantin Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, and Eugenio Barba.

## المستخلص

### مسرح المقهورين من منظور ما وراء الحداثة: رؤية جديدة لأوغستو بوال

نسرین ابراهيم ابراهيم رضوان

تتناول هذه الدراسة التقنيات الأدائية التي ابتكرها أوغستو بوال في مسرح المقهورين، ونظراً لها في كتابه "مسرح المقهورين" (2000)، وذلك من منظور ما وراء الحداثة؛ إذ رأى بوال أن المسرح التقليدي لا يعبر عن طموحات المقهورين وتطلعاتهم بطريقة ملائمة، وذلك بسبب هيمنة الأنظمة الاستبدادية التي تروج لتوجهاتها الأيديولوجية السلطوية والأحادية، والتي ترسخ فكرة تعميق الفوارق الطبقية والعرقية والاجتماعية، وذلك من خلال فصل المسرح عن الجمهور. وقد أوضح بوال في كتابه "مسرح المقهورين" التقنيات والمنهجية التي استطاع من خلالها رفع مستوى الوعي السياسي عند الجمهور لمجابهة تلك الأيديولوجية السلطوية، وتعزيز البعد الثوري للمسرح بما يحقق طموحات المقهورين وتطلعاتهم في استعادة دورهم الحقيقي والفاعل في المجتمع كونهم بشراً وليسوا مجرد متلقين لتوجهات محددة سلفاً. ويمثل مصطلح "فيما وراء" في سياق نظرية ما وراء الحداثة التوصيف الأنسب للحالة الثورية التي نظراً إليها بوال في "مسرح المقهورين"، ويتجلى هذا المصطلح في الخروج من عباءة المسرح التقليدي، وذلك فيما يتعلق بالنص الذي اعتمد على الارتجال في مجمله، والعلاقة بين الممثل والمتفرج التي تجسدت في الحوار التفاعلي الذي أدى إلى إفراز ما يسمى بالمتفرج الممثل، والتحرر المكاني حيث يمكن عرض المسرحية في أي مكان بعيداً عن خشبة المسرح

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المقهورون، المسرح، التقليدي، الثوري، ما وراء الحداثة، المتفرج، الممثل، فيما وراء، العرض المسرحي

## Works cited

- Abramson, Seth. "Five More Basic Principles of Metamodernism" May 12, 2016  
[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/five-more-basic-principle\\_b\\_7269446](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/five-more-basic-principle_b_7269446). Accessed 20 July 2019.
- Babbage, Frances. 2004. *Augusto Boal*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Boal, Augusto. *Games for Actors and Non-actors*. Translated by Adrian Jackson. Routledge, 2002.
- . *Hamlet and the Baker's Son: My Life in Theatre and Politics*. Translated by A. Jackson and C. Blaker, Routledge, 2001.
- . *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy*. Translated by Adrian Jackson, Routledge, 1995.
- . *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Translated by Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride and Emily Fryer, Pluto Press, 2000.
- . "To Dynamize the Audience: Interview with Augusto Boal." Interview by Robert Enight, *Canadian Theatre Review* 47 (Summer 1986), pp. 41-49
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Translated by John Willett, Hill and Wang, 1964.
- Calderwood, James. *Shakespearean Metadrama: The Argument of the Play in Titus Andronicus, Love's Labour's Lost, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Richard II*. U of Minnesota P, 1971.

- Grotowski, Jerzy. *Towards a Poor Theatre*, edited by Eugenio Braba, Routledge, 2002.
- Katyal Anjum. "Moving from a Monologue to a Dialogue."  
<https://www.seagullindia.com/stq/pdf/STQ%20Issue%202.pdf>
- McLavery-Robinson, Andy. "An A to Z of Theory | Augusto Boal: Brecht and Beyond – The Boal Method." <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/augusto-boal-brecht-boal-method/>
- Nichol, Lee. Foreword. *On Dialogue*, by David Bohm, edited by Lee Nichol, Routledge, 1996.
- Paterson, Doug. 'Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops',  
<http://www.wgcd.org/action/Boal.html> (accessed 20 January 2023)
- Prentki, Tim and Sheila Preston. *Applied Theatre Reader*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Rancière, Jacques. *The Emancipated Spectator*. Translated by Gregory Elliott, Verso, 2011.
- Schutzman, Mady and Cohen-Cruz. *Playing Boal. Theatre, Therapy; Activism*. Routledge: New York, New York, 1994.
- Vermeulen, Timotheus and Robin Van den Akker. "Notes on Metamodernism." *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2010, *Taylor and Francis Online*. doi:10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677. Accessed 30 March 2019.
- Zavarzadeh, Mas'ud. "The Apocalyptic Fact and the Eclipse of Fiction in Recent American Prose Narratives." *Journal of American Studies*, vol.9, no. 1, 1975, pp. 69-83.