

LATIN AMERICAN THEATER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE:  
THE CASE OF AUGUSTO BOAL AND ENRIQUE BUENAVENTURA  
BY

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## Abstract

This study develops the concepts of scenario and anti-scenario through an examination of Latin American Theater for Social Change. These concepts, along with the transmission of cultural and traumatic memory in performance, help demonstrate that the Social Change movement in Latin America is not just “Brechtian-style” theater, but an original movement that developed an aesthetic of its own.

This thesis focuses on the work of two Latin American artists: Brazilian theater maker Augusto Boal, and Colombian playwright and director Enrique Buenaventura. The Boal material examined in this work includes the techniques of Invisible Theater, Forum Theater and Image Theater. Buenaventura's plays considered here include three pieces from *Los Papeles del Infierno: La tortura, La maestra* and *La autopsia*.

Through an analysis of these artists' work, this thesis extends Diana Taylor's concept of scenario to include the presence of an anti-scenario. Anti-scenarios provoke debate among audiences and question social and political structures, helping to bring about social change. Also, through the transmission of cultural and traumatic memories, Theater for Social Change revisits social traumas, reminding audiences of the faults of our society and challenging us to work for greater social and economic justice.

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## **Introduction:**

### **El Nuevo Teatro**

“Nosotros pensamos que el teatro no sólo debe ser popular, sino que también debe serlo todo lo demás: especialmente el Poder y el Estado, los alimentos, las fábricas, las playas, las universidades, la vida” (Boal, *Categorías de Teatro Popular*, 9).

Much of Latin American theater of the second half of the twentieth century was strongly influenced by Bertold Brecht’s Epic Theater. However, Latin American theater practitioners found their own way of understanding and applying Brecht. They did not focus only on staging Brecht, but absorbed his theory and applied it to Latin American culture. The result is a strong theater movement known as the *Nuevo Teatro*.

The *Nuevo Teatro* movement expanded throughout Latin America and took various forms: *Teatro de Creación Colectiva*, Theater of the Oppressed and *Compañías de Teatro Popular*; however, the common element is that it is a movement that focuses on didactic theater and social change promotion. According to Rizk, it is basically a movement of popular theater committed to social change. It addresses situations that concern the audience and at the same time, it asks the audience to step in and transform the reality of the plays. “El Nuevo Teatro es básicamente un teatro popular... por ser un teatro que se preocupa por los problemas que conciernen a su público al tiempo que le pide a este público una mayor participación y transforma sus espectáculos en base a esta aportación” (*El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*, 19).

The *Nuevo Teatro* movement is political and aesthetic at the same time. Buenaventura, founder of the movement in Colombia, thought that theater should confront the audience, make them think and become active in the resolution of social and political problems. However, he also believed that theater shouldn't stop being artistic and rich in aesthetic, "El teatro político sin estética es mal teatro y peor política" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 9). On the same matter, Augusto Boal, founder of Theater of the Oppressed affirms in his book *Categorías de Teatro Popular*, that theater is a tool used to gain knowledge, and therefore, it is political. He also states that theater is transmitted thought our senses, and therefore it constitutes an aesthetic form. "El teatro es una forma de conocimiento, por lo tanto, es político; sus medios son sensoriales, por lo tanto, es estético" (28).

According to Rizk, the movement started during the 1950's in Colombia and quickly spread throughout the continent. The movement was born as a response to the traditional bourgeois western style theater. "Surgió de la necesidad de marcar el momento de ruptura con todas las formas heredadas del teatro directamente anterior: el teatro burgués, llámese naturalista o costumbrista" (*El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*,13). Also, according to Maria Mercedes Jaramillo, the *Nuevo Teatro* was born as a necessity to express the "here and now" and to promote national identity. "El Nuevo Teatro nace a partir de la necesidad de una identidad cultural y de un deseo de expresar "el aquí y el ahora" (19). Latin American theater practitioners thought that the traditional western style theater known as Bourgeois

Theater or Naturalistic Theater did not address Latin American reality and social problems and instead, it only reproduced the European and North American reality.

Latin American theater practitioners were concerned about social problems in their countries, especially because of the circumstances surrounding them at the time, such as social strikes, political conflicts between parties, repressive governments and violence. Also, theater practitioners of the period wanted theater to address their reality and to move away from the elite. They wanted to develop popular theater forms that would be accessible to all populations so that social change could be acquired.

Enrique Buenaventura, pioneer of the *Nuevo Teatro* in Colombia, cited by Rizk, states that the *Nuevo Teatro* does not underestimate Bourgeois Theater, but declares its death. (14).<sup>1</sup> Also, Carballido quotes Buenaventura “Hay que matar al burgues dentro de nosotros” “We must kill the bourgeois inside of us” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 9). Bourgeois Theater, as Buenaventura called naturalistic western theater, did not represent the reality of Latin American working classes. The founders of the *Nuevo Teatro* thought that theater should be a tool to instruct. Their goal was to create consciousness about Latin American realities by representing it through theater. However, the goal of the *Nuevo Teatro* did not end there, creating consciousness wasn't enough, and theater needed to generate solutions. A transformation should occur, something that will transform reality into something better. The theatrical

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<sup>1</sup> “El teatro y el drama burgués tienen fecha tanto de nacimiento como de defunción. No se trata de negarle su validez sino de constatar su muerte” (Buenaventura, cited by Rizk, *El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*, 14).



space should promote a space where actors and audience could work together and generate actions that would transform aspects of reality. Spectators were to become active members of the theatrical experience, because theater, as Boal thinks, is rehearsal for Revolution.

One of the elements that constitute an important characteristic of the *Nuevo Teatro* is the relationship between the actors and spectators. This characteristic is very important to this movement because the themes that are being represented are themes of interest for both parties. The relationship between actor and spectator is based on the mutual concern that they both have about what is happening on stage, because what is happening there is their reality, and it is a reality that can be represented and most of all, transformed.

“En otras palabras, esta relación esta basada en el entendimiento mutuo de lo que está sucediendo en escena le importa a todos, le concierne a todos, tiene que ver con los problemas de la sociedad a la que pertenecen tanto el público como los actores y a la manera como ambos perciben esta realidad que es susceptible a ser representada, y lo más importante de todo, que es también susceptible a ser transformada” (Rizk, *El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*,15).

Also, according to Rizk, the *Nuevo Teatro*'s emphasis is on generating a polemic relationship with the audience (*El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*, 14). The relationship between actors and spectators has to be polemic because it must force a reaction in the audience. In some forms of *Nuevo Teatro*, like Theater of the Oppressed, the spectator reacts to the scene and is allowed to go on stage and

transform the action; however, on other forms of *Nuevo Teatro*, like with Enrique Buenaventura's plays, the audience remains seated at all time, but this does not mean they are passive spectators, on the contrary, the polemic reaction that the play produces in the spectators is supposed to have an effect on their ways of thinking and understanding reality. The goal is for the audience to come out of the theater thinking differently than when they arrived. Something has been transformed in their perception of the world.

The *Nuevo Teatro* themes are extracted from each country's reality. Some of the plays are based on historical facts or historical characters of popular importance, just as in Brechtian style theater. For example Rizk mentions that in Colombia the following historical events have produced a series of plays for *Nuevo Teatro*: The *Comuneros* Revolution against the Spaniards in 1781, The Banana Strike in 1928, the decade known as *La violencia* (1948-1958) and the Colombian participation during the Korean War (*El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*, 23-24). The same phenomenon occurred in Brazil, where companies such as *Teatro Arena* de Sao Paulo, directed by Augusto Boal, represented plays with historical characters. One example is the play *Arena contra Tiradentes*, about a popular hero of the eighteenth century who was hanged after being rebellious against the Portuguese conquests (*El Nuevo Teatro Latinoamericano*, 25).

As all movements, the *Nuevo Teatro* movement was a gradual process that can be trace from many decades before and which seeds finally flourish during the 1950's. Latin American theater has a long history of promoting social change.

Throughout history, one can trace a strong link among theater, politics and education. According to Luzuriaga, the Spanish and Portuguese colonizers used theater to Christianize the Indians and teach them a new language and culture (xii-xiv). Jaramillo agrees and adds that the Spanish theater was religious and courtesan and had a double function: to educate the natives on Catholicism and to entertain the government elites (45). Also according to Luzuriaga, after independence in the year 1821, theater was used to create and promote national identity. Finally, during the 1950's and 1960's, many Latin American governments designed programs in rural areas that used theater as a tool for reducing illiteracy, sickness and ignorance. For example, *Escuela Departamental de Teatro*, (later named *Teatro Experimental de Cali*) was created under government support to promote national identity and cultural development in Colombia (Rizk, *Theater Research International*, 132). Theater was also used by working groups to promote social change and educate workers on their rights as workers and citizens, while artists continued to use it to educate and promote better social conditions in rural areas.

Theater historians and academics agree that some of the factors that contributed to the formation of national liberation movements such as the *Nuevo Teatro* are: the waves of Marxist anti-capitalist struggle that culminated with the Cuban Revolution triumph, the social and economic consequences of World War II, the economic dependency and external debt of many Latin American countries and most of all, the difference between the European influenced bourgeois class culture and the culture of the popular classes (Rizk, 17-18; Taylor, *Brecht Sourcebook*, 172).

According to Jaramillo, the antecedents of the *Nuevo Teatro* can be traced to the vanguard movements of Europe and the United States:

“El teatro colombiano y latinoamericano han sufrido una serie de transformaciones en el siglo XX, que en parte tienen su origen en los movimientos vanguardistas europeos y norteamericanos, pero que responden también a las transformaciones sociales y políticas del mundo hispanoamericano” (29).

The vanguard movements were searching for new dramatic structures. Theater practitioners of the 1900's and 1920's such as Zola, Antoine and Stanislavski experienced with scenography and acting techniques. For example, the scenography should not be realistic, the plot was not to be linear and the themes of the plays should express modern social problems (Jaramillo, 30). In synthesis, the varied vanguard movements had one thing in common; they were reactions against the past and the norm and they all searched for new expressive forms on stage. “Estos movimientos de vanguardia aparecieron en el teatro entre 1909 y 1920, y tendrán una misma idea: reacción contra el pasado y lo establecido y una búsqueda incansable de nuevas formas expresivas” (Jaramillo, 31).

Also according to Jaramillo another antecedent of the *Nuevo Teatro* movement is the Political Theater of Piscator and Brecht. The Political Theater is an opposition to the Ideological Theater. It tries to represent reality in a historical way; this means that the Political Theater treats events in a three-dimensional way,

analyzing all its circumstances, while the Ideological Theater tries to hide reality and treats events as destiny (Jaramillo, 34).

According to Diana Taylor, Latin American theater of the second half of the twentieth century can be called “Revolutionary Theater”. On her essay in *Brecht Sourcebook*, she states that the *Nuevo Teatro* productions incorporated revolutionary ideology, identity and images. “The theater of revolution...also aimed at real, political change and saw itself as an important instrument in the social struggle” (175). She also states that during the 1960’s, theater productions reinforced revolution by setting emphasis on leadership, unity, mass mobilization, and combined force (175).

Finally, Albuquerque offers us a frivolous yet disturbingly true description of Latin American social and political reality of the second half of the twentieth century. This description helps us understand why the *Nuevo Teatro* was born, and why it was so radical and rebellious against the bourgeois:

“...to a grim list of poverty, disease, hunger, and natural disaster, one must add urban and countryside guerrilla fighting to overthrow pathetic tyrants and insensitive oligarchs; the ousting of democratic and civilian rule followed by oppression, torture and suppression of human rights and of the freedom of the press in several countries; frequent kidnapping, hijacks, holdups, strikes, riots, and demonstrations...” (14).

For more concrete examples of these violent realities, one can mention the Somoza and the Stroessner dictatorships in Nicaragua and Paraguay respectively, the El Salvador death squads, the Colombian drug rings and political conflicts known as

*La Violencia*, the massacre of the Amazon Indians, and the thousands of *desaparecidos* due to political conflicts and dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

After reviewing the violent and unstable realities of Latin American countries during the second half of the twentieth century, it is clear why theater practitioners used Brecht and his Epic Theater as a source of inspiration. It is also clear that theater practitioners were determined to contribute to the end of violence in their countries by moving away from traditional theater meant to entertain and generating *el Nuevo Teatro*, a theater meant to educate and facilitate tools that could help transform reality.

In conclusion, the vanguard movements and political theater of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with the social and political circumstances of Latin America during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, contributed to the formation of the *Nuevo Teatro* Movement. This movement fought to promote social change and instruct audiences about the political, social and economic circumstances of their countries. The artist who believed in and practiced the *Nuevo Teatro*, thought that by creating consciousness about reality, people could transform it into something better, and it was the theater's duty to promote that consciousness and not to alienate populations with false realities like the Bourgeois Theater did.

So far, I have presented the antecedents of the *Nuevo Teatro* movement in Latin American, however, some of the most valuable products from this movement come from Colombia and Brazil, as reflected in the cases studied in this thesis.

The cases in this thesis are the ones of Enrique Buenaventura, Colombian theater practitioner, director and playwright for the *Teatro Experimental de Cali* and founder of the *Nuevo Teatro* movement in his country; and Augusto Boal, Brazilian theater practitioner, director of the *Teatro Arena* and creator of the Theater of the Oppressed theory.

They both developed different methodologies to promote social change in their countries. They both agreed that to generate change they needed to move away from the traditional play production method and create their own way of approaching an audience. Both of them used Brecht as an inspiration and left important legacies in Latin American Theater: Theater of the Oppressed and *Teatro de Creación Colectiva*. Also, both of them stood up for their beliefs and confronted their governments to achieve their goal of making theater with the popular classes and available for all populations. Their beliefs cost them their positions and freedom; however, they were still able to achieve their goal and succeeded in the promotion of social change. Boal was incarcerated and tortured in Brazil before being exiled to Paris, while Buenaventura was thrown out of his teaching position at *Escuela Departamental de Teatro del Valle* and stop receiving government support for his productions.

In order to understand the importance of the *Nuevo Teatro* in Colombia and Brazil's social change promotion process, it is important to take a look at the circumstances surrounding these countries prior to and during the flourish of the *Nuevo Teatro*.

During the late 1950's Colombia was recovering from one of its most turbulent moments, known as *La violencia*. This took place between 1948 and 1957, when a rural strife between the two traditional parties killed over 300,000 people (Rizk, *Theater Research International*, 132). During *La violencia*, *campesinos* and native communities were expropriated from their lands at a larger scale than before. Also, because of the strife, millions of *campesinos* migrated into the city, generating unemployment, lack of homes and poverty for the popular classes (Jaramillo, 80). Inspired by the chaotic situation in their country, Colombian theater practitioners decided to stop entertaining the audience with bourgeois theater, and instead, they started questioning the social, economic and political conditions of their country in order to create awareness in the populations.

During this time, Colombia was under the dictatorship of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who introduced national television to the country. His government planned on using television to promote the image of their populist regimen and to distract the people from the atrocities that were being committed in the rural areas. For this purpose, they hired the best Spanish speaking theater director to train actors for Bogota's television. (Baycroft, qtd in Jaramillo, 81). In 1956, Seki Sano, a Japanese director who at the time worked in Mexico, arrived in the country.

Seki Sano had studied in the Moscow Art Theater, applying Stanislavski and Meyerhold's techniques to his work. Contrary to the government plans, Sano did not contribute to the alienation of the masses but reinforced the creation of a Colombian national theater. According to Jaramillo, Sano's major contribution to Colombian



theater was that he taught actors to be creative and not to just follow directors' orders. He motivated theater practitioners to be creative and to produce theater that questioned and addressed Colombian reality. With his teaching, Colombian theater moved away from the hierarchy of the author and director, contributing to what later became *Teatro de Creación Colectiva*.

When the government realized that their plan was not working, they fired Seki Sano and expelled him from the country, accusing him of communism (Jaramillo, 83). But it was too late, his teachings had an effect on his students and they all spread throughout the country with theater projects. For example, Santiago Garcia founded a group called *El Buho* and Fausto Cabrera founded *Escuela de Teatro del Distrito* (*Theater Research International*, Rizk, 132).

Meanwhile, in Cali, the *Escuela Departamental de Teatro*, later *Teatro Experimental de Cali* (TEC) was “created within the cultural development and national reconstruction programmes implemented by the dictatorial government of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla” (Rizk, *Theater Research International*, 132). The *Escuela* was under the direction of Luca de Tena, but after a year, he left, leaving Enrique Buenaventura as head of the school. Under Buenaventura's direction, *Teatro Experimental de Cali* developed a technique known as *Creación Colectiva* where every member of the company shared responsibilities for the productions and participated in the process of creating the artistic product. The technique was later used by many Latin American companies, giving its theater a particular form.

When referring to Colombian *Nuevo Teatro*, Carballido states that one of the reasons it is so rich in both politics and aesthetics is because it did not have to compete with a commercial theater (as opposed to other Latin American countries like Mexico and Argentina where commercial theater was much more powerful than the professional one) and it did not receive any support from the government, which allowed them to grow in any direction they wanted to. “Quizás la bendición colombiana haya sido la falta de apoyo estatal... y la maravillosa inexistencia de un teatro comercial. Pudo surgir así un movimiento muy amplio, fuerte, popular y tan original como se le dio la gana, por la falta de moldes tradicionales” (Carballido, *Los Papeles del Infierno*, 10).

On the other hand, during the first half of the 1960's, Brazil was under the orders of President João Goulart. He was elected vice-president to Jânio Quadros, and when Quadros resigned in 1961, Goulart assumed the ruler's position. However, Goulart was overthrown in 1964 by the military because they suspected him to have communist aspirations; his socialist points of views were not sympathetic to them or the right-wing side of the government. What followed was a two decade military dictatorship that proved to be among the most repressive in Brazilian history (Evenson, 241). This military dictatorship finally came to an end in 1985, with the election of Tancredo Neves as president of the country.

At that time, Augusto Boal and his company *Teatro de Arena de Sao Paulo* were concerned with oppressed populations in Brazil. They traveled extensively to poor areas, “some of the most poverty-stricken parts of Brazil: the interior of Sao

Paulo, the North-East...” (Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire*, 1). In these towns, they performed plays that rebelled against the oppressions of the dominant classes. The plays they wrote and performed dealt with social problems such as worker strikes, poverty and military violence. Because of his work as a cultural activist, Boal was perceived as a threat to the military regimen. According to Paterson, because of this threat, Boal was kidnapped one day when walking home from an *Arena* performance of Brecht’s *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, a play he had directed in 1971. In Paterson’s words, “Boal was kidnapped off the street, arrested, tortured, and eventually exiled to Argentina”<sup>2</sup>.

During his exile in Argentina, Boal published his first book, *Theater of the Oppressed*. In this book, he explains his revolutionary approach to Theater for Social Change. Then, after his exile, Boal self-exiled to Europe and lived in Paris, where he continued to experiment with his techniques and wrote his second book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*.

Later, during his exiles in Europe, Boal continued to work around oppressed populations. He felt that performing for the audience was not enough to generate social change, so he experimented with different ways to involve the audience in the theatrical event. Influenced by Brecht and his *Didactic Theater*, Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Moreno’s *Psychodrama*, he developed a

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<sup>2</sup> Extracted from the web page of the Pedagogy and Theater of the Oppressed organization, visited on September 21, 2007  
<http://www.ptoweb.org/about/boal.php>

methodology known as Theater of the Oppressed. This methodology includes different techniques such as Image Theater, Invisible Theater and Forum Theater.

The goal of Theater of the Oppressed is to transform the spectators into active participants of the play. For Boal, theater is a rehearsal for real life, meaning that the audience must stop being passive viewers of the actions on stage, and become active participants, or as he calls them Spect-Actors. Being active in the theater will later allow them to be active in their own lives and stop being passive member of society. The ultimate goal of Theater of the Oppressed is to transform reality in favor of the oppressed and not the oppressors.

As mentioned before, the *Nuevo Teatro* movement was strongly influenced by Brecht's Epic Theater and in fact, there are many studies concerning his influence on Latin American theater. Existing scholars in the field focus on analyzing the Brechtian influence on Latin American Theater (Andrade, Renee Ovadia; Baycroft, Bernard Kent; Ellis, Lorena B; Evenson, Mark Calvin; Milleret, Margo; O' Sullivan, Carmel; Rizk, Beatriz J). However, they all label Latin American theater practitioners as "Brechtian" failing to acknowledge the many other elements of this theater that makes it unique and rich in Latin American culture.

For example, Bernard Baycroft's dissertation, *Brecht in Colombia: The Rise of the New Theater*, is very clear in identifying three stages through which the *Nuevo Teatro* went in Colombia to pass from being a reproductive movement (that reproduces Western plays) into a productive movement (a movement that produce its own theater). The author identifies one Brechtian element per stage and supports his

argument with an example (a play of the period). For Baycroft, the first stage focuses on historical facts, the second, on *Gestus* and the third one on *Verfremdung*. The examples he analyzes were: *I took Panama*, from *Teatro Malayerba*; *Guadalupe años sin cuenta* by *Teatro la Candelaria*; and *Diálogo del Rebusque*, also from *Teatro la Candelaria*.

Another study, *Rethinking the Heroic: Demystification and Revision of History in Nuevo Teatro*, identifies Brechtian elements in plays that were produced by Latin American theater companies. The author analyzes plays such as *Arena contra Zumbi* produced by *Teatro Arena* and *La denuncia* produced by *Teatro Experimental de Cali*.

Both of these studies concentrate on the identification of Brechtian elements in the *Nuevo Teatro*. They emphasize the importance of the *Nuevo Teatro* as a theater movement that drove Latin America into producing political and pedagogical theater. They also emphasize the value of the theater theory and theater methodology that was born as a result of the *Nuevo Teatro* (Theater of the Oppressed and *Método de Creación Colectiva*). However, they both classify the *Nuevo Teatro* movement as “Brechtian” failing to identify the elements of the movement that moved away from Brecht and gave the movement a unique Latin American flavor.

Yet another example of a scholar who addresses the Brechtian influence on Latin American theater is Carmel O’Sullivan, who states that Boal’s thinking is strongly influenced by Brecht, making his thinking and practices Marxist. In the essay *Searching for the Marxist in Boal*, the author states that there is a contradiction

between the theory of Boal, supposedly socialist, and the actual practice, which, according to the author, supports the capitalist regime. This author continuously mentions that Boal's theory 'borrows' elements from Brecht, who is drawn from Marx, but that in practice, Boal failed to understand Brecht and Marx because his workshops and techniques support the capitalist world. In synthesis, this author criticizes Boal for not being 'Brechtian' enough. O'Sullivan fails to understand that the reason why Boal does not label himself Marxist or Brechtian is because he is not. As many other Latin American practitioners, Boal did not reproduce Marxism or Brechtian theater; he used them as inspirations to create his own work.

On this same matter, in an interview directed by Charles Driskell, Augusto Boal states that the two major influences of his theatrical work were Brecht and the Brazilian circus and vaudevilles. "So, if I may say that there were two major influences on my theater, they were Bertolt Brecht and the circus" (Boal, interview in November, 1974 in Los Angeles, 72). However, he does not state that he considered himself a Brechtian practitioner. Also, if we were to label him as Brechtian, then we should also consider labeling him as a circus practitioner which he is not.

In defense of the Latin American theater practice, Diana Taylor states that most of Latin American theater practitioners know Brecht's theories but very few of them stage his plays (*Brecht Sourcebook*, 172). She states that Latin American theater makers don't claim to make 'Brechtian' theater, yet they do agree that they introduce Brechtian elements into their work. In her essay, she explores this paradox by studying the historical context in which Brecht is introduced to Latin America and the

way that local theater practitioners integrate “Brechtian” elements into their own work.

Taylor states that Latin American *Nuevo Teatro* is not just ‘Brechtian’ styled theater but a movement itself that incorporated Brechtian elements in order to achieve their own purposes. Latin American theater artist could not separate their art from the social and political struggles their countries were going through. They saw in Brecht a model that allowed them to set politics and aesthetics in conversation, “The theater artist, Brecht suggested, was at the forefront of political conflict, not sitting somewhere with his back to it” (*Brecht Sourcebook*, 173).

According to Taylor, Brecht’s epic theater was relevant to Latin American theater practitioners because he found the way of setting political discourse and aesthetics in conversation. His theater was political, but it was also artistic, and that inspired Latin American artists to do the same and in their own way:

“His way of infusing the epic form with Marxist ideology offered one more way of framing and making sense of Latin America’s revolutionary praxis and aspirations... Brecht’s efforts to combine anti-capitalist ideology with esthetic principles inspired Latin American theater artist to do the same for themselves, and in their own way” (*Brecht Sourcebook*,173).

In this same matter and according to Carballido, Buenaventura and Colombian theater took Brecht as a professor and they assimilated his theory in order to give us something new and different. Thanks to that, Colombian theater makers reinvented theater, using Latin American reality as a starting point. “El y Colombia han tomado a

Brecht como maestro y lo han asimilado para darnos algo distinto y nuevo, reinventando a partir de nuestra realidad” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 10).

For Taylor, theater historians and academics who claim that the *Nuevo Teatro* is Brechtian theater failed to identify the most important element of the movement. This element is the one that moved away from Brecht and give the *Nuevo Teatro* a Latin American taste. According to Taylor, this element is transculturation. She explains that Latin American theater practitioners did not borrow Brecht’s techniques but assimilated them in a process she refers to as transculturation. According to Fernando Ortiz, a Cuban anthropologist in the 1940’s, transculturation is the third stage of a tripartite process formed by acculturation, deculturation and transculturation. What happens in this process is that a culture receives information from a foreign culture, then it assimilates the information and finally transforms it into something local. In Taylor’s words: “...one cultural system receives and ultimately transforms material from another” (*Brecht Sourcebook*, 176).

The fact that Latin American theater was and still is revolutionary does not necessary means that it is “Brechtian.” For Taylor, even though Latin American theater addressed the oppressed populations and confronted the bourgeois, capitalist and imperialist ideology, it also imposed its own myths, which were different from Brecht’s European reality (*Brecht Sourcebook*, 174). She states that the *Nuevo Teatro* cannot be analyzed according to any Brechtian terminology because the social, political and economical circumstances were completely different, not to mention the differences of race, culture and spiritual beliefs.



Diana Taylor also states that it is not possible to label Latin American *Nuevo Teatro* as “Brechtian” because the Brechtian elements are deployed in Latin American theater, meaning that they could mean different things in Latin American culture than they did in Brecht’s European circumstances. In her book, *The Archive and The Repertoire*, Taylor introduces the concepts of scenario, cultural memory and traumatic memory as elements that characterize Latin American theater. She explores the presence of cultural memory in Latin American performances. For her, performance is a didactic tool through which we communicate political claims, cultural memory and cultural identity (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, xvii).

For the purpose of this study, I am applying Diana Taylor’s concepts of scenario, cultural memory and traumatic memory to the work of Augusto Boal and Enrique Buenaventura. By applying these concepts to the work of these artists, I hope to demonstrate that Latin American Theater for Social Change is not Brechtian but an original Latin American movement that produces scenarios where cultural and traumatic memory is transmitted as means to educate and promote social transformation.

Also, the application of these concepts produces what I call Anti-Scenarios in Latin American Theater for Social Change. Anti-scenarios are turning points that provoke the questioning of the social order, and therefore, educate and promote personal transformation and social change. A major part of my work in this project will be dedicated to the study of anti-scenarios. They are a fundamental element in

Theater for Social Change and for that reason I will analyze their presence and the role that they play in the work of Buenaventura and Boal.

Taylor's concepts of performance, scenario, cultural memory and traumatic memory will be the base ground of my analysis. Without these elements it would be impossible to explain the presence and application of anti-scenarios in Theater for Social Change and their role as tools that promote change. Therefore, it is important to briefly explain them, although they will be largely discussed in later chapters.

Taylor defines performances as “vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory and a sense of identity through reiterated behavior” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3). For her, performance can be understood on two different levels: on one hand, performance is understood as the object or process of analysis in performance studies, that is, anything that involves theatrical, rehearsed, or conventional / event-appropriate behaviors. On the other hand, performance is also understood as a methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events as performance. For example: civic obedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity and sexual identity are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3).

Taylor defines scenario as “an act of transfer, as a paradigm that is formulaic, portable, respectable, and often banal because it leaves out complexity, reduces complex to its stock elements, and encourages fantasies of participation” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 54). In this sense, scenarios are places or spaces that transmit common knowledge. For example, if we see a group of young people sitting

on desks and an older person in front of them, we understand that what we are seeing is a classroom. We don't need to be explained what a teacher or a student is, because we already have that knowledge. Scenarios also provide different lenses to interpret and/or analyze reality. Scenarios are framed, that is, they are different than reality because they are a representation of reality and the frame allows us to identify different lenses and levels of analysis.

Taylor also states that performers embody cultural memory, for example gestures, poses, modes, etc. that are transmitted through generations and that are part of our understanding of the world. She claims that through performance, we can learn about people, history and social groups (Taylor, Diana. Personal Interview, 13 April 2007, University of Kansas). Almost any cultural gesture can be attributed to cultural memory. For example, the ways in which we walk and speak are influenced by cultural memory, as well as our interactions with the world. Cultural memory is not only embodied through performance, on the contrary, our daily activities, what we perceive as good or bad, and almost all of our actions are somehow a product of cultural memory.

Last, traumatic memory is a form that derives from cultural memory. Again, these traumas do not need to be explained, they are part of our understanding of the world and they are not only transmitted through performance; in fact, we carry them with us and embody them in our actions and interactions with others.

The portrayals of scenarios in Latin American Theater for Social Change are the basis for the production of anti-scenarios. It is important to remember that

scenarios are constituted by actions that are socially accepted and therefore they reproduce the social norms and the status quo of our society. On the contrary, anti-scenarios are constituted by actions that contradict the norm and the status quo that scenarios depict. Anti-scenarios show us an alternative reality by questioning the structure of our society. In the work of Boal and Buenaventura, anti-scenarios question our traces of cultural and traumatic memories.

In conclusion, it is well known that Brecht influenced Latin American Theater and it is relevant to identify the Brechtian elements in the work of Latin American theater companies in order to understand the meaningfulness of their aesthetics and to value the theory and methodologies that have emerged as a result of this influence. However, it is also important to eliminate the Brechtian label that Latin American Theater for Social Change practitioners have carried for so long and give them the status of creative and original Theater for Social Change practitioners that they deserve. That is why the focus of my work will not be the Brechtian elements in Latin American theater, but the other elements that put together with the Brechtian elements, make Latin American Theater the unique political and pedagogical *Nuevo Teatro*.

I will analyze different pieces of Buenaventura and Boal's work with Diana Taylor's concepts of scenarios, cultural memory and traumatic memory to prove the existence of anti-scenarios in Theater for Social Change. My work will also provide evidence that Latin American theater is not Brechtian but a strong self-oriented

movement that was once influenced by Brecht and grew into a movement with an aesthetic of its own.

I want to apply Taylor's concepts of scenarios, cultural memory and traumatic memory to Buenaventura's plays and Boal's methodologies. I hope to prove that both Buenaventura's and Boal's work depict scenarios that produce anti-scenarios. At the same time, these scenarios transmit cultural and traumatic memory that are later questioned and reflected upon the anti-scenarios. Therefore, the application of these concepts functions as tools to instruct and promote change.

Boal's and Buenaventura's goal is to promote social change. They both use different strategies to achieve their goal but in both cases, the application of the above mentioned concepts play an important role in engaging the people into generating social change. The plays by Buenaventura that I will analyze are included in his book *Los papeles del Infierno*, and they are: *La maestra*, *La autopsia* and *La tortura*. In addition, I will analyze the techniques developed by Boal in his Theater of the Oppressed: Image Theater, Invisible Theater and Forum Theater.

In the present chapter I exposed the *Nuevo Teatro* movement and the circumstances under which it developed. I also mentioned the literature that addresses Brechtian influence in Latin American theater in order to expose my belief: that Theater for Social Change in Latin America is not necessary Brechtian. Last, I introduced Diana Taylor's concepts of scenario, cultural memory and traumatic memory. These concepts will serve as starting points for the analysis of what I call anti-scenarios in Buenaventura's and Boal's work. These concepts, together with that

of anti-scenarios, also serve as examples of Latin American theater elements that do not come from Brecht and at the same time enrich the discourse and the aesthetics of the *Nuevo Teatro*.

In chapter one I review Taylor's concept of scenario and introduce the presence of anti-scenarios in Theater for Social Change. I hope to demonstrate that Boal's Invisible Theater serves as an example of how scenarios and anti-scenarios are depicted in the repertoire, that is, the practice; while Buenaventura's play, *La tortura*, serves as an example of how scenarios and anti-scenarios are framed in the narrative, that is, the archive.

Chapter two focuses on the instructive value of scenarios and anti-scenarios as elements that transmit cultural memory. I will analyze Boal's Forum Theater and Buenaventura's play, *La maestra*, in order to demonstrate that they both transmit cultural memory and then question these memories through the application of anti-scenarios. The reflection and questioning of cultural memory is meant to politically instruct the audience and promote social change.

Chapter three provides two case studies of what the concepts of scenario and anti-scenarios do in practice. I want to demonstrate that Boal's Image Theater and Buenaventura's play, *La autopsia*, portray scenarios and anti-scenarios that transmit traumatic memory as a way to cope with the difficulties caused by social traumatic events.

Finally, the last chapter will be dedicated to the conclusions of this project.

## **Chapter 1:**

### **Scenario versus Anti-Scenario:**

#### **Their role in the Archive and the Repertoire**

In her book, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor explains that Western culture empowers the archive over the repertoire because the archive can record past events, while the repertoire cannot; however, she focuses her work on some of the methodological implications of revalorizing expressive, embodied culture in order to prove that the repertoire can generate and transmit as much knowledge as the archive.

Archival documents such as books, maps, literacy texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, video, film, CDS, and all other items supposedly resistant to change (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19), have the ability to record reality and history, while the repertoire enacts embodied memory but cannot record an event. The repertoire is constituted by performance, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short and all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20), meaning that live events and performances are often underestimated by our culture because of its ephemeral nature.

Our culture valorizes the archive because it always remains the same, it's a record of the past that everyone can look at in order to acquire knowledge. For example, different researchers may use the same sources of information for completely different projects and come up with totally different theories of past events. According to Taylor, "What makes an object archival is the process whereby

it is selected, classified and presented for analysis” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19). The story might change depending on the investigator, but the archival pieces have the advantage that they capture history and remain as proof of existence of past events and civilization. On the other hand, the repertoire is embodied memory, “because it is live, exceeds the archive’s ability to capture it” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20). The repertoire embodies past events, cultures and civilization but, as opposed to the archive, we do not possess records of the repertoire as proof of those past events; if we did say, recorded or made a narrative of a repertoire event, then it would be transformed into an archival piece.

The archive has been considered more powerful than the repertoire because of its resistance in time. Throughout history, the archive has been considered powerful in the sense that people who dedicated their lives to it were and still are, considered important, educated and respectful, while the people who dedicated their lives to repertoire activities like artists, were and still are, considered inferior and not well educated.

However, Taylor wants to move away from the typical archival analysis and look at the repertoire for sources for her study. She wants to prove that the repertoire enacts cultural memory and plays an important role in the process of transmitting and generating knowledge. “Embodied expression has participated and will probably continue to participate in the transmission of social knowledge, memory and identity pre- and postwriting” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 16).



For her, the repertoire is as valid as the archive for analysis, sometimes even more because of its flexibility “As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20). Also, just as an archival piece can be interpreted in different ways by different people, the repertoire also allows for multiple interpretations. And besides, to witness a live event can transmit more knowledge than the archive because all of our senses are exposed to the event, while the archive can only capture words or images. On this matter, Taylor states “The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being part of the transmission” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20), while the archive only records someone’s interpretation of a past event.

Taylor suggests that the repertoire can indeed serve as academic evidence for analysis; however, this would require that academic disciplines revise their methodologies and expand their concepts of what they consider ‘appropriate canons’. The analysis of repertoire events; if included as methodological frameworks can enrich not only researcher’s development in the arts, but also in the social sciences and many humanities disciplines.

Performances are repertoire events that can be used as objects of analysis for the arts and the social sciences. “Embodied and performed acts generate, record and transmit knowledge” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20). For Taylor, performances produce scenarios and those scenarios are the elements that the analyst works with because they transmit cultural memory and generate new knowledge for the audience.

She understands scenarios to be “meaning-making paradigms that structure social environments, behaviors, and potential outcomes” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 28). This means that scenarios function as paradigms that do not need to be explained because they are part of our world view. They contain information that is understood by everyone who belongs to the culture the scenario is referring to; they reproduce the status quo of our society. They have been being used by the powerful classes to control minorities because they are “...formulaic, portable, respectable, and often banal ...it leaves out complexity, reduces complex to its stock elements, and encourages fantasies of participation” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 54).

Taylor uses an example of scenario in order to explain its multiple functions. The example she states corresponds to that of a New England newspaper that in September 11, 1995 published an article that claimed that an expedition had found a new tribe in the Amazon’s rain forest. This example of scenario confronts the white reporters with two natives in Brazil

In this example, the term ‘scenario’ functions as:

- A device of transportation. It transports us (the readers) from here to an “exotic” there.
- A device of transfer. It transfers the not-ours to the ours.
- A device of translation. It translates the Other’s systems of communication into one we claim to understand.
- A device of transformation. It transforms past enactments (earlier discovery scenario) into future outcomes (usually loss of native lands).

The example of the Amazon tribe that was just discovered is an example of a scenario of discovery; that is, it takes us back to the discovery of America. There are many examples or versions of scenarios of discovery and the fact that there are so many versions speaks to overflow of meaning, levels, and possible perspective to analyze them. However, what makes these examples scenarios is the fact that they all belong to a framework that includes particular elements that are recognized by viewers despite the variations between scenarios, “It’s like having multiple possibilities of a basic sequence” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 55).

As object of analysis, scenario functions as a frame from which one can analyze reality. Scenarios reproduce society’s ideas, beliefs and stereotypes, and this allows the analyzer to identify them and use them as sources of new knowledge about culture and social structure. “The scenario makes visible, yet again, what is already there: the ghost, the images, the stereotypes” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 28). Analyzing scenarios allows us to analyze cultural and gender differences, social behaviors and constructions, and or historical facts.

Latin American Theater for Social Change requires the presence of scenarios because they allow the flourish of anti-scenarios. Scenarios and anti-scenarios are two complementary concepts. One cannot exist without the other because they have reverse meanings and functionalities. What the scenario says, the anti-scenario contradicts. Scenarios are meant to reproduce the status quo and anti-scenarios are meant to deconstruct the social order.

Anti-scenarios challenge everything that scenarios portray; therefore, they constitute the most important concept in Theater for Social Change. It is common for theater movements such as realism and naturalism, to portray scenarios that reinforce cultural beliefs and social behaviors, however, the goal of Theater for Social Change is to break the norm and transform the social structure; consequently, the application of anti-scenarios becomes a necessity. Without anti-scenarios, the Theater for Social Change performance cannot be able to promote change.

For this chapter, I have selected two case studies for analysis, one is the play *La Tortura* by Enrique Buenaventura and the other one is the technique known as Invisible Theater, by Augusto Boal. Both of them belong to the archive because they are recorded. However, they both have the ability to belong to the repertoire if someone stages them or use them as working techniques. In this chapter I intend to analyze the different scenarios and anti-scenarios that are produced by these examples. I will analyze them through different frames that include the construction of social stereotypes, the construction of marital relationships and the construction of social interactions in public spaces.

However, before I begin my analysis it is important to mention that to choose to analyze the repertoire has some advantages and disadvantages. In this project, my analysis of Buenaventura's work can only be done through the archive, since I can only analyze the plays recorded in his book *Los Papeles del Infierno*. This is ironic, considering that I am analyzing repertoire pieces that have been recorded and stored in the archive. The same happened with Boal's cases of study. Even though the

examples in this project belong to the repertoire, I did not experience the live event, so I must rely on the archive, which contradicts my expectations of analyzing Buenaventura's piece from the archive; and Boal's technique from the repertoire. However, my analysis of Buenaventura's play will focus on the text, while Boal's technique will be analyzed from his records of the Invisible Theater session he experienced in Paris.

*Invisible Theater: the case of Sexual Harassment*

Invisible Theater is a technique that Augusto Boal developed in France in his search for ways to generate and promote social change. What makes Invisible Theater invisible is the fact that the audience does not know that they are the audience and truly believes that what they see happening is real life, “Invisible Theater is public theater which involves the public as participants in the action without their knowing it” (Jackson, *Games for Actors and Non - Actors*, xx). To achieve this goal, Invisible Theater is performed in unconventional staging locations like the street, a park, a metro station and other places where there are gatherings of people. However, the themes for Invisible Theater are carefully selected and the story created is rehearsed by the actors. The themes must be something of clear importance to the future spect-actors because it must encourage them to intervene in the scene; it must force them to become active participants of the action and not mere spectators. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 6).

The goal of Invisible Theater is to engage the unaware audience in a debate about social problems and reality. The fact that the audience is unaware of their role as active spect-actors allows them to assume any position they want to with respect to the conflict, and also express their ideas without feeling judged or questioned by an authority. In Jackson’s words “Invisible Theater is a way of using theater to stimulate debate, getting people to question issues in a public forum” (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, xx)

The example I want to analyze is *Sexual Harassment*. This example is included in Boal's book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, on page 6. The play was performed in one of Paris' Metros, in the last carriage before the first-class section, and in the middle of the train. Nine actors are necessary for the scene, consisting of two female feminist roles, a female victim, a Tunisian, a couple formed by a Mother and Son, a male passenger, a male aggressor and a male victim. The scene took place at the second stop of the Metro, when the male aggressor boarded the train. By this time all other characters were on board and seated in different parts of the carriage except for the male victim. In summary, the male aggressor sexually harassed the female victim and managed to get away with it because no one in the train defended the victim. A couple of stops later, the male victim boarded the train and he is harassed by the two feminist. This produced discomfort in the train until the people started to intervene to stop the situation. The actors took advantage of the spect-actors' interventions to make verbal statements that questioned social roles of gender and this generated different reactions among the spect-actors and created a debate in the train about the subject of sexual harassment. At the end, it is clear that the theme of this Invisible Theater is that neither men nor women have the right to sexually harass others. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 6-7)

The performance does not end until the actors leave the train. However, what makes Invisible Theater invisible is the fact that the audience never realized that they were playing spect-actors when they intervened in the scene. They thought they were witnessing a live situation. In Invisible Theater, the scenario is hidden because

the audience never realizes they are being part of a performance. However, as analysts, we can identify the scenario(s) and use it (them) as methodological frames for the analysis of culture and social structures.

According to Adrian Jackson, responsible for the translation of many of Boal's books into English, what happens in Invisible Theater is that:

“Several actors rehearse a scene which they then play in an appropriate public space; the scene usually involves an unexpected subversion of ‘normal’ behavior within that particular society. In reaction to the incidents in the scene, the public becomes involved in an argument, usually aided by a couple of *agent provocateur* actors mingling with the public and expressing extreme and opposite reactions to the events of the scene”<sup>3</sup>.

What Jackson is suggesting in this explanation is that first, the actors of Invisible Theater select a location in which to perform. Then, they create a scene that constitutes a scenario. The scene of Invisible Theater constitutes a scenario because it has to be camouflaged from the social interactions that are taking place in wherever the chosen location is; that is, the scenario must reproduce the status quo of society, and it has to be constituted by behaviors that are socially accepted. However, at some point during the scene, the scenario is broken, which generally means that one or more not socially accepted behaviors are performed. It can also mean that social roles are switched; generating conflict not only between the actors, but also between the unaware audiences, the actors and the audience.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the Translator's Introduction in the English version of Augusto Boal's book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. Routledge. London. 1992, page xx.



The example of *Sexual harassment* in Invisible Theater constitutes a scenario because it embraced a paradigm that was socially accepted in Parisian culture at the time: it was fine for men to harass women in public places, but it was not socially accepted for women to harass men. Also, when a man harasses a woman in a public space, it is usually not considered harassment but a compliment. This happens because culturally, our society has given men some privileges that women cannot enjoy, like being able to publicly admire someone “attractive” and announce that beauty to anyone near. These privileges also carry stereotypes about men and women social statuses in our society and how they ought to behave in public. That is why the actions on the train become a scenario, at least when the female victim is being harassed and nobody stands up to stop the situation. It is a scenario because it is constituted by behaviors that are recognized by everyone as socially accepted.

Sexual harassment happens everywhere, all the time and in many different manifestations, therefore, sexual harassment constitutes a cultural scenario that portrays gender differences and struggles in Western culture. It involves a perpetrator and a victim, the perpetrator being in a more powerful position than the victim because the perpetrator controls the incident. Also, in order to label an incident as sexual harassment, the law requires that the harassment incident had to be committed by someone in a powerful position, meaning, a boss, a priest, a teacher, etc. to someone in an inferior position: an employee, a church attendee, a student, etc.

Different behaviors that go from an inappropriate comment to a naughty look can be considered a form of harassment if the person receiving the message does not

welcome it. Sexual harassment can happen at a bar, on the street, at work, on the bus or in our own homes, however, sexual harassment is often a hidden incident, that is, the perpetrator harasses the victim when there are no witnesses present. It is important for the perpetrator that there are no witnesses of the event because in that way, he or she can maintain control of the situation and not damage his or her reputation.

What Boal and his troop did was create a scenario of sexual harassment that was not hidden, but that had a lot of witnesses around it. He highlighted the harassment to make sure that everyone in the train cabin understood what was going on. After underlining the scenario, Boal switched the roles; he positioned two women in the powerful position harassing a young man, which constitutes an anti-scenario. This anti-scenario was perceived as an antisocial vulgar act and generated conflict and diverse opinions about gender roles and rights. It also started a conversation about how each gender should behave in public spaces, like the metro.

The conflict and the conversation that started on that train, based on the scene of sexual harassment, would not have been possible without the presence of the anti-scenario. Thanks to the switching of the roles, the spect-actors reacted to what was going on, and then, with the help of the actors, who promoted the conversation by making statements that supported or negated the right to harass people, the spect-actors reflected upon how the social structure mandates what men and women can do and how they ought to do it.

The concept of performance in Invisible Theater serves both as an object to be analyzed and as a methodological lens that enables us to analyze in daily life

behaviors and cultural beliefs being performed. For example, when the woman is harassed, everyone ignores it because it is 'normal,' but when the male is harassed, the people react in surprise because it is an abnormal situation. Boal cites phrases said by spect-actors during the discussion of the event; the comments include a men defending males' right to harass women by saying "it's the law of nature; that the way men are and there's no getting away from it." (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 8) Then when asked if he believed that men had the right to touch women in the Metro, another man answered "Yes I do- they provoke us." (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 9) These phrases clearly state cultural beliefs about how men and women should behave in society. These phrases are examples of cultural memory being embodied, that is, performed in real life.

In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor presents scenarios of discovery as the biggest and most well known example of scenario in the Americas. For her, the scenario of the discovery, followed by the conquest and colonization of America is a scenario that our society continues to reproduce today. Taylor states that issues such as power due to culture and racial differences are still used today as excuses to overpower minorities. She explains the way in which the scenario of the discovery of America was represented in the archive, with the Spaniards in the powerful position, implanting their culture, religion, language and literacy over the natives. They were well dressed, possessed arms, had a creed and were literate. At the same time, this scenario presents the natives as people with no clothes, no creed, no iron, no writing

and no civilization, “a people very deficient in everything”<sup>4</sup>. Taylor suggests that the natives were seen as “at one with nature” while the Spaniards dominated nature, “The Spaniards, on the contrary, control nature, their ships and small boats dominating the water” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 61). Her explanation is rich in images of cultural differences. It explains why, until this day, our world is controlled under the “white supremacy.” Through her explanation, one can identify stereotypes that are still present in our society: The native is to the Spaniard what the Mexican is to the North American.

The scenario of sexual harassment is not a scenario of discovery, however, just as the scenario of discovery portrays certain stereotypes about those in the powerful position (the Spaniards) and those in the powerless one (the natives); the sexual harassment example also positions certain individuals in a more powerful position than others.

It is not a secret that Western culture possesses gender differences. Throughout history men have occupied a more powerful position than women. Also, throughout history women have fought for equal rights and have won many battles in the road for equality. However, even though in the present women have equal human rights in labor, health, disability and other aspects, our culture still positions men in a more powerful position than women. In many instances, this “positioning” is made in an unconscious way. We don’t purposely think that men are better or worse than women, but we do it because of our cultural legacy, or in Taylor terminology, as a result of

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<sup>4</sup> Columbus, Journal, 23-24. (Quoted by Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 59).

cultural memory. An example of this unconscious positioning of superiority over inferiority could be when we are driving a car and get stuck behind a “bad” driver; almost everyone thinks that it must be a women driver for it to drive so badly. Another example is the old stereotype that says that men do better in sports because they are more competitive than women; women are more generous, therefore, not good competitors.

I am not trying to enter a feminist discussion about which gender is more powerful, on the contrary, the point that I am trying to make is that our culture is rich in gender differences and that the sexual harassment example was made to highlight those differences.

Invisible Theater does not end with a solution to the problem. As mentioned before, the goal is to promote a debate, not to determine who is right and who is not in a particular conflict. As opposed to Forum Theater where different solutions are suggested for a specific problem, Invisible Theater does not come up with any solutions, but it does give the audience an opportunity to express their ideas and to listen to different points of view with respect to an argument.

Scenarios are social paradigms understood by everyone and constituted by behaviors that are considered normal. In this sense, scenarios are reproduced not only by performances but also by daily interactions with others. They happen all the time and everywhere, meaning that they are not limited to the theatrical space. If performances reproduce real life, then scenarios reproduce daily life interactions and social constructions. For example, the event of sexual harassment that took place in

the Parisian metro played both roles: a role as scenario inside the invisible performance; and a role as a daily life event (scenario) that reproduced the social structure, the 'norm' of the time "The scenario thus bridges the past and future as well as the here and there. It's never for the first time, and never for the last, yet it continues to be constantly reactivate in the *now* of performance" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 58).

Invisible Theater presents a situation that generates a conflict in which spect-actors are force to intervene. The conflict is presented in the form of an anti-scenario, like the two feminist harassing a young man. The fact that the audience never knows that what they are experiencing is a performance and not reality, positions them in a more powerful position than if they were just passive spectators. Also, the fact that spect-actors think the event is real, makes them more willing to generate a discussion on the topic than if someone imposes a debate on them. The hope is for the debate to make them reflect and question reality, which is, in essence, social change promotion.

Last, the performance of a scenario accompanied by an anti-scenario challenges our daily performances in real life because performance allows us to deconstruct reality. "The artistic performance challenged the cultural performance, the way history and culture are packaged, sold, and consumed within hegemonic structures" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 67). Since performance allows us to frame scenarios and analyze them, the performance of the common scenario of harassment and then its counter part, the anti-scenario, allowed us to understand the way in which social norms and stereotypes are constructed in society and the way in

which they function in our daily interactions with others. In Taylor's words "Performance as an object of study... took on performance as an episteme, as a culturally produced lens" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 67).

As mentioned before, I tried to analyze this case of Invisible Theater as an example of how scenarios and anti-scenarios function in the repertoire. However, I only had access to the archival record of these Invisible Theater experiences, which causes several limitations to my analysis, the bigger one being the fact that the only record I possess is the one of Boal and his perception of the scenes; I do not have access to the perceptions of the actors or the spect-actors. Nevertheless, regardless of this limitation, I still want to make the distinction that Invisible Theater serves as an example of how scenario functions in the practice, as opposed to my next object of analysis, Buenaventura's play, *La tortura*, which serves as an example of scenario in the archive, that is, scenario in the dramatic text.

*Play: La tortura*

*La tortura* is a short play included in Buenaventura's collection *Los Papeles del Infierno*. Before starting the analysis of the play, it is important to mention that according to scholars such as Rizk, Taylor and Albuquerque, *Los Papeles del Infierno* is Buenaventura's version of Brecht's *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*<sup>5</sup>. Buenaventura's piece is a compilation of short plays that has violence as its central theme. All the plays are situated during the decade known as *La violencia*, a period in Colombian history where the two main political parties were at war and killed over 300,000 people. The plays' characters represent Colombian life as a society that breathed and walked on violence on a daily basis. The plays are not only centered on victims of violence, but also on the producers, reproducers, and accomplices of such violent acts.

*La tortura*, meaning The Torture, is a two scene play with 5 characters: a man who works as a torturer for the government, his wife and three detectives. The first scene takes place at the torturer's house. He and his wife are in the living room having a conversation while he eats his dinner and she puts on a pair of stockings. He complains about the meat on his plate being so hard he can't even stick the knife in it, while his wife complains about him not spending time with her. The images of his job perturb him as he speaks to her about it. He complains about his job, about the victims he tortured and how their eyes perturb him. At the same time, his wife

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<sup>5</sup> Brecht, Bertold. *Fear and misery of the third Reich*. 1938. An Anti-Nazi play that introduced Epic Theater techniques to address the audience. The play is constituted by 24 short scenes that resemble different characteristics of life in Europe during the Second World War.



continues to complain about him not paying attention to her. They seem to be having two different conversations. He confronts his wife about her flirting with other men; he treats her as if she is one of his victims: questioning and demanding answers from her. Finally, he stabs her to death. The next scene presents three detectives at the crime scene. They mention that he pulled her eyes out. They are surprised that he murdered his wife as a result of a paranoia attack because, according to them, he was a tough guy who could usually take five to six torture sessions a day without going insane or feeling sick. Then they talk about the trial he will face. They mention that the judge is a friend and will find the torturer not guilty of any charge by proclaiming that the wife was unfaithful.

First of all, it is important to mention that this play, as well as the other plays in this compilation corresponds to Colombian reality during the years of *La violencia*. Also, Latin American society has very strong rules concerning socially accepted behaviors for men and women. I mention this because this play generate scenarios that represents many of the stereotypes that Latin American society imposes over married couples and their socially accepted behaviors with each other and with others.

The play *La tortura* is a performance that generates several common scenarios concerning married couples in Latin America. The scenarios that this play produces can be understood as social paradigms that are assimilated by every member of a culture because they reproduce the status quo. There are different layers through which we can interpret the scenarios in this play. First, I will analyze the scenario present in the relationship between the husband and the wife. Then I will analyze the

scenario of violence as an element of daily life interaction, for example, the torturer who is tortured by the memories of his victims, and the torturer who tortures his wife.

The first scenario that we can identify is that of the relationship between husband and wife. There is nothing unusual about this relationship in how the scene is set up. When the play starts, we see the man sitting on the living room table eating a plate of food. The wife is somewhere near him, either at the other end of the table or a nearby chair or couch. They are both reproducing actions that are socially understood to correspond to their gender: the man is eating the dinner that the wife prepared for him and the woman is putting on a pair of stockings. It is important to note that the selections of actions that the characters enact are not randomly selected. The selection of actions in this first scene resembles a couple formed by a dominant and controlling husband and a flirting wife. The fact that the woman is putting on a pair of stockings tells us that this woman cares about her personal appearance. She probably likes to dress and look nicely, which can provoke jealousy in an over-controlling husband. On the other hand, the husband is eating the dinner that she prepared for him and complaining about it. His behavior announces us that he does not seem to be in a good mood, which is also a stereotype of a controlling-abusive husband. The selection of these actions triggers a common scenario in our heads: A man who works all day and comes home to eat the dinner that his wife, who stays at home doing house chores, prepared for him. It also triggers common stereotypes about types of couples: this is a 'dysfunctional' couple formed by a controlling and abusive husband and a flirting good looking wife.

The dialogue they share at the beginning of the scene also highlights the scenario by assuring us that we are watching at a typical dysfunctional marriage: he complains about the meat on his plate, which reminds us that the woman was the one who prepared the meal. The fact that he complains about the food is also a common stereotype of abusive husbands. Then he confronts her about the number of stockings that she uses a day, letting us know that he is the financial provider of that household, a responsibility that, culturally, has been imposed on men. Also, complaining about the stockings supports the image of the abusive husband that does not want his wife to look attractive. It also demonstrates that he does not trust his wife.

The woman complains to him that he does not spend enough time with her. The complaints are reminders that the woman stays home all day while the husband is allowed to leave the house for work and other activities. It corresponds to the old stereotype that states that women belong at home while men belong in the street. Also, she states that she wants to repeat the honeymoon but that he does not even notice her: “Si salieras un poco más conmigo, podríamos repetir la luna de miel” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 23). Her statement depicts her as a woman with a sexual desire that is not being satisfied by her husband. Culturally, women are not supposed to have or express sexual desire, and since she does, we picture her as a ‘bad woman’, one that is probably flirting with other men.

Another element of this scenario of dysfunctional marriage is the fact that, during their conversation, both of them accuse each other of infidelity. For example, the wife confronts him by telling him that she has heard the stories of his past and

present affairs with other women. “Me han contado tus historias. Las de antes y las de ahora.” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 24). Also, in another moment, the woman complains that she cannot have any girlfriends because no one wants to be friend with a torturer’s wife. In response to that comment, the husband states that maybe she cannot have girlfriends; but that he knows that she has boyfriends because he is well informed, “Pero amigos sí. Estoy bien informado.” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 25).

However, there is one more element that Buenaventura introduces in this scenario of the dysfunctional marriage and it has to do with the selection of words that the torturer uses to address his wife. For example, when he asks her about the number of stockings that she uses a day, he demands her to confess how many pairs she wears. The fact that he uses the word ‘confess’ immediately tells us that his job as a torturer is part of his daily routine and that he is bringing the relationship between torturer and victim to his marital relationship.

The wife seems to be used to his treatment and simply ignores his demands. However, she does confront him about his whereabouts and about what people would think of him if he did not buy her stockings, but the husband is so perturbed with the images from his last torture victim that he does not pay attention to her. At the same time, she seems not to notice that he is perturbed and ignores all the signals of what is about to happen.

According to Taylor, “The scenario includes features well theorized in literary analysis, such as narrative and plot, but demands that we also pay attention to milieu and corporeal behaviors such as gestures, attitudes and tones not reducible to

language” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 28). This last statement reveals that the scenario is not just a fixed image that is framed but that the scenario can also be analyzed in action.

As audience members, we can notice different elements during the scene that make us aware that he is going to kill his wife. To start with, at the beginning of the scene, the man confronts her about the stockings. “Confiesa simplemente cuántos pares de medias gastas al día. Confiesa eso sin evasivas” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 22). Here he demands her to confess how many pairs of stockings she uses a day, like if she were one of his prisoners. Then he complains about the meat being so hard he can’t stick the knife in it. “La carne está dura, no le entra el cuchillo. Es una porquería” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 22). This last phrase is an analogy to his job. His work is to torture men, to make them speak. He has probably put knives into men’s flesh several times before, and the fact that the meat he is eating is so hard he can’t do it, could mean that the duties of his job are so heavy he can’t deal with them anymore.

Also, in one statement he mentions that the last prisoner he tortured was as hard as a train rail, meaning that he did not speak regardless of the torture sessions, then, in that same statement, he repeats that the meat is hard, “Me tocó un tipo duro. Un tipo más duro que un riel. Esto es un cuero” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 24). The meat is not only an analogy of the pressure of his job, but also of the memory of his last victim. The victim was as hard as the meat he is eating.

The second scenario that I want to analyze is more of an anti-scenario. Let us remember that the role of Theater for Social Change is to rebel against the norms that society has imposed on us, therefore, oppressing us. The goal of Theater for Social Change is to promote change in the audience so that he or she can achieve liberation from that which oppresses them. The anti-scenario that I am proposing corresponds to that of the torturer being tortured by his victim. Here the roles are switched and the victim overpowers the torturer. The power of the anti-scenario is precisely that it switches roles, it presents reality from a different perspective, and therefore, it questions the norm and promotes social change.

The anti-scenario takes place when the torturer labels himself as a victim. He complains about his job, about how hard it is to carry the memories of his job with him at all times. He is perturbed by the fact that he has to make a person talk with torture, which at the same time tortures him. “Si el tipo habla, quedo todo loco. No sé que hacer. Habla...habla... y yo le digo que hable. Y él habla y habla, y yo le digo que hable y él habla y habla...” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 24). Here, he is positioning himself as a victim. He feels sorry for his job, he wants his wife to stop complaining about nonsense by letting her know that he is the one who is suffering and doesn't know what to do.

Then the wife complains about his job. She states that his job has cost her friendships with other women. That she feels ashamed and sick about his position. “No. Me da asco, me da vergüenza. No puedo...” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 25). He

resents that she does not understand the pressure of his duties and reacts violently, accusing her of enjoying the money made with torture and calling her a prostitute.

During the argument about his job, he maintains his position of a victim by stating that she complains about it but enjoys all the stuff he buys her with the money he makes by torturing people. Here, he is positioning himself as a victim to his ambitious wife, affirming that he does not enjoy what he does or the money that he makes and implying that he does what he does so that she can enjoy the money.

Later, after he accuses her of enjoying the money, he accuses her of having the same eyes of the victim who perturbs him, “Tienes los ojos como él. Los ojos como él, todo el cuarto lleno de ojos.” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 26) Just a moment before this statement, he described how his last victim’s eyes perturb him. He also describes what he and other torturers did to his victim and how he never spoke a word. Clearly, the eyes of his last victim are perturbing him and driving him insane. Here, we finally see the torturer as a human being, a man who is not enjoying making other people suffer but that has to do it to protect himself and his family from being accused of treason and being incarcerated by the army.

Finally, the images of the tortured man’s eyes overpower him. He overlaps those eyes on his wife in his last attempt to gain control over the ghost of his victim that is torturing him. He sees his last victim in his wife and stabs her. With this action, the torturer wins the battle over the ghost, but adds another victim to his list; one that will probably continue to torture him during his life.

Another layer of analysis in this play is the use of violence as an element of daily life interaction. Taylor states that "...embodied performances have often contributed to the maintenance of a repressive social order" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 22). She is referring to the way in which performances have been used by the powerful classes of society to repress and control minorities. However, Buenaventura is using theater as a tool to generate change inside that repressive social order. What Buenaventura is doing with this play is breaking the scenario of the socially accepted dysfunctional married couple by making the husband stab the wife. However, the message of the play does not depict the torturer as a bad man that hated his wife and stabs her, but as a man who is a victim of the repressive social order. The play ends with a tragedy where the torturer became the victim of his victims. Buenaventura is revealing reality to his audience. He is telling us that any situation can be analyzed from many different perspectives and that what we are presented with is not always the "truth". In this play all the characters are victims of the repressive dictatorship they are under. They are proof that living in a violent environment can only generate violent actions.



## Chapter 2:

### Cultural Memory in Latin American Theater for Social Change.

“Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, reconstituting themselves- transmitting communal memories, histories and values from one group/ generation to the next” (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 193).

The previous chapter concentrated on the concept of scenarios as fixed paradigms that reproduce our culture and social structure; and the role of anti-scenarios as turning points that contradict the scenarios and promote social change. It also contemplated Taylor’s notion of scenarios as acts of transfer, that is, as spaces that produce and transmit knowledge and cultural memory. This chapter will focus on the concept of cultural memory and its instructive purpose in Latin American theater for social change.

Diana Taylor states that cultural memory is a practice that we embody and transmit every day. For her, cultural memory is transmitted through actions; that is, every activity that we perform during the day. This includes performance and daily life interactions between people. She defines it as “among other things, a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 82).

Cultural memory is embodied in us, that is, it is interlaced with “the person” that we are today, because it is created and transmitted in our culture by our daily life interactions. Cultural memory is connected to identity and cannot be separated from gender and race. “Here I suggest the impossibility of separating these three: cultural memory, race and gender” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 86). It is connected to

our identity because it plays a special role in a person's process of forming a sense of identity. Everything that we are taught is transmitted through cultural memory. It is also connected to gender because a person's identity is formed differently if it is a male or a female due to the social rules that dictate how men and women should behave in society. In conclusion, our personality, the persona that we are today, is constituted; among other things, by the cultural memory that our daily interactions with the world have taught us. Elements of cultural memory are transmitted to us by past generations and we are constantly transmitting them to others when we interact.

I agree with Taylor that it is impossible to separate performance from cultural memory because we ourselves are a result of cultural memory. As she states in her book, "The bodies participating in the transmission of knowledge and memory are themselves a product of certain taxonomic, disciplinary and mnemonic systems" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 86). Also, cultural memory is transmitted through multiple devices that are set upon by culture and, if cultural memory is transmitted from generation to generation, then it is accurate to believe that gender and ethnicity affect the construction of it, "If collective memory relies on social frameworks to enable transmission, then clearly the behavioral practices that define ethnicity participate in that transmission" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 88).

Cultural memory is the result of multiple factors that include, but are not limited to, cultural beliefs, stereotypes, myths, historical facts, folk tales and religious beliefs. For Taylor, the body in embodied culture is "specific, pivotal, and subject to change" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 86) therefore, it is impossible to think

about cultural memory and identity as disembodied. Our bodies embodied cultural memory: the way we talk, walk and move, and the gestures that we embody when reacting to different stimuli are determined, among other things, by cultural memory. This assumption implies that cultural memory varies depending on the culture, which immediately results in gender and ethnicity differences. “Gender impacts how these bodies participate, as does ethnicity” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 86).

Taylor also suggests that every culture possesses different transmission devices. “The techniques of transmission vary from group to group” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 86). Many of our beliefs are transmitted orally or through literature, for example religious beliefs. However, regardless of the transmission device, our bodies embody the knowledge that we get from these transmissions. We carry our beliefs and cultural background in our bodies and transmit it to others when we interact.

It is important to be aware of the role that cultural memory plays in our understanding of the world and in the decision making leading to our actions. And, if cultural memory influences our actions, what role does the transmission of cultural memory play in performance? Throughout history, performance arts have served the dominant classes of society to reproduce the status quo. This implies that cultural memory has been used to transmit the “truth”, that is, the norm. However, Theater for Social Change envisions theater as a tool to be used by everyone, which means that just as it can be used to reinforce the norm; it can also be used to question the norm and to promote the transformation of the social order.

The same applies to the transmission of cultural memory in performance. The fact that we recognize it as a cultural legacy that forms our world views and sense of identity, allows us to use it as a tool to promote change and question that which we have been told is the “truth”.

In order to explore the role that cultural memory plays in Latin American Theater for Social Change as an instructive tool that promotes transformation, I will analyze Augusto Boal’s technique of Forum Theater and Enrique Buenaventura’s play *La maestra*. Both of these examples portray common scenarios where cultural memory is transmitted through stereotypical behaviors around gender and social status. I will also identify the anti-scenarios present in these examples, and their role as social change promoters. Also, through the transmission of cultural memory, both of these examples generate shock and debate in us, about our reality and the way in which it is structured.

*Forum Theater: The case of Leader at work, slave in the home*

In his Book *The Rainbow of Desire*, Boal briefly describes Forum Theater as consisting, in essence, of "...proposing to a group of spectators, after a first improvisation of a scene, that they replace the protagonist and try to improvise variations on his actions. The real protagonist should, ultimately, improvise the variations that have motivated him the most" (184). He also describes it as "a sort of a fight or game" (*Games for actors and non-actors*, 18) with rules that assure that the situation does not get out of control and also to facilitate a prolific discussion.

In synthesis, Forum Theater consists of the dramatization of a story that ends abruptly with the introduction of a big conflict that worries the protagonist and paralyzes his or her actions. Then, the joker, meaning the facilitator of the forum, encourages the audience to propose solutions to the problem that the protagonist is experiencing. The audiences are also encouraged to go on stage and take on the role of the protagonist. By making the audience active participants of the dramatic action, Forum Theater hopes to serve as a rehearsal for real life. It hopes for participants to become active not only during the forum, but also in the reins of their own lives. Nevertheless, Forum Theater never comes to a solution; on the contrary, the forum explores many different solutions to the same problem. Usually, the solutions proposed generate new obstacles, creating a chain of cause and effect that never ends and that resembles real life: that all our actions have consequences and that there are no solutions to anything, there are only choices.

An important characteristic of Forum Theater is that the story to be staged must contain an error or mistake; something that is not right, so that spectators can propose solutions to the problem. Boal clearly states in his book *Game for Actors and Non-Actors*, that Forum Theater is not propaganda theater, but pedagogical theater; the goal is for both actors and spectators to learn something from the experience. (19)

Forum Theater usually consists of the performance of three or four scenes upon an audience. The scenes are based on a theme that is important to the audience it is addressing. For example, if the audience is composed by mine workers, then the scenes will be around the conflicts that mine laborers encounter with their bosses and working conditions.

The scenes enacted in a Forum Theater session are previously scripted and rehearsed by the actors, however, the actors must always be prepared for improvisation because they must follow the spect-actors suggestions and interact with them when they go on stage. Since Forum Theater is based on social problems that occur to real people in real life situations, it makes sense to believe that cultural memory is embodied on those improvisations. Forum Theater usually addresses the conflicts experienced by a specific population. For example, when working with teachers, it usually addresses teacher-student or teacher-education system conflicts, or when working with the employees of a company, it addresses employee-employer conflicts. The elements of cultural memory in these examples of Forum Theater are those that are transmitted to us throughout our lives and that dictate how these relationships between teacher-student, employer-employee, should be.

Forum Theater, just like Image Theater and Invisible Theater, requires the presence of oppression in its improvisations. However, that which is oppressing us is not always a person; sometimes it is morality, or the social structure, or the lack of economic power. Whatever the oppression, the improvisations in Forum Theater must define clearly who or what the oppressor is, who or what the oppressed are, and what is the conflict that these two forces are creating.

The first part of Forum Theater consists of a play performed by actors, with normal spectators serving as an audience. The plays are usually divided into scenes or actions and contain one or more mistakes that must be clear enough for the audience to identify. After the play is performed, the second and most important part of the technique starts, that is, the forum. During the forum, the spectators are transformed into spect-actors because they are encouraged to propose solutions to the problems or mistakes presented in the play. Also, spect-actors are welcome to take the role of the different characters of the play and act out their solutions until the group as a whole comes to an agreement about the problem.

I want to analyze an example of Forum Theater mentioned in the book *Games for Actor and Non-Actors*. The example is called *Leader at work, slave in the home*, and can be found on page 25. Here, I will apply Taylor's idea that performances embody cultural memory. Cultural memory can be found in the form of scenarios, but also, the interventions of the spect-actors during the forum are constituted with elements of cultural memory. These elements of cultural memory, together with the

expression of political claims and the reinforcing of identity serve as tools to transfer and generate knowledge to the audience.

This Forum Theater took place in Paris, during a strike by the electronic accounting department of a bank. The story that was presented for the forum was that of a woman who was a leading trade unionist at work, but a total slave to her husband at home.

The play is divided into three scenes or, as Boal calls them, actions. The first action starts at the workplace, with many costumers being attended. After the bank closes, the unionist woman organizes her colleagues, makes phone calls, arranges meetings and gives directions to everyone. The second action takes place when the woman's husband arrives in his car and honks the horn at her. She shows some signs of resistance but, eventually abandons her colleagues and ends up going home with her husband. Action three begins at home with the woman taking care of the husband, bathing her baby and doing all kinds of house duties while the husband relaxes after work. The piece ends with the note: "this woman is entirely a slave to her family" (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 25).

The forum starts right after the performance of the piece. Here, Boal explains that many women intervene by adopting the role of the protagonist. They tried to break the oppression by arguing with the husband and trying to convince him of helping with the house chores. Also, many women took the role of the oppressor and found out that even if the woman decided to stay in the office and kept working, other obstacles would have occurred. For example, the woman playing the manager went



back to the office and found the protagonist in there, she, as manager, finally threw her out of the office. In another improvisation, the solution proposed by one woman was not to let the husband into the office. This forced the husband to seek other strategies such as making phone calls, emotionally harassing, and lying to his wife. The last piece of information given to us by Boal about this forum is that during the last scene, one woman spect-actor was playing the main role and was so busy with house chores that she could not attend to the child who was taking a bath. In response to that, the child called for the mother, but since this didn't work, the child ended up calling for the father, who had no other choice than to get up and take care of the child.

The first point that I want to make about this piece and that applies to every Forum Theater is that the performance does not end with the performance of the three scenes. If we apply Taylor's first definition of performance being understood as something that is put on stage and that serves as the object of analysis for performance studies (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3), the performance of the three actions would perfectly fit the mold. However, in Forum Theater, that first performance works as a starting point that generates the performance of the forum. The forum has performative characteristics not only because spect-actors go on stage and perform their solutions, but because they are unaware that they are performing an active role and are not just passive spectators. So, even with our conventional understanding of theater, the three scenes that took place before the forum constitutes the performance, on Boal's work, the whole workshop is a performance. The action

does not stop with the dramatization of the play, but instead, the dramatization leads to the real performance, that is, the spect-actors taking active roles in the process of problem solving.

Taylor's second definition of performances being understood as methodological lenses that enable scholars to analyze events as performance (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 3) can be applied to this example of Forum Theater because the actions that are performed are based on the personal experience of a real woman; that is, those actions are performed regularly in daily life. The performance frames a common scenario for women who work and have families: independent at work, dependent on husband at home. The role of the forum is to question the scenario, that is, to question the transmission of cultural memory that is being transmitted through the scenario. The cultural memory in this scenario has to do with what we are taught is normal for women and men to do at work and at home. The forum promotes the production of solutions that will break this scenario, that is, break the chain of transmission of that particular element of cultural memory that allows and forbids women and men to behave in certain ways. By breaking the transmission, the forum generates a transformation in the scenario, which in turn, will promote a transformation in real life.

Furthermore, since the whole forum constitutes a performance, the generation of scenarios that serve as acts of transfer occur not only during the dramatization provided by the actors, but also during the suggestions made by spect-actors. Actually, it is normal for spect-actors to suggest solutions that constitute fixed scenarios that

reproduce social norms because that is what we, as members of society, have learned to be true and correct. The role of the forum is to question those scenarios that we think are the correct answer to our problems and to promote a transformation. By performing common scenarios, spectators are reproducing cultural memory that refers to social norms about gender and social status. It is the joker's duty to question the spect-actor's proposal so that the scenario can be broken and new knowledge achieved.

The forum itself constitutes an anti-scenario because it is meant to be debated. The forum allows spect-actors to go on stage and perform actions that they think are the solutions to the protagonist's problem. Usually, the spect-actors interventions produce new obstacles and then the joker initiates a discussion about whether or not the solutions proposed by the spect-actors work. These discussions are based on the spect-actors interventions and they are anti-scenarios because they question the way in which we jump to conclusions when it comes to problem solving. These discussions promote the reflection on cultural beliefs and social apparatus; therefore, they constitute anti-scenarios that promote social change.

The second point I want to discuss here is that Taylor states that performances have often contributed to maintain the repressive social order of society (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 22) In that same way, Boal believes that the Aristotelian system of tragedy that we still use to structure many theater plays and productions is coercive, and its task is the purgation of any antisocial element. (*Theater of the Oppressed*, 46) In Forum Theater, the performance made before the forum, that is, the one in which

the forum would be based upon, is always built under this statement. In the dramatization of the woman who is a leader at work and a slave at home, the goal of the first performance is to reassure the social order; that is, culturally we have learned that it is the wife's job to take care of the children and the house chores, and the male's role is to go to work and provide economic support for the family. The performance clearly reinforces the cultural beliefs about gender in order to generate discomfort among the audience and push them to challenge the social order and create a new one, with more equality for both genders. The performance is a common scenario that transmits cultural memory: women are supposed to take care of the house, the husband and the children, and also go to work.

Once the forum begins, all the performances are focused on breaking the oppression and creating a new social order. In this sense, the goal of the forum is to generate new knowledge about our understanding of society using theater as a tool. The fact that during one of the performances the woman playing the unionist female role was too busy with the house chores and could not take care of the child generated a solution to the problem of the woman doing everything at home, because it forced the husband to act and take care of the child. This performance challenged the social order because it somehow switched the roles established for the genders. Even though the women did not switch into a male role, the male was forced to perform an action culturally designated for females. This performance may seem insignificant in modern times because in our days more and more women are joining the work force and at home both spouses take care of house chores, but the truth is that social and

cultural stereotypes concerning the roles that male and female must perform are still strong in society. These stereotypes or stigmas are transmitted through everyday embodied behavior and usually are taken for granted in our lives. That is why the fact that the male enacts a female role in the performance is important, because it cannot be taken for granted by the spectator and therefore generates new knowledge.

Last, Taylor defines scenario as “an act of transfer, as a paradigm that is formulaic, portable, respectable, and often banal because it leaves out complexity, reduces complex to its stock elements, and encourages fantasies of participation.” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 54) Considering this definition, the performance made before the forum is a scenario, because the basic framework (woman doing chores, man relaxing after work) needs no explanation; it is recognized by the audience because it is congruent with the roles that society imposes on men and women. Nevertheless, the scenario is broken and it stops being banal when the forum takes place. The forum deconstructs the scenario, generating new meaning and points of view about a conflict or a situation that is usually taken for granted.

So far, I have largely discussed the importance that performance plays in the production of scenarios that transfer cultural memory to the audience. However, the question that still has not been answered is what kinds of memories are transmitted through performance? In the example of the woman who is a leader at work and a slave at home, the cultural memories that are being transmitted to the audience are those that do not allow her to be a leader at home. My assumption here is that this woman learned from her mother (who at the same time, learned from her own

mother.), that women should take care of all the house chores and be submissive to the husband, because culturally, that is the norm; that is what women are taught. Even though in present times women have gained equality at work and in the home environment, the reality for many women is still to be a leader at work and a slave at home. The protagonist of this forum embodies those beliefs and transmits them through cultural memory, even if she is not conscious of that. Nevertheless, once the forum begins, spect-actors question the elements of cultural memory that were just transmitted to them. By stepping onto the stage and performing new solutions that are not necessary what the norm dictates, spect-actors are creating anti-scenarios that transmit and generate new knowledge about our reality and the way in which it is constructed.

By setting the example of the women who is a leader at work and a slave at home, on stage, audience member can appreciate a scenario that is common for women who work and take care of the household. This scenario transmits cultural memory to the audience, in the form of all the ideas that the scenario portrays and that support women's role as slaves at home: women must have a job to support their families but they must also take care of all the household duties, the husband and the children. However, the forum breaks the scenario and therefore, the transmission of cultural memory that we assume is the truth. The forum generates anti-scenarios and new knowledge about our social structure.

Cultural memory is implicit. It is camouflaged in our culture and transmitted daily through every day behaviors. Cultural memory is not only embodied and

transmitted corporally; it is also transmitted linguistically through oral myths, legends and stories.

In general, all the techniques in Theater of the Oppressed reproduce and transmit cultural memory. Cultural stereotypes about gender, ethnicity and social status are somehow a product of cultural memory because they are taught to us in our interactions with others. In the example of the leader at work, slave at home, the woman really wanted to be independent and professional. At work she was able to be, but at home she turned into a slave, a dependent woman that took care not only of the household chores, but also of all the necessities of her husband and child. Her behavior at work speaks of a professional modern woman, but her behavior at home was that of an old-style house wife. She embodies cultural memories about gender roles in society, especially about how women are to behave and perform at home. Her mental framework is set with ideas and beliefs that were taught to her by the powerful figures of society: her parent, teachers, priests, and other institutions that also play a role in the transmission of cultural norms and rules. She had the intention of being a successful career woman, but deep in her mind (unconscious), she was being stopped by all the stereotypes, myths and stigmas that had been imposed on her as truth by her culture.

I understand gender, ethnicity and social status stereotypes to be a product of cultural memory because they are taught to us in our homes and educational systems. They play a role in the process of formation of identity and they all play a role in the maintenance of the status quo.

In the *Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor exemplifies the concept of cultural memory with a play by Emilio Carballido. In the play, *Yo tambien hablo de la rosa*, there is a *mestizo* woman narrator. This narrator serves as a link between the past and the present, because she embodies both. On the other hand, in my example of Forum Theater, the link between the past and the present is done by the questioning of social stereotypes. In the first action, before the forum, the actors portray a common scenario: a professional woman who is a leader at work and a slave to her husband and child. At the end of the third action, the note “this woman is entirely a slave to her family” (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 25) is said and these words are the ones that encouraged the audience to participate in the forum. The goal of the forum is to question the social stereotypes around gender. These stereotypes are producing, that in this household, the woman gets to do everything and the husband does not, even though they both have a job.

The questioning and discussion around these stereotypes and social “norms” produce a link between the past and the present. Where do these stereotypes come from? Why are they causing oppressions in today’s reality and why are we still reproducing them if our reality is different from that of the past?

The dramatization of the three scenes or actions performed before the forum, framed scenarios that transmitted cultural memory about gender stereotypes and norms of behavior for men and women. The problem that this generated is that these norms or rules of behavior were formulated far in the past because they fitted in with the model of the society that they were implemented to. However, these norms have



been transmitted generation through generation and they do not fit the model of society we have today. The goal of this forum theater example was to question these products of cultural memory to promote change in the audience. The forum questions the elements of cultural memory by positioning old beliefs in the present. By overlapping past and present, it is clear that the reasons why we want to promote change are based on the fact that the social norms that rule our society do not fit the model of society we have today.

*Play: La maestra.*

In her book, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor explores the concept of cultural memory in Emilio Carballido's play *Yo, tambien hablo de la rosa*. Here, the main character, a *mestizo* woman, begins the play with a monologue about her knowledge and memories in old Mexico DF; today, one of the most populated cities in the world. Taylor states that the woman "embodies the locus and means of communication" (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 80) because she is transmitting the images of her knowledge and memories to the audience through her embodied knowledge. She is the link between the past and the present. She embodies the ancient aboriginal culture and the European influence in one body. In synthesis, she is the vehicle through which cultural memory is transmitted.

For the purpose of this chapter, that is, to explore the presence and importance of cultural memory in Latin American Theater for Social Change, I will use Enrique Buenaventura's play *La maestra* as an example.

*La maestra*, just as the rest of the plays in *Los Papeles del Infierno*, is a short one act play with four scenes and seven characters. In the first scene, *la maestra*, a young woman, is sitting on stage narrating a monologue. Here she states that she is dead and describes the little town where she used to live and where she died. The second scene is constituted by two simultaneous scenes: on the one hand, the ghost of *la maestra* keeps its role as a narrator, telling us about her funeral; on the other hand, we see the actual funeral taking place. Pedro and Juana Pasambúr, *la maestra's* aunt and uncle, are at the funeral; as well as Tobias el Tuerto (the old Corregidor) and la

Vieja Asunción (an old *partera*). The third scene is also constituted by two simultaneous scenes: *La maestra* narrating how her old father, who was a *campesino*, was murdered by an army's general, and then the actual murder scene taking place. During the last scene, all simultaneous scenes disappear, leaving *la maestra* alone on stage again, as she narrates being raped by the soldiers who invade her home and killed her father. She then states that that episode caused her to lose her appetite and willingness to live, until she died.

Similar to the *mestizo* woman in Carballido's play, *La maestra* starts with a single woman on stage performing a monologue. Her first words state that she is dead, which immediately lets us know that we are listening to a ghost talking about her story. During the monologue, she describes her past, saying that she was born in the little town from which she is now telling us the story. She describes her house as little, made with red mud and a straw roof that sits along the main road, in front of the school, "la casita de barro rojo con techo de paja que está al borde del camino, frente a la escuela" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 16). Then she describes the road that passes in front of her house, a red river of mud during the winter (the rainy season) and a red twister of dust during summer (dry season). She ends her monologue by describing the odor of the grass that is strong in the town.

*La maestra* is also a link between the past and the present. Just as the *mestizo* woman in Carballido's play, *la maestra* embodies cultural memory because she herself is a memory. She embodies the atrocities committed by the military. She is the proof that these atrocities did exist. Her body carries the wounds and scars of her rape,

as well as the memories of her father's death. She states that her town lived in constant fear, until one day, the fear transformed into reality with the invasion of the army. She describes the fear as an immense gray cloud that overcasts her town and that one day it burst open and struck them. "Un día se desgarró el nubarrón y el rayo cayó sobre nosotros" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 18)

Her description of the town where she lived matches the description of any small rural town in Colombia in the 1950's. Her memories of this town constitute cultural memory because they are the memories of hundreds of people who lived in those towns during *La violencia*.

Also, *La maestra* is a ghost, therefore, we believe her. She is also the victim of the story. She is the voice that represents all the victims of *La violencia*. Since she is the victim, we immediately connect with her and take her side. The concepts of good and bad are very clear in this play: the military (the bad) invaded, killed and tortured the population of a little rural town (the good) because the government considered them to be traitors to the authority's beliefs. This duality of good and bad is traceable in many cultural scenarios like those of discovery and conquest, where the good (the conquistadors) dominate the savage (natives).

Dramaturgically speaking, that first monologue serves as an exposition of the given circumstances. Through that monologue, the audience is able to understand where this woman is coming from and of her actual status. A lot of information is revealed through that small monologue, and the audience can even picture, in their heads, the little town, the house of this woman, the red road that goes by it and the

smell. However, this monologue also constitutes the memories of this character. Her memories are put into words and transmitted to the audience who will combine them with memories of their own. Here, cultural memory is being transmitted.

*La maestra* represents and embodies many cultural stereotypes that are related to women's gender and identity. First of all, the fact that *la maestra* is a woman gives more credibility to the story and has a different connotation than if the narrator were a man. Culturally, women are perceived to be more vulnerable than men, therefore, stereotypically, women are more likely to be victims than men.

Also, it is important to mention that in Latin America most of the population is catholic and devoted to religion. This is important because another stereotype that *La maestra* carries is that well educated women in rural areas, where literacy is not the norm, are associated with chastity and purity; like the Virgin Mary. Therefore, having sexual relations outside of marriage, even if they were forced, constitutes a crime, not only against her body, but also to her identity; the rape destroyed her identity as a pure good woman, probably causing her to provoke her own death.

Yet another stereotype that *La maestra* represents is that teachers have mother-like instincts. Generally, teachers in rural town are single women who, instead of getting married and raise children, decide to educate themselves and pass that knowledge to the people in the community. *La maestra* fits this stereotype. She also plays a motherly role with her old father, who she takes care of since her mother died. She is a school teacher in a little rural town; actually, she is the only teacher in the town, which means that everyone knows who she is. Also, she has the respect and

appreciation of everyone in town because of the motherhood role that she plays in school with the children.

Another interesting point about this play has to do with the display of two overlapping actions taking place in one scene. This happens in scene two and three of the play. In scene two, we have the teacher narrating her story, and her burial procession taking place. Then, in scene three, we see *La maestra* narrating her father's murder and the actual murder taking place. These overlapping actions serve as scenarios and anti-scenarios that are displayed together at the same time.

In scene two, both dramatic actions overlap each other as the teacher narrates her memories of the burial ceremony and the characters present in the ceremony speak in the actual time of the funeral. Here, both actions embody cultural memory. On the one hand, the burial procession constitutes a ritual that we are all familiar with and that we associate with certain feelings like sadness and melancholy. On the other hand, the presence of the ghost of *La maestra* also embodies cultural memory not only of the event that she experienced, but of what ghosts represent in our culture. Usually ghosts are perceived as tormented souls that cannot rest because they died in a violent way or left something undone on earth. In this case, *La maestra* cannot rest until she narrates to us the real story of what happened to her and her father; and because she is a ghost, we believe her and identify with her role as a victim.

During scene three, we are sent to the near past, where the teacher's father is assassinated by an army officer. As we experience the execution taking place, *La maestra* continues her role as a narrator and informs us that her father had been one of

the founders of the town, he had named the town *La Esperanza* (the hope), and had also been mayor of the town in the past. She also mentions that the army was eradicating all the town leaders of the past government by orders from the new government, a repressive regiment. Then the focus of the action switches to the execution scene, where the army officer demands answer from *La maestra's* father. He does not speak because he does not understand what is going on. Here, the ghost of *La maestra* intervenes and explains that her father had been the governor of the town because he happened to be one of the founders; however, he did not understand much about politics, and was not aware that the situation had changed and was now under a repressive regimen.

So far, we are presented with two simultaneous scenes. On the one hand, the representation of the execution is the representation of reality. This scene represents an event that happened in reality to many *campesinos* that were killed by army officers. On the other hand, *La maestra* is filling in the gaps of the story by letting us know why this story ended with the army's intrusion in her town and her father's death. We are presented with actual historical facts that are questioned by the narrator with her statements about what her real life was like. *La maestra* is the anti-scenario that questions the scenario of the execution, a scenario that can also be traced through cultural memory and related to scenarios of colonization; where the one with authority has control of the life and death of others.

The soldiers picture *La maestra's* father as a politician who had misused his power to obtain land and position his family with good jobs. "Con la política

conseguiste esta tierra. ¿Cierto? (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 18). “Y también las posiciones están mal repartidas. Tu hija es la maestra de escuela, ¿no? (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 19). However, the statements of *La maestra* contradict this depiction and makes us aware that in reality, the army officials were the ones who were abusing their power for their own benefits. She states that her father had earned his land because of his work for the community. She also explains that she was the teacher because her mother used to be the teacher, and that role was assigned to her after her mother’s death. *La maestra* serves as the anti-scenario in this scene because her role is to speak the truth; she is revealing what really happened when her father was murdered. She is the voice of the victims; she embodies the memories of *La violencia*.

The overlapping dramatic actions that are presented in this play are important because we don’t just experience the actions that take place in the story, but at the same time; the ghost of *La maestra* reveals to us the truth. Her presence functions as an anti-scenario that reveals against the actions committed by the army. *La maestra* represents all the victims of *La violencia*. She is cultural memory because she embodies the struggle and the blood lost by Colombian citizens. However, she is also questioning our cultural legacy by resisting to rest.

Last, I would like to conclude that as opposed to the anti-scenarios on Forum Theater, which enables spect-actors to reflect about reality during the process of the forum and provide them with an active role, the anti-scenarios in *La maestra* function in a more implicit way and may not be perceived as easily as that of the forum by spect-actors. Nevertheless, even if the anti-scenario does not reveal itself to the



audience, the role of the narrator as that who questions the authority and refuses to have her story misunderstood, is fundamental to the promotion of social change, because without her interventions, the play would be telling us a different story.

### Chapter 3:

#### Traumatic Memory in Theater for Social Change

“Thinking about the interconnections among atrocity, embodied knowledge and subjectivity proves urgent for the many populations in the Americas that have experience centuries of social trauma” (Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 193).

In past chapters I analyzed the presence of scenarios and cultural memory in the work of Augusto Boal and Enrique Buenaventura, and how these concepts produce anti-scenarios that promote social change in Latin American *Nuevo Teatro*. Now, I will focus on how the work of these artists transmit traumatic memory in order to generate anti-scenarios that promote social transformations and help society cope with the consequences of social traumas.

In her book *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor explores the relationship between performance and traumatic memory. For her, the individual focus of trauma studies and the collective and public focus of performance studies overlap each other because performances that transmit traumatic memories have the ability to help survivors cope with trauma whether at an individual or collective level. Also, traumatic memory often relies on performance for transmission because culturally, trauma is considered unspeakable. Taylor also states that trauma and performance share some characteristics, for example, they both have repetitive natures, they are both felt viscerally in the present and they are always in situ, meaning that “They intervene in the individual, political and social body at a

particular moment and reflect specific tensions” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 167).

Theater for Social Change, such as Theater of the Oppressed and Enrique Buenaventura’s plays are examples of performances that transmit traumatic memory as a way to promote change and social healing.

Enrique Buenaventura’s, *Los Papeles del Infierno*, is a compilation of plays that transmit the traumas of *La violencia*. These plays not only transmit the traumas of the victims, but also those of the perpetrators and the collaborators of such violence. *Los Papeles del Infierno* frames the reality that Colombian society was living at the time. This archival piece does not let us forget what happened. It is a piece where trauma and performance overlap to keep the memories of *La violencia* alive.

In Theater of the Oppressed, the situations that are selected for work are either oppressions shared by everyone or individual oppressions that a specific person desires to expose. Whatever the case, these oppressions can, in some cases, be related to traumatic events. For example, originally Theater of the Oppressed was born as a possible solution to cope with the fear and violence generated by the dictatorship in Brazil. However, Boal’s goal was not to heal people (in the therapeutic sense), but to create a space where people could reflect on the situation in which they were living and construct possible solutions to confront the repressive system. However, in modern times, apart from being considered a theater for social change theory, Theater of the Oppressed is viewed as a set of techniques that can be used in therapeutic

processes. It is interesting to note how at the beginning, this theory had the masses as an objective to work with, while in modern times, many use it to focus on individual problems. The point I am trying to make here is that there is a relationship between Theater of the Oppressed and therapy and in that sense, the material treated in Theater of the Oppressed techniques can also transmit traumatic memory.

In his Book *The Rainbow of Desire*, Boal exposes a therapeutic view of Theater of the Oppressed. Nevertheless, he is emphatic in the matter that whether or not Theater of the Oppressed can help people cope with traumatic events, it is not therapy, it is theater and it will always be theater.

There is no doubt in my mind that performances transmit cultural and traumatic memory. Nevertheless, my goal in this chapter is to identify which memories constitute traumatic memories and how Theater for Social Change address these memories to educate, promote transformation and help populations heal.

There is a strong correlation between cultural memory and traumatic memory in Latin American culture. Due to the history of conquest, colonization and dictatorships on the continent, our culture is filled with cultural memories that contain some degree of traumatic connotation. Boal talks about working with collective oppressions, like dealing with a repressive government. He refers to oppressions that are shared by specific groups of people, for example dealing with social injustice due to economical differences; like when working with farmers that received a minimal salary after they had worked long periods of time. But how often are oppressions born due to cultural and traumatic memory? For example, what is the role of cultural

memory and traumatic memory in the acts of violence against women, like the killing of hundreds of women in Guatemala? And is there cultural and traumatic memory behind natural disasters like earthquakes, flooding, and volcanic eruptions?

Taylor narrates her experience as an audience member to an HIJOS performance in Argentina. HIJOS is an organization formed by the sons and daughters of the ‘desaparecidos’, the victims of the 1970’s and 1980’s military dictatorship who were accused of being communists and therefore kidnapped, tortured and killed.

The HIJOS performances are called *Escraches*. They organize carnival style protests that gather people from the community and take them, singing and dancing, to the house of a perpetrator, or to an office or clandestine place where the tortures and crimes were committed during the dictatorship. The performance that Taylor experienced took her to two garages that were used during the dictatorship as concentration camps. It was there where the parents of HIJOS, along with hundreds of other citizens were tortured and murdered. In each of these locations, HIJOS sang, danced and put graffiti on the street as a reminder of all the atrocities committed against them. Taylor states, “If performance transmits traumatic memory and political commitment, those of us accompanying them seem to have caught it” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 164).

Protests, just as the ones done by HIJOS and by the *Madres y Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo*, transmit cultural and traumatic memory to the audience. In Taylor’s words:

“They have contributed to human rights efforts by successfully transmitting traumatic memory from one generation to another and from the Argentine political context to an international public that did not live the violence firsthand. Those acts of transfer prove vital to an understanding of cultural agency” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 165).

For this chapter, I will analyze Augusto Boal’s Image Theater and its function as a tool to be used in the process of healing from a traumatic event. I will also explore Buenaventura’s play *La autopsia* and its role as a performance that transmits traumatic memory to its audience as means to maintain the memories of *La violencia* alive.

*Image Theater: The case of Immigrants.*

In her chapters about traumatic memory, Taylor explores the role that performance plays as a tool that, unlike the archive, transmits traumatic memory through the senses and not through narrative. Her assumption states that our culture prefers the archive over the repertoire, because the archive is tangible while the repertoire is ephemeral. However, the understanding of these concepts in our culture suggests that trauma is usually studied from an individual perspective in the archive. According to Taylor, this position leaves no consideration for the collective nature of trauma “suffered by illiterate and literate communities alike, transmitted through embodied performance” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 193).

Like Taylor, Augusto Boal also believes in the power of the repertoire, meaning performance, to produce and transmit knowledge in a collective way. His terminology does not include terms such as scenarios, cultural memory or traumatic memory, but clearly, he is not interested in addressing trauma or cultural memory in an individual sense. He often states that his work is not meant to be therapeutic; on the contrary, Theater of the Oppressed is designed to address collective oppressions, therefore, it also addresses collective memories and collective traumas.

Augusto Boal practices Popular Theater. Western culture tends to underestimate Popular Theater because culturally, this kind of theater is not considered artistic and it is only meant to entertain the masses. However, Taylor believes that in Latin America, Popular Theater was often animated by Marxist theories and therefore, it played an important role as a promoter of social change.

“Because Marxism privilege class, anticapitalist, and anti-imperialist struggles at the expense of racial, ethnic and gender conflict, its implementation in popular theater groups in Latin America ran the risk of reducing deep-seated cultural differences to class differences” (*The Archive and the Repertoire*, 198).

Boal was committed to Popular Theater in the rural areas of Brazil. During his experiences in these towns, he implemented a technique known as Image Theater. This technique is very popular among Theater for Social Change practitioners and requires the participation of every member of the workshop. Since everyone participates, there are no spectators, only spect-actors because everyone has to be active.

Image Theater consists of asking spect-actors to produce one collective image called Real Image. The image can also be done by a protagonist, if the group agrees to do it in that way. The Real Image is based on an oppression that has been previously selected by the group and that is familiar to everyone in the workshop. Then, the group or individual performing the image, is asked to produce an Ideal Image, that is, an utopist image of how reality could be like if that oppression disappears. After performing the Ideal Image, participants are asked to return to the Real Image. Then, each participant has the opportunity to modify the image in order to show how it may be possible to move from the Real Image to the Ideal Image. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 2-3) By enacting a transition that moves from the Real Image to the Ideal Image, participants are rehearsing different ways in which they can address the oppression and transform it into something productive for them.



Psychoanalytic theories refer to trauma as that which we cannot talk about because it is repressed. Trauma belongs to the unconscious because the memories of it are too strong for our bodies and minds to deal with. Nevertheless, a traumatic event, even if not remembered by the victim, can produce a series of consequences in a person's behaviors and interactions with the outside world. The role of therapy is to bring the traumas out of the unconscious and into the conscious mind, so that the person who suffered the trauma can confront it and move on with their life.

Image Theatre is a very effective way to communicate trauma because even though trauma is unconscious, we embody our traumas and transmit them daily through our behaviors and interactions with others. In this sense, when we make images about something that bother us or perturb us, we are embodying our traumas without being conscious about it. Then, the images that we produce serve as a starting point to reflect upon the trauma and then confront it.

Image Theater is not only effective in the transmission of traumatic memory, but it is also successful with the communication of cultural memory. The Real Images of Image Theater often constitute common cultural scenarios that represent our culture. On the other hand, Ideal Images constitute anti-scenarios, because they picture what reality would be like without the oppression that the scenario is producing. Those anti-scenarios function as possible solutions to cope with the resiliencies of traumatic events.

Since traumatic events do not always function in the collective order, Boal developed a technique known as The Rainbow of Desire, to treat personal

oppressions and traumas that affect a person's life. The technique is based on Image Theater and it asks the protagonist to make images about his or her oppressions/traumas. Boal states that the protagonist should produce images of his or her desires, states of mind, love and hate and of all the forces that the protagonist considers important to work with (*The Rainbow of Desire*, 151). Then, other participants reproduce the images together, so that the protagonist can admire the rainbow of possibilities of his or her personality and the different perspective in which he or she can analyze the problem. Then the protagonist is asked to utter a brief monologue with each image. The monologue should consider addressing the reasons why the protagonist is reflected in each of the images and if he or she likes being like that or not. Last, the protagonist is given the power to arrange the images in the order that he or she wants to. By arranging them, the protagonist is taking control over his or her life and the multiple faces of its personality.

As mentioned before, Image Theater is the base of the Rainbow of Desire technique and it has proven to be effective in the transmission of traumatic memories because it allows participants to express their fears and traumatic experiences through their bodies and not through oral expression. The display of traumatic memories is not meant to highlight the protagonist role as a victim, on the contrary, the technique produces a series of images that allows the protagonist and the rest of the participants to overcome the trauma by acknowledging the many layers of analysis that there are to it.

Also, Image Theater plays an important role in using traumatic memories to produce knowledge and promote change. In the last part of the technique, when participants are enacting the process in which one moves from the real image to the ideal one, new knowledge is produced because we are picturing possible solutions to cope with our oppressions-traumas, and that constitutes social change.

The following example is also part of the book *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, and can be found on page 4. The example took place in Sweden when an immigrant in the workshop suggested the theme for the exercise. Everyone was asked to perform an individual image based on how they felt about the theme. Boal describes how the Real Images created by the immigrants in the workshop always had some elements of despair. Immigrants did not feel comfortable being immigrants, while the Real Images of the natives always suggested help and acceptance towards the immigrants. Surprised by this result, Boal asked both parties to complement their images in a big Ideal Image that was performed first without motion, and then with motion added to it. The result was that there was always distance between the two parties, none of the spect-actors in either group managed to make physical contact with someone in the other group, even though they were sharing the same image. (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 4-5)

The process of Image Theater has many performative qualities. First, the fact that someone is performing the image while others observe, constitutes in itself a performance. Second, the images don't need to move to transmit cultural memory. In this example, everyone, whether immigrant or not, understood the emotions contained

by the images because the images represented embodied behaviors and portrayed common cultural scenarios. Third, Real Images constitute scenarios because they represent the general view and understanding of oppressions. The scenarios that the Real Images portray are broken when Ideal Images, which serve as anti-scenarios in Image Theater, are created because Ideal Images are not paradigms understood by everyone, but personal representations of our desires.

Image Theater serves as a good example of how cultural memory is embodied in our daily life's actions and performances. Boal narrates how all the images created by the immigrants and natives had similar characteristics. This proves that there are elements in our culture that mold and shape our understanding of the world and that those elements are particularly different in every culture, which can be interpreted as trails of cultural and traumatic memory. Both the immigrants and the natives showed their despair for the problem of immigration. The immigrants felt despair because they did not receive any help to adjust in a new country, while the native felt despaired that they wanted to help but did not do it.

The immigration example portrays scenarios of how immigration is perceived culturally. If our identity is tied to the place that we consider home, then, national identity plays an important role in our own perception of who we are. Immigrants do not necessary lose their identities when living in other countries, but the fact that they do not experience the sense of belonging that native citizens do, may constitute a trauma for them.

The example of immigration exposes the lack of communication between cultures; it also exposes the native's perception of immigrants and the immigrant's feelings of incompleteness. Through Image Theater, the immigrants were able to express their despair for being in a country that does not belong to them, while the natives were able to communicate that they believed they understood and helped the immigrants, although the Ideal Image clearly showed that there was a desire to help that never came to reality.

Immigrants are subjected to many cultural stereotypes directed at them from the native culture. However, people in the native culture often do not realize this. For example, immigrants are often depicted as poor and non-educated. They are also seen as people that would accept any job for little money. Nowadays, all immigrants carry the stereotype of illegal immigrants, they are viewed as people that do everything illegally, and thanks to the new immigration law they are labeled as criminals.

If the scenario of this example showed immigrants asking for help and native willing to give them help, then, then it would be accurate to believe that the Ideal Image should have shown immigrants and natives interacting together and sharing their lives in a happy environment. However, let's not forget that the Ideal Image serves as an anti-scenario and therefore, in this example, it reveals the fears and stereotypes that one group labeled to the other. Instead of presenting a happy world where immigrants and native can co-exist together, the anti-scenario in this example

showed that immigrants do not trust the native and their proclaimed help, while the natives may be willing to help, but actually do not do it.

The anti-scenario in this example is the starting point for debate. Boal states that one participant said that after performing the Ideal Image, he realized that he always thought he had the desire to help immigrants, but that actually, that desire was fake. He realized this because during the performing of the Ideal Image, he had the opportunity to reach out his hand and help the immigrants in need, but still, he did not do it. As we can see, the anti-scenario in this example provokes the discussion about how natives and immigrants perceive each other and it also revealed their feeling about the situation; the Ideal Image then, constitutes social change promotion.

Even though being an immigrant does not necessary imply a trauma; the reason behind the immigration may be due to traumatic events. For example many Europeans migrated to America as a way to escape from the World War II. Also, many South Americans migrated to the United States and neutral countries like Switzerland and Costa Rica because of the violence caused by the repressive governments of their countries. Other traumatic events that cause people to migrate to other countries are natural disaster like earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes. Natural disasters can tear families apart and leave people with nothing, causing them to migrate to new places and start a new life.

Also, being an immigrant in a country that rejects and labels immigrants with negative connotation may constitute a traumatic situation for people who seek better lives abroad and cause them to feel rejected. I do not mean to imply that every

immigrant sees their experience as traumatic; on the contrary, immigration can also be the solution to a trauma caused in the home country. What I imply is that Image Theater can be cathartic for many individual who have mixed feelings about a specific situation. In the example of the immigrants, Image Theater is a technique that revealed the way in which immigrants and natives felt about each other. The multiple images that were performed helped immigrants understand that natives were willing to help them, maybe they just did not know how; it also made it clear for the natives that the immigrants felt incomplete in their country because no matter what, they will always be foreigners.

Even though Image Theater is not meant to heal traumas in a therapeutic way, the exposition of the images that show them how they felt about each other, is a step in any healing process because it humanizes the enemy, allowing participants to see them differently, which promotes forgiveness, healing and social change.

*Play: La autopsia.*

*Los Papeles del Infierno* is a compilation of short plays, nine in total, published for the first time in 1990. However, all the plays in this compilation narrate the atrocities committed during *La violencia*. For Emilio Carballido, *Los Papeles del Infierno* is an album of atrocious images that represent not only the Colombian *La violencia* but all kinds of violence, “Album de imágenes atroces, tiene el don de la gran variedad de tonos y tratamientos; cubre la crónica de los más terribles años de *La violencia* en Colombia y se vuelve a la vez una imagen de todas las violencias” (*Los papeles del infierno*, 11).

*La autopsia* is a short one act play with two characters: La mujer y El doctor. The action takes place at the doctor’s office; he must go and perform an autopsy on a young man’s body that happens to be the couple’s son. The young man died in the hands of the military, probably tortured and murdered in a cell. During the length of the play, the doctor and his wife discuss their fears towards the regimen; the doctor suspects that if he does not perform the autopsy, they will call him a traitor and kill him. The wife tries to support her husband, but also begs him not to do the autopsy. At the end, the doctor is told by the authorities not to go, and he moves on to arrange his son’s funeral.

The action starts when the doctor is getting ready to go perform the autopsy. His wife is standing near him. They are having a conversation about their son. The doctor complains that the woman used to spoil the son too much and that as a consequence of that, he disobeyed the law and ended up dead. The wife defends the



son, saying that he was a good man and could not tolerate injustice. Then, the conversation takes a twist when the doctor complains about a missing button on his jacket. The woman suggests for him not to go to work and he reminds her that he must go to work because that is the only way of survival for them. If he disagrees with the authorities, he might end up dead too. The conversation goes on as they look at the newspaper and compare their dead son killed in an “altercation with the police” to another young man who is announced in the same newspaper as intelligent and with a bright future. Their son represents the traitors, the communists, while the other boy represents the government followers. They continue to debate their situation. The doctor fears that if he doesn’t do this autopsy, he will be killed like his son. The woman supports him at time, telling him that he has always done the right thing, and then at times, she asks him not to go. Their debate is interrupted by a phone call; it’s the police. They have called to let him know that he does not have to perform the autopsy. Someone else has been hired to do so. The doctor explains that the police have always appreciated him and his work and that is why they are being so nice to him. He prepares to leave to arrange the funeral; his wife is going to look for a button that looks exactly like the other ones to fix his jacket.

In the chapters devoted to traumatic memory, Taylor explains that September 11, 2001, is one example of an event that produced a collective trauma in The United States. In that same way, I want to explore the period of time in Colombian history known as *La violencia* as a decade that produced a series of traumatic events to Colombian citizens. These traumas are embodied and transmitted daily through our

interactions with others, and that still to this day, the ghost of *La violencia* haunts Colombia and the rest of the world.

*La violencia* took place between 1948 and 1958. It started with conflicts between the two traditional political parties, but then is turned into massive amount of violence and crimes committed especially in the rural areas of the country. According to Leon,

“In the beginning it seemed to be inspired politically by mutual antagonism between two traditional Colombian parties, liberal and conservative. It then seemed to degenerate progressively into plain banditry, with the gangs performing their antisocial activities for profit. In later years it seems to be inspired and sustained by extremist ideas originated in the Cuban Revolution” (1565)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> In 1930, the Colombian liberal party took control of the country after years of conservative governments. Because of the conservative resistance, they used violent means to remain in power. However, they suffered divisions in the inside of their party and in 1944; the conservatives took control of the government again. On April 9, 1948, the liberal political leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan was assassinated. His murder was followed by a massive riot known as “El Bogotazo.” After these episodes, violence kept increasing in the country and by 1949, diverse guerrilla groups were organized in rural areas, which, in return, were fought by “peace guerrillas.” by 1958 *La violencia* reached its peak and began to decrease gradually. The pattern of the movement changed and *La violencia* expanded to the urban areas in forms of acts of terrorism and kidnappings that still remain to this day (Leon, 1565).

During the years of *La violencia*, approximately 300,000 people, including women and children, were killed. According to Leon, guerrilla groups invaded rural towns suspected of supporting the government. They would eradicate the whole town, murder everyone, including children and set the towns on fire. Torture in the form of rape and impaling were common. Guerrilla groups had specific signatures to their crimes like the dismembering of corpses and the burning of the bodies. Other groups took body parts as trophies after the massacres (Leon, 1568-1569). Also, the repressive government was generating multiple violent acts against the population of the cities. They persecuted people that they considered a threat to the political system, often incarcerating them to later torture and kill them.

The memories of *La violencia* are embodied not only by the Colombian citizens who survived this decade, but also by the generation that followed them. Theater for Social Change addresses these memories as a way to heal and promote change in the population. Buenaventura's plays and the content of Boal's workshops deal with the cultural and the traumatic memories of *La violencia*. By keeping these memories alive, Theater for Social Change instructs new generations of past events, it also promotes change by questioning the ideas that lead to the flourish of *La violencia* and it can provide closure for those who are still tortured by these memories.

The plays in *Los Papeles del Infierno*, transmit traumatic memory through stories that narrate the experiences of the victims, the perpetrators and the collaborators of the violence during the Colombian dictatorship. In past chapters I analyzed the plays *La tortura*, which is a story with a perpetrator of violence as a

protagonist; and *La maestra*, with a victim as a protagonist. *La autopsia*, on the other hand, portrays all its characters as victim of the system, although the protagonist is a collaborator of the government; he does not enact the violent acts, but he covers them.

In *La autopsia*, the doctor, who serves the military, is a collaborator of the violence in Colombia, but, when his son is murdered in the hands of the military, the doctor and his wife become not only collaborators, but victims of *La violencia*. The anti-scenario in this play is presented at the very beginning. The anti-scenario is that this man, who make a living out of supporting the government and claiming natural death on tortured victims, now feels obligated to apply that procedure to his own son. The presence of this anti-scenario from the very beginning of the play leaves no room for the portrayal of the common scenario, which would include a “normal” family that is able to survive under a repressive government.

The doctor is responsible for the autopsies of all victims of the military. It is his job to claim natural deaths in all the bodies that have been tortured and executed. He has to deal with the horrible images of tortured bodies and the culpability of declaring them natural deaths. Now he is tortured by the idea of performing the autopsy for his son and the culpability of naming his death natural. His wife tries to support him by assuring him the he should do it, just like he does any other day, with any other body, “... será como cualquier otro día. Como cualquier otro cadáver” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 33)

The doctor and his wife do not necessarily belief in totalitarian regimens, but they have chosen to support it in order to survive. They live in constant fear because

the military controls everything, they control everyone's movements and any action can lead to being accused of being a traitor. However, the doctor has decided to work with the military to bring money to his household. By working with the military, the doctor can maintain a good salary and a good reputation.

The doctor is a troubled man. His points of view about the world are subject to the reality that he sees and walks through every day, that is, violence, fear, torture and death. For him, the world cannot be fixed because it is a slaughter house. "El mundo no tiene arreglo. El mundo es un matadero, Ana" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 36). He is troubled by the activities that he must perform every day. He does not approve of them because they are not honest and harm the people around him.

Since the anti-scenario is presented from the beginning, throughout the play the characters are troubled by the decision that they have to make. The doctor justifies his actions by assuring himself that he did what any other honest and professional man would do, "Yo siempre he cumplido con mi deber" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 32). However, he is tormented by the love that he feels for his son. He feels powerless because he knows that the military killed his son, yet, he has to keep lying in order to keep his job and his life.

The doctor and his wife are not bad people. They are victims of the system that do not know what else to do but to surrender and do as the government says. Throughout the conversation with his wife the doctor transmits his mixed feelings about the situation with phrases that justify his actions, like when he states that his good reputation and all his achievements are due to the honest man that he is, "¿Por

qué estoy yo como estoy? ¿Por qué he llegado a lo que he llegado? Por honrado y recto” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 36). At the same time, he also cites phrases that express his fear and culpability. For example, he feels responsible for his son’s death and states that maybe he did not do all that he could have done for him, “Y, quizás... yo no hice todo lo que tenía que hacer” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 37)

Trough out the play, we are presented with the duality of good and bad, honesty and dishonesty and surviving and surrender. These dualities are caused by the presence of the anti-scenario. Since it is presented at the beginning, the play presents us with two characters that do not know what to do. This uncertainty is transmitted to the audience, who at the same time are making assumptions of what they would do in this family’s position. Throughout the play, the presence of the anti-scenario, that is, the son’s death, questions the morality of the doctor. It also questions the passive attitude that the doctor’s wife has played all along. The presence of these dualities and the questioning of the actions that this couple has decided to do are the motors of social change promotion in this play.

The anti-scenario produces the husband and the wife to go through different stages during their conversation and decision making. In the first stage, the husband blames the wife for spoiling the son too much. For the doctor, the reason why the son is rebellious is because the mother spoiled him, “Lo consentiste demasiado. Siempre lo consentiste demansiado” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 31).

During the second stage, the doctor sees himself as a victim of his family, for him, all he does is a sacrifice. He works for the government so that his family can live

well, and his son paid him by joining the resistant wing, the rebellious. “Todo lo que he hecho es trabajar como una bestia para sostener este hogar y levantar ese hijo en la fe en Dios” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 31).

In the third stage, the mother, who usually supports her husband’s beliefs, begs him not to perform the autopsy. She claims that they cannot force him to do it, that doing so would be inhuman, “Podrías no ir, no te pueden obligar...” (35). The husband, who is tormented by this dilemma, asks, in several occasions, for the woman’s opinion. He asks her what she wants him to do, “¿Y qué quieres que haga? ¿Qué quieres que haga, Ana” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 33).

In the fourth stage, the doctor expresses his fear to the military. He grabs a newspaper and asks her to look at it. In the newspaper, their son’s name is recorded in the list of antisocialist and criminals, as opposed to Doctor Mella’s son, who is depicted as a promising and intelligent young man. Both boys went to school together and now they are labeled differently because of their political associations. The newspaper states that their son was killed in a confrontation with the army. To this statement, the mother states that it was no confrontation. Her son was murdered in a cell. The military put a gun in his mouth and fired at him. Then, in that same line, she tells her husband to go and perform the autopsy, like he does everyday with any other body. “Muerto en un encuentro. Asesinado en el calabozo. Le pusieron la ametralladora en la boca y le dispararon. Y tú irás y harás la autopsia. Como siempre. Como todos los días” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 34-35).

Later, the doctor feels responsible for his son's actions. He thinks he could have done more to protect him. The mother assures him that he is a good husband and a good father. "Has sido un buen marido, un buen cristiano, un buen padre" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 37).

Finally, in the sixth stage, their conversation is interrupted by a phone call. The military informs the doctor that he does not need to perform the autopsy and that his assistant will take care of it. Then, the doctor feels grateful with the authorities. He states that they always respected him and the work he does for them. That is why they are being so nice to him "Siempre me tuvieron mucha estimación. Eso no se puede negar" (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 39).

All of these stages are a consequence of the turning point that the anti-scenario produced in this couple's life. In each of these stages we can find dual elements that represent the torment of this family. These dualities may also trouble the audience and make them reflect and question their own morality and role in society.

An interesting metaphor in this play is that of the button. At the beginning of the play, the doctors mention that his suit is missing a button. The wife offers to fix it but cannot find a button exactly as the others, so she puts one that is very similar. According to her, no one will notice the difference. However, the doctor is uncomfortable with the button. At the end of the play, he asks her to change the button again for one that looks just like the others. He states that people do notice, they pay attention and notice the difference, "La gente se fija, Ana" (*Los Papeles del*



*Infierno*, 40). The conflict around the button represents the doctor's fears of the military. He does not want to be noticed. He does not want to be different from the rest because that will give the military suspicious about his beliefs. He would rather perform the autopsy on his own son, than be incarcerated and murdered like him.

As mentioned before, *La autopsia* is a play that victimizes the collaborators of the violence in Colombia. The scenario depicted in this play is a little different from a common scenario, because, a common scenario would portray the victim as the protagonist, like in the case of *La maestra*. However, in *La autopsia* the scenario that is provided to us depicts the protagonists and his wife, as collaborators of the violence that the government is exerting on the people. Our common understanding of the word 'victim', signals the couple's son as the real victim of the story; however, the doctor and his wife are also victims of the system because they are suffering the violence that surrounds their country. By positioning them as collaborators and victims of *La violencia*, Buenaventura is humanizing these characters.

One scenario that depicts *La violencia*, is that of living in fear. The situation that this family is experiencing constitutes traumatic memory for everyone in the audience. The play presents us with a couple that lives in fear. Just like them, every other family that lived through *La violencia*, lived in fear. Fear of being persecuted, fear of being arrested and tortured, fear of having someone you love arrested and tortured; fear of everything. During their conversation, the woman continuously begged the husband to lower his voice because she fears that the neighbors will hear

them and accuse them of being traitors and report them to the police, “No grites, los vecinos están pendientes de nosotros” (*Los Papeles del Infierno*, 32).

The fear that is constantly felt by the characters is an element of both, cultural and traumatic memory. This fear is understood by all of us, even those who have not experienced life in a totalitarian regiment. Taylor explains that as a witness to the HIJOS performance, she received the elements of traumatic memory that the performance transmitted to her, in this same way, the fear that these characters experience is understood by us because it constitutes part of our history.

Last, by introducing the anti-scenario from the very beginning of the play, Buenaventura is presenting us with a violent reality that affected everyone in society, not only the victims and their families. He is calling our attention by letting us know that there are different layers in which a violent environment affects us. He is also trying to eradicate the labels of ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ that we impose upon people depending on their social status and/or political association. With this play, he is telling us that we are all collaborators and victims of the system; therefore, we cannot label ourselves as “good guys” and “bad guys”.

## Conclusions

The analysis of elements, such as the presence of fixed social paradigms in the form of scenarios and the transmission of cultural and traumatic memory in Latin American Theater for Social Change, has proven that the *Nuevo Teatro* movement is not “Brechtian” style theater, but a movement with an aesthetic of its own.

Theater for Social Change practitioners, such as Enrique Buenaventura and Augusto Boal, applied concepts such as scenarios, cultural memory and traumatic memory in their work as tools to generate a turning point that I have called anti-scenarios. These anti-scenarios serve as debate starters in Theater of the Oppressed and provoke the questioning of social structures in Buenaventura’s audiences.

The presence of cultural and traumatic memory in Theater for Social Change is an indicator that Latin American theater developed its own methodology and aesthetic. Latin American *Nuevo Teatro* is based on Latin American reality. What gives life to the work of Buenaventura and Boal are themes that are important to the popular classes of Latin American society. The hope is that their work will create an impact on the audiences and promote social change.

The fact that the *Nuevo Teatro* stems from Marxist and socialist ideologies, as well as on Brecht’s Epic Theater does not indicate that the movement produces ‘Brechtian-style’ theater. To not correct this affirmation is to negate the originality of the movement and the importance that its productions have in the process of social change promotion. Also, to classify the movement as ‘Brechtian’ negates the presence of Latin American culture in its productions and the meaningfulness of its

legacies: Theater of the Oppressed and *Teatro de Creación Colectiva*; two methodologies that originated in this movement and that have proven to be effective around the world.

For this project, I took the concepts of scenario, cultural memory and traumatic memory, developed by Diana Taylor in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire*, and applied them to the work of Enrique Buenaventura and Augusto Boal. There are various reasons why I selected these two artists: First, they are among the most well-known theater for social change practitioners in Latin America. Second of all, their methodologies are very different: Buenaventura promoted social change through his plays, while Boal explored it through workshops with the popular classes. Also, I studied Buenaventura's work from the archive point of view, that is, the presence of scenarios, cultural and traumatic memory in the archive; the narrative. On the other hand, Boal's work serves as an example of the presence of these three concepts in the practice, which is the repertoire.

The work of Enrique Buenaventura and Augusto Boal concentrates on the promotion of social change in Latin American society. They both developed different ways to promote social change with theater. In his compilation of short plays, *Los Papeles del Infierno*, Buenaventura explored the consequences of living in a violent environment. It affected citizens on different levels. His characters, which belong to different social statuses, played multiple roles as victims, collaborators and/or perpetrators of violence.

Augusto Boal explores social change promotion by working with the popular classes. His legacy, Theater of the Oppressed, offers many techniques that can be used to address social problems and promote change. As opposed to Buenaventura, who focused on social change through the production of his plays, Boal urges his audiences to become active participants of the theatrical experience. By doing so, he transforms them into spect-actors, turning the theatrical experience into a rehearsal for real life.

The presence of the concepts of scenarios, cultural memory and traumatic memory in the work of these artists is proof enough that the *Nuevo Teatro* movement developed an aesthetic of their own. Most important of all, the analyses of these artists' work lead me to an important discovery: the presence of anti-scenarios in Theater for Social Change. I realized that in all of Buenaventura's plays and Boal's techniques there is always a turning point in the dramatic action that serves as a provocation for analysis and debate among audiences or the spect-actors. This element is important because it is the one that provokes consciousness about the social structure; therefore, it is the one that promotes social change.

The anti-scenario is the opposite of a scenario. Scenarios are fixed paradigms that portray elements of our culture; therefore, scenarios depict social beliefs and stereotypes in performance. On the contrary, the anti-scenario questions the social order, it switches gender roles, empowers the oppressed, etc. Examples of anti-scenarios that were analyzed in this paper are the *Ideal Image* of the Immigrants in Image Theater, the switching of gender roles from the example of the woman who

was a leader at work and a slave at home, and the torturer who became the victim of his victims.

We can identify anti-scenarios in the work of Buenaventura. They are presented to us in a way by which he treats all his characters as victims of *La violencia*. The torturer who ends up being tortured by the ghost of his victims, and the doctor who is tormented by the idea of performing an autopsy on his son, who was murdered by the military, and to whom he must support by saying his son died of a natural death, are examples in which Buenaventura exposes the anti-scenario. The torturer and the doctor, who occupied powerful positions in their society, are positioned by Buenaventura as vulnerable and powerless. By taking away their power, we are able to see these characters as human beings and this generates the questioning of the social structure. If these characters, who are respected and powerful members of society are also victims of the system, then who is responsible? Who is to blame for the consequences of *La violencia*? How can we make sure that this does not happen again?

One can also identify anti-scenarios in the work of Boal. For example, the *Ideal Image* in Image Theater is an anti-scenario because it breaks the social structure and generates images of an ideal structure. Other ways in which Boal breaks scenarios and produces anti-scenarios is by inviting audience members to substitute the protagonist on Forum Theater. By doing this, Boal is breaking a very common scenario: that the actors perform the play and the audiences are passive spectators. His creation of the spect-actor constitutes the most important form of anti-scenario

because it empowers the audience, making them active participants of the theatrical experience and of their lives.

It is important for me to mention the personal discoveries that I have come across through the development of this work. For example, the analysis of the compilation of plays *Los Papeles del Infierno*, motivated and excited me, because it made me view the phenomenon of *La violencia* with different eyes. To me, the richness of this compilation is derived from the fact that it addresses *La violencia* from different angles. The perspectives of the victims, the perpetrators and the collaborators of violence provide a three-dimensional analysis of the violence in Colombia. It humanizes the perpetrators and the collaborators of the military regiment by positioning them as victims of the social and political system that they chose for their country. This compilation is a collection of images and stories that serve as reminders of the atrocities of *La violencia*.

Last, the development of this work hopes to contribute to the field of Theater for Social Change and Performance Studies. The presence of anti-scenarios and the transmission of cultural and traumatic memory in Latin American Theater for Social Change need to be further explored in the work of these artists and other modern Latin American artists and social change practitioners. Further research in this area could consider the application of anti-scenarios in other culture's Theater for Social Change, and the way in which their devices for the transmission of cultural and traumatic memory differs from those used by the Latin American culture.

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