THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

IMPROVISATION THEATRE AS MEDIUM TO DISCUSS SOCIAL CONFLICTS
– An Ethnographic Field Study

3-ECTS PRACTICAL PROJECT IN CHILE
SOPHIA HUBMANN
OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION

“...theatre as such is not revolutionary, but it is the rehearsal to the revolution because even if the action is fiction, the experiences of the people are real.”

(Augusto Boal (1989), Theater der Unterdrückten, p. 43, 58)

Augusto Boal, 1931 – 2009 Rio de Janeiro, Founder of the TO
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

1. Concepts of Role and Personhood
   → TO, Augusto Boal

2. Oppression and Equality
   → Power Structures; Systems of Advantage

3. When Culture Meets Language
   → Maintenance of Power Structures; Ethnography
   Clifford Geertz, Stuart Hall
PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Theatre Passion

2. Connect a visit of artist friends in Chile with university life
PROJECT: WHAT?

• Cooperation with NgullumapuRedTO

• 3 workshops
  • Recognising & undoing sexist stereotypes in my own behaviour
  • The most violent experience in my life
  • Breaking free from daily routine
    → Sharpening perception inside & outside of body
    → Meaning is created through bodily expression

• 10 Interviews
  • Contextualise TO into life
PROJECT: HOW?

- Ethnographic field study
  - Participant observation
  - Ethnographic journal
  - Semi-structured interviews

- Travelling to Santiago, Concepción, and Valparaíso
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

• Augusto Boal’s theatre method = practical implementation of Clifford Geertz theory

• **Geertz**: unravelling of the layers of culture → understanding its meaning

• **Boal**: “deconstruct the body“; getting aware and exploring the infinite capacities of bodily expression

→ Meaning = bodily expressive act
PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS

• Application of theoretical knowledge
• Appreciation of creative work
• Political person
• Anthropology master
• Culture shocks