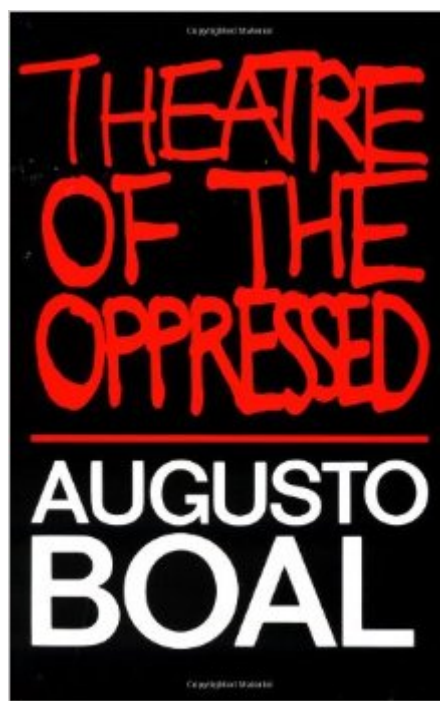


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Theatre Of The Oppressed



Synopsis

"Boal and his work are marvelous examples of the post-modern situation-its problems and its opportunities. Twice exiled, Boal is 'at home' now wherever he finds himself to be. He makes a skeptical, comic, inquisitive and finally optimistic theatre involving spectators and performers in the search for community and integrity. This is a good book to be used even more than to be read." - Richard Schechner

"Augusto Boal's achievement is so remarkable, so original and so groundbreaking that I have no hesitation in describing the book as the most important theoretical work in the theatre in modern times - a statement I make with having suffered any memory lapse with respect to Stanislavsky, Artaud or Grotowski." - Goerge E. Wellwarth

Originally basing himself at the Arena Stage in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Augusto Boal developed a series of imaginative theatre exercises which promote awareness of one's social situation and its limitations, individual attitudes, and even how our bodies are bound by tradition. Boal is continued his explorations in Paris, where he directed Le CEDITADE (Centre d'Etude et de Diffusion des Techniques Actives d'Expression - Methode Boal), in addition to traveling and lecturing extensively in other countries. On May 2, 2009, Boal died at age 78 in Rio de Janeiro.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps the pursuit of art in this world of massive economic, social and legal inequality is simply privileged playing and bemusement? Perhaps art has no valued, but as marketable, profitable entertainment? Or, perhaps art (and specifically theatre) can actually change the world? Boal is not

the first to speak of theater's revolutionary quality, but unlike his predecessors he takes to the street with his theory. Tracing the relationship between the producers of theatre and its audience, Boal exposes the historical oppression imposed by the dramatic machine/conventions of the past. In its place he offers theoretical and practical examples of his "People's theatre" (i.e., paratheatre or interactive theatre). For all seriously minded artist this is a must read. Especially if you wish to understand your role in artistic production and also wish to make a difference with your work.

One of the most important questions you need to consider as an artist is the relationship between the work, and the audience. Boal provokes the question masterfully, and even if you don't agree with his thesis - that the "Aristotelian" approach, in which the audience is there to be manipulated and emotionally purged, and that theatre should rebel against this authoritarian relationship - he raises the question clearly. This is a book you should read, argue with, and discuss.

Buy this. I know that isn't a sentence but wow. This is a life changing work. If you care the minutest bit about theatre, mankind, and the future of both (together and separate) then feast here. Also, a side benefit is listening to Boal argue AGAINST The Poetics. Good stuff. The beginning is a little slow because he begins by very carefully setting up examples and definitions before he begins to explain his actual work and theory. This is necessary and impressive (citing some ancient Greek philosophers to whom I had never been introduced). I think this book handed me some special x-ray glasses to look through the clothing of our contemporary American theatre. Get yourself a pair.

The first two sections (analyzing Aristotle's Poetics and Brecht's aesthetics), while long, dense and confusing, make clear Boal's argument for the necessity of a change in theater practice if it's going to be a vehicle of change. It also cleared up my ancient philosophy course from college. I'm glad he's written other books, because the actual information about theatre of the oppressed tends to be thin and abstract, and since it's so different from anything I've ever done or seen, more examples would have been helpful. Still, he never wastes words, and it is such a rich subject that I know I'll understand more when I reread it. Highly recommended.

Anyone interested in understanding how theater and, by extension, film and television play a vital role in maintaining the status quo, should read Augusto Boal's book. Boal takes readers on a stroll through the history of drama, philosophy and politics, merging the three artforms into a powerful triumvirate. Boal then offers suggestions for a theater to counteract traditional cultural ideological

aparatuses. Theater of the Oppressed describes a theater of, for and by the oppressed to tell their own stories; a space wherein marginalized people's might reflect on their own concrete realities and contradictions; and an arena of practice in action, moving the oppressed, and those who identify with the oppressed, towards social transformation.

Boal is insane, but not nearly as much as Brecht or Artaud. Boal is essentially a communist that approaches all art from the social-conflict paradigm of sociology (Marxism). He tends to argue that most theatre is made to coerce, and that much of it is made with the power/elite in mind (that is the mildest description I can give you without starting a debate). Whether you agree with Boal or not, his chapters dealing with the Coercive Aristotelian Tragedies are highly educational just in the factual sense of what he presents. If you have any interest in classical or Greek theatre this is definitely a must read. He explains the dynamics of Greek theatre so well that it can almost be used as a text book.

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