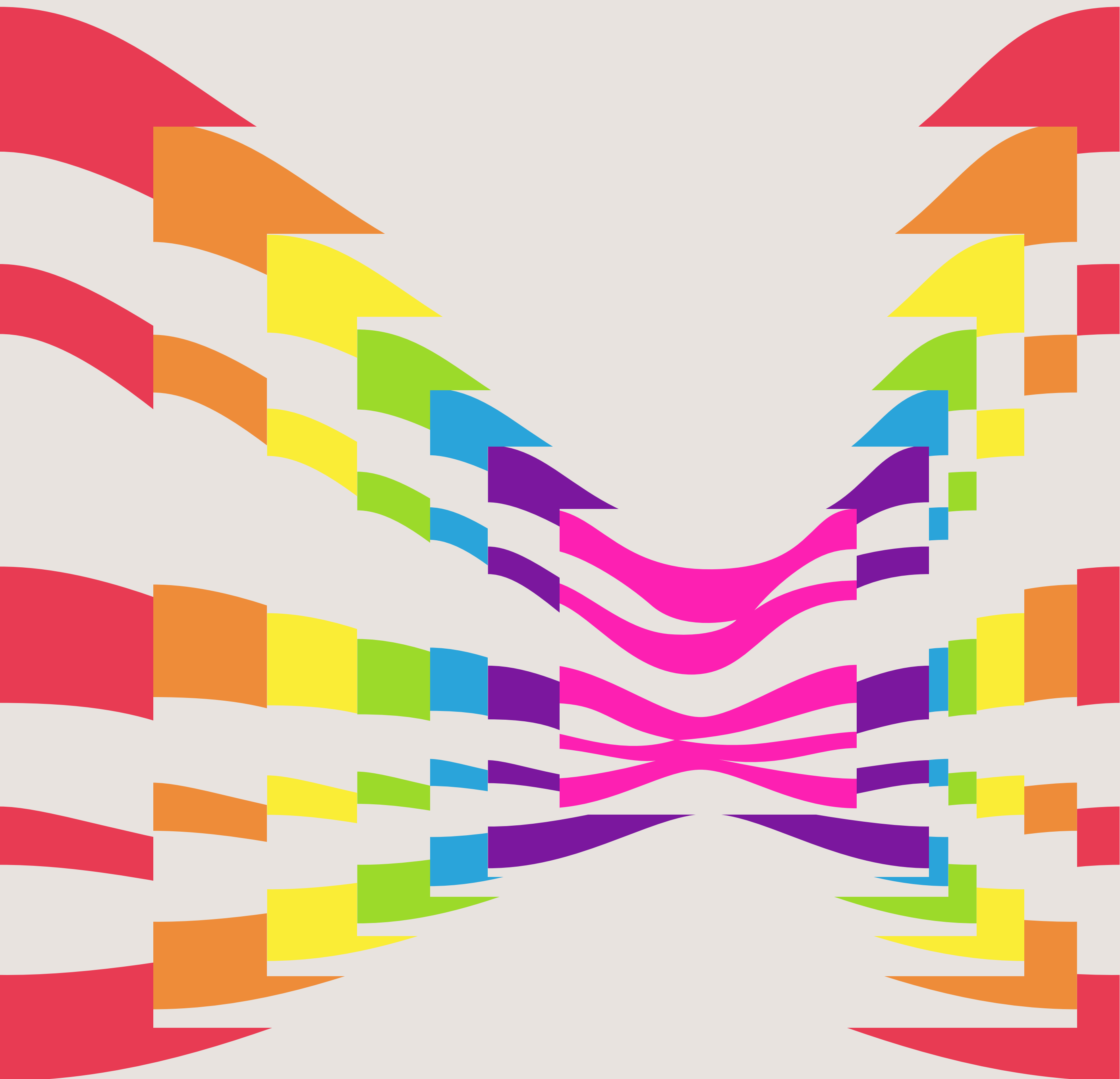


# RAINBOW OF DESIRES AS TOOL FOR ADULT EDUCATION



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**Tool-kit**

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 To readers

This tool-kit, addressed to Adult educators, is meant to provide special techniques from Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), based on body images, to be used to analyse in depth relational and emotional situations in the framework of a course, a training, a workshop with adults, both emerging from daily life and happening during the educational event.

These tools are also useful for supervision or inter-vision of trainers/educators, as a means to analyse the personal internal conflicts and problematic relationships related to our work with adults, both among educators and with learners.

The aim of this tool-kit is to give you an idea about how these tools can be used, but we are also aware that the complexity of their use requires a skilled trainer, so our suggestion is, before using them, to attend a course where you can experiment on your skin.

More suggestions will be provided within the text.

### 1.2 How it was created

The process to arrive at the final version was quite complex but really enriching.

1) We started with a theoretical seminar inviting four TO expert practitioners from Australia (Paul Dwyer), Austria (Birgit Fritz), Portugal (José Soeiro) and the UK (Adrian Jackson) to debate the political side of RoD and to share their own experiences with these techniques.

2) After that we organised a 5-day-long training where 25 people experimented RoD personally, exploring some of the main techniques mentioned in this tool-kit.

3) Immediately after, a systematising seminar gathered together most of the participants, to systematise the reflection, clarify doubts, and prepare the ground for the next step.

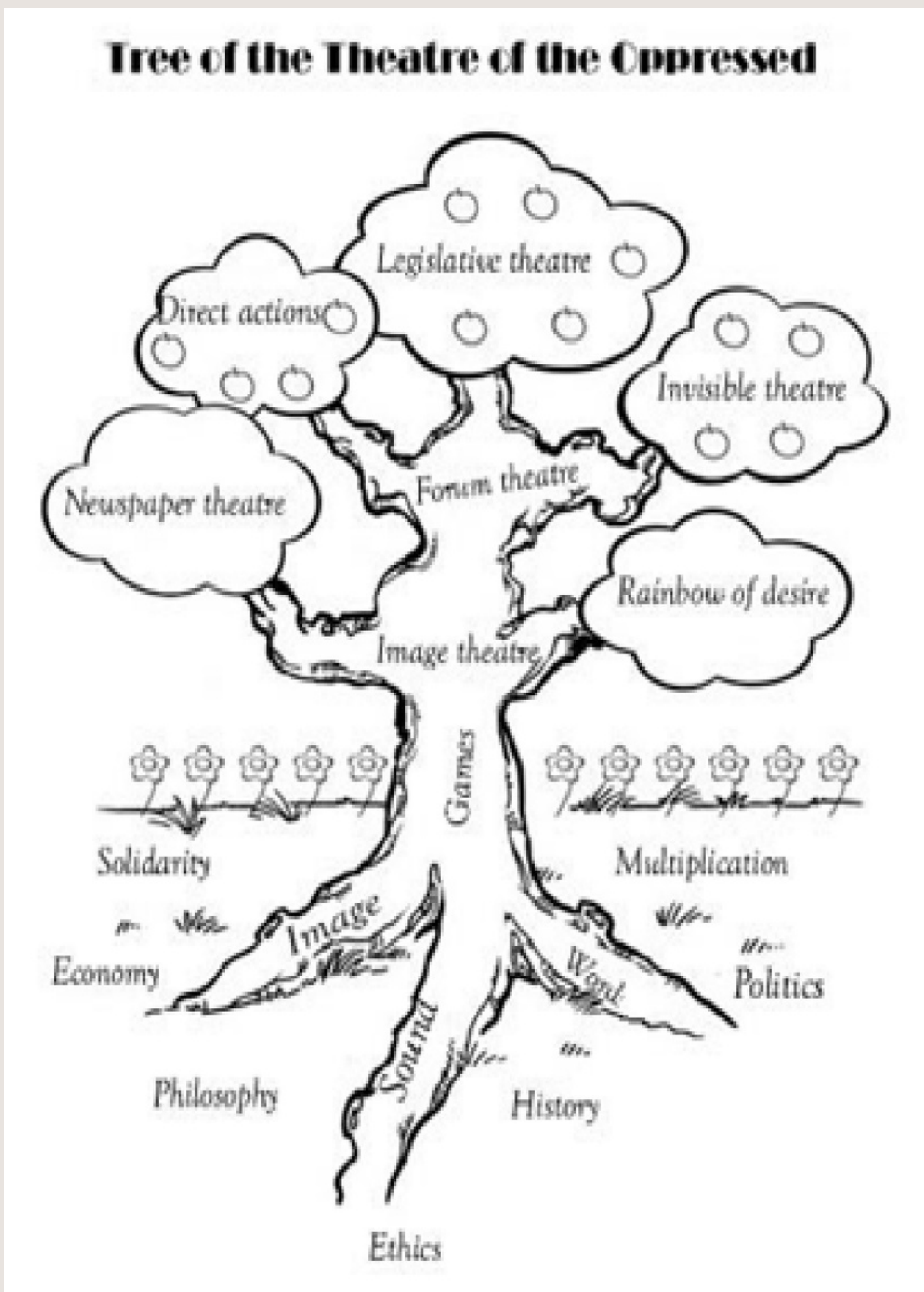
4) Application on the field was the next, where those who felt ready to do it, started to apply RoD in his/her specific context, with different groups. Experiences were run in Hungary, Italy, Greece.

5) Finally, we had a Follow-up seminar to collect what had gone on in the application on the field, gathering other questions and doubts and enriching the tool-kit itself.

6) The text was written as a draft by Roberto Mazzini from Giolli and enriched and commented by Olga Irimias and Anna Vegh from Artemisszio.

### 1.3 The TO tree

Here is a metaphor to summarise the TO structure.



In this picture we can identify the main elements of this method.

We will not go into a detailed presentation of each branch as we are focusing on Rainbow of Desires, but you can find some resources in the annex and bibliography.

However the first feature is its vitality, that is, it is not a fixed-forever approach but something evolving over time, as it was created in the fire of fighting oppressions in different situations, faced creatively by inventing new tools.

The ground is rich with sources that nourish the tree from different angles.

The 3 roots are the languages that can be used: image, sound and word.

The trunk and branches represent the various techniques developed over time.

One is special, "Direct action" means a concrete and possible collective action that is the final result of a TO process and brings people to change something in society.



#### 1.4 RoD as concept and history

First of all we have to make a linguistic distinction as Rainbow of Desires<sup>1</sup> is a phrase used both to indicate a specific technique and to encompass a set of techniques that have this aim to explore the internal conflicts of people.

Similarly, sometimes the expression "Cops in the head" is commonly used, that is again one specific technique, the first created by Boal, but also indicates the whole set of these techniques.

Here we use RoD to speak about the set, and Rainbow of Desires for the specific technique.

How were these techniques created and why?

Augusto Boal started to work on Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) during the Brazilian dictatorship and he was arrested and then exiled after 1971, first in Argentina, then in South America and finally in Europe. When he was living in Paris (1979-1980), he started to meet oppression he was not used to hearing; instead of violence, exploitation, physical aggression, murders... people attending his workshops were denouncing: sense of emptiness, ambivalence, powerlessness, internal blocks to act, etc.

Although at first he rejected these situations as "not oppressive" but "psychological problems", very soon he realised that also European people suffer even if in a different manner, as the basic material needs were more or less satisfied. So where there is suffering, TO can do something, and he started a 2-year-long course with his theatre group, to analyse such situations and create new techniques.

At the beginning the first idea was to search for policemen, that is, since in Brazil and South America the clearest oppressor is the policeman, his hypothesis was that in Europe the concrete policeman entered the head of the oppressed, becoming "Cop in the head".

In this specific technique for instance, the Protagonist tells a story where he/she could not react in a specific context, as he/she felt an internal block. The technique asks the Protagonist and the group to create as many images as possible, representing these cops in the head, impersonating the internal elements, identifying concrete persons who had an important influence on the Protagonist's life in the past and now are installed inside and order, seduce, threaten, etc., him/her from within.

Structure.

After this technique other situations were explored and other techniques developed, so that now we can count 20-30 tools with different purposes but similar structure:

- they all start with an improvisation by the Protagonist of a story that occurred to him/her and where the problem told is clearly felt by the Protagonist. This step is a "representation" of reality, not a "reproduction", that means it is not a realistic role-play, but it is a summary detecting the oppressive mechanisms, like when you edit a movie where you select the most important frames, maybe also creating some flash-backs. Moreover, sometimes we improvise symbolic scenes representing the internal dilemma or imaginary scenes instead of a realistic scene.
- Then body images are created to analyse the internal forces (blocks, emotions, desires, etc.) which oppress/confuse the Protagonist from within.
- After several improvisations that depend on the specific technique, the Protagonist comes back to the original real situation to re-improvise and make a change. This is called "Rehearsal of the future action".
- Finally there is what Boal calls "the multiple mirror of the others' gaze", where all participants share their observations and hypotheses.



<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it is written as singular, "desire", but as the technique explores the richness and complexity of our internal world we propose to use the plural "desires".



## 1.5 Usefulness and goals

We see that in our work with adults of different kinds, using Theatre of the Oppressed, we face situations that are not suitable for Forum-Theatre or the other techniques normally used.

As we deal with life problems expressed by learners we have to be careful and make a distinction among different types of problems and then choose the right techniques.

In general sense we can meet at least 4 kinds of problematic situations:

1) where the teller is in a difficult situation not because the other role is oppressing him/her to keep privileges, but because of **lack of counterpart's skills**: a teacher is not able to manage the class, a social worker is not able to communicate properly, an officer is not competent in dealing with users, etc. There is no will to oppress, but incapacity to manage the relationship. When the problem is the lack of competencies on the other side or when we are working with professionals lacking some competencies, the main tool is "role play" as created by Jacob Moreno.

In this case the scene is set up in a realistic style and the group can intervene, replacing anyone, to improve the role behaviour. So in this case, it is possible to enter any character's role, not only the protagonist as in a Forum-Theatre session.

2) **Where the teller is not able to manage communication with a counterpart** and there is more or less the same power in the relationship. The main problem is bad communication, like de-evaluating, criticising in an arrogant way, undermining the self-esteem of the Protagonist, etc.

In this case we can use exercises from outside of Theatre of the Oppressed, to improve communication skills like:

- Thomas Gordon's (2001) approach in active listening and method without losers.<sup>2</sup>

- Nonviolent communication by Marshall Rosenberg (1999), who suggests to us to identify our needs and emotions, to express them instead of accusing the other side, etc.

- Constructive criticism by Jerome Liss (1974) who guides us to make a criticism in a positive way, focusing on our observation and emotions, avoiding generalisations and accusations, etc.

3) Forum-Theatre is excellent to work on oppressions/problems where the Protagonist is in trouble because he/she experiences **an oppression (unbalanced relationship)** where he/she is weaker and his/her rights/needs are not satisfied; the reason is mainly his/her belonging to a weak social group; typical situations are exploitation, violence, humiliation, lack of resources for health or education, racism and all kinds of discrimination affecting a group. The basic idea is that belonging to the group of white people gives you more power than black, men more than women, able more than disabled, Europeans more than Third countries, nationals more than migrants, and so on. Of course the specific power of each characteristic depends also on the specific context where it is exercised.

In this case Forum-Theatre is a suitable tool where there is a clear agent of oppression, a person or more, acting against the Protagonist in different ways, depending on the specific oppression.

Forum-Theatre is more known than Rainbow of Desires (RoD), but is not trivial, as you should analyse the oppression not in terms of simply bad will of the Oppressor, but detecting the social mechanisms working in the specific situation.

For this analysis we refer to Boal's books in bibliography.

4) But what about when the **oppression is internalised**? Here is the usefulness of RoD. In case 2 you need to improve communication skills, here you need to fight internal oppressors.

The typical situations here are:

- Protagonist knows what he/she wants, but when trying to get it, something is blocking him/her from within.

- Protagonist is really confused about what he/she wants.

- Protagonist knows what he/she wants in a specific relationship, there are no blocks, but he/she cannot get it, because in the developed dynamics with the counterpart he/she ends up as loser.

- Protagonist would not behave in a bad way, but is not able to change his/her behaviour in that specific situation.

- Protagonist and Antagonist have a relationship affected by mutual stereotypes and Protagonist is not able to go out.

And many others.

<sup>2</sup> The method foresees expressing the needs from both sides and trying to find a bridge like a mediation, a compromise or a creative solution. It is structured in some steps to help people proceed in a constructive way.



We think that in the Adult education work these RoD techniques can be very useful in at least 2 situations:

- a) when we work with a group of adults
- b) when we are in a supervision setting.

a) **Working in a group of adults** with TO one can meet stories like the ones listed above. Often Adult educators use Forum-Theatre to deal with problematic stories, but what to do if the story does not have a clear Oppressor? Or sometimes we start with a Forum and a clear Oppressor; then during the session the group finds an effective strategy but someone says <I cannot do that, I don't feel I have the capacity, I am blocked>. Or what to do if the group is too heterogeneous and we cannot find a common story to stage where people can identify themselves? In all these cases we can benefit from RoD as the starting point is a personal story, there is no need to have a clear Oppressor and these stories are easy to be found as they are very common.





We want to underline that the goal of the RoD set of techniques is also to find a way to pluralise the personal story. This is a very important objective as we want to create solidarity in the group we work with, but how to do it if the life situations are very different?

RoD gives us a chance to do it thanks to the body images that are a kind of bridge between different personal stories, as despite the different contexts, they identify the underlying mechanisms of oppression, and these are common to many people.

#### **b) In a supervision setting.**

We think that when we work with adults, mainly members of discriminated groups, we should have a safe place where to bring our emotions and doubts, difficulties and discoveries.

This is usually labelled as supervision or, if we prefer a less hierarchical approach, inter-vision (peer support and exchange).

RoD seems really appropriate to us to explore the controversial emotions emerging from working with adults and adults in troubles, or even the difficulties of working in a team.

Differently from what is commonly used in supervision, the speech, here we use the whole person, with all dimensions: intellectual, verbal, non verbal, corporeal, emotional, relational.

In a session of RoD we can explore, in a safe environment, ourselves and learn something more about our desires, contradictions, ambivalence, potentialities, etc.

In the meantime RoD helps us search for alternative solutions, experiment and practise them in theatre first and then extrapolate them into life.

Moreover we can experiment solidarity as likely our story will intertwine with the other's story and we would feel not alone.

If the group is in inter-vision we can imagine a leading at turn or someone more expert in RoD, or an external expert coming. In any case the benefits from this approach can be important and move on the reflection, integrating better the various dimensions.

### **1.6 Why do we need to connect the individual with society**

#### **The pluralisation.**

The aim of TO is to be the theatre of plurality, of "we oppressed", even if the starting point is often a personal story. We need to pluralise as only together can we change the situations of oppression that usually are strongly rooted into society and history with a complex twist of cultural, political, social and economic elements.

The same is true about RoD, but here the risk to isolate the person from the context is higher as we deal with phantoms, internal forces, psychological elements.

If we use RoD as a way to psychologise the life difficulties we push people to an individual response and forget the society in the analysis of the problem.

Therefore the risk is a trivial analysis of the problem and isolation of the Protagonist from other possible allies.

#### **Victim/Oppressed.**

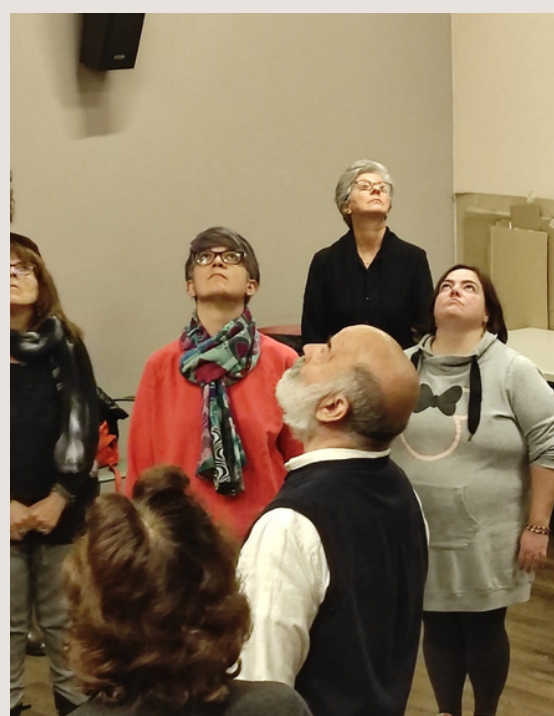
When we work with adults we aim at empowering them in order to enable them to deal with daily life problems, from the more clearly collective to the more clearly personal ones.

As stated above, TO aims at pluralising the individual perception of a problem.

But another important goal is to enable us to analyse and react, taking the power of changing the contexts of living. In other words, we want to help pass from the role of victim (where one thinks there is no chance to change the situation, fatalism is the attitude) to the role of oppressed (a person aware about the oppression and willing to change it).

In other words, oppressed people are not victims, but people who have critical awareness of the problem as Freire (1970) said, and also search for strategies to solve them, so we need them to be active.

But in order to be effective in acting we need to have a deep analysis of the problem, creating solidarity and therefore collective power to change the situation, to connect individual perception with the large context.









## Individual-Society

Summarising, to overcome passivity, fear, contradictions, we can use 3 main ways:

A) therapy to unblock/clarify the will

B) RoD where to discover, thanks to pluralisation, that our blocks are similar to the others' ones.

C) RoD + SPIC (see later paragraph 1.9) to perceive the connection between personal problem with societal values and the mechanisms of oppression.

The tool-kit refers to the way at point B as it is the one we experimented on the field.

While in Forum-Theatre the link between individual problem and societal mechanism is easier to see (as the conflict is outside people, there is a visible Oppressor, the analysis of oppressive mechanisms can bring to identify implied social forces and not only bad behaviours of the Oppressor), in RoD the risk to forget the influence from society is higher, as we deal with psychological elements.

Psychology, historically, was born to investigate the internal forces which drive us in our life, first studying how we perceive the world, then trying to understand the reasons of our behaviour, passing through the discovery of Unconscious by Freud (1962), and so on with a lot of different approaches and therapies.

One risky aspect of most therapies and psychological approaches is to forget society, to consider the person as neither historical nor influenced by society and culture, like an essence in itself, eternal and homogeneous.

RoD runs the same risk as, except for Cops in the Head technique (where the trainer asks the Protagonist to identify concrete persons that now are cops but were real persons in the past), the other techniques are more related to internal forces.

## The SPIC

Psychologisation or "psychoanalysis" (Castel, 1981) is the term we use to annotate the tendency to read all behaviours as determined by psychological inner forces, forgetting that we grow in a society and we are influenced by society, as well as we contribute to build it.

In our vision RoD should not forget to investigate the link between individual stories and the larger societal context.

For this reason Giolli developed in 2004-5 a research called SPIC, to find out the links between the elements discovered during a RoD session and the societal forces like Institutions, values, movements, legislation, mass-media, ideologies, etc.

This tool-kit will give you a taste of this research (see paragraph 1.9).

## 1.7 RoD and therapy

This is a tricky issue discussed many times in the TO movement.

Boal's position is sometimes ambiguous as the title of the French edition is "Methode Boal de theatre et therapie" (Boal's method of theatre and therapy), while within the text he argues against therapy based on catharsis (Freud, Moreno), but also says that TO is the therapy of society while psychotherapy is an individual approach.

Catharsis in Moreno is the way we learn in psychodrama; he means the trainer should push the Protagonist to an emotional discharge, where he/she can cry, scream, be aggressive or sad.

In RoD it is not necessary to reach this climax, but to create metaxis,<sup>3</sup> that is to help the Protagonist feel in the RoD session the same emotions of real situation.



<sup>3</sup> Metaxis is a Greek term used by Boal to hypothesise what happens when TO works: it means to belong to 2 worlds, the one of reality and the one of theatre. It is supposed that when I act, I split myself in two, as I am the person acting in a fictional space now, but also the real person that is playing his/her own story; I am here but I'm playing yesterday and tomorrow. This is due to the properties of aesthetic space, in fact one of them is the dichotomic aspect, that is theatre occurs in a double space, the physical space with 3 dimensions and the fictional space of theatre with 5 dimension: over the 3 geometrical ones, also memory and imagination).







The issue is really complex.

First, we should have a common concept about therapy, then we could see the parallelism and differences between therapy and RoD.

However let's just say as a first approach to this topic, that RoD tries to pluralise the personal problems, to show that:

- they are not singular, but common to many people if we unmask the specific characteristics of the context, to focus on oppressive mechanisms
- what is inside of us comes from society in many ways (education, socialisation, mass-media, social rituals)<sup>4</sup>
- it is necessary to change ourselves, but also the context around us and the whole society (Boal, 1995).

The individual-based therapies, like Psychoanalysis (Freud, 1962), Bioenergetic (Lowen, 1975), Cognitive (Beck, 1976), Rational-Cognitive (Ellis, 2001), Gestalt (Perls, 1981), Transactional analysis (Berne, 1961)... on the contrary, focus mainly on:

- individual internal life instead of group or social context
- internal elements with no historical or social origin; they are taken as eternal, specific to the human beings (life and death drive, structure of personality, etc.)
- adapt the person to society (see the ideal perspective in psychoanalysis of being able to work and love and the concepts of "principle of reality" against "principle of pleasure")<sup>5</sup>.

Through group-based therapies the individual opens to the group, the family, the society, so they go in the RoD direction to some extent, like in the Systemic approach. However also this therapy is accused of ignoring the dimension of power in human relationships.<sup>6</sup>

However this is not the text for such a deep discussion, so please refer to the bibliography.



<sup>4</sup> According to Boal we are constantly in social interactions ruled by implicit rules that come from the dominant classes. These interactions (a medical visit, a lesson, a job activity, a leisure event, a sport activity etc.) are mechanised, we are not creative and free to act as we want, but each role should behave in a specific way, under threat of being sanctioned as a bad person or crazy one.

<sup>5</sup> According to Freud, the child is driven by the "pleasure principle", i.e. the immediate satisfaction of his/her needs, without any social limits. Growing up means curbing this principle and replacing it with the "reality principle", where the context is taken into account and one is able to delay the satisfaction of one's needs or block them if they are anti-social.

A German psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm (1955), criticised these concepts, saying that Freud confuses the "performance" principle with the "reality principle", i.e. by not criticising capitalism, he means the efficient, productive, working man (performance principle) is the reality principle, but forgets that healthy development must lead to an integral human being, capable of enjoying and living to the full, without being conditioned by the efficiency demands of capitalist society.

<sup>6</sup> Rigliano, Paolo, and Siciliani, Orazio. (1988). The two authors agree the idea that we are all responsible as we are all playing a role in the system (family, group, institution, society...). However, they say that the mainstream systemic approach is naive, as it forgets that we have different powers to influence the system itself.



## 1.8 Some risks and limits

Here is an incomplete list of risks of using RoD:

A- the main one is to open an emotional/psychological door and not be able to close the circle. We mean, RoD is really powerful to evoke emotions and the trainer should be aware about that, but also about how to bring this openness (essential in order to learn something new) to a step where the Protagonist can manage what was moved.

It is true that all the RoD techniques foresee a last moment where to share feelings and observations but the trainer should pay particular attention to this phase, before closing the session, when observations and experiences are shared. At this moment, it may happen that the Protagonist receives uncomfortable interpretations and judgements, or that someone who acted in the scene feels uncomfortable, or that in those who witnessed, painful situations were evoked and there was no way to act on them and release accumulated tensions.

Attention should be paid to the emotional state of individuals, to understand if someone needs help.

It is therefore a good idea to give everyone the floor, observe and if necessary propose some tension-relieving, emotional balancing, sharing or other useful exercises.

The experience shows that sometimes the most affected are the people who were not engaged in the RoD session except as observers, as they could not express in action their emotions.

B- to trivialise the situation: if the group is not ready to afford emotions, there are many resistances, the technique can convert in a simple game, where people are not seriously engaged emotionally, or they play too much at an intellectual level. The emotional engagement of most of the group, the so called "sim-pathy" is essential to have a deep work together.

C- to miss the metaxis: if the scene improvised is not stimulating the same emotions as in real life, that means the Protagonist is not creating on the stage a representation of real life, so the metaxis does not occur. For this reason it is important to ask and observe the Protagonist, to understand if he/she is experiencing, in the fictional scene, similar emotions as in the real life.

Limits:

- in a psychiatric context it is hard to use RoD as these techniques work on phantoms, internal elements, and those who suffer from a psychiatric disorder could exit more confused, with more voices in their head and difficulty to manage them.

- when language is not fluent, as with migrant people with low linguistic competence, the improvisations risk being very poor.

- a certain level of self-reflection is also needed, in order to detect one's own emotional elements.

- a basic openness to dramatic tools as if you are resistant to this language the entire process is undermined.

- being able to focus on a long process lasting for 2-3 or more hours in a group.

## 1.9 The SPIC (Social, Political, Ideological, Cultural) research

This research started with a question: how to improve the link between individual and society, during a RoD session?

It is true that the link is also implicit in the set of techniques at various levels:

- when the story is chosen, likely it represents something common to more than the teller's life, so the story creates a link among different individual lives.
- When the improvisation creates sim-pathy, this is another way to enlarge the personal story to the collective experience.
- At the first steps in each technique, when the Protagonist, together with the participants is building images of some aspects of the story, the Protagonist's internal elements, etc. the images are bridges which keep the essence of the oppressive mechanisms, cleared from the irrelevant contextual details; so also in this case there is an openness to society.

Until here we are in the so-called "pluralisation" which Boal talked about, that recalls the idea that TO is not the first singular person, and "I", but it is related to "we".







However, in our experience many times the exploration stops there and it is not clear how the singular behaviour or internal element is created, or affected or strengthened, or tackled by the larger context like ideologies, cultural values, Institutions, legislation, social movements, etc.

For these reasons in 2004-5 Giolli developed a one-year-long research, with a group of 20 people, to investigate how to enrich/modify the classic techniques in order to get this new level of pluralisation.

At the end of the process we created some new steps to be added to the classic techniques:

- The SPIC techniques
- Some extrapolation exercises.

This tool-kit is limited to the RoD set created by Boal, exploring some of the main techniques, so for the SPIC research we defer to next project.

## 2) PREPARATION

In this chapter we describe some useful tools to prepare the ground for effective work with RoD.

Do not underestimate this step as the RoD includes complex techniques and some people could not be prepared enough to fully exploit the occasion.

Preparatory exercises can affect 3 different fields:

- creating a safe and brave space
- improving images creation
- improving improvisation based on images.

In fact we need to have a space where people feel free enough to share their stories of oppression and be creative.

This is a requirement for all TO work.

Specifically for RoD we also need to develop 2 main skills linked to the main language we are going to use: the language of body images.

Therefore we need to make people at ease to create images in an associative way, that is not following a logical reflection, but for association, like in psychoanalysis. Secondly, we also need to allow people to improvise freely, based on the body image they have.

In fact the language of body images, despite the fact that unconsciously we use it daily, is not so easy for participants to manage in a fluid way.

### 2.1) Safe and brave space

People should trust the group and the Joker, and feel safe enough to open up their emotions and reduce their resistance.

Moreover, when the Joker asks to tell stories, even if none is obliged to do it, we need at least one story to work on.

Why brave?

Because if we keep the group in their comfort zone, likely no new learning will appear, as really learning means to discover something new, unexpected and enter in a place that is outside of the comfort zone, but not yet in the panic zone.

This is true for the whole TO work, but in RoD there is a higher need for that, as we are touching the intimacy of the Protagonist.

How to create a safe and brave space?

Fundamentally with our inclusive and respectful attitude and with some tools.

In Boal's arsenal we have all the exercises from the 5 categories that work to create trust and links among participants and therefore help create the sense of group.

Just some examples among the most useful in our experience:





### **How are you?**

Standing in a circle.

Person 1 asks the person in front of him/her, let's say person 2, "how are you?".

Person 2 responds about what he/she feels like sharing.

Immediately person 1 steps forward and creates with his or her body an image that reflects something of what person 2 said.

The two people next to person 1 immediately join in, creating with their bodies other images that reinforce the first one or complete it by showing other aspects of what person 2 said.

Person 2 looks at the composed image, feels it and claps once when satisfied.

Then the activity continues, i.e. the person right to person 1 asks the person right to person 2, and so on.

### **Interview with exchange of role**

In pairs, person 1 and person 2.

Person 1 has about 5 minutes to interview person 2 who answers how much they want to share about their life.

Person 1 can ask all kinds of questions, concrete, biographical, but also about person 2's hopes, fears, values.

Then person 1 of the various pairs go to the centre, form a circle, close their eyes and the Joker guides them to recall what they have heard, form an image of person 2 and finally put themselves in his/her shoes, becoming person 2 as much as possible.

When all persons 1 are ready they return to their partners and introduce themselves by saying: <Hello I am (partner's name)> and tell their story as if they were person 2.

The partner listens without commenting or judging, as if seeing himself/herself in the mirror. Finally, the two persons exchange experiences and emotions, discoveries and difficulties experienced in the exercise.

### **The drunk bottle and other blind exercises**

Boal (Boal, 2021) explains many exercises in a category called "bringing more senses into play"; most of them are played with closed eyes; one is called the "Drunk bottle".

In a group from 7 to 9, standing in a circle. One person, the bottle, goes to the centre, the rest of the group approaches to be ready to sustain the bottle.

Everyone swings while keeping their feet together, without getting off balance.

Then the circle stops, while the bottle (the person in the centre) continues to swing in all directions until he or she feels ready and lets go of the balance.

Immediately at least 2, better 3 people support the bottle with their hands, preventing the fall.

The bottle must stay rigid in order to be well supported by the group. The group must have their hands ready and their feet well positioned to support the weight of the bottle.

The group's task is to prevent it from falling and to bring it back to the centre, without throwing it.

A second level, when the bottle is so confident, it closes its eyes and continues the exercise with their eyes closed.

### **And what about "brave"?**

For this goal we do not need particular exercises, but it is important to pay attention to propose activities to the group which are a little challenging, not completely in their comfort zone.

This point requires refined observation by the Joker, to perceive how far and deep to push the group in the exercise. The concept is to bring people in activities where they are encouraged to explore something new and benefit from this research.







## 2.2) Improving images creation

The goal here is to develop the skill to create images promptly, without passing through the mediation of the intellect.

Here are some examples:

### **Sculptor and clay**

It is the basic exercise of Image-Theatre well explained in Boal's book (Boal, 2021).

A classic version is made in pairs, where person 1 sculpts person 2 by using his/her own hands to model the other's body. Really complex positions or expressions, like facial expressions, are difficult to be modelled using hands, therefore, person 1 can show them directly using their own body and person 2 copies the expression.

There is a third suggestion for the gaze, to direct it by using your fingers to indicate the direction and then snapping.

There are many variations like: the sculptor adds to the sculpted image, the trainer can suggest to sculpt the partner with an included object, or to sculpt an emotion, or invite to sculpt 2 or more people, etc.

### **Images from the Playback-Theatre**

It is a simple exercise from this kind of theatre that enables people to promptly create images with their body.

There are multiple versions, but one we use a lot is this: split the group into sub-groups of 4-5 people and put them in the corners of the room, standing in a numbered line; so in each sub-group we will have person number 1, number 2, up to 4 or 5.

Give to the first group whatever sentence like for instance: <A balloon on the sea> or <I want to open this door> or <What a wonderful day!> or <You are always the same!>...

Immediately the person number 1 of group 1 steps out and stops in an image representing an association with the sentence (it can be a character, a symbol, an object, an emotion... whatever).

Immediately after number 2 starts and stops in another image, connected with the first, then the 3rd and so on, until the whole sub-group has played.

Just a few seconds to watch and then the Joker gives a second sentence to the second group, and so on.

## 2.3) Improving improvisation based on images

### **Duplan's images**

It is a game based on walking, stopping and creating images, with an increase of improvisation.

Just as an example but you can adapt, invent, add other inputs.

The group starts moving in the room, walking in a nonlinear trajectory, changing direction from time to time.

The Joker says stop and the group stops and each time the Joker gives different and increasing instructions:

- Create an image without thinking, just what is coming out now from the body
- The same, and when created one, just do the opposite, whatever it is
- Create an image as before and feel it: sensations in your body
- As before, but focus on emotions evoked by the image
- As before, focused on images in your head, stimulated by the image itself
- As before, create the image, feel it at different levels and imagine who you are (which character or animal or object or fantastic being...)
- As before and wonder who you are and where you are
- As before, wonder who you are, where you are and what your will is
- As before and after having felt the image and answered the previous 3 questions, start a monologue







- As before and after the monologue try to find a partner with whom to dialogue, still keeping the image
- As before and now start to improvise, by using body and word.

### **Monologue and dialogue in images.**

In groups of 3:

- person 1 sculpts person 2 who starts to feel the image and then a monologue. Person 3 observes. Taking turns each person takes on the 3 roles.
- As before, but now person 1, after the sculpting, adds him/herself to the image, completing it. Then person 1 and 2 start a monologue.
- As before, but now the monologue is converted into dialogue.
- As before, but after the dialogue the 2 improvise using body and word.

## **3) DESCRIPTION OF SOME TECHNIQUES**

The RoD techniques can be split in 2 categories according to Boal (1995):

- prospective
- introspective.

The first group are techniques that search for oppressions in a general sense, without asking a personal story or in case they need that, the story is not developed for a long time as in the second group of techniques.

In this group we have for example:

- Image and counter-image
- Kaleidoscopic image
- Image of the Antagonist.

The techniques in the second group are harder as they go deeper into the individual story, to analyse the personal mechanisms which weaken the Protagonist, even if the aim is to pluralise the personal story thanks to the creation of images getting the essential mechanisms of the oppression. In this second group therefore the Protagonist can be more stressed as he/she remains at the centre of attention for a long time.

In the second group we have among others:

- Cops in the head
- Rainbow of desires
- Analytical image
- Circuit of ritual and masks.

These introspective or hard techniques need at least 2 hours of work.

General remark: pay attention to the fact that Boal did not write a Bible, so the description of techniques can be different in different translations as Boal's books are more a logbook than an essay, so they reflect the state of exploration in the moment when they were written or translated.

### **3.1 The techniques**

Here we can read an explanation of each technique, similar to that from Boal's books.

#### **A) PROSPECTIVE**

##### **A.1 Image and counter-image**

###### **GOALS**

To search possible situations for introspective techniques.

To prepare the ground for the harder techniques by creating an intimate relationship, exploring a first story a little, collecting possible stories for the further work, improving skills to observe and feed-back.

To explore a personal story in a soft way.

To clarify the Protagonist's desires.

To raise awareness about the different perspectives Protagonist and listener can have and reveal some details that may be useful to the Protagonist.

###### **DESCRIPTION**

###### **Step 1:**

The Joker proposes to the group to split in pairs and at turn to tell a story using the so called co-pilotage exercise: both sit down comfortably and with eyes closed, with body contact. The teller starts to explain a personal difficult situation and gives as many details as possible to stimulate the listener to figure out the story. The listener can ask questions only to better imagine the situation, with neither judgement, nor suggestion or evaluation.



#### Step 2:

When the first person in each pair has told his/her story the Joker asks who, among the listeners, has had a concrete and strong image of the situation. One listener is therefore chosen and the Joker asks both, the storyteller and the listener, to create an image, using the participants' body, related to the story, expressing what the essence of that story was. Images can be realistic but better metaphoric/symbolic.

The two should show their back to each other and mainly focus on their own image, without looking at the other's.

So finally there will be the Image of the story created by the teller and the image created by the listener.

#### Step 3:

The Joker guides the group to observe the 2 images of the same story and make objective observations like: in this there are 3 people, in the other 4, they are all standing but one in this image is not... etc.

Also the 2 sculptors can later comment.

#### Step 4:

The Joker asks both, teller and listener, to think about 3 desires to edit the image for the better. The Joker will count 30 seconds for each desire and each time, at the end, will scream "Stop".

At the end of the sequence the Joker asks the audience about what has been done by both, teller and listener, what was similar and what different, any observation is welcome as it helps to clarify the Protagonist's desires.

### **A.2 Kaleidoscopic image**

#### GOALS

To search for possible situations for harder techniques.

To perceive a story with several possible nuances.

To get people used to refracting an action/story like in a mirror and discover details.

To find connection with other possible stories in the group.

#### DESCRIPTION

##### Step 1:

a person tells an episode of oppression or bad feelings and is helped by the Joker to stage it creating a scene. The audience is invited to observe.

##### Step 2:

The Joker invites the audience first to make images of the perceptions, feelings, etc. created by Protagonist's action in the scene. One by one, those who like can show the image linked to the Protagonist, with his/her own body.

To be effective we need to create at least 5 images of the Protagonist and 5 of the Antagonist, or for each Antagonist if more than one.

##### Step 3:

Randomly, each image searches for its complement and pairs are created.

The people who are left out go as witnesses in the couples.



##### Step 4:

At the same time, in the so-called fair mode, all couples improvise with the told story as a script, but exploring what the created image is telling about a specific attitude or side of the character. The witness observes with no intervention at all.

##### Step 5:

Each pair (or trio) goes on stage and repeats, but first the witness tells the audience what he/she saw. The actors should therefore show better what was misunderstood by the witness.

At the end of each improvisation a short debate about what surprised participants starts, guided by the Joker.

##### Step 6:

A debate is opened to share what happened both in the action and within each person alongside the whole process.









### A.3 Image of the Antagonist

Even if Boal puts these techniques in the "introspective" group, its structure is for us more related to the prospective ones.

#### GOALS

- To search for possible situations for harder techniques.
- To start a first exploration of oppressive situations but in a short way.
- To improve the skills of creating images and improvising based on them.
- To strengthen the will to fight against oppression.
- To find bridges among different stories in the group.

#### DESCRIPTION

##### Step 1:

The group chooses a theme as "fear", "jealousy", "indecision" etc. then the Joker asks to stand in a circle back to the centre, and remember a concrete personal situation where this theme was present. Then the Joker asks all participants to create an image about him/herself, related to the Antagonist. When they all are ready they turn in and show the images.

##### Step 2:

The Joker asks to approach the images similar to one's own and create a kind of family. Better not to have more than 5 groups.

##### Step 3:

Group by group the Joker asks the others to choose, among all, the image that better represents the entire group. The chosen image should contain as many elements of the single images as possible. When it ends we will have some images as representatives of the singular images about this theme, in this group, today.

##### Step 4:

###### Dynamisations:

- the Joker asks the representative images to stand in a line, face the group, and asks for comments, observations.
- the Joker asks for a first dynamisation, that is, all the images start a repetitive movement, implicit in the image, slow or quick, small or wide.
- then as before but adding one or more sentences implicit in the image+movement.
- then the Joker asks the image to, slowly, make a metamorphosis, from the Protagonist to the Antagonist, in front of the Protagonist.
- again, the Antagonist's image is dynamised, first with gestures, then with words too.

##### Step 5:

The Joker asks the audience who can identify, recognise or resonate with one Antagonist; those who say yes replace the Antagonist's image assuming the same posture. When all Antagonists are replaced, the original actors (who were elected as representatives and started the dynamisation) re-assume the Protagonist's image.

##### Step 6:

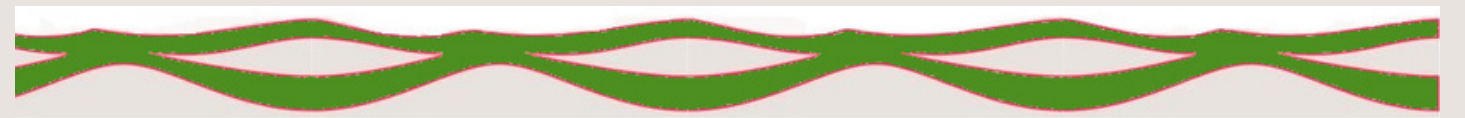
In the fair mode, all the couples created, Protagonist-Antagonist, start to improvise simultaneously and the rest of the group walks in this fair, observing and listening.





The improvisation is guided by the Joker who marks these steps:  
- image (all keep the image)  
- movement (all make repetitive gestures)  
- sentences (all start to dialogue but keeping the image)  
- action (they can move and talk; the Protagonist searching for a way to liberate, the Antagonist trying to maintain the oppression).

Step 7:  
Debriefing where to share observations, personal feelings and hypotheses about what happened.



## B) INTROSPECTIVE

In general, these group of RoD techniques are useful when the oppressor:

- does not exist
- is a pretext, is not fully responsible for the situation
- the conflict is more internal (within the Protagonist) than external (Oppressed/Oppressor).

You should choose the right technique asking questions to the Protagonist to understand the key elements (see also B.1 Description).

### B.1 Cops in the head

#### GOALS

To reveal the internal characters who block the Protagonist, preventing him/her to act his/her own will.

#### SUITABLE STORIES

This specific technique is particularly effective when the Protagonist knows what to do, but cannot realise it, because he/she experiences some internal resistance.

#### STEPS

The blue steps are the same in all the techniques.

- 1- Description of the story
- 2- First improvisation
- 3- Creation of Cops
- 4- The constellation of Cops
- 5- Confidences to Cops
- 6- Improvisation with Cops
- 7- Flash Forum
- 8- Creation of anti-Cops
- 9- Cops and anti-Cops fair
- 10- Rehearsal of the future action (re-improvisation without Cops)
- 11- The multiple mirror of the others' gaze.

#### DESCRIPTION

##### Step 1:

A person tells a personal story of oppression.

Key questions as Joker, after storytelling:

- 1) what did you want in this situation from that person?
- 2) If the will is clear: what should you have done to get this will? (if not, better move to Rainbow of Desires)
- 3) If the answer is clear: why did you not do it? (if not maybe Analytical-Image can help or Forum-Theatre if there is a clear oppressor).
- 4) If the answer is something related to an internal resistance, this is the moment to propose this technique.

In short:

a) Is the WILL clear? YES ---> Next question  
Is the WILL clear? No --> Rainbow of Desires

b) Is the STRATEGY clear? YES --> Next question  
Is the STRATEGY clear? NO --> Analytical-Image or Forum-Theatre.





c) Is there an internal RESISTANCE? YES --→ Cops in the head  
 Is there an internal RESISTANCE? NO --→ Analytical-Image or Circuit of rituals and masks.

#### Step 2:

This step is not easy, depending on the specific story and the awareness the Protagonist has to select the main elements and expose them clearly. The passage is from a narrative language to the theatre language. The two are different as theatre needs to be seen, not only heard, and the scene, with movements, objects, sounds, speech, should be coherent with reality. It does not mean we must choose a realistic style, sometimes it is better to introduce symbols or to use a surrealistic style. In any case, from the entire experience of the Protagonist we have to help him/her to select the best moment and then transform the narrative elements in a theatrical scene.

A path we propose to better navigate in this step is the following:

1) After the general exposition of the problem, ask the Protagonist to tell a situation that is emblematic of the oppression he/she wants to explore. Within the general problem the Joker tries to fix the right moment to be improvised, the one that can be emotionally and intellectually the most clear and strong one to point out the problem. Sometimes it is easy, sometimes not.

1.1) If it is not possible to find one because he/she cannot find one moment, propose to start from the one you detected as possibly important or the first that comes to her/his mind. Try to improvise some pieces of the story to get the point.

2) When an episode is found, invite the Protagonist to choose a person in the group as Antagonist, or more than one to choose from. It is not important to have the gender of the actor matching the one of the character, maybe only when gender is the specific issue.

When chosen it is better to ask the Protagonist to provide the actor with some details like: 3 adjectives to define the character, the social characteristics of the Antagonist and the characters' will (presumed). Boal says it is also important to define and clarify where they are, who they are and what the wills of each are.

3) After the first improvisation ask the Protagonist if the scene has reactivated similar emotions to those in real life; if so, it means there is the metaxis, the scene represents reality in its essence and the Protagonist is dichotomised, he/she is the person in real life, but also the person acting in this moment, he/she is doubled.

This dichotomisation suggests that the changes in the theatre setting would also affect the real person in daily life.

If so you can proceed proposing a specific technique, if not:

3.1) Ask what was different from reality: it can be some words, or the attitude of the Antagonist, or something else. If the weak point is in the Antagonist's behaviour you can ask a better explanation to the Protagonist and re-improvise or ask the Protagonist to reverse her/himself the role with the Antagonist, playing this role as perceived by the Protagonist.

Most of the time in this way you can then proceed.

4) After the improvisation and the confirmation of metaxis, ask the Protagonist what is his/her will in this situation towards the Antagonist.

If the will is not clear or there is ambivalence and contradictions, Rainbow of Desires is the best technique to clarify.

If it is clear many roads are open (see Step 1).

#### Step 3:

- The Joker asks the Protagonist to show with his/her own body and one by one, the possible Cops in his/her head, coming out during the improvisation. Cops should be real people that the Protagonist really met in the past and are now internalised as voices. The Joker should insist on detecting the real person or at least a group of similar persons, to avoid a generic Cop.



At any time a Cop is shown and, in the audience, someone identifies/recognizes/resonates with the Cop, they can come into the aesthetic space and replace the Protagonist who can therefore show another Cop, and so on.

- When the Protagonist has no more ideas the audience can propose the Cops they have perceived in the Protagonist on stage or the ones that were activated in their mind observing the improvisation.

The best is to have at least 3 Cops up to 8-10.

Step 4:

- The Joker asks to put the Cops in a constellation, representing the position where the Protagonist sees the Cops during the scene. Are the Cops with the Protagonist? Is each of them visible or not? Close or far away? Isolated or together with someone else? Etc.

- The Joker should observe the constellation for the final sharing or can immediately ask the audience to make comments (observations and hypotheses).

Step 5:

- The Joker invites the Protagonist to approach the Cops (that were put in a line on one side of the scene) and make confidences to each one. The confidence starts with <Do you remember when...> and the Protagonist should remind the Cop of a personal common experience that changed him/herself. Then complete by saying <... and it is for this that now I...>; here the Protagonist should express the consequences that this event had on his/her life/personality.

It happens that a Cop receives a piece of information different from or opposite to the idea he/she figured out of this Cop; there are 2 possible solutions:

a) the actor is able to integrate the information from the Protagonist with his/her own idea and play however the Cop, also jumping from one to another

b) the actor is not able to mix up the opposite/different ideas and gives up; a replacement is asked from the audience.

- Variation: after or instead of the confidence you can ask Cops to make monologues, from the image they have.

Step 6:

It is the more complex and heavy phase as a new improvisation starts, on 2 levels; the real one where the Protagonist interacts with the Antagonist, and the fantastic one, where the Protagonist interacts with his/her Cops.

The Protagonist is free to choose how long to stay on one level or with a specific Cop or the Antagonist. He/she can interact as much as he/she likes.

Some rules:

- The Protagonist can talk and act; he/she can do what he/she wants towards Cops.

- The Antagonist must keep the character and interact only with the real persons in the scene, not with Cops, as they are in the head of the Protagonist only.

- Cops can interact only with the Protagonist, for the same reason.

- Cops prevent the Protagonist to change behaviour, they want him/her to do the same things, for different reasons; each Cop has its specific reason and strategy, some threatening, some seducing, some confusing, some trying to blame.

- Cops do not go away simply because they are asked to, they move with no resistance only if the Protagonist pushes them away.

- A Cop who is moved away has the tendency to return, slowly, to the same place where he/she was.

The Joker should avoid prolonging the tiring scene and overwhelming the Protagonist; in the meantime the Joker should observe his/her movements and strategies.

Step 7:

The audience is now invited to replace the Protagonist and to show how to deal with the situation, at the same 2 levels, Antagonist and Cops.

This step is useful to give the Protagonist a wider spectrum of possibilities to change.

This step is called Flash Forum as each spect-actor has more or less 30 seconds to show a strategy, towards the Antagonist and/or the Cops, just a draft.





#### Step 8:

The Joker asks the Protagonist to re-improvise only with the Cops, facing one by one, showing a clear strategy to neutralise them. As soon as the audience understands the strategy, one spect-actor comes and replaces the Protagonist, so he/she is free to face the second Cop, and so on. Here again the Joker observes which Cop was faced first or last, which strategy was used, the Protagonist's indecision, etc. for the final step.

#### Step 9:

When all Cops have been countered by the Protagonist, so that each of them has its own anti-Cop, start the fair, that is, each couple improvises at the same time and the Protagonist, together with the left spect-actors, visits this fair of Cops and anti-Cops to observe the different interactions. The Joker should observe the Protagonist movements, as they were a sort of writing: to whom he/she is approaching first, who is avoided, the straight or uncertain direction...

#### Step 10:

This step is common in each technique as it prepares the future, the change, at personal and relational level, but there are differences depending on the specific technique.

In this one the Protagonist and Antagonist simply resume the first improvisation, but now the Protagonist's goal is to change the situation according to her/his will.

#### Step 11:

It is a common ending for all the techniques. Boal calls this the "multiple mirror of the others' gaze" as he has the idea that here each person should share his/her own perceptions:

- observations (what is almost objective, everyone has seen or heard the same)
- interpretation (the meaning of what one observed). Interpretation should be offered as a hypothesis to the Protagonist to understand better the dynamics and not as judgement of his/her behaviour.

In our experience we have added 2 other possibilities:

- 1) the psychodramatic sharing: here each person can speak only about him/herself.
- 2) wild sharing: where all comments are possible.

Even if we think that Boal's sharing is the most fruitful, sometimes more protection can be necessary, like in psychodramatic sharing, or more challenge, as in the wild sharing.

Following Boal's approach and TO framework, we prefer to ask the Protagonist to choose the preferred type of sharing.

## **B.2 Rainbow of Desires**

### **GOALS**

To clarify the multiplicity of emotions, feelings, desires within the Protagonist.

### **SUITABLE STORIES**

All stories where the will of the Protagonist is not clear, where there is a mess of emotions or ambivalence.

### **STEPS**

- 1- Description of the story
- 2- First improvisation
- 3- Creation of the rainbow
- 4- The confidences
- 5- The part becomes the whole
- 6- Real and ideal constellation
- 7- Agora of images who in pairs dialogue while the Protagonist observes and makes combinations of those he/she feels are most opposed
- 8- Rehearsal of the future action (re-improvisation of the initial scene in order to transform it)
- 9- The multiple mirror of the others' gaze.

### **DESCRIPTION**

#### Steps 1-2:

see "Cops in the head" technique.

#### Step 3:

The Joker asks the Protagonist to identify in him/herself all the feelings, emotions, desires, one by one and show each of them with a body image of their own.

As soon as the Protagonist shows an image the Joker asks the audience if someone can identify/recognise/resonate with that image and replace the Protagonist.







When the Protagonist has no more ideas the Joker asks the audience if someone would propose an additional image. The Protagonist can then accept or not.

At the end there will be a set of images (better between 3 and 8; sometimes one image is contained by another or really alike, so better to eliminate except if you feel as Joker that there is something important in both).

#### Step 4:

The Joker asks the images to stand on one side of the scene in a line, then invites the Protagonist to go to them one by one and make a short confidence with this structure:

<I am like that and it is good because...>

<I am like this but I wouldn't like to be so, because...>

<I am like that and I would like to be more so, because...>.

These confidences should be listened to in silence by the images and incorporated for the next improvisation.

Variation: a participant in our training said that when she uses it she does not ask confidences, but monologues from the images/desires; the actors start feeling the images, thinking about who they are, and expressing all the thoughts that are coming to their mind.

#### Step 5:

The Protagonist sends the images of his/her emotions, one by one, on the scene and each image improvises with the Antagonist. The basis is the previous improvisation, but the image is invited to explore also the so-called sub-text, that is all the thoughts that are not usually expressed but are driving our speech and behaviour, as they are the real intention we have in that specific relationship and context.

The Protagonist sends the image one by one and the Joker sends them back once the improvisation shows clearly enough the change that could occur if the Protagonist would show only one emotion.

#### Step 6:

The Protagonist creates a constellation putting all the images on the scene in the position he/she supposes the Antagonist sees the Protagonist.

Antagonist starts to improvise and refers to the images as if they were only one person, jumping from one conversation to another one as the Protagonist was, as a whole, changing mood/attitude/desires. It is an improvisation, so there is only one rule, namely accept what is happening and improvise a reaction. The source of improvisation is within the character that they are all playing, Antagonist and images. For the images another important source of information is the image they have (the body position and shape nourish improvisation with feelings, intuition, desires...) and the confidences received.

The Protagonist can move the constellation to try different combinations in order to improve the relationship and clarify what she/he really wants.

#### Step 7:

- When the Protagonist is satisfied with the constellation, the Joker asks him/her to stay close to the Antagonist to perceive the impression of the images from this point of view.

- After a while the Joker asks the Antagonist to go out and the Protagonist to replace the Antagonist, interacting with the images as Protagonist.

- Finally also the Protagonist gets out and the images, alone, start an "Agorà", discussing among themselves, explaining what each of them wants and why, trying to convince the other ones. It is important that at first each image can have space to be recognised by the others, then a mess can happen, where the images discuss all together or in pairs or in small groups at the same time.

The Protagonist can move among the images and observe their relationships.

#### Steps 8-9:

see "Cops in the head" technique.



### **B.3 Analytical image**

#### **GOALS**

To detect weak points in the Protagonist's behaviour that negatively affect a specific relationship.

#### **SUITABLE STORIES**

Stories or episodes where the Protagonist has a clear will, but cannot realise what she/he wants, likely because of some weaknesses in her/his behaviour.

#### **STEPS**

1- Description of the story

2- First improvisation

3- Creation of images related to the Protagonist's weak points and the Antagonist's strong points: hidden details, unrealistic images

4- Pair formation: guided by feelings



- 5- Re-improvisation: keeping the substance, image as filter, telling the sub-text, memory of improvisation and imagination
- 6- Protagonist assumes images: go side by side, get out!, you can change! (slowly)
- 7- Protagonist and Antagonist: Protagonist improvises against Antagonist's 5 images not speaking together (read the movements)
- 8- Antagonist and Protagonist: reverse of step 7
- 9- Rehearsal of the future action (new improvisation with the images warning of mistakes as Protagonist seeks metamorphosis)
- 10- The multiple mirror of the others' gaze.



## DESCRIPTION

Steps 1-2:  
see "Cops in the head" technique.

### Step 3:

The Joker asks the audience to propose images related to some weak points hidden in the Protagonist's behaviour during the scene; some aspects that are making the Protagonist weaker in this relationship. Images should not be realistic as we have already seen the scene, but should highlight a detail, so they can be expressionist, symbolic, surrealist, magnified, etc.

For better work, 5 images are good, fewer images impoverish the analysis and more would take too much time to develop.

After that the Joker asks to create a similar number of images related this time to the Antagonist, images that are detecting what makes him/her stronger.

### Step 4:

In this phase the images of the Protagonist are on the opposite side of the Antagonist's, in a line.

At a Joker's signal all images from both lines step forward to encounter their complement.

It can be an easy choice when there is a mutual selection, but it can happen that Image 1 chooses image 2 while 2 chooses 3... in this case the rapidity to choose is important.

Or that image 1 and 2 choose image 3, so it is up to image 3 to take the decision.

The choice is guided by sensations and intuition, more than reflection.

### Step 5:

At turn, each couple re-improvise the scene, again by filtering the speech and behaviour according to the image each actor has. So each improvisation can seem very crazy and far from the realistic scene, but each can show in an aesthetic way a real detail that is playing a role in the real situation.

### Step 6:

Now the scene is re-improvise by each couple but in this step there is this sequence:

- the Protagonist goes side by side and, keeping the image, repeats the sentence and expression of the Protagonist's image, immediately after; it is a way to magnify this detail that was detected and feel it, feel if it is a weakness or not and how to modify it.

- the image of the Protagonist (when the Joker feels it is well assumed by the real Protagonist, that is the Protagonist has precisely copied the image and his/her speech is coherent with the image) leaves the scene and the improvisation continues between the Image of the Antagonist's strength against the Protagonist him/herself.

- when the Joker perceives the Protagonist completely camouflaged by the image and well inside of that, yells <You can change!). In this moment the Protagonist should feel if he/she wants to change the image and if so, do it but in slow motion, continuing the improvisation. On the contrary the Protagonist could keep the image if she/he feels it is not endangering him/her.

The proceeding is repeated for all the couples.



From a participant in the training: she suggested, maybe before step 7 or before step 9, to add a step where the Protagonist, and then the group, creates images of the Protagonist's strong points to be developed, to play in the relation, already present in the Protagonist's personality.

She said: *<I will add a second phase in which the group is asked to do the opposite and show the Protagonist's strengths and the Antagonist's weaknesses in order to enlarge the Protagonist's imagination .*

*In my opinion, with the technique as it is proposed by the 'Bible', the protagonist finds herself crushed by giants and deprived of an imaginary that gives her more 'power' than she is allowed to have or imagine.>*

Step 7:

The Protagonist improvises again, to fight against all the images of the Antagonist at the same time. He/she can talk with only one or all of them while the images, being a part of the Antagonist, can only relate to the Protagonist.

Here again as in the other techniques the Protagonist's movements in the scene are a writing with a meaning that can be given back to him/her in the final step. The Joker can observe the safe movements, indecisions, directions, routes, etc. related to each image and reflect them to the Protagonist to understand better what she/he did.

Step 8:

The same but in this step it is the Antagonist who struggles against all the Protagonist's images. Here again we try to understand what is weakening the Protagonist and reinforcing the Antagonist.

Steps 9-10:

see "Cops in the head" technique.

Additionally, in step 9, the Protagonist is helped by the Images of his/her weak point, in fact, during this last improvisation that has the aim to change reality, the images can advise the Protagonist when they see him/her fall again in the particular attitude they embody.



#### **B.4 Circuit of ritual and masks**

##### **GOALS**

To experiment the possibility to exit a ritual<sup>7</sup> and have a different behaviour/attitude in a specific context.

##### **SUITABLE STORIES**

In this case stories/episodes that can benefit from this technique are the ones where a person has a clear will but cannot change attitude; it seems that in front of this relationship she/he can only behave in a ritualised way, repeating the same patterns over and over.

##### **STEPS**

1- Description of the story

2- First improvisation

3- Creation of the social mask of the prevailing attitude

4- Creation of another 3-4 improvisations on situations in which the protagonist behaves differently and creation of the relevant social masks

5- Assumption of the mask by the protagonist and amplification of the improvisations

6- Protagonist on indication of the trainer takes a social mask, starts the improvisation in the related scene, and then moves to the scene indicated by the trainer, doing so for several times

<sup>7</sup> In Boal's framework "ritual" is a meaningful word; it refers to a social situation where we enter and have a behavioural pattern created by the repetitive gesture and interaction we have had in similar situations. The ritual is therefore a social interaction codified by implicit norms.



- 7- Rehearsal of the future action (re-improvisation without masks of the initial scene and rehearsal of transformation. Protagonist does not act the way the story went in reality but tries to transform it)
- 8- The multiple mirror of the others' gaze (exchange of ideas).

## DESCRIPTION

Steps 1-2:  
see "Cops in the head" technique.

Step 3:  
The Joker asks the audience to show through images what the prevailing attitudes and characteristics of the Protagonist in the scene are. Each proposal is welcome, but at the end the group should choose one image, the most convincing. In this technique it is the group without consulting the Protagonist, so it can be delicate for her/him, but also enriching as the others see things he/she could not recognise and accept.

Step 4:  
The Joker asks the Protagonist to create other 3-4 scenes where he/she has a different attitude compared with the image previously chosen. For each scene, after improvisation, the Joker asks the group as in step 3 and an image synthesis is agreed.

Step 5:  
Now the Joker asks the Protagonist to enter the 4-5 scenes, but keeping and exaggerating his/her own image (the mask detected in step 3) in each ritual; where he/she was timid, to be more timid, where she/he was paternalistic, to be more paternalistic... and so on.

Step 6:  
The Joker asks the Protagonist to keep an image from one scene and bring it to another one and improvise with this new mask. In this way the mask clashes with the ritual and something new can happen. It is up to the Joker to send the Protagonist in the scene where the clash with the specific mask can stimulate something new. The idea of transformation here is that the Protagonist already has the resources to better manage the oppressive situation, as in other circumstances he/she shows a different attitude; so the only task is to bring this resource where it is needed.

Steps 7-8:  
see "Cops in the head" technique.







### 3.2 Identification, recognition, resonance

In all the RoD techniques participants are asked to create images, to recognise them, to improvise by them: how to do it?

Boal suggests 3 types of relation between participants and image:

- 1) the actor sees the image created by the Protagonist and identifies her/himself; it is like saying: <This is who I am>.
- 2) The actor recognises the image; it is like saying: <I know a person like that>.
- 3) The actor has not a clear idea about who the image can represent but is emotionally touched by that, there is a kind of "resonance" between actor and image.

In all 3 cases the link is suitable to bring the actor to a good improvisation. If the image does not speak to the actor in none of the 3 modalities, it is better not to take it on.

About improvising through an image, what is important is first to feel the image, what it is saying at a physical, emotional, intellectual level? What kind of sensations, feelings, memories and images does it create within the actor? Starting from this step the actor can let body and mouth act and speak freely, with no boundaries except the safety of all participants.

Feel free to explore the unknown as otherwise the richness of theatre risks being limited to reproduce reality, the surface.

Sometimes images can bring to a wild imagination, something that seems completely far from the told situation; for instance once in Analytical Image, an actor made an image of a lion tamer; nothing to do with the specific context (urban, an apartment...) but meaningful about the relationship in that couple.



### 3.3 Questions and doubts

There are some questions and doubts we collected during our group process that might be helpful for other professionals as well. We have grouped questions in four areas.



## A) Individual and society

1) How are the personal/community/social levels included in the techniques?

2) The voices in the head (Cops) nowadays are also the ones coming from social media and influencers.

3) Through these techniques can we get a change?

### Possible answers:

1) How are the personal/community/social levels included in the techniques?

There are many levels:

- sym-pathy check: the Joker, after the story is told or after the first improvisation or before the final sharing, could ask the group to say or show through their body, how much sym-pathy they felt for the story.

- During the main RoD technique when images are created, these images are bridges between the Protagonist's story and the participants'.

- Into Cops-in-the-head there is a step when the Protagonist tells a confidence to each Cop, recalling a real fact that happened. In this case the social context appears, with the identified characters.

- Moreover, when we apply the SPIC work, we can move farther, from the internal forces, to the social/political/ideological/cultural elements which affect the personal story.

2) The voices in the head (Cops) nowadays are also the ones coming from social media and influencers.

Yes, we agree. We can identify these voices too, either in the Cops technique or in the SPIC work.

3) Through these techniques can we get a change?

It depends on what kind of change we have in mind.

We can have changes in the person but also in the group he/she belongs to, the Institution, the neighbourhood, in society...

At personal level we can change:

-Our mind: new information, new knowledge, new analysis, new way to reflect...

-Our language: attention to speech and words...

-Our emotions: new expressions, new emotional regulations, new ways to manage them...

-Our skills: improving some competences we have to deal with conflict...

-Our attitudes: a new position towards my job, or a new orientation towards my partner,...

-Our behaviours: a new way to act, or a variation in the old behaviour...

-Our personality: improved self-esteem, less depression, more self-awareness...

RoD techniques can affect mainly the personal level of change and in this area all of the 6 listed can happen except the change in personality as it requires a long time and deep work, let's say a therapeutic approach.

In our practice what often results as change in the Protagonist and also in the other participants is more awareness about the oppressive situations in daily life and the feeling not to be alone.



## B) Type of stories

1) How to find personal stories that fit the RoD set?

2) What kind of stories do we need? Should we select them?

3) I heard more existential stories than more daily ones... are there instructions?

4) How does one choose the most suitable technique for the story?

### Possible answers:

1) How to find personal stories that fit the RoD set?

The question is incorrect as, like Boal said, TO is created for the people and not the opposite; so the challenge for the Joker is not to find the right story, but to propose the right technique for each specific story.

Sometimes it is not easy to understand quickly what to do, so our suggestion in these cases is to start with one, the best you know and be sure that something would come out.

The selection of the story to be played is made only by participants, as we have to create metaxis and sym-pathy; normally it is done by voting the best story among 2 or 3; indeed we need at least part of the group to be emotionally linked to the chosen story, otherwise it is difficult to create sym-pathy.

2) What kind of stories do we need? Should we select them?

As explained in the chapter (see paragraph 1.5) we use RoD when the oppressor is not clear or visible.

So one fundamental question is to distinguish from the telling if the oppression comes from outside, driven by one or more oppressors, or if it comes mainly from inside, from phantoms and internal characters or forces.

The distinction is not black and white, as each situation can have both sides, but we have to perceive the dominant one. It is always possible to start with RoD and go to Forum or vice versa.



Typically, if we find a solution with the Forum-Theatre and one person says, "yes, I agree, it is a good solution but I would not be able to apply it as I feel blocked or I feel contradictory passions within me, etc....", in this case the solution is not available because we need to unblock the person using some RoD technique.

3) I heard stories more existential than others more daily ones... are there instructions?

No, all stories can be worked out, it does not matter if it is an exceptional episode or strange story or, on the contrary, it is a very common and apparently "trivial" one.

As Boal said, we do not have to evaluate the oppression, but just to work on it.

There is not a hierarchy among stories, but we have to choose the one which is most felt by the group, to be sure there is an emotional engagement and a likely sym-pathy and then metaxis.

4) How one chooses the technique more suitable to the story?

The techniques have been created by Boal and his group in Paris to face different situations people were talking about during a long-term workshop.

So there is some advice about which technique is the most suitable for a specific story.

In general, stories can be complex to understand immediately, so it happen that the real problem emerges slowly and we can choose the right technique later; however we can take into account that:

- "Cops in the head" is perfect when the Protagonist has a clear will in the specific situation, but feels blocked from within.

- "Rainbow of desires" when the Protagonist has not a clear will or feels opposite wills/emotions, or he/she is confused about what she/he wants.

- "Analytical image" when the Protagonist lives a relationship where he/she cannot reach something important and she/he does not know why but is often a loser.

- "Circuit of rituals and masks" when the Protagonist is blocked in a negative attitude within a specific relationship, and thinks he/she cannot change this attitude.

Other techniques are oriented to different situations.



### C) Technical questions

1) When the Antagonist plays really differently from the person known by the Protagonist, what should the Joker do?

2) Is it possible to change the image of the Oppressor?

3) What instructions to give to those who do not have a clear Oppressor?

4) How to change if you see that a technique is not working?

5) In general in RoD techniques is it important to come out with a positive result?

6) How to transform a personal dilemma or story into a concrete scene where Protagonist could be brought to a change?

7) How to deal with a story completely in the far past where it is not possible to change anything (except internal memory and living of an internal event = a catharsis)?

8) Is it possible and fruitful to make RoD online?

9) About the Image of Antagonist: the 5 improvisations were running simultaneously; is it possible to see one by one?

10) About Rainbow of Desires:

10.1) I entered the scene as a self-sabotage role, but I was perceived as a helper; what should I have done?

10.2) Does naming the feelings from the beginning help identify them better?

10.3) Can the Protagonist explain the meaning of the image instead of simply showing it?

10.4) Should I play a woman who makes possible an intimate relationship or not?

11) About the Circuit of rituals and masks, is there any logic in the order of entering the scenes and choosing which mask to do?

12) In Circuit of rituals and masks, are we searching for a more efficient or simply different attitude to create the other scenes?

13) How to manage Cops in the head when the Protagonist is not able to interact with her Cops as she confuses Cops and her inner feelings?

### Possible answers:

1) When the Antagonist plays really differently from the person known by the Protagonist, what should the Joker do?

There are different situations:

-The actor who embodies an internal element has a really different idea from the Protagonist's idea of the Cop/Feeling/Weak points, etc. and he/she is not able to incorporate the 2 aspects

-As above, but the actor can manage the contradiction and is able to merge them

-A third solution, for really skilled actors, could be to jump from one element to the other.

If none is possible, better to replace the actor with another one who feels similar to the Protagonist.

2) Is it possible to change the image of the Oppressor?

No. In these techniques ideally the actors in the image should stay in the image.



That does not mean they cannot move at all, they do not have to stay like frozen, they can move and change but must keep the essence of the image; this essential element should be perceived not thought; if the actor perceives that it is essential to lie down, the actor should keep this position but can move the body; if the element is the direct gaze into the Protagonist's eyes, this aspect should be respected, and so on.

What is the reason?

The image captures some key details and makes it essential, so, in order to be inspired by this element, the actor must keep what is essential in the image, as the source for improvisation are based in the sensations, feelings and images nourished by the body image.

### 3) What instructions to give to those who do not have a clear Oppressor?

No instructions but techniques. If the Protagonist does not have a clear Oppressor that means likely that he/she is internalised, so the Rainbow of Desires technique for instance can be fruitful.

It is different if the Protagonist cannot recall a relational situation where this oppression occurs. RoD requires a relation, at least among Protagonist and one Antagonist. The word Oppressor is replaced by Antagonist as in these stories we are not sure that there is an oppression from outside, maybe yes, or likely it is internalised and the Antagonist is just a pretext to activate the internal oppressors.

So, in case the Protagonist cannot tell a relational situation we need to investigate more, asking and questioning, to find a possible situation.

Sometimes we can imagine a future, like <think to have the chance to talk with your father or boss or else... May you figure out the situation? Where could it happen? Who are the people present? Etc.>

### 4) How to change if you see that a technique is not working?

It is rare that a technique does not work at all; it can happen that it is not the best one for the story. In this case the Joker should feel if it is better to proceed anyway as some results are coming, or to stop clearly and propose another one.

Take into consideration also the time; a main technique can last 2 hours or more, so if you are working for one hour and want to start another technique, maybe there is not enough time or energy in the Protagonist or the group to carry on another exploration.

So in general, either the Joker changes technique just at the beginning or it is better to conclude with the path that was already started and maybe to use another technique in the next session.



### 5) In general in RoD techniques is it important to come out with a positive result?

Yes and no.

We do not search for a catharsis, but a metaxis.

That means also to question what is a positive result.

For some therapeutic approach the good result is when the Protagonist lives a strong emotional engagement arriving to release strong emotions. Psychodrama searches for catharsis as a means to transform the internal perceptions of Protagonists and discover new insights.

In RoD it is not necessary to push people to cry or scream, but it is important to create the metaxis, that is to make the Protagonist feel the same emotions in the scene as in real life.

Then, once the process is started, there are two typical endings:

-The last improvisation is always what Boal called "rehearsal for the future action". Here the Joker must be aware and focused to help the Protagonist explore a different way to manage the situation, without any judgement. So the improvisation should be clearly oriented to change the situation and not to repeat the oppressive pattern. Usually the Protagonist arrives to this almost last step more aware about the situation and his/her own behaviour, and also with the will to change, but sometimes he/she arrives exhausted or confused, so the Joker can help him/her by stopping the improvisation, providing guidance, asking her/him about the process and the satisfaction, etc. there are many different possibilities.

-After that there is the so-called "multiple mirror of the others' gaze", where the Protagonist can receive observations and hypotheses from the group. Also in this part it is important as a Joker to ensure that there is no judgement but observation and that in case of interpretations they are provided as possible lenses, not as the Truth.

So it is important that those 2 steps would help the Protagonist to get out with some new insight or strength or possible way out of oppression, but not necessarily as a happy end.





6) How to transform a personal dilemma or story into a concrete scene where Protagonist could be brought to a change?

It is not easy but you can try to do something like this:

Joker: What is the situation you want to improve/change?

Protagonist: I have a dilemma, I do not know if I should keep my straight couple or explore my bisexuality too. I do not know what to choose, if it is right or wrong...

J: Let's improvise 2 different situations, here you are with your partner in a positive moment, which one can we improvise?

Here you are in a positive moment where you are living also your bisexuality; which one can be?

Let's improvise both.

(first improvisation starts)

J: How do you feel?

Now we start the second improvisation.

(second improvisation starts)

J: How do you feel?

P: Better in the second.

J: (having had confirmation by observation that the sentence is true, because verbal and non-verbal communication are in accordance) So, let's say this is your main desire; why don't you follow it?

P: Because I am afraid to lose my straight partner...

J: Ok, so now I propose to use Cops in the head.

In this manner, something that was an internal dilemma, something moral, intellectual, is transformed in a situation where to apply a RoD technique.

7) How to deal with a story completely in the far past where it is not possible to change anything (except internal memory and living of an internal event = a catharsis)?

TO is future-oriented; if the story is completely in the far past where it is not possible to change anything, we have some options:

-To give up to TO and to use psychodrama, as it is oriented to change the internal memory and living of the personal past events through catharsis.

-To ask how this past is refracted into the present life of the Protagonist and then choose one story from the present.

-To play the past situation and then ask the Protagonist to re-play as he/she would have liked to act in that moment. Of course this is magic as the past cannot change, but like in the Morenian catharsis, this step can lead the Protagonist to reconcile with her/his own past and the persons related to the event. Moreover the exploration can give him/her new strength to address the consequences of that event in the present life.

8) Is it possible and fruitful to make RoD online?

Never done but we know people doing that.



9) About the Image of Antagonist: the 5 improvisations were running simultaneously; is it possible to see one by one?

Usually we do not do it as it is a technique we use to activate the group, to stimulate everyone to focus on a personal story. Therefore the way to improvise simultaneously is easing people to open up themselves without a big pressure from the group given that it is split in small sub-groups.

This is the advantage of the so-called "Fair mode".<sup>8</sup>

But of course, if you feel the group is ready to manage the possible resistances and you are too, you can try, maybe after some minutes in the fair mode.

10) About Rainbow of Desires:

10.1) I entered the scene as a self-sabotage role, but I was perceived as a helper; what should I have done?

This is a specific case to which a general answer was given in question 1.

10.2) Does naming the feelings from the beginning help identify them better?

Likely yes, but at the same time we lose the multifacetedness of the body image, that is the fact that it represents something ambiguous that can bring us to discover unexpected links or parallelisms.

10.3) Can the Protagonist explain the meaning of the image instead of simply showing it?

As above, the image is the core of RoD and the tool that allows to create bridges between the personal experiences of participants as it captures the essence of the mechanisms, cleared from all irrelevant contextual details. If we name or explain the images, they lose this potential and are reduced to a unique reading. So the risk is that there are no bridges between stories, no pluralisation of the Protagonist's problem.

10.4) Should I play a woman who makes possible an intimate relationship or not?

It happened when the Protagonist was trying to approach the woman she liked. The step in the technique was in the middle of the process where we tried to keep the reality of oppression, not to change it, so in that moment we should not change the oppression by making the Antagonist more open/positive. Moreover in that story the problem was not to win the woman over, but to allow herself to approach her; therefore the desire was to be free to try and not necessarily to win.

<sup>8</sup> "Fair mode" is a mode proposed by Boal consisting in pairs improvising at the same time. In this way many people are simultaneously engaged and there is less pressure on a specific couple. It is different from the "Agorà" step, where only the internal forces are playing, discussing together how to negotiate or prevail.



Only if the strategy and behaviour of the Protagonist really affect the Antagonist, he/she can change, as in the Forum-Theatre, where oppressors should be sensitive and perceive what is happening inside their character in the face of the Spectator's intervention.

Being sensitive does not mean to facilitate the Protagonist's task and make easy what is not, but to be open to feel what is changing inside. The role of Antagonist in RoD is the same as in Forum-Theatre, to avoid the extreme (I would not change at all, never... or the opposite, I cease soon, as I like the happy ending). Only in this way can the research be fruitful. See also answer to question 5.

**11) About the Circuit of rituals and masks, is there any logic in the order of entering the scenes and choosing which mask to do?**

In this technique the idea is that we show ourselves in each context in a different way, called social masks. These masks are produced and reinforced by social rituals, that is, relational events where we enter and unconsciously follow unwritten social rules and play our roles as foreseen.

We are a personality but playing in different ways depending on what we learnt to be appropriate in society. To break down a social ritual is a way to change oppression.

But we can also use the mask from one ritual to another, to let the ritual explode and to find new and more positive behaviours.

So coming to the question, as Joker, we should send the Protagonist to another ritual but keeping the mask he/she has in the previous one. The positive result is already in the breaking of correspondence between ritual and mask; this fact stimulates us to be more free, to not be forced to follow a script in each situation but perceive that we can be free to change our mask.

The second positive result is to discover that I already have the resources to behave in another way.

A third output is to feel how a specific mask can be useful in a different context to liberate my energy and creativity.

**12) In Circuit of rituals and masks, are we searching for a more efficient or simply different attitude to create the other scenes?**

During the building of the circuit we are searching just for different attitudes/masks and ask the Protagonist to tell at least 4, maximum 5, different situations. Then during the tour, when the Joker asks to bring a mask in another situation, the focus is on the main scene, the one the Protagonist told to illustrate her/his own oppression. So usually we do not use all masks in all scenes, but explore mainly how a new mask can be positive or negative in the main scene.

The positive result as said in answer 11 is already to unblock the connection between masks and rituals.

**13) How to manage Cops in the head when the Protagonist is not able to interact with her Cops as she confuses Cops and her inner feelings?**

This occurred in an "application on the field" experience and we had to stop the technique, jumping to the last steps, as this exploration was impossible for the Protagonist.

We do not know if the obstacle was at the intellectual level - the difficult distinction between Cops as internalised external forces and personal feelings - or if it was maybe a defence against the suffering in recognising specific Cops in this situation of psychological gender-based violence.

We tried several times to focus her on this aspect of the Cops but unsuccessfully, so we proposed to come back to the "rehearsal for the future action".

In this case the positive outcome for the Protagonist was, however, reached as she estimated that it was really important for her to tell this sad story within her theatre group.





## D) Dealing with emotions

1) How to close a RoD session?

2) How are we entering/leaving the roles?

3) Which balance between safe tension and safe space should we keep?

4) How to deal with people who are emotionally strongly touched (cry, rage...) during a technique?

5) How much should we push the Protagonist into the story and engage him/her emotionally?

6) How to manage a reluctant group to participate, how to involve a community that is not used to questioning itself?

7) What to do with tellers whose stories were not chosen by the group?

### Possible answers:

1) How to close a RoD session?

The RoD set foresees a common ending, called "the multiple mirror of others' gaze" but as explained in the techniques, other 2 kinds of sharing are possible. The final sharing is meant to provide insights to the Protagonist, but also to feel sympathy for him/her and create solidarity. To make us not to feel alone with our own problems but perceive we have similar ones, at least with someone else.

Moreover it is seen as a moment where we can increase our knowledge, thanks to the collective, about oppressive situations.

It can happen that the group or some participants need something else to get out of their roles or release the emotional tension, etc., for example some voice- or body-based exercises (see some examples below under question number 2). It can be a good idea to ask the group after the sharing part, whether they need something before closing the session.

2) How are we entering/leaving the roles?

When we start with the first improvisation there are several tools that can help the other roles invited by Protagonist to enter the specific character:

- Joker can ask the Protagonist about the characteristics of each role, for instance asking to define it in short, with 3 adjectives.

- Joker can ask the Protagonist to identify the main will of each character on stage.

- Joker can invite him/her to start the improvisation and when he/she sees difficulties in playing a character, he/she can help the actor/actress focus, or ask questions, or remind the information received by the Protagonist, etc.

- another way is to ask all the group to improvise the role and then ask the Protagonist to choose the person who played in the way which was the most close to the real character.

About leaving the roles, we think it is important to accompany the actors to exit from characters, mainly when they have been played for a long-time or in a deep way.

Some exercises from TO or other disciplines can help, for instance:

- standing in a circle, breath in and out and every time leave the character exiting

- standing in a circle, jump and scream out the character, shouting

- standing in a circle, take off the imaginary skin of the character from each point of your body, slowly

- standing in a circle, step forward leaving the character behind you on the ground, like a dress or a mask.



3) Which balance between safe tension and safe space should we keep?

It's a matter of sensitivity not rules; so as Joker you should try to feel if the persons on stage and the audience need more comfort zone or to be challenged more. You can follow your instinct or insight and try, observing the reactions.

In a general sense, if you perceive things are not moving enough you can push more, if you perceive resistance, shyness, mistrust... you should go back a little to ensure a good atmosphere in the group. Mistakes for sure will happen, the process is about experimenting together.

4) How to deal with people who are emotionally strongly touched (cry, rage...) during a technique?

The main problem, according to a therapeutic perspective, is not expressing emotions but withholding emotions. So if a person cries or screams, don't panic but support the person. More important to observe if someone is upset but not expressing clear emotions or staying in between or intellectualising.



To manage emotions it would be better to lead the activities in pairs, so one Joker can be more focused on the aesthetic space while the other is focused on the audience watching the RoD scene.

To take care the emotions some simple tools are effective:

- to give a space to verbalise the internal feelings
  - to propose a learning-buddies moment or Subject-Guide exercises<sup>9</sup>
  - to ask the person what can be done for him/her to feel better
  - to propose a ritual to discard overwhelming emotions
  - to propose a children-play to release the heavy atmosphere.
- Etc.

#### 5) How much should we push the Protagonist into the story and engage him/her emotionally?

While in a psychodramatic session the trainer pushes the Protagonist to live intense emotions as the goal is to have a catharsis and new insights based on that, in RoD it is not necessary to arrive up to cry or scream; what is important, however, is getting to a point where the Protagonist is feeling the same emotions as in the real situation. Only in this way TO produces a metaxis and therefore, according to Boal, a further change in him/herself and the context.

#### 6) How to manage a reluctant group to participate? How to involve a community that is not used to questioning itself?

When an entire group is reluctant to participate we have to think about possible reasons, maybe also asking the group or some of the members.

To understand if the knot is the relationship with me as trainer, or the lack of trust in the group, or the setting where we are, or lack of habit to do theatre or move...

If the reason is shyness or lack of trust in the Joker, we have to build this trust, slowly, through game, more positive interaction, accepting the resistance and helping overcome it.

For this purpose we can use exercises from the arsenal of TO or from other sources.

It is a bit different in the case of a large community, like a village, a neighbourhood, or an Institution.

Also here we have to analyse case by case the reasons and this is a typical situation for community work.<sup>10</sup> Also having an alliance with a person from the community that can push the group to dare more could help.

#### 7) What to do with tellers whose stories were not chosen by the group?

It is a really delicate moment when the Joker asks the participants to tell stories and then only one is chosen. The rejection may lead the people whose stories were not chosen to feel belittled, not understood, hurt or left alone.

There are 3 steps and 3 ideas regarding how to manage the not chosen stories:

a) Before voting it is better to inform the group that only one story will be chosen that day, to be worked out with a RoD technique, which will be the story which affects the group the most. It is not useful to choose a story that does not resonate in the group as the work will be affected by this emotionally poor approach and the sim-pathy will be at risk.

So we must choose.

But if you choose one, the others will be rejected, at least that day.

So the Joker can advise the group that choosing one does not mean the other stories are not important, but that the chosen one is, today, in this group, the one which has resonated the most.

b) The second step is immediately after the voting. You can thank the persons who told the story not chosen and maybe ask them a bit about how they are feeling. In case of deep emotion in a teller the Joker can maybe stop for a while and talk with the person or give him/her specific attention.

c) At the end of the session, if there is time, or later on, the Joker could take again the rejected stories and do an exercise to manage them a bit. For instance, the extrapolation exercises can be very useful even if they do not go deeply in a story, they can help visualise and feel a possible change.

One participant suggested also doing some movement or playing a game with the cards of archetypes, giving a physical image of how you feel.

<sup>9</sup> Subject-Guide comes from Jerome Liss's (1974) practice; it's about an exercise in pairs where the Subject talks about his/her emotions related to the activity which is done and the Guide helps recognise better the emotions, by asking, by proposing to repeat some key words, to repeat some key gestures, etc. The basis is the active listening of Thomas Gordon (2001), plus a body activation.

<sup>10</sup> To work with a community implies to refer to Community Organising, an Anglo-Saxon movement of social activists who help communities to self-organise to claim for their own rights. It was started by the American sociologist Saul Alinsky (1971) who focused on the building of people's organisations with attention to programmes; leadership; community traditions; tactics; popular education and psychological observations on mass organisation.







## 4) SUGGESTIONS FOR READERS

Here is some advice focused on TO, RoD, therapies and critical psychology.

### 4.1 ARTICLES

Kunitson, Nikolai:

Free Our Mind - Training material in Rainbow of Desires

[https://issuu.com/nikolaikunitson/docs/rod\\_eng](https://issuu.com/nikolaikunitson/docs/rod_eng)

(a summary of TO techniques)

Dwyer, Paul:

Though This Be Madness ...? The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy

<https://www.intellectbooks.com/asset/520/atr-8.7.pdf>

(a critical article about RoD techniques and systemic approach)

Paska, Ivva:

Social Adversity, Mental Distress, and the Theatre of the Oppressed

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2020/11/theatre-oppressed/>

(Social Adversity, Mental Distress, and the Theatre of the Oppressed)

Andy McLaverty-Robinson:

Augusto Boal: The Rainbow of Desire An A to Z of Theory

<https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/augusto-boal-rainbow-desire/>

(article about RoD and Boal's work in prison with its contradictions)

Forgasz, Rachel:

Reframing 'The Rainbow of Desire' as embodied self-reflexivity in initial teacher education

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13569783.2014.928008>

(this research produces a new, politicised purpose for RoD itself, which has traditionally been categorised as a therapeutic applied theatre practice).

### 4.2 BOOKS

- Alinsky, Saul D. (1971). Rules for Radicals. A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals. New York. Vintage.
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- Freire, Paulo. (1973). Education for Critical Consciousness. New York. Seabury.
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- Perls, Frederick Salomon. (1981). The Gestalt approach; and Eye witness to therapy. New York. Bantam Books.
- Rigliano, Paolo and Siciliani, Orazio. (1988). Famiglia schizofrenia violenza. Un approccio sistemico e non violento al conflitto familiare. Roma. NIS.
- Rosenberg, Marshall. (1999). Nonviolent Communication. USA. PuddleDancer Press.



#### 4.3 WEBSITES

CTO, Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)  
<https://www.ctorio.org.br/home/>

Jana Sanskriti (JS) Centre for Theatre of the Oppressed (India and Bangladesh)  
<https://janasanskriti.org/about-page>

Giolli Cooperativa sociale, Centre for Theatre and Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Italy)  
[www.giollicoop.it](http://www.giollicoop.it)

Kuringa, Space for theatre of the Oppressed (Berlin, Germany)  
<https://kuringa.de/en/home-2/>

#### 4.4 VIDEOS

ALa, Galway, Gavin Crichton's Rainbow of Desire - Theatre of the Oppressed, training:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECJTNIDdFoA>

David Diamond explains Rainbow of Desire technique and its variation:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivounW6cJxw&t=316s>

Cops In The Head (1996) - A session led by David Diamond:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEd961-Txa0>

Poetic Justice Theatre Ensemble: Cops in Head with "Spect-actors" - A long session with Cops:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2xjQab\\_cYc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2xjQab_cYc)

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Here you can find some short descriptions of the on the filed experience in Italy and Hungary:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1X76DLsX1eJf1NB0eHnCFV8k\\_ngx8B87G?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1X76DLsX1eJf1NB0eHnCFV8k_ngx8B87G?usp=sharing)

