

Spectator to Actor to Multiplier: EDISCA's Humanizing Methodology

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Abstract

Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theater theorist and practitioner, transferred the means of production of theater to the oppressed. The oppressed, formally passive spectators filled by the elites' images of the world, became liberated participants in the creation of dramatic action. Through "people's theater," Boal encouraged participants to critically analyze their relationships with the world and in the world through onstage action.

EDISCA (Escola de Dança e Integração Social para Criança e Adolescente [*School of Dance and Social Integration for Children and Adolescents*]), located in Fortaleza, Brazil, introduces artistic languages to children and adolescents from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The youth then have the opportunity to reconstruct and deconstruct those languages to represent experiences from their own lives. EDISCA, similar to Boal's "people's theater," transfers the power of artistic creation to their students. Gilano Andrade, EDISCA's artistic director, experiments with new approaches to apply EDISCA's philosophy to other communities of socio-economically disadvantaged youth. I analyzed EDISCA, Gilano's "Projeto Zero" in a juvenile detention facility and his work with local hip-hop groups to determine how EDISCA's methodology, like Boal's, facilitates participants' humanization.

Through the introduction of artistic languages, EDISCA's methodology encourages students to view the world from a new perspective, thus providing for students' critical analysis. EDISCA simultaneously reinforces its students' ability to transform by supporting students' manipulation of those artistic languages. EDISCA's educational methodology, ultimately, encourages its students to facilitate the proliferation of human emancipation.

Methodology

I completed my Independent Study Project (ISP) in Fortaleza, Brazil for four weeks in April, May and June of 2007. Within my ISP proposal, I indicated that I wished to analyze how arts education projects provide a forum for unheard youth to evaluate their identities and understand their humanity. In order to pursue my problem statement, I first investigated EDISCA (Escola de Dança e Integração Social para Criança e Adolescente [*School of Dance and Social Integration for Children and Adolescents*]), an organization in Fortaleza that utilizes a unique arts education methodology. Gilano Andrade, my project advisor and EDISCA's artistic director, encouraged me to conduct a comparative study of three projects: EDISCA, his project in a juvenile detention facility (Projeto Zero), and his work with two hip-hop groups including Projeto Enxame. My study's comparative aspect allowed me to analyze the application of EDISCA's methodology to different groups of marginalized youth.

To complete my field research, I used qualitative research methods: namely, observations, participation and informal interviews. As I hoped to witness the methodologies' affects on youth, the majority of my field data came from observations at each project and careful note-taking. With Gilano's work at Projeto Enxame, Projeto Zero and the other hip-hop group, I observed rehearsals and occasionally gave comments and feedback to Gilano and the participants. At EDISCA, I observed both classes and performances.

Gilano, additionally, gave me the opportunity to participate in developing a curriculum for his workshop in New York City that would utilize EDISCA's educational methodology. I aided him in creating a curriculum, using my understanding of American

youth culture, New York City's social environment, and the implementation of EDISCA's educational philosophy. My participation allowed me to better understand the methodology from an educator's perspective.

I conducted a total of ten informal interviews with seven different informants. I chose my informants based on their access to privileged information about my topic: such as Gilano Andrade and Oscar (EDISCA educators), EDISCA students who participated in *UrbesFavela: O teatro* (an EDISCA theater production directed by Gilano), and members of Gilano's hip-hop projects. Unfortunately, however, I was unable to conduct interviews with the participants of Projeto Zero. My access to the juvenile detention facility was through Gilano and we did not have the opportunity to visit more than twice due to scheduling.

In my interviews, I attempted to create a dialogue with other person. Due to my limited Portuguese skills, I needed to plan out specific questions to ensure that I could obtain the information most pertinent to my research. I found, as I interviewed, that tape recording the interview aided me especially with younger subjects. When tape recording, I could overcome both language barriers and participants' closed responses to my constant writing as they spoke. My most successful interviews were conversational and in quiet environments where the interviewee felt comfortable.

Introduction

Minutes from an idyllic beachfront with ocean view apartment complexes and touristy outdoor markets sits Mucuripe, a favela in Fortaleza, Brazil. Temporary structures of cardboard, plastic sheets, advertisements and metal poles line Mucuripe's hillside. A house without walls advertises manicures, pedicures and haircuts on a hand-painted piece of cardboard. Unlike the expensive apartment buildings' quiet sidewalks only blocks away, people crowd the unpaved streets of Mucuripe. Groups of teenage boys stand in doorways staring at passers-by, pairs of girls in tank tops and short shorts stroll through the neighborhood, and snack vendors push around styrofoam coolers on wheeled carts. At the foot of the favela's hills, the name "Enxame" is scrawled in black spray paint on white metal gates. "Enxame" means "swarm," and the graffiti design integrates a beehive, honeycomb pattern underneath Enxame's black letters.¹

Inside the gates, an arched metal covering protects a large, open concrete floor. The structure's loosened metal panels clank in the night's wind. Gilano Andrade, the artistic director and a founder of EDISCA (*Escola de Dança e Integração Social para Criança e Adolescente [School of Dance and Social Integration for Children and Adolescents]*), gathers the ten participants of Projeto Enxame's hip-hop dance group into a circle on the concrete floor. The group consists of adolescent males, some dressed in basketball jerseys, baseball hats and baggy shorts. Others go shirtless, wearing only surfer shorts and havaiana flip-flops. They are all residents of Mucuripe and come to Enxame to develop breakdancing skills. Gilano, a guest at Enxame, animatedly describes his proposal to the blank-faced, visibly skeptical group: film the dancers as they create a

¹ Observations, 17 April 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 9-10.

theatrical piece with pop and lock hip-hop movements.² A few of the breakdancers snigger, eyeing each other across the circle as Gilano attempts to mimic the pop and lock dance style to demonstrate his ideas. Gilano additionally emphasizes the mixture of various dance styles common in Northeast Brazil, such as forró³ and capoeira,⁴ with hip-hop to develop a more complex artistic language. The group still maintains their cynicism, wary of Gilano's endeavors to push them beyond their current understanding of hip-hop dance.

As Gilano speaks, a quiet younger boy, concealed in a shadow about fifteen feet away, commences the basic capoeira movement. Unseen by the group, he attempts to transition from the capoeira step into a breakdance handstand, but falls to the ground. He tries the transition again, this time successfully, smiles to himself and rejoins the conversation.

Gilano, at this point, encourages a group leader, Valber, to experiment with the new artistic language in front of the participants. Valber, skilled in the pop and lock style, creates a fisherman character waiting to catch a fish. He combines hip-hop and theater, telling the fisherman's story through broken physical movements. The other group members begin to gather around Valber, laughing at his facial expressions and playing on the sidelines with their own interpretations of the language. Gilano constructs scenes with the participants based on ideas from their physical experimentations. Without being prompted, the teenage boys jump onto to the "stage," a worn wooden slab laid on the concrete, to improvise scenes with each other. They physically express their release of creative energy, not only shouting out suggestions but using their bodies to

² See Terms and Definitions.

³ See Terms and Definitions.

⁴ See Terms and Definitions.

demonstrate their ideas. Inside Enxame's metal gates, the teenagers become inventors, exploring the possibilities of an original artistic language.⁵

Gilano Andrade, with the youth from Projeto Enxame, was experimenting with techniques to spread EDISCA's methodology to other socio-economically disadvantaged communities. EDISCA, a non-governmental organization located in the upscale neighborhood Água Fria, provides dance and theater classes, lunch, transportation fees, dance clothing, library services, English instruction, and computer access to four hundred children and adolescents from Fortaleza's poor communities, or favelas.⁶ Children, ages seven to ten, audition to participate in EDISCA's free programming and directors select students based on basic movement ability, discipline and the student's socio-economic status.⁷ EDISCA responds to dispossessed children and youth's need for a space to freely express creative energy, with the intention of reintegrating and balancing all dimensions of their humanity.⁸ Students develop professional and artistic skills, but more importantly, grow to understand their capacity to transform their realities.

Students and directors at EDISCA engage in "multiplying" their methodology to reach more youth living in circumstances detrimental to their human development. Many youth in Fortaleza's favelas still face police and domestic violence, sexual exploitation and conditions that require them to work as children.⁹ As Fernanda Gonçalves Almeida and Inaiá Maria Moreira de Carvalho elucidate in their analysis of Brazilian children

⁵ Observations, 19 April 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 13.

⁶ See Terms and Definitions.

⁷ Isaurora Claudia Martins de Freitas, "Da Periferia ao Palco: A Ressocialização de Crianças e Adolescentes da Periferia de Fortaleza através da Artes," Universidade Federal do Ceará, Programa de Pós – Graduação em Sociologia (2000): 56.

⁸ *EDISCA: A Arte na Construção do Humano*, (Fortaleza: AVINA, Grupo M. Dias Branco, Banco do Nordeste, 2004), 59.

⁹ Reis Nascimento, Elizanias dos, "Violence against Children and Adolescents," *Human Rights in Brazil 2002: A Report by the Social Network for Justice and Human Rights*, (2002): 140-142.

living in poverty, children “are at once exploited and learning to exploit others,” leading to cycles of violence, drugs and prostitution.¹⁰ If the justice system places youth in a detention facility, Human Rights Watch indicates that they may be subject to “systematic torture and ill-treatment,” including youth on youth violence, unnecessary confinement and limited access to education.¹¹ EDISCA, through its own work and its commitment to multiplication, recognizes the possible damages to a child’s development if s/he does not have access to a liberating education.

Gilano Andrade’s efforts at Projeto Enxame exemplify his dedication to provide favela youth with alternative education through creative expression. Gilano introduced unconventional perspectives on hip-hop to the dance group, which pushed them to reformulate their previous knowledge of breakdance. In addition to his work with Enxame and another, similar hip-hop dance troupe, Gilano is currently developing an arts and film project in a juvenile detention center for young women ages twelve to seventeen. Entitled “Projeto Zero,” Gilano’s work involves using theater to provide the girls with an alternative perspective from which to view their life experiences. Then, he intends to utilize video and video editing as a “temporary mirror” that encourages the girls to self-reflect and self-reconstruct.¹² His projects, like EDISCA, stretch, transform and build upon the participants’ experience by introducing and layering artistic languages.

In the early 1970s, Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theater practitioner and theorist, transferred to the oppressed the means to create their own works of art. Through this

¹⁰ Fernanda Gonçalves Almeida and Inaiá Maria Moreira de Carvalho, “Projeto Axé: Educating Children in Salvador,” in *Children of the Americas*, ed. Roslyn A. Mickelson (New York: Routledge, 1999), 173.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, “Brazil – Major Human Rights Issues,” *Human Rights Watch World Report 2004* (January 26, 2004), <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/12/31/brazil6998.htm>.

¹² Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 15 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 37-38.

transference, he developed a revolutionary re-visioning of theater's role in becoming a liberator of oppressed peoples. According to Boal, theater and its manifestations (particularly cinema and television) had become tools of the powerful elite to purge people of their revolutionary instincts and critical thought.¹³ Boal counteracted the elite's usage of theater for pacification by allowing *everyone* to participate in theater's dramatic action. In "people's theater," the former "spectator" "assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, he trains himself for real action."¹⁴ Boal's theater gave all participants the opportunity to facilitate change onstage, thereby encouraging them to critically reflect on their role in potential action offstage.

Boal developed a method of liberating education by utilizing the praxis, or interdependent relationship, of critical reflection and social action. Boal's notion of the praxis of reflection and action evolves from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire, a revolutionary Brazilian educator and education theorist, supported "problem-posing" education, in which educators and students pose problems about their relations in the world and with the world.¹⁵ As people begin to view "men as in the process of "becoming" – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality," they recognize their duty to change themselves and the world.¹⁶ Boal describes a similar moment of participants' recognition of their need to enact change: "The practice of these theatrical forms [people's theater] creates a sort of uneasy sense of

¹³ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. Charles A. and Maria-Odilia Leal McBride (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985), xiv.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1985), 66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

incompleteness that seeks fulfillment through real action.”¹⁷ Boal and Freire created educational methodologies in which critical analysis of one’s relations *with* and *in* the world leads to a desire for transformation.

Education that supports the praxis of reflection and action leads people to discover how to fully utilize their human rights, thus leading to their humanization. In a personal interview with Gilano, he defined his view of liberating education: “Education is not a box to give someone, education makes someone give something.”¹⁸ EDISCA’s methodology, and Gilano’s multiplication of that methodology with the hip-hop groups and in Projeto Zero, utilizes the introduction of artistic languages to engage favela youth in critical reflection and release students’ creative energy. Students, then, have the opportunity to deconstruct and reconstruct those languages to express their ideas. The participants become the creators, inventors and enactors of their art. EDISCA and Gilano’s projects, thus, facilitate humanization by introducing alternative lenses through which students can view their relationship with the world, while simultaneously affirming students’ capacity to transform those lenses.

“Everybody wants to express themselves artistically.”¹⁹

While having lunch at a small round table in the back room of EDISCA’s cafeteria, Gilano excitedly tells me that he is going to perform a demonstration for me. He calls to one of EDISCA’s cooks as she takes a fruit salad out of the refrigerator next to our table, “Olá, a senhora! Boa tarde! [*Hello, Ma’am! Good afternoon!*]” In her

¹⁷ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, ..., 142.

¹⁸ Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 15 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 38.

¹⁹ Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 22 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 39-40.

starched white apron and plastic hairnet, the middle-aged cook greets Gilano in a motherly tone.

“Boa tarde, Gilano. [*Good afternoon, Gilano.*]”

Smiling, Gilano launches into his “demonstration,” “Eu vou fazer uma peça, a senhora quer comigo? [*I am going to do a play, would you like to come with me?*]”

The cook looks at Gilano dubiously. “Vai com você? Agora? Eu estou trabalhando, Gilano. Posso não. [*Go with you? Now? I am working, Gilano. I can't.*]”

“Não, não a senhora, mais tarde. À noite. [*No, no Ma'am, later. At night.*]”

She shakes her head and blushes at his request. “Eu, Gilano? Eu não posso, não, Gilano, tenho muitas coisas para fazer na casa. [*Me, Gilano? I can't, no, Gilano. I have a lot of things to do at home.*]”

Choosing not to force her participation, Gilano nods and replies, “Tá bom, tá bom. [*Okay, that's fine, that's fine.*]” We resume eating and Gilano, in English, begins to analyze her response to his offer. She continues to bustle about the room, stacking sterling silver trays and preparing her fruit salad behind Gilano. Pausing briefly, she glances over at him.

“Gilano,” she says, grabbing his attention, “onde é? [*where is it?*]”²⁰

Within educational practice, arts possess an advantage: people like them. Gilano simply invited a middle-aged cook at EDISCA to participate in a play. She initially refused, claiming she had too much work to do at home. However, her curiosity in his proposition overcame the comfort of refusal. People fantasize about being onstage, on television, in the movies. Seven-year old girls from favelas vie for the opportunity to

²⁰ Observation of conversation, 22 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 39-40.

study at EDISCA, dreaming of becoming premiere ballerinas. Liberating pedagogy requires students to learn how to think critically. However, as Freire indicates, “it’s impossible for me in this kind of education to teach *how* to think unless we are teaching something, some content to the students.”²¹ Artistic languages provide a content that engages people’s initial interest, due to their personal dreams and desires.

Dreams of the stage, however, can evolve from needs. Within favela life, society reinforces children’s duty to accept and adapt to oppressive conditions. Poverty forces children to work for their families. Their inability to afford private school, additionally, limits their opportunities for obtaining a degree and attending university. Within the formal school system, children and youth can face “banking education” in which “the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor.”²² Youth can internalize the passive role of “depository” that teachers impose on them and begin to accept the world as limited and unchangeable.²³ Even under this oppressive system, however, people fantasize about the arts. The arts provide a means for creating new information, thus counteracting a person’s role as an information “depository.” People’s desires for creative expression, therefore, can simultaneously reveal their desires to become social actors within their own lives. Those desires also reinforce the power of arts to be the facilitator of that social action.

EDISCA addresses the world’s increasing demand on people to be able to expertly deposit, categorize and organize information. In fact, EDISCA’s literature claims that the economic, social, political and cultural systems that configure the world’s

²¹ Paulo Freire, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, ed. Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 172.

²² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,..., 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, 60.

present poverty crisis are only symptoms of a more profound crisis: the unbalanced development of human beings. EDISCA focuses on reintegrating youth with their forgotten human dimensions: sentiment, impulses, desires, their relationships with life and death, and their ideas about right and wrong.²⁴ By giving youth the opportunity to creatively express themselves, EDISCA attempts to fulfill the human need and desire for internal balance.

Gilano, a founder of the EDISCA philosophy, recognizes juvenile detention's detriments to the balanced human development of adolescent girls. A strict schedule regiments the girls' daily lives in Fortaleza's O Centro Educacional Aldacy Barbosa [*The Aldacy Barbosa Educational Center*], the site of Projeto Zero. The facility's name, which indicates a school, does not accurately portray the conditions of the girls' incarceration. The severe limitations of imprisonment, however, do not prevent the girls from fantasizing about the freedom that comes with creative expression.

Gilano, his friend Veronica and I drive into the outskirts of a favela near Fortaleza's neighborhood President Kennedy. In the partial light of streetlamps, I see trash lining the sidewalks and people lounging in front of their houses in plastic chairs, staring at the car as we pass. Gilano pulls his car into the driveway of a non-descript building surrounded by white walls. A large sign, supported by metal rods like an advertising billboard, reads, "O Centro Educacional Aldacy Barbosa [*The Aldacy Barbosa Educational Center*]." A man wearing flip-flops and a shirt with a ragged collar opens the metal gates and guides us into an unpaved parking spot. Several casually

²⁴ EDISCA: *A Arte na Construção do Humano*, ..., 56.

dressed men, leaning against the facility's inside walls, watch us as we exit the car. "Boa noite, pessoal, [*Good evening, friends,*]" Gilano extends to them lightheartedly.

The men nod reservedly. "Boa noite. [*Good evening.*]"

Gilano leads Veronica and me through a maze of construction, which he explains will eventually be the center's new facility. Wooden planks serve as our walkways over ditches as we attempt to avoid large puddles of water and mud. After several wrong turns through the unfinished hallways, we approach a locked metal gate. Gilano yells and claps to get the attention of a non-uniformed guard, who looks pointedly at the doorbell and unlocks the gate for us.

Rounding the corner to a long covered porch, we encounter a lively, bustling atmosphere. Intense energy buzzes in the air as chattering girls run in and out of the warmly-lit building. Each teenage girl wears a variation on the same basic set of pajamas: a brightly colored t-shirt, boxer shorts and flip flops. We greet a series of adult personnel, including two guards in beige uniforms, who strategically sit between the girls and the gate. As we approach the girls, they first encircle Gilano, pulling him towards them to hug him and kiss his cheeks. He introduces Veronica and me to the eager group. A wide-eyed teenage girl, about fifteen years old, grabs my hand. She stares at my face curiously and then shouts to another girl, "Olhe, os olhos delas! [*Look, her eyes!*]" She looks me directly in the eyes and says with a surprising seriousness, "São lindos. [*They're beautiful.*]"

As Gilano moves the girls to the lawn to begin a physical warm-up, I ask the cluster of girls congregated around me, "Vocês gostam do teatro? [*Do you like theater?*]" The teenager who had grabbed my hand tilts her head towards me and smiles.

“Eu amo, [*I love it,*]” she proclaims. She laughs and repeats, “Amo! [*Love it!*]”

About twenty girls join Gilano’s circle to participate a warm-up. The small lawn sits five feet beneath the porch, sparsely covered with dry grasses, sand and dirt. Girls excitedly shed their flip flops and begin to physically shake out their vibrant energy under Gilano’s relaxed guidance. Gilano does not force everyone to participate; several girls swing their legs over the side of the porch or lounge on benches, watching the activities. Still others remain inside of the facility, occasionally poking their heads outside to investigate. A uniformed guard, with a quizzical expression, asks Gilano if he wants all of the girls to join the circle. Gilano explains that the girls can decide how they wish to participate.

Gilano carefully reformulates his lesson plans and techniques to adjust to the girls’ needs and desires. A girl, after briefly conversing with Veronica, loudly announces to the group that Veronica dances salsa. Girls rush towards Veronica, eagerly declaring that they want to learn. Witnessing the girls’ proclaimed interest in salsa, Gilano encourages Veronica to give them a short lesson. He calls to a guard, asking if they can play a CD for the group. Veronica demonstrates the basic salsa movements to the girls, who in turn instruct Veronica and me in forró. Two girls, one acting as the “man” in the pair, perform the forró dance step for the group. Laughter and chatter dissolves as everyone intently watches the pair in order to learn the dance.

Gilano instructs the girls to form small groups to rehearse short, improvised scenes. The same girl who commented on my eyes grabs my hand again, leading me to join her group of three. The girls commence brainstorming. Gilano does not give them a specific story to develop; instead he allows the girls the freedom to choose their own

plotlines. A shorter girl with long, unruly curls stands proudly in the center of our group's circle. She announces that we should create a scene about a family. The other girls immediately assign characters, "Você é o pai, você é o filho e você é a namorada dele... [*You are the dad, you are the son and you are his girlfriend...*]." Another girl, with the physical presence of a tall, thin model, shouts that she has a better idea: we should enact an assault. With the newfound freedom to both proclaim their ideas and explore ways in which to articulate them, the girls change their scenarios almost manically. We become drug dealers, mothers, sons, robbers, friends, teachers, prostitutes. We eventually settle on a scene in which two men drink at a bar and one of them chooses to hire a prostitute for the night. The other decides to stay loyal to his girlfriend. We prepare for our performance, adding details to the scene and creating makeshift costumes with our hair-styles.

Each group improvises their scene for the workshop's participants and onlookers. Girls transform into commanding mothers watching novelas, armed drug dealers expertly rolling joints, sassy prostitutes offering their services to passers-by and manipulative friends pressuring their peers to try new drugs. Gilano facilitates a discussion following each improvisation. He poses questions to the audience and the performers. With his questions, he simultaneously raises issues about characters' choices, the scenes' purpose and theatrical concepts. After a scene in which the main character commits suicide because of an uncontrollable drug addiction, Gilano asks, "Por quê vocês decidiram fazer uma tragédia? Por quê não fizeram uma comédia? [*Why did you decide to do a tragedy? Why not a comedy?*]"

The girl who played the drug-addict responds to him immediately with another question, “Gilano, o quê é uma tragédia? [*Gilano, what’s a tragedy?*]”

Towards the end of the evening, a girl volunteers to give us a tour of the facility. We enter the orange lobby, which proudly displays a large, framed print of Jesus in the center of the wall. She leads us into a hallway with four barred doorways lined up along one wall. Through the thick metal bars of the first doorway, I can see five or six beds with thin mattresses and worn sheets. The bedrooms are meticulously clean and mostly barren. At the end of the hallway, a girl stares at us from the inside of an already padlocked bedroom. She hangs onto the bars, absently fiddling with the lock. Gilano asks her why she didn’t participate in the workshop. She shrugs. He turns to me, explaining that she had been in solitary confinement during his previous visit because she had attempted to escape the facility. She smiles at Veronica and me as he introduces us and converses calmly with Gilano about the workshop.

A member of the adult staff motions to Gilano. He indicates that we have to leave, as the girls are preparing for bed. The girls swarm around us as we say our goodbyes, giving us hugs and kisses. My friend takes my hand and asks me repeatedly, “Vai voltar, né? Vai voltar? [*You’re going to come back, right? Are you coming back?*]”

I deliberately look her in the eyes and tell her, “Vou voltar. Com certeza. [*I am coming back. Definitely.*]”²⁵

For the adolescent girls detained within O Centro Educacional Aldacy Barbosa, the government regulates any freedom of time and space. According to Boal, oppressors

²⁵ Observations, 9 April 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 7-9.

use manipulative systems to maintain the people's status as "spectators," or passive beings who delegate the power of change to the social "actors."²⁶ The government has physically restricted the girls' capacities to develop their relationship with the world and participate in social action. Deprived of physical access to the world as well as temporal and spatial control inside the facility, youth become spectators of their own lives. The girls must adapt to strict time schedules, taking organized trips to the shower and abiding by "lights-out" bedtimes.²⁷ Padlocked bars and guards standing watch enforce their restrictions to physical freedom within the facility. Rebellion only results in more restrictions. The girl's attempt to escape, for example, led to her solitary confinement.²⁸

Projeto Zero opens pathways for the girls to rediscover their ability to create and transform. When Gilano introduced the group to theatrical expression through improvised scenes, the girls' creative energy flooded the atmosphere. Accustomed to constant regulation, the girls suddenly had control. Setting, time, characters, personal actions and consequences of those actions became their decisions, instead of decisions others made for them. Within the context of the scenes, they were no longer passive spectators, they were the social actors. The girls responded to their freedom with an energetic frenzy. When the girls in my group initially realized their capacity to create exciting scenarios, they had difficulty transitioning from brainstorming to choosing the scene's path. They wanted to explore every scenario's possible characters and plotlines. Their astonishment at their own creative abilities reinforces their need for a space to develop themselves as social actors.

²⁶ Augusto Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed*, ..., 122.

²⁷ Observations, 18 April 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 12.

²⁸ Observations, 9 April 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 9.

““Spectator” is a bad word!”²⁹

Pulling into my driveway, Gilano shouts, “Let’s go!” Seven of us cram into Gilano’s aged blue car. Gilano, laughing, does not tell me where we are going or the identity of the five other teenagers stuffed in the car. I attempt to ascertain the situation’s details. I meet Jorge, squeezed next to me in the back seat, who explains that they are a hip-hop dance group that will work with Gilano to create a video. His long hair is covered in a loose knit cap. Wearing t-shirts, loose pants or shorts and flip flops, the four twenty-something guys look appropriately dressed for the laidback Sunday afternoon. A short, thin girl sits on the lap of one of the guys in the front seat. Her calm and quiet demeanor seems to contrast her beach punk style: long, baggy shorts with a studded belt, a tight tank top and converse high-tops.

Soon, we pull up to the gated driveway of Dora Andrade’s house, Gilano’s sister and the founder of EDISCA. A casually dressed young man opens the gate for us, and Gilano drives directly across the expansive green lawn towards a covered patio area. Terracotta tiles line the patio’s floor and walls. Two rusting chandeliers are attached to the wooden ceiling of the patio’s overhang. On one side of the patio is a garden; on the other is large kidney-shaped pool. We pile out of the car and the boys begin to prepare themselves for rehearsal, pulling on their hard-soled shoes and stretching. As Gilano sets up his video camera to film their rehearsal, I sit next to Michele, the girl in the front seat of Gilano’s car, on a wooden bench. I ask her if she dances, too, and she shakes her head. “Ainda, não. [*Still no.*]” She explains that she is only there to watch her boyfriend, Tony.

²⁹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 154-155.

Michele and I remain spectators on the sidelines as the members of the hip-hop group warm-up. Angling the camera towards the dancers, Gilano instructs them to simply experiment with their hip-hop language. One by one, they hesitantly enter the space in front of the camera and perform basic breakdance movements. After the first couple people finish, no one reenters the circle. Gilano, refusing to cater to their timidity, loudly shouts from behind the camera, “Borra, borra gente! [*Let’s go, people!*]” The boys respond to Gilano’s words and they begin to shed their inhibitions, jumping eagerly into the circle and even making faces for the camera.

After about five minutes of warm-up, Gilano gathers all of the participants around the video camera’s three square inch screen to view their work. Gilano motions to Michele and me to join them. We crowd the tiny screen as the participants begin to deconstruct and comment on their movements. Highly critical of themselves as dancers, Tony and Jorge make sour facial expressions in response to a few of their movements. Luciano, another breakdancer, laughs and turns his head from the screen when he sees himself fall to the ground on film.

Gilano, then, proposes his idea to combine theatrical expression with breakdancing’s pop and lock movements. He sets up a bench in front of the camera and instructs the four participants to enter the scene, look around as if waiting for someone, sit on the bench, and then leave the scene when no one comes. “Na tua língua, [*In your language,*]” he emphasizes. “Tua língua de... [*your language of...*]” he cuts himself off and commences a demonstration of pop and lock. Asking the participants if they are familiar with Charlie Chaplin, he uses the comedian’s physical comedy as inspiration for

the group. “É ainda hip-hop, mas mais poético, entendeu? [*It’s still hip-hop, but more poetic, understand?*]”

The group appears both excited and nervous to experiment with Gilano’s idea. They took turns enacting the scene, exploring how their language could express an everyday situation. In their initial performance, they do not focus on facial expression or characters; they primarily experiment with how to demonstrate walking, waiting and sitting within the context of pop and lock. After each performer acts out the short scene, they excitedly assemble around the camera screen to analyze their work. With Gilano’s encouragement, they comment on their colleagues’ performances as well. When viewing Tony’s execution of a move, Luciano exclaims, “É massa! [*That’s cool!*]” punching Tony’s arm jokingly.

Throughout the boys’ initial performances, Michele remains on the sidelines, occasionally giving Tony encouragement with smiles and winks. Commenting on the overwhelming male presence in the group, Gilano turns to Michele, “Michele, senta ali, no banco, [*Michele, sit over there, on the bench,*]” gesturing to the bench in front of the camera.

“Eu, Gilano? [*Me, Gilano?*]” she asks, slightly taken aback at his request.

“Sim, você. Para ajudar, viu? [*Yes, you. To help, okay?*]” She moves towards the bench and sits on the edge.

“Aqui? [*Here?*]” she asks hesitantly. He nods and animatedly commences to organize the scene’s logistics. Now, the boys must enter the scene, one by one, and non-verbally interact with Michele. Michele becomes the scene’s focal point. The boys each have a chance to win her attention, using various flirting tactics communicated through

breakdance. Gilano does not allow Michele to be exempt from the expression of the artistic language. Though she has no previous experience with breakdance, Gilano and Michele brainstorm various movements she can utilize to express behaviors and attitudes. Together, they build her artistic vocabulary. She twirls her hair to the beat of the music, bats her eyelashes, taps her foot and sourly frowns. She can access each “word” of her new vocabulary when she reacts to the boys’ attempts to seduce her.

As the dancers begin to interact with Michele, their facial expressions come alive. Luciano enters his scene pretending to be oblivious to Michele, as she smacks her gum with a bored expression on her face. Once Luciano witnesses Michele’s beauty, his eyes nearly pop out of his head and he jerkily jumps backwards. He commences, onstage, to brainstorm about how to secure her interest. Improvising, he reaches into his pocket with broken movements and pulls out a flower to give to her. He swivels his head towards the camera and grins, pleased with his ingenuity. After popping and locking his body into a bow, he gently presents the flower to Michele who bats her wide eyes and coyly smiles. The rest of the participants intently watch the progression of Luciano and Michele’s scene, laughing at their blatant physical reactions and command of facial expressions.

The participants choose to develop their mini-series of scenes into a short dance. Michele remains the central character, deciding how to treat each boy who battles for her attention. Building upon the characters the participants already created, Gilano offers suggestions and images for each group member to explore. Each person contributes ideas to the scene’s creation, deciding how to physically express their characters as well as the sequence of events. To finish the scene, they choose to have Michele pick the romantic, goofy character over her controlling and jealous boyfriend.

They rehearse and experiment with their scene under Gilano's direction. At one point, Michele moves to the bench after rejecting two potential suitors. Gilano, from behind the camera, yells, "Mude os pés! [*Move your feet!*]" Michele immediately blends forró with breakdance into a unique foot movement as she sits down on the bench. Leaning against a post with his arms crossed, Tony watches his girlfriend. He softly smiles to himself as she executes the movement. Her fresh perspective pushes the boundaries of hip-hop, an artistic medium which no longer solely belongs to Tony.³⁰

In Augusto Boal's experiments with "people's theater," he had the objective of "the liberation of the spectator," in which "the spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself!"³¹ Michele, as a spectator of the rehearsal, could not facilitate change onstage. Her role as a dancer's girlfriend designated her role at the rehearsal: to sit, watch, and support her boyfriend. After Gilano told her to join the scene, however, Michele took on the role of creator. She developed a character and a corporal language through which to express that character. This development pushed her to think beyond her previous knowledge of hip-hop and theater. Her unique physical and personal experiences, additionally, pushed the group to view their understanding of hip-hop from a different perspective. Michele's participation increased the scene's possibilities, reformulated the group's knowledge of hip-hop, and most importantly, demonstrated to her that she could think and act for herself.

Michele, however, did not initially facilitate her own liberation. During a later discussion with Gilano, I excitedly noted Michele's transition from a spectator to an

³⁰ Observations, 20 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 17-19.

³¹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 155.

actor. Gilano nodded and added, “But there was another actor in that situation. Me. She would have sat on the sidelines for the whole time and let the boys act, but I told her to enter the scene on the bench.”³² Gilano, an educator committed to human development, recognized that Michele had something to teach the group. Unlike the members of the dance group, Michele was not trained in breakdance. She could not physically perform the boys’ interpretation of hip-hop. Each individual, however, offers an alternative perspective on both content and form of artistic expression. Through his action to put Michele in the scene, Gilano demonstrated to everyone, including Michele, that her participation could change both the course of scene and their construction of the artistic language.

Gilano served to initiate Michele’s participation, but he also encouraged her to extend her creative capacity through his introduction of the theater, dance, and hip-hop language. Understanding her limited physical ability to perform break dance, Gilano suggested variations on the language that Michele could master and further develop. His suggestions, however, evolved from her ideas and her previous understanding of the language. Michele’s catty facial expressions in her first improvisation, for example, led him to propose that she loudly chew gum to the music’s beat. Myles Horton, the founder of the innovative educational institution Highlander Folk School, discusses the importance of building on a person’s experience in education: “You try to stretch people’s minds and their understanding, but if you move too fast you break the connection. You go off and leave them, and so they aren’t being stretched in their

³² Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 22 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 39.

thinking.”³³ Gilano used Michele’s view of the language as a starting point from which they could grow together, as opposed to depositing his artistic knowledge onto her.

Stretching a person’s understanding through an artistic language also includes choosing content to express. Gilano introduced the initial, simple scenario to the hip-hop group: enter, wait for someone, sit down, and then stand up and exit. Before they could enact complex content, the participants needed to gain control over the language. Once they had experimented with the physical possibilities, however, the group began to develop their own characters and investigate how their characters interacted with their surroundings. Without prompting from Gilano, they created characters that possessed some of their own personal characteristics and relationships. Tony, for example, chose to play Michele’s boyfriend. In contrast to Tony’s docile attitude, his character’s jealousy in the scene leads him to rashly instigate a fight with his competition. The couple had an opportunity to experiment with their relationship’s power dynamics through the perspective of their characters. Additionally, they had an entirely different vocabulary of movement with which they could express themselves. Through the exploration of a new artistic perspective, the couple could critically reconstruct their personal relationship.

In addition to the complex artistic language, Gilano introduced another tool to provoke the group’s self-reflection: a video camera. Boal expresses the importance of layering languages, including non-idiomatic languages, to develop critical thought:

“By learning a new language, a person acquires a new way of knowing reality and of passing that knowledge on to others. Each language is absolutely irreplaceable. All languages complement each other in achieving the widest, most complete knowledge of what is real.”³⁴

³³ Myles Horton, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, ed. Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 161.

³⁴ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 121.

Gilano's video camera gave the group access to a completely different perspective. The participants had to consider how their work would translate through the lens of the camera. Additionally, due to the camera's recording capabilities, the videos became a starting point for critical analysis of their creative decisions. As Gilano stated in a personal interview, video provides a way for "youth to analyze themselves from the outside...video technology [becomes] an instrument of self-consciousness in education."³⁵

After the hip-hop group's final filming of their scene, for example, they viewed their work again on the small camera screen. Due to Gilano's consistent recordings of their work, the participants were able to compare and contrast their performances. Luciano, intently studying the three-inch frame, commented that their rehearsal of facial expressions had enhanced their performance. Jumping up and down, he loudly exclaimed, "Para mim, foi a vez melhor. Massa, massa! [*For me, that was the best. Sweet, sweet!*]"³⁶

Gilano's film provided proof for the hip-hop group that they could create a unique work of art that was "massa." The participants did not accept others' interpretations of art. Instead, they took those interpretations and molded them into an original language. They were not spectators, they were social actors. I later asked Jorge, who is also an arts educator, if he would utilize this language within his classrooms. He thought for a second, then responded, "Acho que sim. Mas com outras idéias, outras coisas também.

³⁵ Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 15 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 38.

³⁶ Observations, 23 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 25.

Não sol essa forma. [*I think so. But with other ideas, other things, also. Not only this form.*]³⁷

“Theater is action!”³⁸

Ten EDISCA students and Gilano Andrade stand frozen onstage with their arms at their sides. They are scattered about the black stage in Dragão do Mar’s theater, Fortaleza’s premier culture center. At this point in the night’s performance, some actors wear only white underwear, while others are clothed in baggy army pants or white tees and jean skirts. Behind the actors, a free-standing white screen pops against the stage’s black walls and floor. The screen shows a four-framed video projection of the action onstage. A teenage boy in a loose hooded sweatshirt slowly saunters backwards onto the stage. Gilano, the play’s director, unfreezes himself and weaves rapidly through the actors’ still bodies. The teenager violently stops him at the front of the stage. He pulls out a white flower and points it in Gilano’s face, ordering him to hand over his jewelry and money. Gilano reacts with a frantic fear, giving his watch and necklace to the boy.

An adolescent girl unfreezes and enters the scene. Simultaneously, the assailant transforms into a shy boy who wants to give the girl his flower. Once the girl refreezes, he aims his flower at Gilano, resuming his assault. The video projections in the background complement the series of freezing/unfreezing transitions, changing from four-frame to one-frame camera views. Eventually, the assailant is the only character left in the scene. He speaks directly to the audience, loudly defending his masculinity, and then freezes.

³⁷ Jorge, Personal interview, 23 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 43.

³⁸ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 155.

A previously frozen girl comes to life and grabs a soccer ball from offstage. A loud cheering crowd can be heard through the speakers. She expertly maneuvers the ball as she crisscrosses in between the other actors' bodies. The crowd noise fades out. A cheerful guitar riff enters as the actors simultaneously leap into the air, replacing the recorded crowd noise with their own. The stage transforms into a rambunctious soccer game on the street. Teenagers greet each other, flirt and talk on cell phones, while others chase the ball around the stage. The youth fill the stage with a joyous vibrancy, contrasting the previous scene's intense stillness.³⁹

Gilano Andrade's *UrbesFavela: O teatro* explored the beauty and controversy of urban life through the perspective of youth from favela communities. As an EDISCA production, the development and performance of *UrbesFavela: O teatro* served primarily to educate EDISCA students. The students brought their knowledge of youth culture in urban favelas to create characters and construct the play's content. With Gilano's aid, they integrated their training at EDISCA and personal experience to build a unique artistic language of theater, dance, music and video. The language beautifully expressed their life experience, as well as encouraged the students to explore their experience from alternative perspectives.⁴⁰ *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, similar to Gilano's projects with the hip-hop group and in O Centro Educaçional Aldacy Barbosa, facilitated learning by building upon participants' previous knowledge in a shared creational experience.

UrbesFavela: O teatro, unlike the hip-hop project and Gilano's work in the detention facility, included another educational element: a performance for spectators.

³⁹ *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, DVD.

⁴⁰ Nataliana Brito, Personal interview, 29 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 46-48.

The Dragão do Mar audience was composed of participants' families and friends as well as Fortaleza's typical theater-going crowd. As I previously stated, Augusto Boal's objective with "people's theater" was "to change the people – "spectators," passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon – into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action."⁴¹ Boal, however, further defines his concept of spectator and actor:

“...since those responsible for theatrical performances are in general people who belong directly or indirectly to the ruling classes, obviously their finished images will be reflections of themselves. The spectators in people's theater (i.e., the people themselves) cannot go on being the passive victims of those images.”⁴²

In *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, youth from favelas created a theater piece based on personal experience, which they performed for Fortaleza's wealthier residents. EDISCA switched the traditional roles of performance: the "people" presented images, or reflections of themselves, to members of "the ruling classes."

Over lunch in EDISCA's open air cafeteria with Ícaro, a seventeen-year old EDISCA student and an actor in *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, he explained the performance's attempt to awaken its audiences:

“Primeiramente... [*UrbesFavela: O teatro*] enfatizou o aspecto do talento das pessoas que moram nas favelas. A capacidade das pessoas que moram nas favelas têm de interpretar, de dançar e de cantar. [*Firstly...[UrbesFavela: O teatro] emphasized the talent that people who live in a favela have. The capacity of people who live in slums have to interpret, dance and sing.*]”⁴³

Considering the negative connotations associated with favela life, such as crime, violence and poverty, Ícaro also noted the necessity to demonstrate favelas' beauty to Fortaleza's audiences.

“Depois as temáticas, né, as temas que foram usados na peça, foram muito relacionados com...dia á dia dos adolescentes da favela, que eram vários

⁴¹ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 122.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴³ Ícaro, Personal interview, 30 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 51.

atividades dia á dia...essa vontade eles têm de ser felizes. Eu acho que *UrbesFavela: O teatro* mostrou muito essa partes boas, né, na favela. Ele não ficou...não ficou procurando somente os problemas. O *UrbesFavela: O teatro* mostrou bastante a alegria das pessoas...a vontade de viver eles tinham, a vontade de ser felizes, de ir á praia, de cantar, de ir á festa...todos os aspectos que existem na vida da favela... [Secondly, the themes, the themes that were used in the play, were very relational to the day to day life of adolescents in a favela, the day to day activities...The will they have to be happy. I think that *UrbesFavela: O teatro* showed many good parts, you know, in the favela. It wasn't...it wasn't searching only for the problems. *UrbesFavela: O teatro* really showed people's joy...the will people have to live, the desire to be happy, to go to the beach, to sing, to go to parties...all aspects that exist in favela life...]⁴⁴

UrbesFavela: O teatro, through its attempt to demonstrate “all aspects that exist in favela life,” addressed life’s contrasts for adolescents in favelas. In the scene described above, for example, the teenage boy struggled to define his masculinity through a violent assault and simultaneously overcome shyness in front of a cute girl. His conflict reflected his fight to fulfill his “desire to be happy” under pressures to act within certain male behavioral codes. Audience members witnessed the teenage boy’s endeavor to realize his human right to happiness. Since favela youth performed and created the play, audiences simultaneously witnessed adolescents like Ícaro actively striving for and achieving access to their human rights through theatrical performance. The play encouraged audiences, therefore, to reexamine how their own perceptions and actions affect the prevention of adolescents’ realization of human rights.

UrbesFavela: O teatro’s served not only to transform audiences, but to provide youth with the opportunity to become social actors outside of classrooms. EDISCA’s students, through learning and re-interpreting artistic languages, develop an ability to critically reflect on their relationships with the world and in the world. Their performance in one of Fortaleza’s most popular theaters, however, facilitated the

⁴⁴ Ibid.

students' recognition of their capacity to change *others'* perspectives about issues that affect the students' lives. Once students have realized that capacity, their proliferation of the social action necessitated by their critical reflection becomes attainable. As Boal claims, "Perhaps theater is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution!"⁴⁵

Conclusion: "Now, what about *our* project?"⁴⁶

"Hannah, do not ask me any questions about your research this morning. I don't want to hear anything about Enxame, the prison, blah blah blah," Gilano tells me, laughing, as he drives us to EDISCA. "Instead, I need *your* help."

Curious, I respond, "Okay, Gilano, no questions. But help with what?"

He launches into a description of a workshop that a project in New York City for socio-economically disadvantaged adolescents asked him to give the following week. "I want to introduce the language we have been developing with the hip-hop groups. I think that the youth will be able to relate to it, especially kids that have grown up in a hip-hop culture." Gilano animatedly describes his plans for the workshop, in which he first intends to aid the youth in the creation of a movement vocabulary. "After we develop the basic "words," I want to suggest ideas for scenes, so we can further build that vocabulary. But here is where you come in! Help me come up with ideas for scenes that relate to their experiences!"

At first, I am slightly taken aback by his desire for my help. Gilano's insistent attitude, however, encourages me to realize my ability to contribute to his project. Due to

⁴⁵ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*,..., 155.

⁴⁶ Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 15 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 38.

my understanding of the hip-hop/theater language and my personal experience as an American adolescent, I have a unique perspective to offer Gilano on scenarios that might work effectively for his workshop's participants. I begin to brainstorm ideas for scenes in the car. "On the subway," I excitedly propose, "a teenager jamming out to his headphones, a mother with a stroller and two small children, a group of uniformed school children headed on a field trip to the Metropolitan..."

"Yes!" Gilano exclaims. "Where's your little notebook? Write it down, write it down!" I scribble a few notes as we pull up to EDISCA's white front gates. Buzzing with energy, I retreat to the airy upper office space to develop ideas.

After we finish lunch in the small room next to the spotless white kitchen, I pull out my notebook to propose my scenarios to Gilano. He leans back in his chair, hands behind his head. "Vai! [*Go!*]" he demands with a smile.

"Okay, well..." and I begin to describe my ideas. I use my body to physically express potential scenarios for his workshop. A little sister sneaks into her big sister's room to read her diary and steal her make-up. A teacher catches two girls passing notes in class and makes them read the note aloud to everyone. "A person gets lost on the subway –"

"– and he doesn't speak English!" Gilano adds, sitting up in his chair and laughing.

"Isso, [*Exactly,*]" I nod, grinning. "Isso."⁴⁷

As I explored the impact of EDISCA's educational methodology, Gilano transformed me into a subject of that methodology. Originally, I intended to observe

⁴⁷ Observations, 25 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 25-27.

Gilano's introduction of complex artistic languages, fulfilling my role as an investigator. To facilitate my own learning, I would primarily watch from the sidelines as a critical spectator and supplement my observations with dialogical interviews. Gilano, however, had other plans. Upon my return to EDISCA after a two week excursion, Gilano immediately asked me, "Now, what about *our* project in Los Angeles?"⁴⁸ Thoughts of doubt ran through my head: I have to finish school, I don't have a job, I don't have any money, how do you even start an NGO?... He, however, commenced brainstorming, and not wanting to be left behind, I joined him. My knowledge of Los Angeles, I realized, complemented his experience with artistic languages to create exciting possibilities.

Through my observations of his work, Gilano introduced me to his innovative layering and re-envisioning of artistic lenses with project participants. I witnessed youth's need to reunite with their creative dimensions in order to produce critical thought. He, then, pushed me beyond that knowledge, giving me the responsibility of reforming those languages for American audiences. His trust in my ability to facilitate an arts education project in Los Angeles and contribute to his New York workshop released my own creative energy. I am eagerly brainstorming and making contacts to begin the organization of my own project. Having had the opportunity to be a social actor in Gilano's projects, I feel empowered to enact social change through arts projects within my community.

I return to Gilano's description of education: "Education is not a box to give someone, education makes someone give something."⁴⁹ The young women at O Centro Educaçional Aldacy Barbosa, Gilano informed me, are currently writing and enacting a

⁴⁸ Gilano Andrade, Personal interview, 15 May 2007, in "Independent Study Project Work Journal," 38.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

play on their own accord, entitled “Deixe a Vaca Ir Pra Brejo,” a colloquial expression that roughly translates to “Let Everything Go Down the Drain.”⁵⁰ Ícaro, an actor in *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, recently asked me to give him an English lesson on legal terms to help in his pursuit of becoming a judge. “I want to learn the law,” he told me, “because I want to make sure that Brazilian citizens know what rights they have.”⁵¹ The girls in the facility, Ícaro and myself exemplify only a few of the thousands EDISCA and its methodology has touched. For when an educator truly practices a liberating pedagogy, students’ “gifts” facilitate the proliferation of human emancipation.

⁵⁰ Gilano Andrade, Meeting, 15 May 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 3.

⁵¹ Ícaro, Personal interview, 16 April 2007, in “Independent Study Project Work Journal,” 33.

Terms and Definitions

Capoeira: An Afro-Brazilian dance tradition, involving a game-like “fight” in which two dancers play off each other’s energies

Favela: A socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhood, often called the “periphery” due to their general location on the city’s outskirts

Forró: A partner dance style traditional to Northeastern Brazil that is very popular in Fortaleza

Pop and lock: A hip-hop dance style in which dancers move their bodies from frozen position to frozen position in a series of broken movements

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Indications for Further Research

EDISCA, as a comprehensive institution, possesses many facets that contribute to their students' human development as well as the development of the students' families. Through physical and psychological health programs (including food services), family support networks, a program that hires students' mothers to make costumes, library services, access to computers, traveling opportunities and much more, EDISCA provides services to enhance the quality of life and creative possibilities of their students. Due to time constraints, I narrowed my study to EDISCA's introduction and layering of artistic languages, specifically in *UrbesFavela: O teatro*, which is a limited representation of EDISCA's reach. For further investigation, I would attempt to take into account the broader picture of EDISCA's role within their students' lives.

At O Centro Educaçional Aldacy Barbosa, I would love the opportunity to spend several days within the facility to better understand the scope of young women's world inside the center's walls. This understanding would enhance my ability to form ideas for an artistic project that would best benefit the facility's residents. I would also like to witness the progression of Projeto Zero and how each step affects the project's participants.

Another possibility for further research is the investigation of arts education projects in the United States and how they differ from Brazil according to the United State's social development. Also, within that comparative study, one could begin to discover how to manipulate artistic languages in order to best support youth's needs according to their geographical and social environments.

Independent Study Project Appendix

My Independent Study Project (ISP) analyzed the transformation and current exploration of the theories of Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theater practitioner and theorist. His impact, though worldwide, left a large mark in Brazil. Therefore, my ISP could not have been conducted in the United States. EDISCA (Escola de Dança e Integração Social para Criança e Adolescente [*The School of Dance and Social Integration for Children and Adolescents*]) and the projects in Fortaleza based on EDISCA's methodology, additionally, utilize a form of liberating arts education that I have never witnessed in the United States. I believe I could have completed part of my literature review in the United States; however, my research relied on observing the practice of an educational method that is not used in the United States (to my knowledge).

Completing field research required an entirely different approach to learning than I practice at my university. Though I have taken classes at Occidental that prepared me for undertaking field research of this magnitude, such as community-based learning courses, I have never experienced learning based on constant observations. Additionally, the ISP requires an incredibly pro-active approach to learning, such as searching for interviewees and making difficult decisions about time management and information organization.

My monograph is composed primarily of primary data, excepting my analysis of the primary data through a theoretical framework. I chose observations and interviews to include in my monograph that I felt best supported my thesis, which I developed based on a synthesis of theory and field research.

The field exercises aided my ability to gather data from experiences, as opposed to secondary sources. Primarily, completing the community project field journal provided me with the opportunity to develop an effective system of collecting and organizing my field data. This helped immensely during the ISP period.

I did not encounter any problems that were severely detrimental to my research. Though the language barrier prevented my ability to conduct in-depth interviews with some people, I found others with whom I could better communicate. Additionally, I was only able to visit one facility twice, because I only had access through my advisor due to government restrictions. I gathered sufficient information for my research during these two visits, however. Since I narrowed my research's focus early in the process, I did not experience any major time constraints.

When I first arrived in Brazil, I had hoped to find an organization in Fortaleza that actively practiced Augusto Boal's methodologies. I soon discovered that though Boal's theories have had an important influence on Brazilian theater and educational theory, no organizations in Fortaleza utilize solely Boal's methodology. I then modified my research, deciding to use Boal's theories as a theoretical framework from which to analyze current arts education projects.

My advisor introduced me to many resources, recommending both literature and people to interview. EDISCA, additionally, provided me with access to publications and its students were happy to conduct interviews with me. In order to complete my field research, I used observations, participation and informal interviews. Most of my data came from observations, as I wanted to analyze the practice of arts education methodology. Gilano Andrade, my advisor, played a large role throughout the research

process. He allowed me to accompany him to his projects, which gave me the opportunity to determine how he spreads EDISCA's methodology to aid other socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Additionally, his willingness to discuss our experiences helped me develop many exciting conclusions about my data. He also utilized his educational methodology during his work with me, inspiring me to brainstorm about possible actions I can take upon my return to the United States to create an arts education project.

Nearly every activity I did applied to my research, as I let my field data lead me to my research conclusions. My advisor also aided my time management, suggesting various activities that served the investigation of my problem statement well.

Throughout the course of my ISP, I met, observed and interviewed many youth from periphery communities. I began to better understand the daily issues that they face, in addition to how the arts can facilitate their access to human rights. They gave me a richer perspective on favela youth culture as well as the relationship among the various communities that compose Fortaleza's urban environment. Through my friendships with youth at EDISCA and other projects, I felt more connected with the city and its culture.

The ISP process, primarily, inspired me to social action. Due to my advisor's encouragement, in addition to the powerful possibilities of arts education that I witnessed, I intend to start an NGO in Los Angeles that incorporates EDISCA's methodology. The research was important in awakening me to the potential impact of arts; however, it simultaneously made me realize that research is not enough and I can learn even more from action.

My suggestions to future students would be to make friends as quickly as possible. Especially when working with youth and children, those friendships will provide information that no secondary source can.

I would undertake this project again. However, due to the impact of this project, I hope to begin learning from the creation of social actions as opposed to from research of them.