

Professional Training Philosophies: an introduction

Móin-Móin is an academic journal published by the Sociedade Cultural Artística de Jaraguá do Sul [The Artistic Culture Society of Jaraguá do Sul] (SCAR) and by the University of Santa Catarina State (UDESC) and is affiliated to the Postgraduate Program (master's and doctoral) in theater of the UDESC Center of Arts.

The main objective of the Journal is to promote studies about the various languages in the field, which in Brazil we call the theater of animated forms: puppet theater, shadow theater, theater of objects and mask theater. It also strives to stimulate research, reflection and expand knowledge about these arts and contribute to the professional training of theater students, professors, theater practitioners and the public in general.

It is important to highlight that the Journal is part of a set of educational and cultural actions held by UDESC and SCAR. Each October, we promote the Festival of Puppetry Arts, in conjunction with a Research Seminars, which takes place in the SCAR Cultural Center in the city of Jaraguá do Sul. The program of this event gathers theatre performances, conferences and a display of banners which inform the public about the researches and creative process of this field of knowledge.

The central theme of this edition N° 14 is: **Philosophies of Professional Training in Puppetry Arts** and was prepared in conjunction with the Professional Training Commission of the UNIMA – Union Internationale de la Marionnette.

The articles published here will serve as a base and reference for the discussions at two events at which *Móin-Móin* will be released: the International Meeting on Training in Puppetry Arts, which will be held in Charleville-Mézières, France, from Sept. 16-18 and the 12th Seminar for the Study of Puppetry Arts, which will be held in Jaraguá do Sul, Brazil, from Sept. 31 – Oct. 3, 2015.

Professional training is one of the recurrent themes in the debates held at the encounters and festivals of Puppetry Arts in Brazil. In 2009 we published edition Nº 6 of the *Journal Móin-Móin* and conducted national seminars about the issue in Jaraguá do Sul in 2009 and 2012.

The theme is important to us because the requirements for becoming a puppeteer have become more complex than they were in the 1970's when puppet theater first became a professional practice in Brazil. In recent decades this art has undergone important changes in our country, which led to a preference for the denomination Theater of Animated Forms or Theater of Animation. The puppeteer no longer worked in hiding; the traditional puppet tent was dismantled and the space of creation and action was transformed. Acting in the public's view, the puppeteer needed to dominate a new field of knowledge. The changes in the space altered the conceptions of staging. Puppet Theater came to dialogue more intensely with other artistic expressions and to incorporate resources of the visual arts, dance, cinema and new technologies.

These incursions through other fields of knowledge and expression led to the creation of daring dramaturgies that broke with traditional forms of theatrical conception and writing. The exploration of different materials to fabricate both puppets and objects, and for the construction of new meanings in the scene, came to be a concern in the work of countless theater groups. The changes thus led to a review of concepts about the training of the theater practitioners.

In recent decades, puppet theater in Brazil has gone beyond common sense notions; such as the belief that the puppeteer is a profession for which a gift or experience is sufficient. It now emphasizes the importance of having a command of techniques, practices and theories related to the trade and overcoming dilettantism, which still marks the profile of some artists and theater groups. Nevertheless, we know that the education of the young puppeteer is quite complex and while it is essential to have command of techniques and theories, this is not enough for artistic creation. The English director Peter Brook, in the preface of a book by Yoshi Oida¹, illustrated this issue: "One day Yoshi told me about the words of an old Kabuki actor: 'I can teach a young actor the movement used to point to the moon. But between the tip of his finger and the moon, the responsibility is his.'" This expresses well the complexity involved in education given that it also involves a reflection about

¹ OIDA, Yoshi. *Um Ator Errante*. São Paulo: Beca, 1999, P. 11.

our convictions about art, and the construction of identities and personalities, and requires a constant discussion about our worldviews.

In Brazil, there are no schools that offer higher education or technical education in the realm of formal education for the profession of puppeteer, as can be found in various European countries. We are taking a different route in which the training of the Puppetry Arts is offered as a discipline within higher education courses in theater, in bachelor programs and in those for accrediting theater teachers offered by universities. For this reason, this issue of the Journal about professional training is very important to us because it provides an opportunity to discover different concepts and new perspectives and approaches to the theme.

For this edition of *Móin-Móin* we bring together the studies of 13 thinkers who address in particular ways different facets of the issues related to the training of the Puppetry Arts. The texts are written by artists, researchers, theater teachers and professionals who are dedicated to professional training in different contexts and cultures. They include: Boris Goldovsky (Russia); Fabrizio Montecchi (Italy); Greta Bruggeman (France); Hadas Ophrat (Israel); Henryk Jurkowski (Poland); Irina Niculescu, John Bell (the United States of America); Lucile Bodson (France); Marek Waszkiel (Poland); Marthe Adam (Canada); Nicolas Gousseff (France); Tito Lorefice (Argentina) and Wang Xiaoxin (China).

The reader will encounter a diversity of foci and perspectives permeated by approaches related to the artistic, professional and formative paths of the authors, who at times offer an autobiographic perspective, enriching the reflections. Various authors present their pedagogical and methodological procedures, and their choice of steps when working with young artists, resulting from their experiences that undergo constant evaluation.

Some of the articles criticize the education offered in regular and formal schools, which reminds us of concerns expressed at the beginning of the last century. In 1918, Russian director and pedagogue Vakhtangov, wrote in his *Notebook*: “God knows what is taught in theater schools. The greatest error of the schools is that they are dedicated to teaching, when what they should do is educate”.² Vakhtangov’s concerns are present in articles permeated by

² SAURA, Jorge. Cuadernos de Notas, (22 de outubro de 1918). In *E. Vajtángov: Teoría y práctica teatral*. Madrid: Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España, 1997. P. 146.

problematizations around binomials such as teaching-educating, instructing-educating; and about the importance of techniques as means and not as ends; and about the school as a place in which the knowledge of the past and of the present establishes a foundation for the future of Puppetry Arts.

The living inheritance contained in the great traditions of puppet theater, as well as the relationship with the masters are also reflected on in these pages. In the relationship with students, the masters - who detain important artistic and cultural heritage - know how to stimulate the imagination and the creative act, allowing the expression of its originality. They construct a relationship of mutual confidence, which allows unveiling their “secrets” to the student, and thus share their worldview, constructing a profound educational relationship.

Upon concluding the reading of each of the texts we have a feeling and conviction that reflects what Margareta Niculescu once wrote: “I totally trust the school. Aware that it is an institution. Should one be afraid of the word? It all depends on the people that inhabit it and the ideas that circulate in it.”³ In this way Margareta highlight that the definition of the concepts and philosophies of professional training experiences inside and outside schools are to a large degree our responsibility. We can make choices.

A journal with the characteristics of *Móin-Móin* can only be published with the collaboration of many people. For this reason we express our gratitude to the authors, the Professional Training Commission of UNIMA, its President Tito Lorefice, and especially to Irina Niculescu, the main idealizer of this edition. Irina accepted the task of selecting the themes of the articles to cover issues important to the education of puppeteers and her enthusiasm touched all of us involved in this work. We are also grateful to the Institut International de la Marionnette (IIM) and the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette (ESNAM), for kindly host our International Meeting on Training in Puppetry Arts, for making possible the presentation of the *Móin-Móin* Journal and the discussion of this important, complex issue that is so dear to all of us.

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³ NICULESCU, Margareta. O futuro do teatro pode nascer também nos canteiros de obras de uma escola. In: *Revista Móin-Móin* N. 6, Pg. 21. Jaraguá do Sul: SCAR/UDESC: 2009. Trad. José Ronaldo Faleiro.