

## Theater education as subjectivity production

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DOI: 10.20396/conce.v8i2.8656489.

Submitted: 01/09/2019 | Accepted: 24/10/2019 | Published: 20/12/2019.



### Abstract

This article aims to identify situations in which theatre classes can foster a potent, singular production of subjectivity with their students. As an example, we will analyze an exercise performed in a theater class within a research process, proposing that elements that occurred there were analogous (“homonomous”) to those of subjectivation processes. References are concepts by Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Michel Foucault.

### KEYWORDS

Theatre Education.  
Subjectivity Production.  
Subjectivation Process.  
Subjectification Process.

### Educação teatral como produção de subjetividade

### Resumo

Artigo que visa caracterizar situações em que aulas de teatro possam fomentar uma produção de subjetividade potente, singular, junto a seus alunos. Como exemplo, será analisado um exercício realizado em uma aula de teatro dentro de um processo de pesquisa, propondo que elementos ali ocorridos se deram de modo análogo (homônimo) aos de processos de subjetivação. As referências são conceitos de Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari e Michel Foucault.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação Teatral. Produção de Subjetividade. Processos de Subjetivação.

## HOT TO MAKE A “HOW”

Jacques Rancière, at a conference on the relationship between art and political resistance, was clear in disqualifying any illusion that there is an ethical superiority of artists over other people, by stating that “we know that artists are neither more nor less rebellious than other populational categories” (2007, p. 17). Among other implications, this speech denotes reservations towards promises of ethical improvement concerning personal transformation in the audience of artistic manifestations and participants in art education. It also invites us, theater teachers, to investigate how theater classes could effectively contribute to live improvements, “not by accumulation of material goods, but by the constitution of values that are ethically accepted by a given community” (ICLE, 2010, p 23).

The importance and the relevance of arts teaching in the citizens education are still in an excessively vague terrain. With some historical exceptions, such as Project Zero<sup>1</sup>, which started at Harvard University, in 1967, there are nearly no long-term research about art teaching that can contribute to define in a clearer, broader way the references for this area of pedagogical thinking.

(...) in a perspective of justification, evaluation and legitimation of artistic education, the research to date remains insufficient, providing no reliable method or generalizable explanatory model to understand what is at stake in this holistic formation of the subject through art. (CHOQUET & KERLAN, 2016, 5)<sup>2</sup>

We have few answers about the effects of artistic education on its students regarding its contribution to their lives. The very terms of the questions and evaluation criteria related to this subject are far from being well placed. The research still chooses criteria vague and exogenous (extrinsic) to the arts to evaluate their pedagogical effects, taking into account, for example, relational resourcefulness and improved academic performance (CHOQUET & KERLAN, 2016). Otherwise, it's too restricted in the evaluation of influence of art classes on student performance, in mathematics and languages for example (OECD, 2013).

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/who-we-are/about>.

<sup>2</sup> “(...) dans une perspective de justification, d'évaluation et de légitimation de l'éducation artistique, les recherches réalisées jusqu'à présent demeurent insuffisantes, ces dernières n'apportant pas de méthode fiable ni de modèle explicatif généralisable pour comprendre ce qui se joue dans cette formation holistique du sujet par l'art. » (CHOQUET & KERLAN, 2016, 5) Translation by the author.

*L'Art pour l'art* (2013), OCDE work about artistic education, despite its limitations in not acknowledging the importance of aesthetical aspects in an intrinsic way (BORDEAUX, 2016, p. 14) and in daily life, brings the important idea that it is the way an art class is conducted that may or may not bring interesting results for the students, even if the mechanisms for such are still unclear. In other words, and in tune with Rancière, it is not any art class (here, theater class) that can foster a pertinent expansion of the students' perception, especially if we consider ethical elements in this assessment.

In Brazil, even with the relevant achievement – thanks to the movements that had their peak in the 1990s (SANTANA, 2009) – that theater teaching is on the hands of specialized teachers<sup>3</sup>, there are still deficiencies regarding the pedagogical references offered to and used by these professors. Moreover, there is an international acknowledgement that the justifications, to society, of why there are arts classes - theater included - for all children and young people are far from having convinced the decision-making bodies in education. And Brazil today is a paroxysm of this problem.

An argumentative line presented here is suggesting that these classes touch what is political and effectively ethical in the students' lives, by referring to the most important processes of their lives – such as survival – and preferably to influence them in a positive way. It is a peculiar utilitarianism, for it considers art essential for life. In this line of thought, it is necessary to weave a framework of understanding and directing theater classes in schools that make them instrumental (*sic*) for the student's life, mainly in their behavior, in their decisions, in the ethical-aesthetic aspects of their daily lives.

These processes are said to be related to the forms of theatrical thoughts already discussed in a previous article (MAGELA, 2018): the theatricality interwoven with life. It is about planning and understanding events and a more complex perception of space, time and human relations; or the capacity of collaborative creation of other worlds of experience and new ways of living. The bet is that the circumstances of the theater class intensify the attention connected to these theatrical dimensions of life, overcoming the automatism that only solves problems and tasks and composing qualities of attention for more inventive relationships. This theatrical reality would be one of the great fields

<sup>3</sup> Teachers that studied in universities or equivalent institutions of art education, specialized in the pedagogy of dance or theater or music or visual arts.

that these classes would approach: a theatrical sphere that forms everyday life and that the qualified pedagogically practice of the scene exercises and expands.

This article will focus on a possible way for theater classes to play a significant role in the way their participants deal with the theatricality of life. In a very synthetic way, we are going to argue that, if we consider that theatrical forces and forms are present in everyday life, they correspond to subjectivation processes. Thus, if the classes can propose immersive experiences in articulations of these theatrical forms and forces, they can process subjectivation and produce subjectivity, theatrical lifestyles in the classroom that can somatically overflow (MAGELA, 2017a) into the students' lives.

## STUDIES OF SUBJECTIVITY AND THEATER TEACHING

In order to better expose what will be addressed in the reflections on the production of subjectivity, it is necessary to explain what we consider as a subjectification<sup>4</sup> process:

So, the question is not: Why do some people want to be dominant? What do they want? What is their overall strategy? The question is this: What happens at the moment of, at the level of the procedure of subjugation, or in the continuous and uninterrupted processes that subjugate bodies, direct gestures, and regulate forms of behavior? In other words, rather than asking ourselves what the sovereign looks like from on high, we should be trying to discover how multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject. (...) ... I think we should be trying – and this is what I have been trying to do – to study the multiple peripheral bodies, the bodies that are constituted as subjects by power-effects. (FOUCAULT, 2003, p. 28-29)

By means of Judith Revel, commentator and specialist on Foucault works, we understand that the subjectivation processes, within Foucault's conceptual field, are connected to the modes of objectivation that constitute human beings as subjects, "processes through which we achieve the constitutions of a subject, or, more exactly, of a subjectivity" (REVEL, 2008, p. 128). We observe that the subjectification process is interwoven with a subjection process, one of the ambiguities and contradictions that characterize the relations of power. At the same time, based on the studies of subjectivity, we can try to articulate the subjecting character of subjectivation processes with a desirable singularization

<sup>4</sup> As the reader will notice, there is, in this paper, an indistinct use of the terms subjectivation and subjectification. The term subjectivation, found in Judith Butler's (1997) studies, for example, seems to be more appropriate to the approach of this article. However, there are other authors who use subjectification, including the translation of Deleuze's (1995) text used here. Hence the option of using both terms.

present in creative subjectivity productions.

If these processes are important in life, constitutive of our ways of being and of our experience, it is essential that there are classes approaching these operations we perform in life. What we intend to show here is that, when we talk about subjectivation, we notice a homonymy, an analogy in operating ways, between theater and life in the ways power operates. If we see theatricality in life as a complex articulation of forms and forces that shape time, space and behavior (a process of subjectivation), perhaps it is possible to approach, in theater classes, how the students produce subjectivity, how they perceive the forces and forms in class and in life and create potent ways of relating to it. This would define theater classes and make them less dependent of the professionalization of actors' culture.

The approaches that see the student as the one who should submit to the "literacy of the individual in the scenic language produced by professionals" (ANDRÉ, 2008, p. 134) are not far from the practices in which the student must become a "human capital" that will be used in the professional or economical systems, in theater job market or other markets, which will expect them to have developed their "creativity" or "skills" (elements appreciated by the manpower training) (COSTA, 2009). Thus, education works as device, as "investment whose accumulation allows not only productivity increase for the individual-worker but also the increasing intensification of their income throughout life" (GADELHA<sup>5</sup>, 2009, p. 150). Education, under this perspective, would be related to the subjectification processes regarding the "production of subjects":

[...] when it comes to education, one could speak of the ways in which it addresses the issue or problem of 'subjectivity': first, involving itself in subjectification processes, policies, devices and mechanisms, that is, the constitution of identities, personalities, forms of sensitivity, ways of acting, feeling and thinking, normalized, subjected, regulated, controlled ... (GADELHA, 2009, p. 173)

However, what is relevant here is creating the conditions for the singular production of subjectivity. Theater teaching in schools, therefore, escapes normalization and aims to produce inventive and strategic ways of living:

[...] in a second case, in which resistance to power comes into focus, taking place through an ethical-aesthetic route, one can think how education is implicated in the invention

<sup>5</sup> These references, GADELHA and COSTA are related to two works by the same person, Sylvio de Sousa Gadelha Costa.

of unique ways of relating to oneself and with otherness. (GADELHA, 2009, p. 173)

With this, through the production of specific forms of relationships, happens the corrosion of “social mechanisms that favor or authorize the common experience of life, as a unit and as a totality”. (BOURDIEU, 2006, p. 185):

The social world, which tends to identify normality with identity understood as the constancy to oneself of a responsible being that is predictable, or at least intelligible, in the way of a well-constructed history (as opposed to a history of an idiot), has available all sorts of institutions of integration and unification of the self. (BOURDIEU, 2006, p. 186)

Theater teaching would make use of the pedagogical aspects of craftsmanship in what mobilizes, broadens students’ attention. This production of subjectivity would occur connected to a theater thinking, to an intelligence present in the perception of what is theatrical in the events of life. Of the many intelligences activated in perception, it would be up to us, theater teachers, who want and should influence the life of all Brazilians, to direct our teaching towards theater cognition.

## FORCES, POWER, SUBJECTIVATION

If we assume that the object of theater education is to establish the connection between what is done in a theater class with what makes up theatrically everyday life, a vitalist philosophy (one which concerns the flows of life) can be connected to the activities of theater education (MAGELA, 2019b) (MAGELA, 2017b)<sup>6</sup>. Thus, this connection makes feasible, at least theoretically, the transposition from the classes to life. It is in this aspect that the overlapping of the experience of the theater class is configured here with processes of subjectivation, studies of subjectivity and philosophies of difference.

My specialization is in theatre education, but I also teach disciplines related to acting (which, to me, is the main element in theatre dedicated to basic education). During my research on the association between theater classes and production of subjectivity, there was an encounter in a specific discipline of improvisation, where there were few students, all undergraduates who already had some acting and theater teaching experience.

In the middle of this semester, after we had built a pedagogical process

<sup>6</sup> The recommended reading order for these two articles really is chronologically reversed.

among us, the students worked on a “free” improvisation, which can be compared to a paratheater or dramatic dynamic. Before this class day, there was an interval of work time, caused by one day of my absence and two academic weeks, which interrupted the intense work at the beginning of the semester.

On the day we analyze, the students arrived and, without saying anything, without talking (as previously established), we made a circle (which I conducted). I sang some songs, trying to induce them to sing too, without success (I admit that my intervention was clichetypical). They did not join and I was singing alone for some time, less than a song (vocals and music are not my focus - in fact, they are a deficiency in my work). But this failure did not cause problems for the work environment. We were silent for a while, hand in hand. I got out of the wheel and turned off the lights, leaving them in this void (there was diffuse and dim lighting from the windows). They started to do things, but I noticed that, from the beginning, they didn't fall into the need of “filling” - they were calm and did not propose known behaviors or previous action resources.

It should be noted that this was only proposed because we had a previous job and, on the day, I identified an opportunity to try this more “aesthetic” beginning of class (an “event class” that I even wanted at this point in the process). And the most important thing in my assessment of this class was to realize that, in their initial improvisation, there was an instance that could, perhaps, be called “pre-game”, in which they did not try to interact within patterns of social responsiveness, of interaction, of communication, or even of a game. This perception, and its correspondent term (pre-game), was then new in this process.

I interrupted the work to solve a security problem (a piece of metal that could hurt them) and, after that, when they returned, the specific instance had been totally lost. They started to improvise, play, etc. normally, within more recognizable patterns of interaction. I interrupted this and we went to a normal working day, with warm-ups and improvisations.

Thinking about what happened, I thought that that “pre-game” instance was characterized by a specific set of forces, of mutual influences that built what happened and what “were” the people that were building themselves and the situation. The people were the relations.

The self and the world are co-engendered by action, in a reciprocal and inseparable way. [...] The processes of subjectivation and objectification take place on a plane below the forms, a plane of moving molds that, through their agency, configure forms that are always precarious and liable to transformation. (KASTRUP, 2005a, p. 1276)

In that class situation, the perception – or cognitive - elements or instances, mentioned in the beginning of this article, were operating as forces. That work, and the insights arising from it, opened the path for a theatrical cognition to become more tangible, at least for those present (it will become more explicit, perhaps, in the next example). This theater cognition is a way of perceiving and making the real that takes place theatrically, in minimalisms and fields of perception that are not anchored mostly on communication and play as previously established, as hegemonic operational resources of relationship.

This instance of “pre-game” or “infra-game”, which emerged on that day, proved to be constituted by processes of collective perception that did not require an explicit communication or a more structured game. Actions take place through minimal and simple constructs, through operative cells as elementary as they are effective and powerful, forces and forms that enter the constitution of a situation, or theatrical dimension.

## SITUATED

This logic of concretely engaged activity unfolded, in the following week, into the exercise of making a diagonal route through the room, in which everyone should carry one acting person. According to my instructions, they should go through this route without speaking, neither looking at each other or signaling – with no intentional communication. Other instructions were to never stop and to absorb my instructions without interrupting work or looking at me, as if they were working with a fourth wall<sup>7</sup>, in a conventional scene ethic.

In the beginning of the work, I told them to make a cycle, where every one was taken to by the others, one at a time. After all were carried, they would repeat, but not necessarily in the same order. They should do everything without interruption, until I instructed them to stop.

After a while, I realized that this cycle caused an excessive rationalization,

<sup>7</sup> In a way, this “fourth wall” is operationally connected to what Gilberto Icle calls “being on the scene” as a theatrical notion (ICLE, 2011, p. 75).



a “noise”; and this took them in an undesirable way: they needed to remember, thinking very rationally, who was and who was not carried in that cycle, when deciding who to carry. So, I suggested during the work, without stopping them, that they should define by the work flow who would be carried at each moment and how this person would be lifted and carried, without problems regarding results or if someone was not carried for a long time (once the rules were followed). In fact, deciding what to do collectively in the flow of actions is all that mattered in this work (and so is in life).

After several comings and goings (more than thirty times), they were entering very intense rhythm and immersion, and constituting a truly theatrical instance executing that task within the situational instructions. They were engaged in the task, avoiding acting clichés, assuming the situation and deciding what came along. The intelligence of perceiving and producing each moment without explicit communication and without falling into stratified definitions of behavior or meanings of actions was the most significant.

The creativity in the way of carrying the colleagues was not important (unusual or different ways, in an evaluation regime more linked to an aesthetic product or to my enjoyment as an observer), but how they acted every second, the quality of every decision, the way they were constituted by the collective interconnection, in a bodily thought totally interconnected collectively with the whole process. Perceiving this pedagogically is the most important in this reflection.

After the constitution of what I ended up seeing as a theatrical dimension (due to the perception of the actors and to the acting forces), through verbal instructions and without interrupting the work, I gradually eliminated more and more explicit and conductor arbitrated rules. In this order and at time intervals:

- I instructed it was no longer necessary to follow cycles, so they could decide who to take without rationalization (what I did right at the beginning, as mentioned earlier, when realizing that the original rule diverted the participants from what I considered necessary to investigate);

- after a while, the diagonal trajectory was no longer needed (they could carry the person around the room as this was defined by work);

- and finally, that there was no need even for the main rule - carrying someone.

Categorically: with the constituted dimension, there were no more explicit or predefined rules. Openings and closings, decisions, refusals and acceptances, were made without communication or prescriptions, but based on rules and modes produced by the relations of forces created by everyone in relation to the flows of these forces.

(...) inventing ways of existing, through optional rules, that can both resist power and elude knowledge, even if knowledge tries to penetrate them and power to appropriate them. But ways of existing or possibilities of life are constantly being recreated, new ones emerge (...). (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 92)

In terms of rules and tasks for class exercise, the situation was the same as in the previous class, in which improvisation initially occurred with no rules or defined proposal. But this happened in a different way: after a process of establishment and subsequent elimination of explicit rules. The operative scenic-ethical processes abide by another regime. This scene ethics transposed into an ethics of thinking, a specific attention. And, in conclusion, corresponded to a process of subjectivation that produced subjectivity for that situation - related to what Deleuze states: "(...) ethics is a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved" (Deleuze, 1995, p.100).

The actants (separately and collectively) perceived, within theatrical forces, a theatrical flow, a dynamic or construction of events, and, at the same time that they were constituted, they constructed these events, which made up a theatrical dimension. Action, reaction, subject, object - no separation of this type made sense: "This is what the word emancipation means: the blurring of the boundary between those who act and those who look; between individuals and members of a collective body" (RANCIÈRE, 2009, p. 19).

I had a strong perception, the first time this activity was carried out, of how the participants perceive (and to perceive is to be produced too) and at the same time produce a mode of space and time to happen (the actions, the theatricality of the moment), a mode to collectively create the situation:

The relationship, understood as agency, is the way of functioning of a collective plan, which appears as a plan of creation, of co-engenderment of beings. It should be noted

that this collective and relational plan is also the subjectivity production plan. Subjectivity here is not synonymous with individual, subject or person, as it includes pre-individual/pre-personal (perceptive, sensitive, etc.) and extrapersonal or social (machinic, economic, technological, ecological, etc.) systems. Thus, the processes of subjectivation are always collective, as long as they arrange heterogeneous strata of being. (KASTRUP, 2005b, p. 303)

Despite what I have called “scene ethics”, this way of thinking did not seem to consider the production of signs for an audience, but the production of a specific situation, of an event that took place in the territory of a theatrical *intensivity* (CARNEIRO, 2018, p. 278) (MAGELA, 2018, p. 305). What mattered was the interaction, the agency produced there. At the same time, the term “forces” and the perception of forces in relation to forces refers to power, as proposed by Foucault and taken up by Deleuze in his considerations about subjectivation: “Indeed, I think subjectification has little to do with a subject. It’s to do, rather, with an electric or magnetic field, an individuation taking place through intensities (weak as well as strong ones), it’s to do with individuated fields, not persons or identities” (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 93).

The actions took place as an aesthetic field, as an artistic composition. The performers were what they did, they were what affected them theatrically: “[It’s] About establishing different ways of existing, depending on how you fold the line of forces, or inventing possibilities of life that depend on death too, on our relations to death: existing not as a subject but as a work of art” (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 92).

Focusing on the political side of these issues, autonomy and singular production of subjectivity find a ground to thrive, with the constitution of a field of reverberation for the creation of other ways of life, questioning and trying to undermine the devices that help the hegemonic ways of living, based on individualism, to be perpetuated, forbidding others ways to arise:

Another type of experience that subjectivity makes of its surroundings is what I call “outside-of-the-subject”, it is the experience of the forces that agitate the world as a living body and that generate effects on our body as a living being. Such effects consist of another way of seeing and feeling what happens in each moment (what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari called, respectively, “percepts” and “affects”). We are taken by a state that has neither an image, nor a word, nor a gesture that corresponds to it and which, however, is real and apprehensive by this mode of cognition that I call “body-knowledge”. Here it is no longer an individual’s experience, nor is there a distinction between subject and object, since the world “lives” in our body under the mode of “affects” and “percepts” and is part of their/our composition in process. These effects form a kind of germ of the world that comes to inhabit us and that strikes us because it is, in principle, untranslatable in the current cultural cartography, since it is exactly what escapes it and puts it at risk of dissolution. (ROLNIK, 2016)

What I once more stress is that, since they did this with a perception and within a decision process that escaped the hegemonic communication regime and the rational mode, they also dismantled previous conventions of agreements and behavior, reconfiguring this stratum of intersubjectivity. They were modulating time and space, with a specific behavior, inventing “in situation”, collectively composing a territory – assembling, arranging.

I pondered that there had been a theatrical cognition, in the sense that their actions were an active perception in a theatrical dimension, in the intensive, operative aspects of the theater:

A process of subjectification, that is, the production of a way of existing, can't be equated with a subject, unless we divest the subject of any interiority and even any identity. Subjectification isn't even anything to do with a “person”: it's a specific or collective individuation relating to an event (a time of day, a river, a wind, a life...)<sup>8</sup>. It's a mode of intensity, not a personal subject. It's a specific dimension without which we can't go beyond knowledge or resist power. (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 98-99)

The characterization of the exercise situation with the production of subjectivity, as seen by Foucault and Deleuze, was shown to be increasingly consistent. Yes: the analysis of aspects related to power and ways of relating to its operations derive from the exercise elements, seen under the light of conceptual elaboration. But these elaborations matter to us as the promotion of singular and, in a particular manner, autonomous ways of being constituted by power, dealing with it and constituting worlds; in our case, in the theatrical aspects, those situated in theatrical dimensions.

The actions they performed, in relation to the presented problems, were similar to those of surfers, in relation to the waves: “[...] a surfer, one who neither fights unabashed nor lets himself be carried away like a stick, but who has the paradoxical wisdom to respect and take advantage of the strength, speed and intensity of the waves” (FEITOSA, 2007, p. 29).

And this would concern the invention, by them, of a kind of thinking (dimension, therefore) that is theatrical: invention of rules, of modes, of other relations of forces, which account for the forces in operation in the theatrical aspect. The mode of appropriation and invention of rules is what determines the singularization: “even if cognitive practices configure rules, they are considered temporary and subject to reinvention” (KASTRUP, 2005a, p. 1281). And

<sup>8</sup> Note here the implicit reference to the concept of haecceity, present elsewhere in Deleuze's work.

this invention within the rules also forms a resistance, for it is a way of overcoming the modes of power based on knowledge about a subject:

It's no longer a matter of determinate forms, as with knowledge, or of constraining rules, as with power: it's a matter of optional rules that make existence a work of art, rules at once ethical and aesthetic that constitute ways of existing or styles of life (including even suicide). (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 98)

In this sense, I emphasize the idea that at work often it is when there is a method that something escapes. Yes, a changing method, but with criteria and principles (also mobile, but for a time they are fixed, so that some friction occurs). If everything gives way, if everything tends to fit together, perhaps nothing new will come - only an impression of movement -, due to the lack of becomings and composition of new territories. The fixed and the rule also provoke movements of outgoing from oneself<sup>9</sup>.

Because if the decisions are made in a way of thinking that escapes the more structured logic of communication (triggered and/or allowed by instructions that restricted exchanges of views and gestures), this also constitutes a destabilization of knowledge:

The time comes once we've worked through knowledge and power; it's that work that forces us to frame the new question, it couldn't have been framed before. Subjectivity is in no sense a knowledge formation or power function that Foucault hadn't previously recognized; subjectification is an artistic activity distinct from, and lying outside, knowledge and power. (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 114)

## THE PARADOX OF THE RULE

In this work, rules and instructions occupy a central place, as they serve the proposals of autonomy in an appropriation, creation and modulation of forces and rules by the actors, which is expected to happen also with their life, outside of school. The main reason has already been exposed: the relationship between power and the production of subjectivity within a theatrical dimension.

The pedagogical proposal addressed here is the transposition of a theatrical process where power is experienced bodily, in a theatrical bodily thought, in order to create new relationships to exercise a capacity, in life, to deal autonomously with theatrical dimensions, with theatrical forces. Thus, the centra-

<sup>9</sup> Concerning paradoxes in normativity issues, see "Normativity of cooperation in theatre classes" (MAGELA, 2019a).

lity of the instruction, of the rule, of the norm, aims to approach meticulously these questions of power, subjectivity, openings and closings, of active or selective porosity.

One frequent interpretation for Deleuze's and Guattari's work is to prioritize lines of flight, deterritorializations, non-organization. A resulting attitude is an aversion to principles, criteria, or rules. But there are criteria, rigors, and even several classifications in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and here these operators have an specifically atrocious way in which they must be treated - a non-steady way, without guarantees, even if caution is a requirement: "Although there is no preformed logical order to becomings and multiplicities, there are criteria, and the important thing is that they not be used after the fact, that they be applied in the course of events, that they be sufficient to guide us through the dangers" (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 251).

I highlight, in this respect, the importance of inhabiting the territory, unlike some appropriations of the works of Deleuze and Guattari, which sometimes seem to fetishize deterritorialization. As Suely Rolnik warns, deterritorialization does not work much as an objective:

Fascination deterritorialization has on us may be fatal now: instead of living it as an essential dimension of creating territories, we take it as an end in itself. And, entirely devoid of territories, we became fragile until we irrevocably dismantle.<sup>10</sup> (ROLNIK, 1994, p. 1)

Deterritorialization is necessary because the territory does not last forever, and when its end comes, we must operate the territorial departure. What was written about the "Body without Organs", in the books *A Thousand Plateaus and Anti-Oedipus*, contains a whole list of procedures and even rules about this complex game of openings and closings, compositions and decompositions that (we can rest assured<sup>11</sup>) works.

But the main issue here is how to accept the failure, how to deal with the non-guarantee, with this malfunction, where no solution is previously given, where there is no control, but caution. And, what is of crucial importance, the necessary questioning about what elements can allow and encourage life to pulse. Often, these elements are precisely what seems, in the common sense, to

<sup>10</sup> Rolnik alludes to love processes

<sup>11</sup> The expression refers to *Anti-Oedipus*: according to Deleuze and Guattari, the desiring-machines work only when they break down.

imprison life.

Thus, in an alternative to views that emphasize what flees in methodical situations (in repulsion to them), one possible approach on the work of these two thinkers would highlight the forms and rigors that exactly promote de-territorializations and processes of singularization, what, in a way, has always been present in their work:

What is the distinctive feature of his thought? What interests Deleuze above all are aberrant movements. His is a philosophy of aberrant or “forced” movements; it represents the most rigorous, the most immoderate, as well as the most systematic attempt to inventory the aberrant movements traversing matter, life, thought, nature, and the history of societies. Classifying is a fundamental activity in his work, an activity for drawing distinctions that is at once pedagogical and systematic. Deleuze continuously identifies and classifies aberrant movements; his work, and that undertaken with Guattari, is something like their encyclopedia (LAPOUJADE, 2017, 23)

Perhaps we can provoke something that escapes, precisely by the ferocious use of a method, a rule, a procedure - that forces the emergence of something. If everything fits, if there is nothing set (at least provisionally), a work rule or an instruction, for example, there is no friction or support points to (real) movement. All without pain, without conflicts, but perhaps without life. Yes, of course: the new happens if we are open to it, even if we don't trigger it. However, the collective structured work demands its explicit rigors, especially if it is artistic, if it wants to induce the new.

Works about theatrical games, particularly those written directly by Viola Spolin (2020[1963]), outline this - games with explicit rules. Games and exercises with rules are a simulation of the real, with which the student will be confronted, recognizing the reality of these rules, accepting them in an initial agreement and sometimes subverting them. In a way, inventing worlds is inventing rules and/or laws (*nómoi*). In some aspects, other places of learning or practices and overall experiences, especially those where there is a plastic element, also operate this confrontation in the one who experiments.

In this specific discussion, it is about normativity itself and the dynamic creation of norms, mostly implicit, which allow us to act collectively (MAGELLA, 2019a). Regarding this aspect of the theater classes we are dealing with in this article, the instructions and rules constitute the work, which will foster an inventive normativity. The simulated real of theater is mostly the constitution of boundaries, which work as triggers of reality production. The more vital and intensive they are, the more this operation of creating realities is interesting

and the less subsumed by representation it becomes.

In most exercises and games, for the participants, objectives and purposes are not the main issue (carrying the colleagues resembled Sisyphean work<sup>12</sup>, or we can remark the chronic situations of Beckett's plays, without any progression<sup>13</sup>). If an endless task is proposed, the conventional sense of task is also destabilized. Finally, these jobs of the theatrical exercise do not have the resolving disposition of usual tasks, nor do they aim to practice skills to have problems better solved. They are aesthetic situations of experiencing a more intensified attention so that the actor is affected by what appears for them.

What we research here are ways how to deal with this rule; the invention and the uniqueness that can arise in these modes. What matters is the way of relating at each moment, the quality of inventiveness and the uniqueness of these forms of relationship - mobile and occasionally unattainable by analysis. An investigation into the possibility that experiences with some theatrical exercises may be qualified ways of dealing with these rules, forces, powers; ways that can be somatically overflowed into the student's life: a more powerful body to invent theatrical thoughts that better deal with these theatrical strata of power.

Trying to collaborate with the understanding of these statements, I recall that Foucault's analyzes of power (also followed and developed by Deleuze) are opposed to traditional models that propose simple schemes showing on the one hand the one who holds power and oppresses, and another one who is oppressed. Foucault proposes a "game of reciprocal implications that seal a fundamental interdependence" (REVEL; 2005: 198). Power in this sense is constituted by a plurality of relations, "actions over actions": power, defined as a set of actions over possible actions, thus implies a transformation of the acting subjects. And it is this transformation, under the shape of a choice of reaction or behavior, that Foucault will then call "resistance" (REVEL, 2005, p. 201).

These tasks and rules induce the actor to a new relationship, which is a trigger. As a resistance, which takes the place of already established relationship forms, undermining them by substitution, the theater exercise promotes con-

<sup>12</sup> Roll a huge boulder up a steep hill and see it roll back down just after reaching the peak, just to have to roll it back up again.

<sup>13</sup> Which, by the way, speak in an extremely lucid way about life, which is basically everyday life.



nections that dismantle other previous connections (desirably, the ones stagnant): from a subject constituted by objectivations, a subject constituting itself through well-ordered practices (GROS, 2005, p. 513).

Therefore, points of view that adhere to the idea of freedom and fullness of being without rules, criteria and limits are alien to the conception we embrace here, which is guided by the power and by the creation of ways of life precisely within the strength relations constituted as power: “The assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled, machined” (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1980<sup>14</sup>, 497).

I take this opportunity to clarify that this work does not affirm it is necessary to go through external rules or to learn several rules to only then act according to one’s own rules, or, in other words, that it would be necessary to submit oneself in order to be free afterwards. Among other reasons, since there is no freedom (in the philosophical system we follow here), there is not an “only later free”. The subjectivation process, in its ever-present aspect of “subjection”<sup>15</sup>, can at the same time be the production of inventive (singular) subjectivity. And recognizing a reality (accepting consciously or unconsciously the existence of forces already occurring in a given reality) takes place by building ways of relating to it.

It is not without reason that one of the most important and politically requested ethical values in education, autonomy, means, etymologically, *acting according to one’s own laws*. In this regard, *one’s own rules* do not effectively and essentially exist, since autonomy is always relative or virtual. And, actually, there isn’t any one’s own... , since there is no subject as an essence.

Subjectivation, which is wanted as inventive, bends the lines of power, co-extensively and co-operationally :

Subjectification, that’s to say the process of folding the line outside, mustn’t be seen as just a way of protecting oneself, taking shelter. It’s rather the only way of confronting the line, riding it (...). (DELEUZE, 1995, 114)

<sup>14</sup> Here, I translated the original text in French, once I didn’t agree, in these sentences, with the final word of the American edition.

<sup>15</sup> Subjection would be related mainly to what objectifies us, making us subjects, according to Judith Revel (2008), when commenting on the issue as proposed by Foucault.

Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them. (DELEUZE, 1988, p. 101)

The dynamic rules observed in the end of the diagonal carrying exercise were created by the participants, like the self-imposed rules in self-care techniques, analyzed by Michel Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005) and other texts - "arts of existence":

... those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. (FOUCAULT, 1990, p. 10-11)

The obligatory rules for power must be doubled by facultative rules for the free men who exercises power (...).  
This is what the Greeks did: they folded force, even though it still remained force. (DELEUZE, 1988, p. 101)

Regarding the subjectification processes, power consists of "a transformation of people's or groups' free action, and not its elimination" (REVEL, 2005, p. 199). As important as, the model of repression is deconstructed by this innovative notion compiled by Foucault, that power relations produce:

Saying that power relations produce is to recognize that they induce effects that are not only of management, limitation and, sometimes, sanction of the real, but that, on the contrary, they allow a positive surplus of reality – or, to put it in terms more ontological than political, a production of being.<sup>16</sup> (REVEL, 2005, p. 198)

Also, the centrality of instruction and of rules proved to be a laboratory for producing this inventiveness that deals with rules and invents optional rules and situated aesthetic ways that "ride the power".

This is what happened in the scenic situation of the exercise of (initially) carrying the colleague diagonally: they collectively created the situation, being produced in the same process of relationship of forces that they co-produced, continuing their existence exactly as they built that world (KASTRUP, 2008, p. 101). What was once an exercise of carrying diagonally became something nameless, indescribable, a theatrical situation that made up its own terms, inapprehensible by knowledge (at least for a duration: we know that everything is

<sup>16</sup> Dire que les relations de pouvoir produisent, c'est reconnaître qu'elles induisent des effets qui ne sont pas seulement de gestion, de limitation et éventuellement de sanction du réel mais qu'elles permettent au contraire un surplus positif de réalité – ou, pour le dire en termes plus ontologiques que politiques, une production d'être. (REVEL, 2005, p. 198).

<sup>17</sup> On this point, I must remark Deleuze's considerations about the capacity for decoding and coding flows present in capitalism, and the provisionality of resistance as noticed by Foucault and commented on by Revel.

captured and that this escape is temporary<sup>17</sup>).

Besides, the collective way of constructing events dissolved the individual agency and its consequences, doing *away with any subject in favor of an assemblage of the haecceity type that carries or brings out the event insofar as it is unformed and incapable of being effectuated by persons* (“*something happens to them that they can only get a grip on again by letting go of their ability to say I*”)<sup>18</sup> (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987, p. 265). This questioned, for attentive observers, points of view tuned with the strict identification of the individual as a biological unit, and consequently, the situations supported by the primacy of the conventional subject - an existence based on an assumption of the individual as master of himself, with its consequences, such as a soul, individual will, free will, choice and freedom, legal responsibility, etc.: “There is no subject, but a production of subjectivity: subjectivity has to be produced, when its time arrives, precisely because there is no subject” (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 113-114).

## FINAL TOUCHES

What is clear as a priority orientation here for theater education is the qualified handling of situations in which this type of theatrical production of subjectivity occurs, or theatrical process of subjectivation, expanding the potency of practitioners to affect themselves theatrically and produce other theatrical dimensions.

This “rhizome of theatrical attention” would be perceived-produced by the student’s increase of theatrical perception, for them to compose and inhabit singular territories and to be available to deterritorialize themselves when necessary. In addition, the student will be able to work under new affects, for new territorial compositions. All of this can be operated in exercises and improvisation (MAGELA, 2017b; 2019b), if these are conducted with the attention directed to these potencies and elements (with principles that focus on this).

The exposition of this diagonal carrying exercise aims to show the connection between the situation of theater performance and the production of

<sup>18</sup> The original sentence was slightly modified from the book to fulfill the article’s purpose, hence the absence of quotation marks and the use of italics.

subjectivity. It being “proto”, minimalist, simple, only confirms that what matters is the intensive theatrical way of things happening, and not the finished scene or the act subsumed by a conventional “audience look”. Furthermore, this “proto”, laboratory or core character is connected to an option of presenting no utilitarian suggestions to be directly applied. Because the objective here is to propose thoughts, criteria, work philosophies that can inspire teaching practices, which are always unique and in answer to very concrete situations.

This theatrical situation (the one reported and all others similar in this respect) presents a “homonymy” with subjectification processes. This type of theatrical perception and mode of action is shown as a process of subjectivation since the actant is made in it (produced, since they are what they perceive, what they do) and makes (produces, since the situation is the collective doing) in theatrical forces. The actant has to make decisions in the flow, with embodied thinking, without the use of explicit communication or rational understanding of what is happening, in an “artist-thinking”: “it’s to do with establishing ways of existing or, as Nietzsche put it, inventing new possibilities of life. Existing not as a subject but as a work of art” (DELEUZE, 1995, p. 95).

It is possible to apprehend that they are microprocesses of subjectivation, theatrical perceptions that permeate the everyday life, such as: the attention to act at the right moment; connecting my action with the actions already occurring, even without understanding them rationally; the use and abandonment of behavior patterns (occasionally inventing new ones); perception of complex implications in the flow of events, causing changes on them in different ways and levels; criticizing one’s own actions and those of others; imagining parallel situations at the same time that one acts (and without stopping acting, like an actor on stage); among others to be invented. theatrical strata in everyone’s life, dimensions whose teaching, as a public policy, is up to qualified theater teachers.

Saying that there is a process of theatrical subjectivation, that the theater students subjectify theatrically, is to say that the theatrical can consistently exist in life. This happens in theatrical modes, theatrical flows of events, as the review of cognitive operations in the previous paragraph tries to illustrate. It means also showing that the subjectivation process (the one already addressed in the works of Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari and others) has a theatrical dimension, and that it may be one of the most active in everyday life.

To put it another way, it is to show that theater education classes really concern something that constitutes everyone's life and that they can make effective interferences in this sense, if they touch on the ways in which students relate to these constitutive dimensions.

Promoting of singular theatrical subjectivity would come from the intensive practice (in its operational aspects) of this theatrical subjectivity in classes, being transposed, by somatic overflow, into the students' lives. The potency to deal with forces (power) is practiced by the invention, within rules and composing new rules, of powerful modes of existence in theatrical dimensions.

Then, we must highlight the importance of an education directed to the perception of the theatrical processes that are in everyone's life, and the practice of ways of inhabiting and composing these flows. And, yes, promoting an increase in the student's ability with these operations to perceive the theatrical dimensions and flows of reality, deal with them and produce them collectively (and in a unique way). In other words, a transposition of the expansion of theatrical power, fostered within the classroom, for their life.

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