The Puppet – What a Miracle!

Union Internationale de la Marionnette

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The conviction concerning the necessity of the use of puppets in the educational process has recently been gaining more and more professional and public support. Nevertheless, the lack of expert literature, theoretical as well as practical, still persists. This book is an attempt to offer some contribution to both domains. More or less all authors want to underline the importance of theoretical approach developing practical experiences in quotidian use of the puppet in educational praxis. Each one in his/her own way.

Dr. Ida Hamre from Denmark, one of the founders of UNIMA Commission *Puppet inEducation*, emphasizes the influence of the puppet theatre play in forming the child's personality on three levels: aesthetical, emotional, ethical and developing creative thinking at the same time. An important article of the Lithuanian artist Dr. Milda Bredikyte was written on the use of the puppet in dialogical plays. The method she suggests coincides with contemporary trends in sociological research which, in order to guide the individual to his/her identity and self-confidence, recur to narration and dialogue as means of discovering his/her problems. But children are not always capable of expressing their feelings and sensations in words, and symbolic play with the puppet offers a good solution to the problem: it enables them to communicate with their environment indirectly, i.e. non-verbally. They can learn the skill by simply watching their teacher's frequent use of the puppet in dialogical plays. Dr.Bredikyte's work is scientifically founded and based on practical work. Its results are similar to the conclusions of many kindergarten and primary-school teachers all over the world, so it is well worth our attention. The English summary of this theoretically and empirically founded thesis on the necessity of the use of puppets in the pedagogical process was one of the important writings of its kind in the last period, continuing research by the deceased Nancy Renfro from USA in the eighties.

The article by Helena Korošec, assistant lecturer of puppetry and drama at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana is also based on theoretical concepts: communication with the puppet which enables the modern child, exposed to the aggressive impacts of media and of life itself, to find solutions for his/her problems on a symbolic level and as painlessly as possible.

Edmond Debouny, initiator of the UNIMA Commission *Puppet in Education*, describes his own way how to improve the use of puppets in the everyday work on school curriculum. We hope that these articles will certainly attract a number of followers and will therefore be well worth professional attention. Undoubtedly there have been many more similar projects performed in schools, so this publication should be taken also as an invitation to individuals experienced with puppets at nursery or elementary school, to share their results with our Commission.

I am glad and proud that the idea of research regarding the use of the puppet to achieve curricular goals improves in certification of my personal CREDO: ***Puppet - a Miracle***. In a way this fact will help to round off the theme of this book and, maybe, make it at the same time a challenge and the starting point for building a systematic collection of writings on the subject. The viewpoint that children have a right to the puppet, and their teachers a right to the knowledge of how to use it, is becoming more and more fervently advocated by the UNIMA international association and its special committee dealing with these issues, so a better insight into their meaning and importance would certainly be very welcome.

Edi Majaron

THE LEARNING PROCESS IN THE THEATRE OF PARADOX

Ida Hamre

Summary

The theory is, that the special "learning shock" of the theatre form - cognitive and emotional - passing through the very strong metaphor of an animationfigure, may provide a trancendence to new acknowledgement and divergent thinking. On this background a pedagogical researchproject runnig for three years is decribed.The learning potential of the animationprocess, its magic and its utopian aspects are analysed and discussed. The focus is on animation. The name animationtheatre underlines the processand the relations between players, figures, craftsmen, spectators. The name is oriented to the centre of this art - that means to its special ways of communication, and therefor it is able to highlight the fact that every artistic expression should be animated and animating.

How can animation theatre provoke education, and how can it contribute to innovation of teatre and drama-education in general?

Animation theatre is not a primitive version of actor's theatre. To many people this theatre looks like a simple artform, but still it is multifacetted and able to open for a variety of visual dramatic art forms - and even to other art forms. It has its own identity and it is a raw medium. From a pedagogical point of view it is very demanding but also very giving. The teacher who deals with the theatre form therefor needs professional training.

The international commission «Puppets in Education» is dealing with those problems and wants to draw attention to the importance of the theatre form in the educational context.

The theory in this article is that the special "learning shock" of the theatre form - cognitive and emotional - passing through the very strong metaphor of a marionette, may provide a trancendence to new acknowledgement and divergent thinking - may be to dynamic forces. This is to be dicussed in the following.

Man - Robot

Grandville (1803-1848) is called grandfather to the idea of the picture-book. As a poet and a painter Grandville described «Un autre Monde». I don't find his figures attractive. Often Grandville is bitingly sharp - in an early surrealistic way he describes men and marionettes, and often he turns them upside down - In my opinion he points out what this theatre is about: - to be or not to be a marionette - that is the question.

The puppet/the animationfigure can shed light on the nature of man as a robot or as a dynamic being.Could the blooming interest in these artistic and artificial figures be due to the fact that we have come closer to the very controlled automatic person? - and to medical and genetic manipulation?Time is ripe for this theatre.

Many elements play a role in a performance. Depending on time and place, people have worked with these elements and this world of signs, which belong to animation theatre. In Europe, the development principally seems to have unfolded in four, basic dimensions. And I here quote proffessor Henryk Jurkowski's characteristic from the explanation in his book "Aspects of Puppets":

- the puppet in the service of neighbouring sign systems. (Rituals /ceremonies)
- the puppet in the sign system of the live theatre. (Imitations)
- the sign system of the puppet theatre. (Identity)
- the atomisation of all elements of the puppet theatre and its semiotic consequences. (Deconstruction which marks the theatre form today).

My own opinion is that the totality, which the figures, players and movements of animation theatre form, can never become true socialist realism - and schould not.

Animation

Why animation theatre?

The name animation theatre underlines the process and the relations between players, figures, craftsmen, spectators… Animation is in one time oriented to the centre of this art - that means to its special ways of communication, to its magic and to the hand. That means the tactile sense. And it is extrovert - highlights the fact that every artistic expression should be animated and animating.

I want to focus on animation.

The animation theatre appeals to the visual and the auditory senses - and to the tactile sense - this is often overlooked.The player's body - and hand - is part of the handicraft - and it has a lot of other functions:The hand forms the figure, the hand animates, symbolises, and communicates. Hand - animation and magic are very closely linked in this theatre.

Through animation, lifeless material is brought to life- this should be apparent - and so should the contradiction between man and dead material.Animation involves an exchange of energy: the animated material has the character of instrument in relation to the hand - at the same time the hand is an instrument for the material.This changes constantly. The process is based on sensibility and concentration - the aim is authenticity.

To animate is to give life and soul to lifeless material - for instance, a marionette or an object. Animation art is based on the perception that things and materials contain energy and an inner dynamic. To sense this dynamic by playing yourself or seeing marionette theatre is to feel close to something alive - an experience that can lead to thoughts of magic and animism. In African society animism is natural and a given - for instance, a road can have a soul, so a sacrifice to the road spirit must be made.

Magic

Like other art forms, this is about craft and magic.What is the magic of animation theatre?Is it especially linked to these aspects?

BELIEF IN THE POSSIBILITY OF CONTACT WITH POWERS FROM OUTSIDE

A belief that things contain a secret and dual meaning. A belief that conjuring or invoking can provoke a physical reaction. The magic is, in this way somehow related to prayer and hope and therefore also part of the holy.

THE ANIMATION PROCESS

To make alive - and to create.The animation process, the movement, which takes place in the play --directly between player and audience with the figure/marionette as the medium.

THE SHAPE AND CHARACTER OF THE MATERIAL

The shape and character of the material that the figure or of which the object itself is made. The fact that the material or the object seems to want something in itself is part of the magic.

AMBIGUITY AND SYMBOLIC FUNCTION
The symbolic or stand-in function of which the figure is a part.The figure as a metaphor for man.

THE RITUAL DIMENSION

The performance is like a story; it will end but it will come back in another form.The roles of the players and the audience; to act and react in certain ways. The code between player and spectator is ritual too; this is real, although we know it is fictive and vice versa.The handicraft and the training of the player and the maker is also a kind of ritual.

ACTION, TIME AND COMMUNICATION
The action and time, the transcending moment when past and present are united in closeness - life. The moment when you succeed in transforming and communicating something commonly human.

In my opinion these aspects of magic coincide with the asthetic learning process.They are archaic phenomena which vibrate between the artistic and the numinous.Animation theatre is close to this magic. So, it is a raw medium - therefore very demanding and giving, seen from a pedagogical point of view. As a teacher one neads professional training.

Animation theatre – Actor's theatre

Is it possible that this theatre form is able to underline what it is about in the asthetic learning process.In a curtain way this type of theatre is both more primitive and complex than actors theatre. For what reason?

The asthetic learning process as such is characterised by an «asthetic double». This double often causes a split. When, for instance it concerns performing actions in drama, this split is about being yourself or being the role, so to say. And such a state of split will often create a

«hyper conciousness».

My thesis is that in animation theatre the asthetic double is a triple, because besides the role and your own identity, you have the animation figure - and in fact, you must be present in this figure , too - so, in each of these three dimensions.

Maybe this is what is made obvious in the therapeutical functions with animation figures which are often very successful.

The French psychologist, Annie Gilles, points to the so called marionnette as a model for both identifications and projections in both spectator and player.She calls this play of the marionnette a «double mirror» and a «metatheatre».Anyway, one may recognise that the animation figure always becomes a human symbol - and therefore very charged.

Utopian aspects.

In the following I want to pick up on what I mentione utopian aspects - using the concept utopian not as a synonym for mad - but in the original (ethymological) meaning : «there is no place for it outside».My point is that these figures will always be utopian figures in spite of their style and type, because they exist in a no mans land in which natural proportions and the law of gravity can be totally abolished.

One can find at least ten different basic animation figures, from which a variety of examples may be created or described.

Basic Figures:
- Hand-figure
- Glove- figure
- Rod-figure
- String-figure
- Shadow-figure
- Foot supported figure
- Ad hoc-figure
- Object
- Marot
- Humanette

According to research of african masks and marionnettes there is no fixed limit between these phenomena, but a lot of mixed figures. These types change the body - not only the hand.

Humanettes - Principles:
- Enlarging of one or more body parts
- Repetition of body parts
- Addition of new body part
- Camouflage of a body part
- Elongation of a body part + camouflage
- Displacement of body part + camouflage
- Multiplication of body parts
- Function of body parts

- Turning of body part
- General camouflage of the shape of the body
- Vertical elongation of the shape of the body
- Horizontal elongation of the shape of the body
- Changing the position of the figure in relation to gravity
- A person creates a number of figures
- Several persons create one figure
- Dissolving and mixing several figures

I call these special figures «humanettes» because of their close relation to man/player. From them one may develop a lot of strange figures. So in fact the field of these figures - which also opens to the world of sculpture, masks and costumes - is a very rich field. One can create a lot of new types and principles from here.

So, the animation figures will always be utopian figures in spite of their style.The typical rooms/scenes are highlighting this utopian aspect, too.According to the player these special scens and figures nourish bizarre and awkward movements - and create utopianmetamorphoses when performed in time and space.And so will the stories. The stories of animation theatre can never be satisfied by depicting and documenting. They are bodily metaphors for the stories of mankind. Crystallisation of the obvious or of the extreme human - of both the awful and ridiculous reality - and for the performance of something quite different.And so the stories are nearly always deeply humorous.

Humour

I think animation theatre always appeals to our sense of humour, mainly because of the irony of the animated figure which always referers to man.

What meaning could humour have as part of the learning process one may ask? What function in relation to the formation of identity and action competence? Humour is underestimated.Humour should be taken seriously. It opens to a field of freedom and courage.

Based on this I suggest the concept «utopian imagination», which I see as an indispensible kind of imagination to stimulate in school today - and a complement to what is called constructive, reconstructive and compensatory forms of imagination. To tackle contradictions is part of modern life and for this, utopian imagination is needed as a path to divergent actions. Here I use «utopian» according to Ernst Bloch – and that means «utopian» with a dimension of hope («Geist der Utopi»).

According to the british art-resercher, David Best, the artistic learning process is a shock - at the same time an emotional and a cognitive shock. (Rationality of Feeling, London -92). He mentione this «emotionel learning». In this context, the work of animation theatre is the example. In this case the emotional learning exceeds the typical concretisations, metaphors and methamorphoses of the theatre form. My theory is, that this «learning shock» - cognitive and emotional - passing through the very strong metaphor of a marionette, may provide a trancendence to new acknowledgement and divergent thinking - may be to dynamic forces.

The Learning Process in the Theatre of Paradox

The animation-theatre opens for a variety of visual dramatic art forms - and to a lot of other artforms -I see this as a quality - if one does not forget the theatre's own identity.

Animation theatre is not a primitive version of actor's theatre.The animation figure - the puppet - is not a requisite. The interaction between player and figure is basic and unique.But the figure is part of the scenography in a more unconditional way than the actor in actor's theatre.

One may call this theatre, theatre of paradox. The instrumental function of the figure must be overstepped if the play is to live - yet at the same time we know that the animation figure is dead material. This is a basic condition in this theatre which therefore focuses on contradictory terms like: concrete- abstract, spirit -matter, subject-object, man - robot, freedom-control, facts-fiction.

An aesthetic learning process could be described as a process, in which experiences and emotions are integrated in knowledge, which is linked to the art form - and shaped into new unities by being formed in to a new shape. At the same time, new meaning and new understanding is created.In relation to the educational work of this learning I see the expressions of the hand as something very important but often very overlooked in arts. In animation theatre it is highlighted. Here one has the opportunity to combine some of the numerous - often very indirect impressions of today - with tactile expressions close to you.

To tackle contradictions is part of modern life and for this, utopian imagination is needed as a path to divergent actions. Animation theatre provides us with the opportunity to rediscover things and to view them in a new light, in the modern industrialized world, which is increasingly dominated by material objects and technology. A culture where it at the same time becomes more and more difficult to see the difference between reality and «theatre».

A project

It is therefore necessary to carry out a study of the fundamental aesthetic learning processes, subjects to be studied and qualifications of the teaching staff.The aim of the educational potential of animated theatre and its graphic language project (initiated by I.H. in 1998) is to examine the possibilities offered by animated theatre as regards the learning potential that may be used in education.

What can children and students learn? What principal themes, methods and development areas can be proposed and described? What teaching and aesthetic skills should teachers aim to acquire?

The project participants will use their personal outlook and individual teaching experiences to inspire and inform other teachers. The project aims to create a foundation for the inclusion of animated theatre (involving puppets, objects, etc.) in teacher training courses, within the framework of general art education. The project will also include a number of previous studies and initiatives carried out in other countries.

Theory and line of argumentation

Theory and practice are inseparable - a philosophy which forms the basis for one of the project's main ideas. Meetings between artists and teachers also constitute a vital element.

One of the project's future goals is to hold meetings featuring presentations about the initial idea and end results.Practical experiences will be used to clarify and adapt the existing theory, which should, in turn, inspire practice.

Animated theatre has the potential to inspire a number of different teaching functions. These functions (and others) should be analysed and discussed within the framework of the project at both a theoretical and practical level, as far as possible. I refer mainly to theories and teaching perspectives such as:

- Learning and aesthetic training.

- Learning and emotional training.

- Learning and ethical training.

Project participants and task organisation

Participants comprise 8 teachers from different institutions, including infant, primary and secondary schools, the IUFM and extracurricular activities centres. Participants will all work with their students using animated theatre/games for a certain period of time, whose length will vary in accordance with each teacher's individual possibilities.

Given that the project involves an area in which teachers have received no training, initial conditions will differ significantly and at first, these activities may prove far from easy. An initial creative approach is extremely important, as is an urge to learn and a willingness to experiment. In short, participants should approach the project with an attitude that will enable them to explore both the themes and methods as well as specialist learning techniques, in order to make the most of the enormous potential of this art form.

The task begins with a basic introduction to animated theatre and a description of the special preliminary conditions. This description will cover all the minimum teaching conditions as well as proposals for themes and methods for pupils and students.

Needless to say, there are many different and equally valid ways of developing the proposed activities. But whatever way is chosen, participants should always bear in mind the basic elements of this form of theatre, and strive to include them in both their theoretical and practical activities:

- puppet, object, etc.

- manual and theoretical animation

- interaction, games and social skills

- text, sound, music

- colour, light, space, scene

- content of the game, fable, etc.

Basic elements

One of the basic elements of the project is the interaction between participants and the project leader. We will try to choose books that we can all read together, in an attempt to create a common work space. Whatever their teaching experience and specialist area, participants should make an effort to ensure that their programmes include both practical and theoretical elements. It is vital to involve students at the following levels:

- Expressive

- Manual

- Perceptive

- Analytical

- Communicative

During the preparation of an animated play, participants should include preparative exercises and progressive initiatives as part of their teaching strategy, thus laying the foundation for a richer framework for the application of their experiences. Similarly, participants should also include any other teaching activities and perspectives that they deem appropriate.

All participants should compile a summary complete with photos and video recordings (where appropriate) outlining their individual programme, project and assessment. Half way through the three-year project, participants will be able to involve third parties in their efforts, providing that they themselves compile the programme's final report.

The project leader is responsible for taking the initiative and planning meetings and debates, etc. The leader will also be responsible for collecting the summaries and comments of the participants half way through the project, and for handing in the global educational development project report in 2002.

The project leader is also responsible for analysing current international conditions regarding the various educational and specialist aspects involved in the initiative, contacting such organisations as the International Puppetry Institute in France or the UNIMA network, in particular the Commission for Puppet Art in Education.

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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND PUPPETS

Helena Korošec

Summary

Activities involving puppetry and theatre enable children to express themselves, to develop their individual capabilities and an entirely new, original and personal way of communication. Many children find it difficult to express themselves verbally and, consequently, to associate with the group. Non-verbal, symbolic communication through the puppet and other theatre activities of expression helps them establish a connection with their environment and build a positive self-image. Creative drama is not based on texts but on creative development of skills like facial expression, body movement, mime, imagination, working with puppets, masks and improvised scenes etc. There are numerous ways of including simple puppetry techniques in school-work, the simplest of them being the use of the teacher's own hands, fingers, knees or feet. Body puppets and puppets made of socks or gloves, marionettes made of cloth or plastic bottles etc. can be quite interesting as well. Regarding the purposes the creative drama can help us achieve it should urgently become part of the curriculum and an accepted didactic approach.

INTRODUCTION

In these days when children are exposed to a lot of pressure and stress in their daily communication, it is very important to find the means that will ease their communication. Communication with the symbolic language – verbal or non-verbal – can be the right solution to improve the communication between teacher and child. Puppet and other dramatic activities can lead to a significant improvement of communication between pupils themselves and reduce the tension between pupils and teachers. The puppet can become the new authority – stronger than a teacher. Child can tell his troubles to it and reestablish his symbolic communication with his environment. The puppet can also make possible an emotional reaction that is independent from words.

The puppet is no longer just a medium for preparing of performances and motivation at lessons but can also represent a magical power in the hands of the teacher and children, which stimulate cognitive, social and emotional growth.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

The term comes from Latin – communicatio. It means a message or an intercourse; »communicare« means to share something with someone.

»A man is a result of communication from his birth till his death. Everyone needs communication, with or without words. Communication is that creates a man. « (Brajša, 1995, page 5)

LEARNING AS COMMUNICATION

Theoretical starting point

The basic instrument of upbringing and education is communication – between the teacher and pupil, between teachers themselves and pupils themselves. »The most important theories of studying tell us that the process of learning consists of transmission of knowledge (concepts, facts, information) or the skills of those who have these knowledges and skills to those who have to master or learn them.« (Furlan, 1972, page 102).

»Communication in schools can be individual or group regarding the number of pupils that are part of it. We are talking about *one-way communication* when the flow of information goes one way (most often from teacher to pupil); two-way communication bases upon the flow that goes both ways, from teacher to pupil and back.« (Blazič, 1991, page 210).

Communication of primary type is the one where the questions are asked by the one who doesn't know the answers and answered by the one who knows them. It is the most important form of communication that satistfies the child's curiosity. On the pre-school stage, this shape of communication is dominant. However, in educational system, the shape of communication that dominates is the one where questions are being asked by the one who knows the answers and answered by the one who has already learned something or still doesn't know – *secundary communication.* The dominant shape of secundary communication is the classic method of discussion where the teacher leads the pupil to comprehension with the help of questions.« (Blazič, 1991, page 120)

KINDS AND SHAPES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal and non-verbal communication

Communication is a complex and manifold process of flow of information that carries not only the message about vocabulary meaning of used words but also the one about intentions, origins and relations between people. At the same time it always travels across different channels… Usually everyone thinks about the use of words or speech when they consider communication, but detailed studies pay attention to several channels of communication, especially to non-verbal communication. (Trček, 1994, page 109)

There are several kinds of messages:
- ❖ Non-verbal speechless – the kind of communication with movement, mime, attitude etc.;
- ❖ Non- verbal speech – sending of phonetical and paralingual messages;
- ❖ Verbal speech;
- ❖ Verbal speechless – sending of messages with the help of writing.

Congruent and incongruent communication

The fact is that we are communicating with a person in his presence even without saying a word. We are transmitting some kind of content to another person and establish some kind of

relation to this content and to recipient of the message in every communication. »If what we are talking and the message that we are putting across non-verbaly are in accordance, we are talking about congruent communication. If the verbal and non-verbal messages don't correspond, then we are talking about incogruent communication. In this case, we devaluate and deny the message of articulated content and give it a completely new meaning.« (Brajša, 1993, page 23)

It is a frequent opinion that communication consists only of content and verbalisation of this content. Lesser attention is devoted to the important role of non-verbal part.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

These are all kinds of communication where we don't use speech (words). These are messages that are transmitted with the help of movement of some part of the body, especially face, in some cases even the whole body (poise). Sending messages with the use of time and space as the media for communication also fits into this definition. The most frequent and important method of non-verbal communication is sending messages with the help of body movement. This is what we call kinestetic communication in communicology.

Kinestetic messages are all the kinds of messages that are put through with all kinds of body movement – from face mimicry to body poise. Besides the use of words, this is the most important and mass method of communication. Body language is the oldest method of understanding between people. Man's first language was movement, despite the use of voice (scerams) from the ancient history on. Even little children can understand movements before they can tell the meaning of the words.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PUPIL AND TEACHER

Non-verbal messages are important

In school, we are sending meassages across with words, but also without them. It's wrong to limit ourselves only to verbal communication. Spoken words are not the only and most important way of communication. Same or even more important is how we say the message. Here we are already talking about non-verbal communication.

»Every word that we say is acompanied with a number of non-verbal signs that give that word a meaning and power of influence.« (Brajša, 1993, page27). Sometimes we understand the right meaning of the words only when it's linked together with the mime, the colour and pitch of the voice and the position of the speaker's body and his accompanied gesticulation.

Pupils are aware of teacher's non-verbal messages and are very sensitive about them. They feel very well if the teacher is intense. They can tell teacher's mood or his real opinion on something by the expression on his/her face. They want the teacher to communicate with them with his look. They can sense the changes in teacher's voice's tone and colour and his real relation to the matter. Younger children want to feel the teacher's touch, older not so. Teacher's clothes do make a differece to them. Some wish to feel close to the teacher during the communication, others not. It is important how and when the teacher is talking to the

children and how much time it takes. Not every moment is a proper one for communication. Teacher's duty is to get to know the children better and to adjust the communication to their personal characteristics.

Communication in the classroom and the seat order

Renata Zadravec finds out in her research on influence of seat order on communication that communication in the classroom does not depend only on mutual relations between the participants in the process, but also on relations in the room. Pupils are aware of importance and necessity of mutual contact with the look with which the basic condition for the beginning of the two-way communication is established, not only between the teacher and the pupil, but also between pupils at the school lessons. Standard classrooms where pupils are ordered in colums obstruct successful communication. Experts don't even talk about communication anymore in this case; the more appropriate word which they prefer to use is »informing«. The dialog that goes both ways is made impossible.

ART AS NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Expression with art was very important for mankind even in the ancient history. Man used to comunicate with several artistic means of expression; he used to decorate his tools, expressed his deepest emotions and relations to the world with dancing, he made first myths and legends before he had been able to write them down; he used to wear costumes, jewelry and colored his face for variable feasts (communication with »superiour being«).

All of the above-mentioned shapes of non-verbal sending of messages are preserved to these days. Dance has developed into contemporary perfected forms like ballet. Puppet and theatre art take their sources from ancient rituals.

Art most definitely deserves its place in the process of upbringing and education because of its primal origins that are part of ourselves.

THEATRE AND PUPPET THEATRE

When we discuss theatre with an actor we find out that it is a direct communication between the actor and the audience. On the other hand, in the puppet theatre the actor communicates with the audience with the help of a mediator – the puppet. Actor declines his ego and directs all of his energy into the puppet. In a stage play the actor confirms his ego, in the puppet play the leading role is taken over by the puppet. A shy child will dare to communicate because the puppet will help him, an egocentric child on the other hand will be forced to subject his ego to the puppet if he will want to establish a relationship with the others.

CREATIVE DRAMA

What is creative drama?

The theatre sphere is the most independent form of child's creativity because of its

boundlessness. Creative drama is one of the most complex aesthetic branches because it incorporates a number of means of expression. Children can express their feelings, thoughts, relationship with their environment and people with mime, pantomime, movement, puppets, masks, imprivisations, music… All these activities can take place at the lessons with achievement of the goals of upbringing and education or at the interest activities.

The aims of creative theatre education

Dr. Nelly McCaslin who is the beginner of creative theatre education in America lists the purposes we can achieve with creative theatre education (McCaslin, 1989, page 4):

- ❖ Creativity and aesthetic development
- ❖ The ability to think critically
- ❖ Social growth and the ability to work cooperatively with others
- ❖ Improved communication skills
- ❖ The development of moral and spiritual values
- ❖ Knowlwdgw of selfe

As we can see, these aims match with the aims of the contemporary studying plan.Nancy Renfro realises that »through the inclusion of creative arts activities –dramatics,music and art – such programming efforts can significantly increase the effectiveness of traditional teaching methods.« (Renfro,1982, page 15)

A child's participation in creative drama contributes to his self-confidence. It can help an insecure child to improve his self-image. This child is relaxed and able to communicate on both verbal and non-verbal levels.

Because lessons in the classroom prefer verbal communication, I see the opportunity for balancing of the proportions between both ways of communication just in creative drama. These aims can not be achieved with few lessons of creative drama but only with systematic, carefully planed and contiuous work.

Communication in creative drama

Both non-verbal and verbal communication between all of the participators are realized in this way of work. If we define communication as »the flow of information from the sender to the receiver in the shape of a symbol or s system of symbols« (Blazič, 1991, 119) the symbols in creative drama take most commonly non-verbal shape (puppet, mime, pantomime, body movement, touch, gesticulation, …).

»Non-verbal communication is most commonly the relation of the sender to other persons, to the object of message or to himself. This is quite opposite of the verbal communication which is most often communication about an object.« (Kadunc, 1990, page 175). In creative drama, the sender is not only the teacher as is the case with traditional lessons. It is a mutual influence of all the participators. Communication goes both ways between the pupil and the teacher and the pupils themselves. A unique communication is going on at the work with a puppet where the teacher can be the sender in relation to all the pupils, but the messages are sent also from the children to the teacher. Sending of the messages is mediatory – the media is

the puppet. »Communication with a puppet in the hand goes two ways: first the adult with a puppet in the hand adresses the children, but later on also a child will react with the help of the media – his puppet, maybe even the animation of his own toy – and express his opinion.«(Majaron, 2000, page 33).

We talk about the two-way communication which usually gets lost when the child starts to attend school. In case that it is a two-way communication, it is of a secundary type.

Possibilities for individualisation

»In the communication between teachers and pupils there must be enough room for differentiation, experimentation, free reaproachment and individualisation if we want to make the school a propriate social utero for birth and growth of the pupil's personality.« (Brajša, 1993, page11)

All means of expression that are used by pupils and teachers to express themselves in creative drama make possible the above mentioned communication. With these activities, we allow the pupil to think in his own way and express himself in his very style. We stimulate creativity and the rise of new, original messages. We respect and accept the experiences of pupils and we don't try to force our owns ideas. We accept and recognise the individuality of every pupil while communicating. We make possible to every single pupil to express his own style and way of communicating.

Pupils find it hard to exprees themselves non-verbally in the beginning because they are used to conventional behaviour expected from them in schooll or they simply have stage fright. But, on his way through many workshops and creative drama hours, every individual finds out (some sooner, some later) that innovativity is welcome.

THE PUPPET – COMMUNICATION THROUGH A METAPHOR

The puppet and its magical power

»The puppet art has its origins in the ancient rituals. Every ceremony is some kind of communication between people and energy that we feel but have no control over it. This communication goes on with the stylised moving, voice or visual appearance, either in costume, mask or a shaped object. An object created with the man's free will gets a new symbolic meaning, it becomes a new creature: a metaphor. How? With the transmition of the puppeteer's energy into the object that he animates with his hands and look. The puppeteer believes in the magical transformation, he believes in the power of the puppet.« (Majaron, 2000, page 33)

Like the puppeteer, also the teacher should believe in the power of the puppet because the puppet can help him in the presentation of upbringing-educational contents. It can be of a great help several times when we look for that »trick« that will motivate the children. Children trust the puppet. They like their teacher, but he/she also represents authority. On the other hand, puppet is »one of them« - with the same troubles, fears and the same desire for games. Despite the fact that the puppet comes to life only in the teacher's hands they believe that it is a brand new person. And they trust that person completely. They are persuaded that

the teacher doesn't know about the secret they share with the puppet even if it comes to life in the hands of the teacher. And that is the magical power that only the puppet has.

A teacher with a puppet in his hand

On the first day of the classes in the elementary school children were welcomed by a puppet – a dwarf. Roguish, cheerful, curious, lively, sad – just like them. This dwarf is with us almost every day on different occasions – morning welcome, comprehension of colours, agreement about the rules in the classroom or for whatever reason. Scenes are always improvised and adapted for stimulation of the children. Many times the puppet solves the problem when we are cornered. It is incredible to see how the children trust the puppet. They believe that the puppet sleeps, that it watches over them, that it learns together with them, that it listens to them. Children have that faith and sincerity that sometimes gets lost with the adults.

»We know that the child makes contact easier with the puppet than with the teacher, sometimes even the parents. We can explain it only with the energetic level and with the child's fear from the adults, with uncertainty in communicating that this mediator makes much easier. And we shall try to use it to help the child to accept the environment in which he lives in a less stressful way and to relate to this environment.« (Majaron, 2000, page33)

The teacher comes closer to the children when sending over his meessage with a puppet; he/she also gains their confidence. Suddenly he becomes a puppeteer, a storyteller, the creator of something magical. Children see this teacher as a person that brings joy, satisfaction and excitement into the classroom. They see him as one of them, a person they can share their joy or grief with in a sincere way. That is the most any teacher can desire.This is what assures the basic foundations for untroubled reestablishment of interpersonal communication.

The puppet in the hands of a child

A simple teacher's puppet can lead children to their own creativity. These puppets that are made by children and are used in their shows can be very simple. »It is not what the puppet looks like that counts but rather how the child feels about the puppet. Remeber, a child-made rabbit puppet does not have to look like a real rabbit – the child needs only to believe in it as a rabbit.«(Renfro, 1982, page24).

Even the most perfectly designed puppet that wasn't brought to life in a stage show (even a very short improvisation) missed its purpose in the system of upbringing and education. It must never happen that a puppet gets stuck in the exhibition place without being brought alive. At the very same moment that a child has no opportunity to play with it, it loses its purpose. The puppet lives only in the hands of an animator (teacher, child). When it is put on the chest it becomes a simple decoration. As the decoration of the classroom it is not a legacy for the future generations. It's just slowly »dying«.

Simple puppets

Many puppet tehniques are known that are easily involved in the lesson: toys and things, hand puppets, shadow puppets, marionettes, body puppets, mimic puppets hands, fingers, knees,

feet… Children can make simple puppets out of different waste materials – boxes, colour paper, pieces of cloth, leather, buttons, plastic bottles…

Maybe we are not aware enough of the simplest puppets that are always carried with us. With a little imagination they will live up our hands, fingers, knees, feet. Children will show the infinite gratitude when we will perform the finger play that we used to play as children with our parents. If we paint a face on the finger and add a piece of cloth for a headgear we get a new person that can talk, sing or go for a walk. Even more unusual and funny are the puppets on our knees and feet. In the following text there are two cases of puppet tehniques mentioned that are rarely used.

Puppets on feet

Through experience children find out how interesting way of communication and a wonderful means of expression can be our feet. Children wait for this kind of work with impatience and hardly wait till the beginning of the work.

They are seated in pairs turned to each other with their feet on the table. Different games can be played:

- ❖ Right foot waves to the classmate's right foot
- ❖ Right foot waves to the left foot
- ❖ Both children's right feet are quarreling
- ❖ Left feet are friends

Etc.

A sock can be added to the foot as ahead-covering, a face can be drawn and we get a new character that can play in an improvised show. A face can be drawn on a slipper, a shoe or even bare foot. The latter makes the animation the most possible.

This kind of work makes the lessons more entertaining, it helps to improve the relations in the classroom and it can also help to form the child's positive self-image. Imagination and motoric skills are being developed in the process of making of a puppet. The child also develops his motoric abilities while bringing the puppet on his foot to life. With the transmition of energy and focusing on the puppet he forgets about his own idiomic difficulties and expresses himself with greater ease. A more confidential atmosphere forms between the teacher and the pupils because they share the same secret – puppet, that was made in their classroom.

The body puppet

A body puppet is a child-size puppet made of old paper or a bigger paper bag. It can be hung around the neck, puppet's arms and legs are attached to the child's. A child with his hands and legs animates the puppets hands and legs.

What can we gain with the body puppet?
1. It helps the child to hide safely because it is worn in front of the body. The child feels safe and free to inspire the puppet's character. The puppet's motion depends on the

2. Face mime is another important aspect of the body puppet. Nancy Renfro for example says(Renfro, 1982) that the face of of the player is always visible, the feelings and moods of the body-puppet character may be conveyed by the player's own facial expressions. In fact, Edi Majaron doesn't agree with her. What he says is that in this case puppet is not child's shield anymore and puppet's face becomes non expressive in compare with human's.
3. The actor accustoms himself into the feelings of the character he plays. This expression reveals itself with a smile, black looks etc. It disburdens him; he throws off his inner tension and conflicts.

A body puppet can be made even from the contour of the child's own body. Children can animate the puppet in front of themselves without fixing it to their bodies. It is called »Me puppet«. It is very intriguing because the child can see himself »differently«, from a totally new perspective. He can wear whatever he likes (with the colouring and attaching), he can jump and he can even fly. If he »wears a mantle«, he can become someone else at once. When making the contour of the body, cooperation between children evolves. This is very helpful in the process of the socialisation. They are learning to acclimatize during the work; they are also developing different skills.

EMOTIONAL PROGRESS AND SOCIALISATION

The puppet – a means for sensibilisation

The puppet can be an exceptional means of motivation for enrichment and sensibilisation of child's emotional and social potential because it demands for accustoming into the puppet's situation and way of perception. Child's ability to understand things from different points of view is developed this way. This is the preliminary condition for tolerance, emotional intelligenc and ability of empathy.

It was already mentioned that the puppet in the hands of the teacher can operate very disburdening taking the role of the media between the mih and the children. The child is disburdened of the fear of authority so he relates to his environment in an easier way.

The pupet in the hands of a child is of a great importance. The most important thing is actually to give the puppet to a child. In the scene the child solves the problem and puts the world into order of his own. For instance, a child will introduce a situation where the big shoe (his father) and the little slipper (himself) are performing. He will solve this conflict he has no control over in the real situation in his own way. Everything is possible in a play of symbols. Attentive and sensitive teacher can see a message in the child's play. It is possible that this message would not have been shown during the direct communication. »The very puppets can animate the chidren's souls with their lyricism, humour and intimacy so they can be seen by the adults. It can draw us closer to each other.« (Bastašić, 1990, page 15)

Playing with the puppet can solve inner conflicts

Zlatko Bastašić, a psychotherapist from Zagreb, wrote about child's growth and crisis that can

rise from it in his book »The puppet has got the heart and the brain« . The book dedicates its attention to children and the puppet thearapy that helps to solve the children's problems.

The child develops from total dependence from his mother to realisation that he must share his mother that he used to »own« with someone else. He shows interest for his coevals, spreads his circle of important people and builds his identification with his parents into the social values and restrictions. Role playing helps to transform subconcious into real.

When the child enters the kindergarden he meets other children and adults so he must accept the laws of living in the group. Entering a new group can cause a crisis that manifests itself in disturbance of habits and behaviour. A similar thing happens when the child enters the school. Fortunatelly the infant imagination is inexhaustible and the creative ones quickly learn that their schoolcase can be helpful in their »struggle«, building of fortresses or even at sledding. Teachers know it very well that in the schoolcases a lot of things like a teddy bear, little automobile or a bunny rabbit can be found. These things are very helpful in overcoming of this crisis. So to me it's unforgivable that these little children are allowed to bring their toys to kindergarden or to school only once a week. The rules of the game are very rigorous at this period. Mistakes are punishe with the elimination from the game. Nor the children nor the parents can easily find the balance between the commitments and the game, between work and pleasure.

Crisis are inseparable part of every process of growth and maturing. There is no development of personality without frustration and getting over it. The puppet can be very helpful in overcoming this frustration. As child's partner, it can become a symbol to whom he is telling his wishes, fears and conflicts. When a child sees a puppet show he projects his feelings and relations into it. He unburdens and explains the things that are happening around him in an easier way.

Very important is also the colective playing of children which is a signal of socialisation and makes possible the child's emotional and cognitive growth. Children are learning to communicate and social skills, even solving the minor conflicts during their games.

It will surprise us very much what the children will let us know through the puppet. A nine years old girl with divorced parents sent this message through the puppet (Bastašić, 1990, page 52):

»Once upon a time there was a little girl that was left all alone in the high mountains. It was very cold and the darkness was soon to come. Suddenly, the sun shone, rising very slowly from behind the mountains. It was getting warmer and warmer and the sun showed the little girl a way that was leading to a mansion. There were a king and a queen without children looking through the window. The girl asked them if she could live with them. The king and the queen accepted her…«

The teacher's duty is not to deal with psychotherapy, but it is right that he/she is sensible for these stories that the child is going to show through the puppet. The teacher shall encourage child to the symbol play because it helps him to surpass his own identity and take over someone else's identity. This helps him in surpassing the situations here and now.

EPILOGUE

Expressing himself with various means of expression has been a very important thing for a man since the ancient history. If he had wanted to communicate with the »superior being« and express his relations with the world, his feelings etc. he did it with non-verbal, symbolic forms of communication (painting of his tools and residence, dancing, costumes, masks, jewelry, statues, rituals…). Art is a part of a human being since his existance. It's the most primary thing in ourselves and a part of our nature.

The puppet and theatre arts also have their origins in ancient rituals and serve to express man's perception of the world and his relation towards it. As that we can also use them in the school. Especially because the communication in the school is mostly one-way, if it goes both ways it is usually of a secondary type. Verbal communication is mostly prefered at lessons in schools. Activities associated with puppets and drama are very helpful for development of child's individual capacities and new, authentic, personal ways of communication. Many children have problems with verbal expression and therefore difficulties with inclusion into groups. Non-verbal, symbolic communicating with the puppet and other dramatic activities are helpful to the child's communicating with his environment and building of positive self-image.

A child with a puppet in his hand lets us know of his distress, joy or knowledge that we can expect of him. The puppet is an exceptional means of motivation and richens the child's emotional and social potential because it demands that the child becomes accustomed to its situation.

Experiences with puppets in the classroom show that also socially excluded pupils and pupils that attain lesser results can prove themselves when making or playing with the puppet. Work motivation is extremely high and that is an important reason for including the puppet into the educational process as a mean to reach the curricilum goals.

Here we can ask why the puppet still doesn't have its place in schools (even I have to admit that the things are getting better). One of the reasons is certainly the teachers' fear of not being able to animate the puppet in a proper way, maybe it is also a decision that the traditional way of tuition is simplier. The basic condition for beginning is certainly the teacher's faith in the puppet. At the same time he/she must be aware that we animate the puppet with our look and gesture. Does it sound too simplified? Puppets have soul and symbolic meaning in the child's imagination. Adults find this symbolism far too simplified sometimes to accept it.

Is this faith into puppet enough to reach one's aims? It is a preliminary condition to even start thinking about it. Asking a teacher if he follows the teaching plan when he is working with the puppet is unnecessary because the puppet has not only been a motivating means for quite a while but it also enforces the aims of education. This has been proven by many teachers' experiences – practicers and students who have used the puppet in connection with many different subjects such as mathematics, native language etc. Different projects that were accomplished with the help of a puppet have shown excellent results. Teachers have reached all the aims from the teaching plan but at the same time also influenced the social and emotional growth of the children.

I am not worried about children mixing the real and fictional world. The theory of symbolic play tells us that the children know exactly when the situation is real and when it is fictitious. The puppet helps to sensibilise the child for things and life that is going on around him. In everyday's life there is not a single thing that could not be brought to life and be given a new,

symbolic meaning. If the child is given an opportunity to bring objects from nature into life (such as stones, fruit etc.) and to arrange scenes with the beings from the subject of learning he is enabled to see the theme also from another point of view. Why should everything be viewed from the point of reality? The world is made of surreal principles and this very surrealism can offer reflection about reality. Through this kind of creativity children will learn to draw a distinction between allegory and reality with being left with one of preliminary conditions for creativity even in the »realistic period«. Unfortunatelly it happens far too fast that adults don't make possible the situations in which the children could experiment with their »as if« questions and they hit the real ground too early. I see the weak point in insufficient presence of symbolic play with puppet and socio-dramatic play in schools. Of course, the right moment for this kind of work must be chosen. When talking about the puppet many people imagine a marionette or carefully completed hand puppet with an actor hidden behind the folding screen. But in fact we know many simple tehniques of puppet-making that can be very helpful during the lessons.

Systematic use of puppet at different domains of educational work can create the conditions for creative expression of children, encourage the children to self-dependent and spontaneus theatre play. These can influence the development of creativity, emotional and social growth. We can't neglect the fact that besides richening of vocabulary children can also learn to understand the symbolic value of semiotic signs and learn the language of non-verbal communication.

If we consider the aims that can be achieved with creative puppet play it is necessary that it becomes a part of the teaching plan didactic touch. It should not be left as accidental self-initiative of individual teachers / educators.

Translated by Sergej Steblovnik

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DIALOGICAL DRAMA WITH PUPPETS (DDP) AS A METHOD OF FOSTERING CHILDREN'S VERBAL CREATIVITY

Milda Brėdikytė

Summary

The DDP method incorporates puppets into the presentation of a fairy tale known and liked by children in the hope that this kind of presentation is most likely to inspire more diverse forms of the child's self-expression. The purpose of the DDP method is to act the fairy-tale out and to embody it with the aid of puppets, employing the fairy tale and puppets as stimuli for children's independent creativity, returning the fairy tale to children's culture and asserting its role in the everyday classroom activities. The DDP method requires the teacher to maintain a dialogue, differently engaging all the children in the classroom. The method also allows coordinating individual and cooperative activities, as well as ensures conditions for each child's individual expression. The object of the research is fostering preschoolers' creative activity and self-expression. The problem researched is the pedagogical conditions for the development of creative verbal self-expression in children, required for the application of the DDP method. The hypothesis of the research were confirmed: the systematic application of the DDP method in the preschool classroom creates the environment conducive for children's creative self-expression, stimulates children's independent dramatic play, which, in turn, activates and stimulates verbal creativity.

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Subject. A democratic approach to the child has become increasingly popular in Lithuania in the past decade. From the standpoint of humanistic pedagogy, the resulting changes bring about a greater recognition of the child's culture and, consequently, the child's right to be who he really is. Childhood with all its implications on the child's personality is recognized as a value in its own right. Education at preschool age is based on play, which today is acknowledged to be children's learning medium and lifestyle. A positive and constructive dialogue replaces directive leadership and constant instruction. The focus of preschool education has shifted to the child, ensuring that the conditions for him to enjoy childhood are in place and that his interests and desires are catered for. A continuous effort is being made to make education more meaningful, taking a more individualized approach to the

child. Respecting the child's desire to play, non-academic methods are employed to enrich the child's experience. (O.Monkevičienė). Apart from the usual roles, the teacher should also act as a researcher constantly observing, registering and independently organizing the educational process. Moreover, he should be able to select the most appropriate educational mediums and means, adjusting them whenever required. It cannot be overlooked that sharpened pedagogical intuition, sensitivity, flexibility, responsibility and creativity – the qualities absolutely vital for the professional educator – need to be constantly developed and perfected through continuous learning, reflection, communication and collaboration with colleagues, pupils' families and, most importantly, with the children themselves. In his everyday work, the teacher has to raise children's plays (both individual and cooperative plays) into the zone of proximal development (according to Vygotsky); this task, in turn, orientates the teacher's activities towards the zone of proximal development as well. In this context, the method of dialogical drama with puppets (DDP), presented in the thesis, is of special significance as one of the new forms of *the teacher-child interaction*.

The DDP method incorporates puppets into the presentation of a fairy tale known and liked by children in the hope that this kind of presentation is most likely to inspire more diverse forms of the child's self-expression. A.Gučas asserts without any reservation that the fairy tale and story are an innate need of the child, emphasizing that children particularly like it when the fairy tale is dramatized. Thus, dramatization of the fairy tale or narrative is another means of developing the child's speech and expression.

Traditionally, the fairy-tale has always been an integral part of children's culture. However, today the situation is changing rapidly, and telling, reading out and let alone dramatizing a fairy-tale is being increasingly squeezed out by the television and computer games (Elkind D., Postman N., Win M.). There is a lot of debate about premature "disappearance" of childhood in the world. Most educators and psychologists acknowledge that nowadays children no longer know how to play and fantasize in an unrestricted manner as they could just ten years ago. J.Singer emphasizes that the faculty of imagination and the ability to assume different roles are not luxury but rather a necessity indispensable in the comprehensive development of the child.

In the Ukraine and Russia V.Sukhomlinsky's experience in creating the appropriate environment in schools, setting up playgrounds and ensuring conditions for the activities encouraging children to make up their own stories, is well known and extensively drawn upon.

A many-year folklore researcher B.Kerbelytė has emphasized the significance of independent story making for the development of pupils' imagination and the stimulation of their thought.

L.I.Elkonikova's research focused on why preschoolers, who like to listen to their favorite fairy-tales again and again, tend to replay the same story for extended periods of time (sometimes for several months or even years). The scientist sought to establish the aim and purpose of such repetition.

Followers of G.S.Altschuler (creator of the theory of creative tasks solution – TRIZ) (Sidorchuck T.A., 1997, Gutckovich I.Y., 1997, Samoylova O.N., 1996) encourage children to acquire the fairy-tale creative techniques and on their basis make up their own versions of fairy-tales according to the conditions and patterns provided by grown-ups. The similarities between theatrical performances and children's play were noticed by the prominent Czech educator J.A.Komensky (1986) as far back as 400 years ago. He pointed out that drama serves as a means of children's comprehensive development and entertainment as well as a school of proper behavior.

The first Lithuanian educator and pedagogue to discuss educational implications of drama was J. Geniušas (1929). He referred to the drama-assisted education as *dramatization*. The significance of the puppet theatre in children's education was pointed out by a psychologist A.Gučas (1994). A. Gai   □utis (1982) activities, drama is the most integrating one as it embraces play, and incorporates natural phenomena and elements of work, etc. Common points between school and the professional theatre have been quite extensively researched, discussed and illustrated by the teaching practice of several prominent educators in the publications by L.Tupikienė (1985, 1988). E. Andriekienė (1992) has written on the significance of the theatre, including the puppet theatre, in the shaping of the child's personality. The puppet theatre has been the focus of V.Kazragytė's (1992) and E.Barzdžiukienė's (1992) research, the latter of whom is an active practitioner.

However, the implications of creative or developmental drama on education have not been researched on the theory level in Lithuania before. Only in the recent years, A.Karzragytė, E. Barzdžiukienė and R.Poškienė embarked on intensive studies related to preschool education through drama and puppetry. The theory behind dramatics has been a subject of extensive discussion and research of many world scientists, such as W. Ward, G.G. Siks, D.Heathcote, P.Slade, G.Tyler, N.McCaslin, M.Goldberg, G.Bolton, B.Way, I.Bowater, D.Baker, R.Courtney, J.Winston, W.Sawyer, and G.Lindqvist. However, the comprehensive investigation into drama in preschool is still quite scarce, with the most outstanding contributors to this field being W.Sawyer, G.Lindqvist, G.Bolton and J.Winston. No research into the use of puppets in fairy-tale presentation to facilitate comprehension and its articulation, to stimulate the imaginative and cognitive processes, and verbal expression as well as to foster children's independent verbal creativity has been found in Lithuania or outside it. Preschoolers' creative role play in its different aspects has been far more thoroughly discussed, investigated, and described, thus creating preconditions for the development of the DDP method.

The core of the DDP method is a continuous dialogue with children maintained throughout the selection, enactment and discussion of a fairy tale as well as deciding on further activities. The DDP method is based on creative or developmental drama, which is defined as "*an improvisational, non-exhibitional process-centered form of drama.... The primary purpose of creative drama is to foster personality growth and to facilitate learning of the participants …*" (See McCaslin, 1982, 6). Many researchers believe that drama originated from play and is based on the same principles as children's play.

The purpose of the DDP method is to act the fairy-tale out and to embody it with the aid of puppets, employing the fairy tale and puppets as stimuli for children's independent creativity, returning the fairy tale to children's culture and asserting its role in the everyday classroom activities.

The DDP method requires the teacher to maintain a dialogue, differently engaging all the children in the classroom. The method also allows coordinating individual and cooperative activities, as well as ensures conditions for each child's individual expression. Meanwhile, the child is exposed to the opinion and choices of other children in the classroom, and has an opportunity at any time to join in any cooperative activities he likes.

The object of the research is fostering preschoolers' creative activity and self-expression. **The problem researched** is the pedagogical conditions for the development of creative verbal self-expression in children, required for the application of the DDP method. **The**

hypothesis of the research: the systematic application of the DDP method in the preschool classroom creates the environment conducive for children's creative self-expression, stimulates children's independent dramatic play, which, in turn, activates and stimulates verbal creativity.

The aim of the research is to provide justification for the method of dialogical drama with puppets (DDP), to establish possible applications of the method as well as the optimum conditions therefore.

Research tasks:

1. To provide theoretical and empirical justification for the application of the DDP method in preschool;
2. To analyze and identify the factors influencing children's independent dramatic activities;
3. To establish the impact of the systematic application of the DDP method in the 3-7 year old preschool classroom on children's verbal creativity;
4. To develop educational practice recommendations on the application of the DDP method.

Research methodology:

1. Theoretical analysis: study and analysis of philosophical, pedagogical and psychological literature, preschool and elementary educational programs, literature analysis, folklore collections and fairy-tales.
2. Educational experiment: the educational experiment was conducted in 1997 –1999 with the aim of verifying the educational potentialities of the DDP method in the development of children's creative self-expression. 311 children from various Lithuanian kindergartens (63 children from experimental preschool groups and 248 children from regular groups) took part in the experiment.
3. Data collection: analysis of videotaped material, observation of participants of the educational process and the educational activities. The observational data was registered in observation charts; children's attention was registered every 10 minutes during the presentation of a fairy tale; children's activities after the presentation were observed for the rest of day and appropriately recorded; during the week, the teacher was observing and recording children's dramatic acts, prompted by the presented fairy tale – children's attempts at reading, retelling or replaying the fairy tale as well as interest in making up their own stories through drawing, talking or writing it down.
4. Statistical analysis: empirical data was analyzed by carrying out tests of statistical significance; the data was processed with PAULA application (B.Bitinas, R.Paulavičius, 1987).

Stages of the research:

During the first stage of research, apart from studying pedagogical and psychological literature, a mapping study was carried out. The aim of the mapping study was to analyze the videotaped stages of the practical application of dialogical drama with puppets, seeking to look into the experimental techniques and means, to compare the play for the children and that by the children as well as to find out how dramatic activities encourage children's creativity. The analysis of the videotaped material helped establish possible DDP method applications in the preschool classroom as well as the conditions required for it. Beside that, it led to the adjustment of separate stages of DDP application, consequential modification of the problem, hypothesis, and aims and tasks of the research.

At the second stage of research (1997-1999), the educational experiment was started, introducing the DDP method in two experimental preschool groups (EG). In 1998, the

research was extended to include 22 regular preschool groups (RG), continuing the experiment in the experimental groups.

During the third stage (1998-2000), stories and fairy-tales made up by the children of one of the experimental groups were collected; a test of children's abilities was carried out.

Novelty of the Findings, Their Theoretical and Practical Significance

The thesis has created and provided theoretical and practical justification for a new method of fostering creative activity in preschool – the dialogical drama with puppets (DDP). This method is a synthesis of children's dramatic play, puppet manipulations and examination of cultural sense (moral message) of fairy-tales. The research has shown that the systematic application of the DDP method in the classroom is an effective preschool educational tool, which enriches and extends the contents (by offering new plots) and form (introducing puppets) of creative play. It also allows the teacher to be an active participant in the play. The systematic application of the DDP method encourages creative self-expression in children; stimulates their dramatic activities, activates verbal expression and story making.

The DDP method promotes the development of the verbal/communicational systems, and intensifies the imaginative and cognitive processes. Moreover, it creates a new type of pedagogical interaction based on dialogue; therefore the child and the adult act as partners building up a joint virtual reality.

Approbation and Application of the Research Findings

The findings and the results of the experiment were discussed with the teachers of the Vilnius kindergarten "Strazdelis", who took part in the research. The DDP method was presented to Lithuanian teachers at a number of seminars at Lithuanian Institute for Teacher's Qualification and has already been out in practice in several Lithuanian kindergartens.

The major findings of the research were presented at the seminar of PhD students of the Nordic and Baltic countries in Tartu, Estonia (1998); international seminars in Kajaani, Finland (1999, 2000). Presentations on the subject of the research were made at a national conference in Vilnius (1997); the international conference "Lithuanian kindergarten: its history and today's situation" in Klaipėda (1998); the international conference "Modern Pedagogical Research" at the University of Oulu, Kajaani, Finland (1998); the ninth and tenth international conferences of the European Early Childhood Educational Research Association (EECERA) in Helsinki, Finland (1999) and London, UK (2000).

Since 1999, the DDP application related research has been included into the work of the international research team "Meaningful Learning and New Approaches to Educational Practice".

The students of preschool education at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of Vilnius Pedagogical University study the DDP method; for the past three years (1998-2000) it has been introduced to postgraduate students in preschool pedagogy at Kajaani Unit of the University of Oulu, Finland.

Thesis Structure: the thesis comprises an introduction, two parts, theoretical findings, practical recommendations, bibliography and annexes.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEIR DISCUSSION

The introduction provides evidence for the significance of the subject of the research, formulates the scientific problem, specifies the object, aims, tasks and hypothesis of the research; describes the research methodology, scientific novelty as well as practical and theoretical significance of the thesis are emphasized.

The first part "**Theoretical Premises of the Research Problem**" comprises four sections. The first section "*Creative Role Play as Children's Activity*" defines play as preschoolers' dominant activity. Today many psychologists and educators acknowledge that "play is the basis, start of the growing personality, without which any further specialized or broader learning would be unimaginable" (Starfeldt, Mathiasen, 1999, 38). The special role of the play is predetermined by its syncretic nature, which was noticed by L.Vygotsky (1978). According to him, play is a spring or flow, where deep at the bottom all skills and abilities indispensable in the child's further life take form. Vygotsky's idea has been extended by D.Elkonin, who pointed out that "play develops not only individual psychic functions of the child's consciousness, it prompts a comprehensive alteration of the child's psyche: entailing growth and maturation of his consciousness, growth and maturation of the child's personality" (1995, 41).

Though play in its different aspects has been raising interest of scientists working in different fields, pedagogues and psychologists still take the lead. Several interpretations of the notion of play (byFreud Z., 1974; Piaget J., 1962; Bruner J., 1980; Vygotsky L., 1997; Leontjev A., 1975; Elkonin D., 1978; Gai̧utis A., 1988; Huizinga J., 1995; Bateson G., 1971; Schwartzman H., 1978; Sutton-Smith B., 1971; Olofsson B., 1995; and others) are presented, and the significance of the play to different zones of the child development is discussed. The thesis also provides a definition of play by P. Smith and R. Vollstead (1998) "*play is joyful, flexible and imaginative*". In addition, extensive treatment is given to creative role-play (Elkonin, 1960), sociodramatic play (Smilansky, 1968), pretend play (Garvey, 1990), describing the characteristic features of each type, their functions and development. An emphasis is placed on an important aspect uniting all the plays – *the child's ability of self-identification with other*. It is a widely acknowledged fact that the child imitates the world around him - its objects and phenomena, through identifying himself with them. Imitation is the external side of this process, whereas self-identification is a resulting internal condition. Gradually, the child acquires an ability to control his self-identification capabilities, and approximately at the same time (normally at the age of three) he starts role-play, transforming his ability to identify himself with others into an ability to assume a role. It is my belief that *child's ability to act in the imagined situation*, which is formed at the preschool age, is "trained" by assuming a role of another person or object.

Finally, the section formulates the basic problem with regard to the teacher's leadership in children's creative play. The research has led many scientists (Elkonin D., 1995; Saracho O., ir Spodek B., 1998; Olofsson B., 1995; N. Grinevičienė, 2000; L. Mondeikienė, 2000; and others) to the assertion that leadership and creation of the environment stimulating children's creative play is one of the most complicated tasks, faced by educators today. As S.Hunt, S.Tyler, C.Hutt, H.Christopherson (1999) have stressed in their research findings, that

conducive and timely participation of the adult as well as the mode thereof are of crucial importance in the stimulation of the child's developmental processes through play. Therefore, a conclusion has been drawn that the professional training of teachers, their profound knowledge of the modern educational techniques and their creative application, accompanied by the sensitive and responsible attitude to the child, are of vital significance. In this context, valuable insights can be drawn from the experience of drama pedagogy, which we, unfortunately, still lack in Lithuania.

The second section "*Drama Pedagogy and its Specific Features*" presents drama as a specific educational medium, provides definitions of creative/developmental drama and identifies the main purpose of creative drama. Creative drama is a dynamic process, encouraging its participants to explore, refine and articulate their experience as well as to share this experience, ideas, opinions and emotions through a dramatic act – drama.

A prominent Canadian developmental drama specialist R.Courtney formulated a still more comprehensive definition of creative drama: "Drama is Being "as if". It is a total process, internal and external, that occurs when we transform our creative imagination into acts, when we create mental fictions and express them in spontaneus play, creative drama, improvisation, role play, and theatre. Like life itself, it is an experience we live through. In life we deal with actual thoughts and acts; in drama we deal with imagined thoughts and dramatic acts". However, the dramatic acts raise real emotions, and the experience acquired becomes actual as well. The only difference is that they are inspired by our imagination, which draws on real life. Drama gives the child an opportunity to live through his imagination's fictions. Developmental drama has been recently included into the curriculum of preschool education student. However, so far the ideas of drama pedagogy have not significantly influenced the pedagogy of play and the approach to children's play.

Drama specialists have noticed the affinity between play and drama long ago. Play resembles the theatre, the roots of which are believed to be in play. The section highlights the similarities and discusses the differences between play and drama. The three major theories on drama pedagogy, their origins, and most outstanding contributors, namely W. Ward, G. Siks, P. Slade, B. Way, D. Heathcote, G. Bolton and others, as well as their ideas are described. Apart from that, the origins, development and overlaps of drama pedagogy and preschool play pedagogy are outlined, identifying the differences between the two. The differences mostly arise due to using different terms to denote the same phenomena and to focusing on the different aspects of the same processes. It is also asserted that the development of play pedagogy and drama pedagogy was parallel, without affecting each other, till the 1960s. Only the past two decades have seen a conscious attempt by the researchers into these two fields to cooperate in their search for means and way of raising effectiveness of education.

In addition, the puppet theatre is presented as a separate type of the art of theatre, which is especially close to preschoolers. The place of the puppet theatre in the Lithuanian preschool educational programs ("Gairės", "Vėrinėlis") is thoroughly discussed, stressing the role of the puppets as an effective educational tool in the kindergarten. It is emphasized that the use of puppets in preschool should not copy that in the professional puppet theatre; on the contrary, creative adaptation of some elements of the puppet theatre is of vital importance in the pursuit of general and more specific educational purposes. Summing up, a note has been made that there is still a lack of research into this field as well as research-based methodology and practical recommendations, which would assist in the practical fulfillment of the aims laid down in the educational programs. Therefore, despite the approval on the part of educators,

educational programs, to a large extent, remain valid only on the paper. The method of dialogical drama with puppets is presented in an attempt to rectify the current situation.

The third section "***The Fairy Tale as a Component of the Child's Experience***" is dedicated to a place the fairy-tale holds in the cultural context of the human race. The interpretations of the purpose and functions of the fairy-tale by different researchers, such as (Bierlein J., 1997; von Franz M. – L., 1998; Baker D., 1981; Tolkien R., 1981; Bettelheim B., 1982; Jung K.G., 1998; Bagdanavičius V.J., 1992; Kerbelytė B., 1997) are presented, followed by a discussion of their possible application and a variety of different interpretations of the meaning of the fairy-tale.

According to a student and follower of C. Jung M. – L. Von Franz, the fairy-tale is a direct reflection of the mental processes occurring in the collective unconscious as "the fairy tale, as a mirror, reflects the basic structure, a skeleton of the human psyche" (von Franz, 1998, 24).

D.Baker (Baker, 1981) has pointed out that the main purpose of the folk tales and fairy-tales is to satisfy a variety of psychological needs, as if the fairy-tale were the oldest form of psychotherapy. Disagreeing with some teachers and the majority of modern-day parents, D.Baker asserts that the fairy tale should not be interpreted as an escape from the reality; quite the opposite, it should be seen as a tool, useful in teaching children to accept and enjoy life as it is rather than to run away from it. B.Bettelheim has revealed the mechanics of the fairy-tale claiming that "... the fairy tales' concern is not useful information about the external world, but the inner processes taking place in an individual" (Bettelheim, 1982, 25). He points out a number of the aspects of the fairy tale affecting maturation of the child's personality:

1. Fairy tales affect the child comprehensively, instilling self-esteem and confidence in his future;
2. Fairy tales assist the child in acquiring a better understanding of self and the world around him as well as in comprehending his feelings;
3. Fairy tales demonstrate the virtues of moral behaviour;
4. Fairy tales provide children with material for their imagination and dreams;
5. Fairy-tales reveal the complexity of human nature and show that the moral problem is about choosing between the good and the evil;
6. A clear-cut polarization of fairy-tale characters (good-evil, clever-foolish, hard-working-lazy) allows the child to make a comparison and his own choice through self-identification with the admired hero.

C.G. Jung's personality theory and system of psychotherapy as well as the methods of dream and fairy-tale analysis – all substantiate the assumption that fairy-tales must play an important role in the life of a human being and children, in particular.

This section also discusses the specific features of fictional text (the fairy tale) comprehension by preschoolers as identified by A. Zhaporozhec and supported by a number of other researchers. Elucidating the development of fairy-tale comprehension at the pre-school age, A. Zhaporozhec (1986) has emphasized that a significant breakthrough at that age occurs when *the child's imagination develops an ability to act in the imagined situation*. The resulting processes in their psychological nature are very close to play; however, the child in play really acts in the imagined circumstances, whereas for the child listening to a fairy-tale, both the situation and actions remain imaginary. At the pre-school stage, comprehension of a fictional text develops from the child's direct and naive involvement in the imaginary events to thinking about them and even further – to being able to stand aside and see them as if from a

distance. Thus, from acting with objects, the child moves on to thinking about them. This new mental activity allows the child to understand phenomena and events in which he is not directly involved. Assuming different roles, and sometimes even acting in several persons at the same time, the child begins to realize differences in perspectives. This is where the DDP method comes into play by "extending" the child's possibilities to act with objects.

Although role-play, the fairy-tale and puppetry have existed in pre-school institutions for years, their role in the general developmental activities has been neglected in the recent years. Therefore, I found rather interesting an idea to join these separate but nonetheless significant elements of the educational process into one method.

In some children, in those of older age in particular, the fairy tale, both read aloud and told, evokes quite deep emotions. However, this, by no means, applies to all children. Therefore, "playing" a fairy tale is a considerably more beneficial tool, especially when working with younger children. Moving back to fairy-tales, it is my belief that reading aloud and telling the fairy tale to preschoolers is not sufficient to develop their ability to act in the imagined situation, let alone to encourage the discovery of the shades of meaning hidden in the fairy-tale. The fairy tale, just as a puppet, provides a stimulus to creativity, talking, and communication, dialogue and play in search for meanings.

The fourth section "***Storytelling As a Form of Child's Cognition***" points out that children's culture is not limited to watching and listening to fairy-tales; quite the opposite is true – children like to talk, tell stories as well as make up their own stories and tales.

In their studies of children's narratives, researchers of different fields (Mouritsen F., 1995; Lindqvist G., 1995; Sutton-Smith B., 1981; Koltsova M., 1995) have insisted that storytelling is children's main cognitive structure, and play is a way for the child to create a certain role and tell a story. It has also been noticed that stories told by children in their form and dramatic organization bear close resemblance to fairy-tales. A.Koltsova (See Lindqvist, 1995), in her studies of the development of the child's story-making abilities, has noticed that children's stories and plays are so interconnected that it is impossible to distinguish between the two. Her work has also shown that plays played by three-year old children have a structure and form typical of the fairy-tale.

During the past decade, psychologists have paid a special attention to children's language and thought, which resulted in the vast body of research into children's verbal and written narratives, utterances, made-up stories and fairy-tales (Schank, 1990; Bruner, 1986). A number of authors on cognitive psychology (Doyle, 1987; Searles, 1992; Bruner, 1990) have stressed that narratives and stories are a form of human cognition. It is also noteworthy that most researchers argue that the first narratives, tales, stories and fairy-tales made up by children should be recognized as a verbal manifestation of their cognitive process.

Preschoolers' story-making often springs from playing, drawing or another activity, and vice versa – drawing, playing, acting or other activities result from the story making. This is why stories told or created by children do not meet the formal criteria applicable to a narrative (a coherent presentation of events in time), however, S. Engel (1999) has stressed that children's narratives cannot be taken out of the context of their life as a spontaneously created story constitutes an organic part of the child's life. If we recognize the child's narratives as a manifestation of his cognitive process, then the child's conscious and meaningful actions accompanying his verbal expression are perfectly suitable to start, continue and accomplish the cognitive process.

Further, thoughts of different psychologists (Vygotsky, Luria, Piaget, Bruner) on language and thought interdependence are discussed, with a conclusion being made that all the scholars recognize the crucial role of language in the child's developmental processes and emphasize that language offers an individual an absolutely new way of experience and cognition.

Furthermore, the section discusses a complicated process of language acquisition as well as its development. The emphasis is placed on its creative aspect, claiming that the child discovers what this or that word, phrase or sentence means through his independent study of where the boundaries of different word meanings and senses lay. In this context, the significance of "speech" (Chukovsky), otherwise referred to as "language plays" (Garvey) is accentuated. Summing up, an assertion is made that the child's independent talking and expression of his own opinion are of utmost significance in language acquisition, as results of the child's independent thought.

Finally, I have arrived at a conclusion that experimenting and manipulating with words and their combinations as well as their meanings and sense is as essential a development stage, as manipulation with objects. The purpose of the dialogical drama with puppets is to involve the child into a dialogue initiated by the teacher and, by letting him watch adults act, encourage him to gradually join in or otherwise take part in the play. At the initial stages, the teacher should assist the child but take care not to inhibit him. With the fledging speech skills, children are still unable to express many things with words, whereas drama with puppets considerably *broadensthe arsenal of expressive means available to them* (facial expressions, body movements, puppets, different sounds), thus helping the child express his thoughts with nonverbal mediums. These dramatic activities involving puppets stimulate children's thought, imagination and verbal expression as children lively and easily talk about their play and their emotions during the performance; they also like to comment on others' playing and have the fairy-tales played out by them recorded.

The second part of the thesis "**The Dialogical Drama With Puppets (DDP) And Its Experimental Application**" comprises four sections. The first one – "*Mapping Research*" – presents the method of dialogical drama with puppets (DDP) as well as identifies the aims and manner of the mapping research, which was undertaken to find justification for the DDP method.

Further follows an analysis of the videotaped material: a fairy-tale enactment with puppets by the experiment team (55 min.), and the same fairy-tale replayed by the children a week later (33 min.). The analysis was aimed at establishing the experimental techniques (later defined as *dialogue-improvisation*) and their implications, the techniques used by the experimenter and the children during the children's play; as well as at comparing the children's and the teachers' techniques, and identifying similarities and differences between the fairy-tale played for the children and that replayed by the children. Moreover, the section discusses whether and how creative dramatics bring out the child's creativity. An attempt has been made to find whether the DDP method suits the various needs, interests and capacities of groups of different-aged children.

The stages of the experimenters' preparation for the fairy-tale enactment and its form (play-dialogue) are described in detail, providing the major reasons for the selection of its form:

1. All children should be able to follow the line of the story;
2. Children should have an interest in and understanding of what is being played out for them;

3. Children should be able not only to watch the performance but also to take part in it;
4. Children should be able to join in not only in those places where the teacher expects them to but also whenever they feel a natural desire to do so;
5. Natural involvement of children in the performance in whatever form should make children active participants of the action, who either "raise" or "lower" the presentation of a fairy-tale to their level of comprehension and interest.

It is highlighted that this kind of a fairy tale presentation may alter not only the course of events but also the ideological aspects and cultural sense. However, this is the virtue of the DDP method - giving children an opportunity to influence and even determine the character of the play. Besides, this kind of play creates a common "sense field", in L.Vygotsky's terminology (Vygotsky, 1978, 289), or "play space", in L.Elkoninova's terminology, where children and adults operate with the ideas they both comprehend and accept. Thus, the child is spared the imposition of adults' ready-made ideas, and the adult gains an opportunity to learn what the child "really" feels with regard to the problem in question (for example, telling a lie), which creates conditions for both of them to find a meaningful and motivated solution.

In addition, the section details the techniques, mediums and modes of expression used by the experimenters during the fairy tale presentation. Detailed treatment is given to the children's replay of a fairy-tale, its course, the techniques applied as well as to the means and modes of expression used.

The comparison of the course of the two enactments (the one by the adults and the other by the children), their contents and dramatic expression shows a number of similarities, or even overlaps, which are comprehensively discussed. Summarizing the comparison results, a conclusion has been drawn that the fairy-tale played out by the children was not a copy of the teachers' enactment but rather an independent creative process, assisting children in discovering, for themselves and the audience, the shades of meaning lurking in the text of the fairy-tale. This conclusion supports R.Sawyer's statement (Sawyer, 1997) that role plays of three-to-six year old children are based on spontaneous improvisations, as some episodes in the children's dramatic play were quite original, spontaneously created in play. A particular emphasis is placed on the observation that in the course of dramatic play the child independently shapes his own cognitive process rather than blindly adopts the truths established by adults. However, these results can only be achieved with the aid of a highly professional teacher and require a subtle organization of the educational process as well as participation in it.

The second section "*The Description of the DDP Method*" comprises three sub-sections. The first one "*The Theory Behind the DDP Method*" gives the theoretical basis for the DDP method, highlighting the theoretical key-points: Vygotsky's ideas on the creative character of children's play and drama, L.Vygotsky and D.Elkonin's theory about the social nature of children's play, R.Steiner's approach to fairy-tales and arts education, M.Bakhtin's ideas on dialogism of thought and consciousness, Y.Lotman's interpretation of dialogue mechanisms and comprehension of fictional texts, H.Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences as well as modern ideas on drama implications on the personality growth.

The sub-section "*The First Attempts to Apply the DDP Method*" discusses the factors, which predetermined the development of the DDP method. The impetus for the emergence of the method was given by the professional puppet theatre, experience of staging performances for children, and observations of the communication between actors and children. Another contributing factor was a more detailed acquaintance with the drama practice in kindergartens,

showing that drama with puppets, whether for children or by children, is normally structured in the same or very similar fashion to the professional theatre performances. Acknowledging all the favorable and valuable experience that the child acquires in the theatre, artistic experiences in particular, it is, nonetheless, pointed out that the theatre fails to establish individual relationship and dialogue with the child as well as dismisses the child's role as an active participant and creator.

The sub-section "*Stages of Pedagogical Activity*" identifies the major steps of the DDP application, specifying the main objectives and goals of each stage as well as the functions and roles of the teacher.

The third section "*The Results of the DDP Method Application*" is divided into three sub-sections. The sub-section "*Experimental Arrangements*" defines the main stages and the course of the experiment carried out as well as describes the organizational conditions. The objective of the experiment was to establish the implications of the DDP method on different areas of the child's activities and *dramatic activities*, in particular. The research was aimed at establishing the affect of the systematic application of the DDP method in the 3-7 year-olds pre-school classrooms on the children's creative activities and their needs and abilities formed during such activities.

- The DDP method was applied in the experimental pre-school groups for two years, observing the groups monthly. The actions of the teacher and the children were recorded in detail; the children's artworks (the puppets made by the children, the made-up fairy-tales, drawings and other artworks) were regularly collected; the children's activities and artworks were photographed and videotaped.

- In regular pre-school groups, a fairy-tale was presented twice: first, it was read aloud or told to the children; and then it was enacted applying the DDP method. The observation charts were filled out during the presentation; the children's activities after the presentation were observed and recorded. No other additional material was collected.

During a fairy-tale enactment, the children's attention was registered every ten minutes on the basis of the selected criteria. Fairy-tales were presented to the children in the following ways:

1. *read aloud* – the teacher is reading a fairy-tale aloud from a book, regularly showing pictures and singing songs;
2. *told* – the teacher is telling a fairy-tale to the children, showing pictures and singing songs;
3. *enacted* – the teacher is enacting a fairy-tale in the classroom using puppets in a very simple setting: a table or her knees; or the teacher is telling a fairy-tale, enacting only the more important episodes;
4. *presented in the form of a dialogue* – the teacher and the children are telling a fairy-tale together, discussing and commenting on the most significant events and the behavior of the characters; singing and discussing how a fairy-tale could be replayed.

The second sub-section "*The Specific Characteristics of the Children's Activities*" discusses the observations made during the experiment. The application of different presentation modes (reading out, telling, enacting and telling a fairy-tale together with the children) was aimed at establishing *whether different modes have a different effect on children's attention and involvement in the play.*

Statistically significant differences in the children's attention were registered during the teacher's *enactment of a fairy-tale*: only one per cent of the children showed low interest in the performance, while the rest (81 per cent) were very focused. *The dialogical presentation of a fairy-tale* essentially changes children's roles, which is reflected in the observational data. The percentage of the children showing no interest, watching and actively watching an enactment was four per cent, with as much as 88 per cent taking part in the dialogue ($\chi^2 = 136$, p <0,0001).

Summarizing, it is pointed out that fairy-tale enactment or discussion create an environment more conducive to children's participation and involvement. In the first case – watching a fairy-tale enactment, the child finds it easier to identify himself with the characters in the fairy-tale and feel their experiences more acutely; in the second case, a child can voice his opinion, discussing a fairy-tale or telling it together with the teacher or other children in the classroom.

The children's independently selected activities after every enactment were observed and registered, seeking to establish how different modes of fairy-tale presentation affect children's independently selected activities and their willingness to replay the fairy-tale.

After an enactment with puppets by the teacher, a number of children replaying it later increased up to 65 per cent (compared to 39 per cent after telling a fairy-tale, and 21 per cent after reading it aloud). Moreover, *an enacted fairy-tale* determined *the contents of the children's further plays and activities* (more children selected an activity related to the fairy-tale presentation). Consequently, an assumption is made that children's interest in the fairy-tale was raised not only by the presentation manner but also by a successfully selected plot and theme.

The discussion of a fairy-tale with the children increased a number of observations of the children replaying it from 65 to 128 per cent ($\chi^2 = 230$, p <0,0001). Some children were replaying the fairy-tale several times, every time in a different way.

By way of summarizing, a conclusion is drawn that after a discussion of a fairy-tale almost all the children selected dramatic play, with some children (57 per cent) replaying the fairy-tale twice or more times. It appears that a discussion allows the children to more profoundly live through the events and comprehend the behavior of the characters described in a fairy-tale. In some children, a fairy-tale enactment aroused *interest and a need* to replay the fairy-tale on their own. Thus, an assertion is made that *discussing a fairy-tale children are naturally prepared for and led to their independent acting it out through play.*

Simultaneously, it was studied how children's attention during the presentation influences their choice of activities afterwards, replaying the fairy-tale in particular. In addition, the children's activities in different study groups of the classroom were carefully observed.

Statistically significant differences between the children watching (W) and not interested in the presentation (NI) were registered in relation to the number of children afterwards engaged in their habitual activity and replaying the fairy-tale. 70 per cent of the not-watching children and 46 per cent of the watching ones preferred habitual activities; whereas only 5 per cent of the not watching and 22 per cent of the watching children replayed the fairy-tale. ($\chi^2 = 182$, p < 0,0001).

Children who took part in the fairy-tale presentation (I) were also *the most active ones* in

other creative activities and *fairy-tale replay, in particular* (as many as 97 per cent of them replayed the fairy-tale).

Thus, a conclusion is drawn that *the child's active involvement at the very initial stages that is in the presentation of a fairy-tale most considerably encourages his independent dramatic play*. Participating in the presentation together with the teacher, the child as if "prepares himself" and "learns" how to replay it on his own. It is also asserted that any form of the child's active involvement and participation in a fairy-tale presentation leads him to its further replaying. Therefore, the teacher's ability to establish *individual contact* with every child during the presentation is absolutely vital.

During the experiment, fairy-tales both familiar and unfamiliar to the children were presented. The comparison of the activities selected by the children after familiar and unfamiliar fairy-tales showed statistically significant differences only after the enacted fairy-tale. An unfamiliar fairy-tale was replayed by 23 per cent of the children observed against 61 per cent replaying a familiar one ($\chi^2 = 121$, p < 0,0001). However, the character of the children's play was also different: the children's attempted replays of an unfamiliar fairy-tale resembled its independent examination, which only in some cases and only in the experimental groups grew into dramatic play.

The third sub-section "*Differences between Experimental and Regular Groups*" compares the findings made in experimental and regular groups. Analyzing the children's interest and involvement in the teachers' presentation of a fairy-tale in the experimental and regular groups, a statistically significant difference was registered only between the number of children carefully watching the presentation - 55 per cent in the experimental groups, and 71 per cent in regular groups ($\chi^2 = 445,9$; p < 0,0001).

The comparison of the level of the children's interest (NI, W, CW, P) in the presentation in both types of groups (E, NE) has led to the conclusion that children in regular groups tend *to show a higher level of interest* in a fairy-tale presentation whereas children in experimental groups tend *to take a more active part* in the presentation by asking questions, commenting, singing, playing musical instrument or acting.

Furthermore, statistical differences can be noticed when comparing the activities selected by the children after the performance in experimental and regular groups. The arts study group (drawing, modeling, puppet making, etc.) was selected by 36 per cent of the children in experimental groups and only 12 per cent by the children in regular groups. Singing and playing musical instruments – by 30 per cent of the children in experimental groups and 6 per cent of the children in regular groups; fairy-tale replay – by 62 per cent of the children in experimental and 33 per cent in regular groups. Looking through books and reading was preferred by 14 per cent of the children in experimental and 35 per cent of the children in regular groups ($\chi^2 = 171$, p <0,0001).

Moreover, an assertion is made that children in experimental groups are more active during the presentation of a fairy-tale and in their choice of *different type of creative activities* related to the fairy-tale, while children in regular groups prefer *the role of an observer*, engaging in rather passive an activity for preschoolers – looking through or reading books, looking at the pictures.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that children's plays in experimental and regular groups differ in both their character and duration. After the presentation of a fairy-tale, children in

regular groups tend to take the puppets and experiment with the puppets' abilities, but they rarely succeed in or even attempt at replaying the events of the fairy-tale. Their playing frequently ends up as "studying" the fairy-tale. Whereas children in experimental groups, who watch and even, take part in their teacher's monthly presentations, study the fairy-tale first and then attempt to replay it. They also make their own simple puppets and make up their own fairy-tales. Some of their dramatic plays last several days, with the children constantly elaborating or continuing the initial plot. Moreover, the experimental group children do not try to copy the teachers' presentation; even though containing a lot of details from the teachers' presentation, each of their replays is abundant with free improvisations. Towards the end of the first year, the teachers started writing down the stories made up and then played by the children, causing a lot of enthusiasm among them and thus encouraging yet more active play, creation and attempts at writing down their own stories.

The comparison of attention and involvement among girls and boys has not shown any significant statistical differences. However, girls tended to be more active in replaying the fairy-tale. Statistically significant differences have been found in relation to the choice of activity after the presentation. Habitual activities were selected by 53 per cent boys, and 25 per cent of girls; and replaying the fairy-tale by 59 per cent of girls against 13 per cent of boys (χ^2 = 135, p<0,0001). Finally, more girls have chosen activities in the arts study group, they were also more active in such areas as singing and music playing, fairy-tale replay as well as book reading.

The fourth section "*The Typological Analysis of Children's Narratives*" examines the narratives made up by children in the experimental groups, pointing out that the texts are not just arbitrary sequences of utterances but rather a reflection of a conscious attempt at a "real" story, fairy-tale or tale. In total, 109 texts produced by 27 children were collected. All the narratives were classified according to their type and grouped by their subject matter:

1. Brief comments, stories or fairy-tales explaining a drawing (47) – these texts were composed after making a drawing, or in other words, they emerged as an attempt to describe or elaborate a drawing.

2. Stories and fairy-tales recorded by the children in their arts notebooks (33) – these texts are first created and written down and only then illustrated. Thus a text has a priority over a related drawing, which was made afterwards to illustrate or accompany the text.

3. Stories and fairy-tales told or played in the classroom (29) – the texts in this group were created orally and spontaneously, emerging from the children's free talk during their morning activities.

All the stories and fairy-tales composed by the children were grouped by the extent of their compliance with the main criteria of the narrative (introduction, events unfolding in time, logical ending, defined subject, and a clearly conveyed message).

Finally, a conclusion is made that such verbal creativity, which later develops into creative writing (when children themselves or with the teacher's assistance start recording the texts they make up), prompt the child to look into his texts with more attention, to give more thought to his ideas and to search for the words most suitable for their expression. Simultaneously, the child develops better comprehensive skills of the texts read or narrated by other people. These two processes are closely interconnected – the more children make up

their own original narratives, the more interest they show in the texts created by others: they listen to them more attentively, offer comments, understand the text better and notice specific language features, etc.

The section also discusses the texts made up by girls and boys, pointing out that 37 per cent of all the texts collected were created by boys and 63 per cent by girls. Moreover, comparing the texts, an observation has been made that boys less often make up fairy-tales, preferring short stories about real or though-up adventures and elaborate commentaries accompanying their drawings, but they also *considerably less frequently seek to have their stories recorded.*

The analysis of the texts made up by an individual child was aimed at finding a certain pattern or consistency in form. However, the children's texts were recorded, as it has already been mentioned, only when the child himself did not object to it or showed at least a slightest initiative to this end; thus it was not possible to notice consistent development from simple to more complicated texts with regard to an individual child. Although a general tendency towards such development has been noticed. Beside, no clear relation between the child's interest in his own creative verbal achievements or those of others and his age has been found: the ages at which children acquire such an interest evidently differs. However, the research validated an assumption that the maturity of the narratives created by the children involved in the experiment is, apart from other factors, heavily influenced by their individual experience and story-making record. The more often the child tells stories and receives the teachers' and his friends' attention, the better he performs and the greater his willingness to do so. Therefore, an assumption is made that children's creativity is encouraged by the attention to *their narratives* on the part of adults and peers.

It is postulated that children willingly create narrative texts primarily because *they not only listen to the fairy-tales and stories told to them, but also see them played out, take part in the play themselves and are active at talking*. Listening and speaking are two integral elements of one and the same process. Similarly inseparable are active actions (playing with puppets by the DDP method), their verbalization and cognition. L.Vygotsky believed that "thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them", therefore, "…we could talk about the embodiment of thought in a word" (Psichologai apie ☐mogaus raid 578). The application of the DDP method assists this process by focusing on the action. Thus we can say that *thought is embodied in a word through a conscious action, which is internalized and verbalized.*

Finally, a conclusion is made that *the systematic application of the DDP method in the presentation of fairy-tales in the pre-school classroom noticeably influences the child's verbal creativity, manifested in the creation of his own stories, tales and fairy-tales.*

CONCLUSIONS

1. The research has validated the hypothesis that the method of the dialogical drama with puppets is a valid comprehensive educational method orientated towards the child's personality and based on the targeted tapping of the child's imagination-assisted ability to act in different roles in the imagined situation. The method, manifesting itself in the form of improvised dialogue, is directed towards development of imagination, comprehension, and dramatic and verbal expression in preschoolers. The DDP method seeks to use a vast variety of semiotic structures (mediums and modes of expression) to stimulate children's creative activity.

2. The research established a vast range of possible applications of the DDP method, revealing that the fairy-tale enacted with puppets according to the DDP methodology creates a common field of senses, themes and social interaction in the classroom, which children individually explore through the accessible and acceptable forms of activities, mostly creative activities.

3. The assumption has been validated that the consistent application of the DDP method in the pre-school classroom creates the environment conducive to the child's creative self-expression, encourages the child's independent dramatic play, which, in turn, stimulates verbal activity and creativity (children start making up their own stories and fairy-tales), as well as broadens the contents and forms of the child's play.

4. It has been established that the application of the DDP method raises all the classroom activities onto another level and creates preconditions for the development of various creative activities. Children subject the plot of the fairy-tale presented to them to creative transformations and adaptations to suit their activities, ranging from creative construction plays, "reading" and looking through books to making of their own fairy-tale collections and setting up their own dramatic performances.

5. It has been established that children's creative activity is in direct relation with their participation together with the teacher in their common activities. The DDP method establishes a new dialogue-based model of a child-teacher interaction. Therefore, in the educational communicative situation, the child and the teacher are partners, working together on creating a common play world/sense field/virtual reality.

6. The research has also found that the application of the DDP method opens up new opportunities for the teacher to observe, participate and influence children's creative play. Moreover, the use of this method allows the teacher to learn how to play and take part in children's plays; taking "an insider" part in the play, the teacher learns to observe children's playing and develops a better understanding of children in play; finds more ways and opportunities to influence their plays, constantly guiding both individual children and the entire classroom to the zone of proximal development.

7. The research has identified the main factors influencing children's independent play and, consequently, increasing children's verbal activity. The research findings show that fairy-tale enactment by the teacher raises the highest degree of interest in children. The child's interest is dependent on the attention shown to him by the teacher and on the employment of *a wide spectrum of expressive means*, which eventually help the child understand the plot and comprehend the course of events. Watching a fairy-tale played out and *actively participating* in the play, the child *learns how to play*. Drama with puppets helps preschoolers, with the assistance of moving puppets, to express and show things, which cannot be expressed or shown only through verbal mediums. Thus, for the children of the age in question *puppets* become *an additional means of self-expression*, helping them better understand and express their ideas and actions.

8. The research has established that children's authentic, unrehearsed play of a fairy-tale has educational implications, as it is a creative process allowing the child to shape his own cognition and self-expression.

9. A hypothesis for further research can be formulated, suggesting that the DDP method is a universal tool for the comprehensive development of the child's personality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seeking multisided and targeted development of pre-school children, the DDP method is recommended to be included in the general system of pre-school education, integrating it in the kindergarten educational programs and the relevant legislation.

- To facilitate the systematic application of the DDP method, a drama area or study group needs to be set up and equipped with the necessary means and attributes so that children could replay and improvise fairy-tales or their own made-up stories at any time during the day.

- To encourage children's individual verbal creativity, allocate time for listening to, reading and recording children's stories.

2. Universities and colleges, training pre-school teachers, are suggested to include courses on the theory and practical application of the DDP method in their curriculum; the students should be encouraged to apply the DDP method during their practical teaching session.

3. The special course on the DDP method could be taught in post-graduate teacher-training institutions.

A list of publications based on the material of the present study

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PUPPETS IN THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Edi Majaron

Summary

The paper wants to underline the importance of the puppets in child's development on different levels, one of them is improvement in narration. The puppet proves the child a kind of cover, hiding himself behind it. So also timid child find motivation to speak, to express his own emotions and to open his secrets to his puppet and through it to his audience. So puppet helps the child to communicate much more spontaneously, avoiding stressed relations, especially to adults. The puppet is an authority, selected by himself. Contemporary efforts to put narration as method of rediscovering and stabilisation of the child's personality are supported by using puppets. Regarding the fact that a child is not able to express exactly all his feelings directly by words, puppet heroes help him finding words and more: another point of view. Additionally children, costumed to use puppets in their everyday conversations, have richer vocabulary, they are able to understand semiotic-symbolic value of visual signs and the language of non-verbal communication, which is may be more important to recognise their real abilities and progress in the most important areas - cognition, sensation, motorical co-ordination, social collaboration...and least but not last - language expression. Through my rather long experiences working with puppets I'm believing in the magical power of the puppets in all kinds of communication with children, enlightening their talents and different forms of their creativity.

Introduction

Some words on the art of puppets are for the beginning very essential. This very art derived from ancient rites. All rites and rituals are a kind of communication between people and free-flowing energy through stylised movement, voice and visual appearance. And these three elements are determining the signification of every puppet. Contemporary puppeteer ensures us that we are watching a parabolic and symbolic life situation through stylised objects with unusual movements, strange voices and simplified appearance. Objects, formed by human determination, receive new meaning, becoming new subjects - metaphors - by the transference of the puppeteer's energy to the objects manipulated in his hands. In this act his belief in miraculous transformation is the most important, the belief in the power of the language of objects.

Puppet and Child

This belief can be compared with the child's relationship to his/her toys. In the child's fantasy each object has its own life and soul. Objects and toys take over the function of imaginative world in which the child dictate rules and search possible solutions for his unsolved problems. In accordance with Vigotsky this kind of games improve all steps in the child's development. Surprisingly, puppetry integrates nearly all disciplines important for this development: perception, comprehension, movement, co-ordination, interaction with the environment, speech, narration. It's difficult to explain the fact that puppets usually find better contact with the child than pre-school teacher or even parents. It seems to be already

mentioned three-levelled stylisation which helps the child to feel, to accept and understand symbolic situation. Through the simplified situation of metaphorically used objects is possible to find out the richness of parabolic games, provoking child's imagination and creativity as the most important elements for further development.

Communication by Puppets

One of the most important steps in the child's progress is finding out the ways of communication The most normal - of course - by feelings, but also dangerous and sometimes stressed. Children are able to react on the environment, generally on the level of sensations. But communication is not always adequate, provoking unpleasant emotions. Reasons can be very different, e.g. misunderstanding or misused word, the result should stop spontaneous communication.* The authority of important person (Vigotsky) can provoke or simple imitation or disobedient protest, both reactions are not liked in educational process. To avoid such stressed situation in quotidian relations we can introduce puppet in search for more elaborate communication between children and their "important persons" in two directions: primarily from an adult person through a puppet in his hand to the child and vice versa - from the child with a puppet addressing an adult Here is opened another important phase of the child's "egocentric speech" (Vigotsky) between both mentioned variant - the child is playing with different objects - puppets a kind of "one person show", satisfying his/her own need. Very soon this "one mouth dialogues" will to catch attention of some other person (a child or adult) transforming the game to a play with certain idea, message. In this moment we can speak about a parallel communication between the child and adult. The point of view of the puppet is not necessary the same as the will of an adult. These "exchange of opinions" are the source of immense possibilities in suggesting the experiences and knowledge about the world and society to the child. The puppet's opinion will be accepted more enthusiastically than ours, while the puppet is an authority by the child's choice, not an appointed one. So a puppet can be a confidant agent in correlation between the child and his surroundings.

*Here it's necessarily underline the difference between an "alive acting a role" as an exposed communication and "playing roles by puppets" as an "covered", indirect communication, much more convenient for shy children.

The Magical Creation

Far in the ancient time was known the magical symbolism of different kinds of puppets, from Javanese shadows to Indian marionettes.

But they can be very simple, the simplest are our **fingers** and **hands**, they may have faces designed directly on the skin, or can be especially made from gloves, socks and paper-bags. Here we need beside manual skill some feeling for form (round, oval, angular, cornered…), colour (nomination and "feeling" of colours, warm and cold) and material (soft, smooth, hard, reflexive…) – the basic visual elements composing each puppet. It is also a challenge for the child to recognise parts of the face in symbolic – semiotic signs (e.g. two points for eyes). Furthermore, parts of the body are used in personification (e.g. a hand as independent subject).We can continue with **elbows, knees, feet**, etc. These various puppets are very appealing for direct touch – some children are shy away from it. When they try to animate these kinds of "puppets" they must develop sensitivity and control of different movements. And something more: these puppets are watching "from another point of view". So the child easily accept the fact he is not "the only world axis".

Each puppet has its own manner (or possibility) of *movement*. The child can recognise movement (running boy, dancing girl, limping daddy, creeping fox…) and compare it with his knowledge, enriching his experience and motorical abilities .

The puppet has its own voice – articulated or non-articulated. Through visual elements the child will accept *non-verbalcommunication* as an important segment of everyday relations, based on sensations and feelings (exchange of energy), supported by narration which will enrich his vocabulary step by step. With the puppet he explore also the meaning of verbal expression.

Simple puppets are also **animated toys** and **everyday objects** with a new metaphoric function. They represent themselves but may also *play" roles"* in different situations. The child will accept this manner of play in his games. Through his "dialogues" and reactions we can resolve certain situations in his microcosm.

Flat puppets are important in improving *visual sensitivity* and *orientation in space* (a translation of a drawing into movement in relation to another animated form).

Similar are **body puppets,** usually used to overcome uncertainty and fear of the group, like half-a-way to the "acting".

Shadowsrepresent the *poetical*, maybe *unreal (virtual) world*, helping the child to overcome different kinds of *fears.*

Marionettes symbolisemanipulation: an important person is always above them, forcing their movement. This relationship also touches a child. He can feel, intuitively, *social models and relativity of data.* He finds himself in the position of "important person" in relation to his puppet (on the place of the child).

So we can continue in describing puppet techniques, each of them communicates with the audience "on another wave", it is important that we trust their help in forming more open and spontaneous, also witty (humorous) relationships with children.

Of course, children are able to compose their own puppets in different techniques from prepared elements, some of them independently, others with some help of older peers or adults. Again children will profit a lot of new experiences, from manual skills to recognising different materials (paper, cardboard, plastics, wood, packaging..), from responsibility for the environment to the knowledge of how to compose similar elements in their own creative way.

An Object with a Soul

The new challenge starts here: in moving their new-born puppet. But, is it enough only to move it? Younger children will find out the miracle of animation spontaneously: by watching their puppet, e.g. transferring their eye energy to their puppet / fixing the sight on the puppet, as in their everyday game with toys. The result is fascinating: next to the alive puppet there is no more place for the child's emphasised ego. And vice versa - shy children will gather more courage for expressing themselves through puppets, presented them like some kind of shield. The principles of this game, where the child's concentration on the object - toy comes back to the child, transforms into a play, where a message is dedicated to another player or/and audience. (Cultural Mediation, Vigotsky)

Puppets and Narration

For this play it is important to establish non-verbal and also verbal communication, which is another great aim to the child's improvement in using words, forming sentences, inventing dialogs, posing different puppets in parabolic conflicts, creating paraphrases on known stories using same personages, or inventing completely new situations. Here we can see the right power of puppets: visual appearance "suggests" inventing corresponding voice. So the need for narrative expression is intensively supported by other creative actions. A puppet can sing, speaks very strange foreign languages, innovates words and expressions for new events, in conversation should prove opportunity to hear each other, can recite stories and poems in literary version or retell them from the point of view of a person appearing in the story or poem. The puppet is often curious, likes to ask questions – usually very provocative ones. It is also prepared to help the child to tidy up his things, to jump when he is afraid, to creep through a tunnel, go to a doctor or brush his teeth. A puppet can speak dialect or children's slang, so children can suggest corrections in common language. It can happen that the child is not able to understand all words of narration, but will accept the meaning through all other elements of the puppet's non - verbal languages. Beside there is something very important: puppet needs rather few, essential words, it's not a chatterbox, loosing words in vain. And if some sentence isn't right, doesn't matter! That's the puppet, making errors, not the child. And a shy child is not struggling for his/her own position but for the position of his/her puppet!

A puppet can also represent personification of ideas, mathematical data, days in the week or letters from the alphabet; all this, and much more in hands of an inventive educator/teacher, who wants to live with children in their own - together invented - wonderland. Thus the child is supported in his imaginative and reproductive creativity, active child in an active environment (Vigotsky).

Creativity and Socialisation

This kind of creative work requires children to collaborate in a team, which means great progress in socialisation, ability to be active and to subordinate sometimes personal ideas to the common goal. To be creative means to think in an anti-positivistic way: to see things not only for their function but also to find a lot of associations with their form, colour, material, smell, sound etc. All this is necessary for imaginative puppetry – and vice versa: puppetry helps us to search in our surroundings for more than function: the way in which the world can become more picturesque.

Through all these elements a child can recognise his/her abilities in very different disciplines: how skilful is he/she, is able to contribute to, but also to accept peer suggestions, how he/she can express his/her ideas, or control his/her impulse to be important….So work with puppets helps the child build self-esteem, supports finding his/her place in-between peers, encourages

his/her activity and feeling for team work. The child likes his own products, but he/she is able to respect strictly also the contribution of his/her peers.

Educator/Teacher and Puppet

An educator/teacher is humanly rich person, proud on the fact that people can admire the growing tree and not the stick supporting it. (Mario Picchi).For him/her it is important to believe in the power of puppets, to use and propose them frequently, but with the right measure. And he/she must know and understand the meaning of puppets, using metaphors in every moment. Sometimes, his/her puppet forces the educator/teacher to be "the second" in the group/class (usually it is welcome for a while!). Through activities with puppets he/she will discover the abilities and special talents of each child. But the most important point is accepting each child as a unique individual - here the puppet can help build a bridge to the heart of everyone.

For such broad field of activities with puppets some knowledge about the essential themes in puppetry is necessary to avoid rediscovering the discovered. Important is the will and belief.

Conclusion

The use of puppets can result in a considerable contribution to a more humane and less stressed educational system in the first years of a child's integration into a group/class where starts his/her socialisation process. And more: puppets provoke the imagination, creativity, and both are the best dowry to a child for further development.

Note:

This paper was supported by the experiences of my students with children in kindergartensand primary schools from 1996 to 2000.. Many of Final Theses at The Faculty of Education (University Ljubljana) / subject Puppetry /, treat these themes, confirmed by practical experiences. There are results of my research and practical work with puppets in the Theatre and Education.

Video-fragments, taken from taped quotidian activities in kindergartens, where my students are educators/teachers are on disposition on request. Presented materials were systemised by Helena Korošec, assistant. We are continuing the research as important part of curriculum for kindergartens.

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PUPPETS AS A TEACHING TOOL

Edmond Debouny

Summary

Puppets and puppet theatre are an excellent teaching tool in infant, primary and secondary school education (2 to 18 years).

As part of a project to prepare a puppet play, children approach many subjects in their mother tongue (such as oral and written expression, for example) with renewed motivation, thereby making their learning more effective. The same is also true for a range of other subjects such as mathematics, history, geography and science, among others. Children even approach rhythm and music in a radically different way when creating sound effects and background music.Being a collaborative effort, preparing a puppet play encourages both independence and socialisation, with students learning to co-operate with others in the accomplishment of a common task, each contributing in accordance with his or her individual skills and abilities. The project favours the development of a critical perception (something that is so necessary in adult life) and also reinforces children's sense of responsibility as regards both the group itself and the commitments undertaken.

The use of puppets often encourages other forms of non-verbal expression and fosters the development of both creativity and aesthetic judgement.

In short, puppets are an extraordinary teaching tool!

The use of puppets as a teaching resource is often confined almost exclusively to infant schools, being largely ignored in primary education and almost non-existent in secondary schools.

A waste of time?

In a serious school, we cannot afford to waste time with puppets.

This is a statement we have all heard over and over again. We all agree that we cannot afford to waste time, but - why should working with puppets necessarily be a waste of time?

If puppets are used correctly within the field of education, they can be a varied, interesting teaching tool that is probably a lot more attractive to students than many more common methods, which bear no relation whatsoever to their experiences or interests.

The class could perhaps decide to give a puppet theatre show, a project which enables children to participate in accordance with their own individual preferences, aptitudes and abilities. The initiative requires that children engage in a large number of different tasks, including the making of the puppets themselves and the set, manipulation, oral expression, the compilation of programmes and the use of spotlights, backlighting and tape recorders, etc.

The children or young people will not necessary be conscious of the fact that they are practising their mathematical, reading or writing skills. Their sole concern will be to complete their task and achieve their goal. The application of the project will enable them to improve their knowledge (history, vocabulary, etc.) and enhance their skills (sewing, painting, dialogue, etc.), as well as providing the opportunity for developing certain attitudes and behaviour (critical appreciation, collaboration, etc.).

New class relations

The teacher is no longer the star, the central focus of attention who explains, commands, directs and clarifies. He/she is no longer the one who always knows the answer, the one who knows where we are coming from and where we are going, the one who knows all the phases through which the students have to pass. He/she is no longer the supreme power, but rather becomes a person-resource who, in collaboration with the group, participates in the planning and definition of the different stages of the project, the distribution of tasks and the establishment of objectives. Occasionally, he/she will also participate in key progress evaluations and any changes or adjustments that become necessary. He/she will sometimes respond to students' demands, suggesting new channels of thought and providing them with bibliographic or computerised data references. Furthermore, now that so many teaching centres have access to the Internet, teachers can also introduce their students to the world wide web, thereby enabling them to carry out their own searches. Finally, teachers are also responsible for ensuring safety, calling their students' attention to the risks inherent in certain performances (such as the use of candles with no protection, etc.).

In order for such projects to be successful, they should always be adapted to the level of the children or young people involved, being neither too easy nor too difficult. They may be either long-term or short-term initiatives, depending upon which best suits each individual class's needs and interests. In some cases, it is best to complete the entire project within the space of eight days, because for certain children at a certain age, imagining the future beyond the coming week is well-nigh impossible.

The awareness of working on something serious and the need to take on responsibilities and carry out useful tasks enables students to recover the self-confidence they may have lost as the result of other failures. It also serves to motivate some children who are usually indifferent or apathetic when presented with a maths problem, for example, in which they have absolutely no interest whatsoever.

Inventing and writing a script, making puppets, choosing a backdrop, creating sound effects and sending invitations to local councillors, etc. is much more gratifying that writing an address on an envelope that will never be sent, and will end up stuck in an exercise book as a useless model example.

Learning to know - to know how to do things and to know how to behave

The development of a script is an excellent way of stimulating students' creativity and an ideal opportunity for them to express themselves. It enables them to give their imaginations a free rein, making up a story from beginning to end, regardless of whether it is based on an existing tale or on a real event or occurrence that is adapted, transformed, expanded or simplified. You could, for example, focus on transforming a tale into dialogue, with the teacher fostering and promoting creativity. One system is to start by brainstorming students' ideas and noting them all down – even the most absurd and ridiculous ones. Next, the whole

class should discuss the different options, in order to decide which are the best or the most viable. The class can also be divided into a series of small groups, with each member of the group being responsible for one part of the story. Students must learn to really LISTEN, i.e. they must try to UNDERSTAND (something many adults often fail to do or do not do often enough), ARGUE their point, compare ideas, develop their critical skills, make decisions and bow to the group's final decision – even though this may sometimes be frustrating, especially when it is somebody else's idea that is eventually chosen.

These are the very skills that are so often lacking among adults who, despite having excellent ideas, are incapable of defending them, totally convinced that they are right and everyone else is wrong and utterly unable to put themselves in someone else's shoes in order to understand their point of view.

Without realising it, children and young people begin to develop their oral language. They also have recourse to the written word, consulting documents, analysing and transforming texts, writing new ones, correcting each other's work, finding information and consulting everything from books to computer programmes and the Internet.

Vocabulary, grammar and verb conjugation, questions, affirmations, negations, etc. all have their niches within this totally functional activity. The project provides students with the opportunity of refining their language and using complements and different tenses, etc. in a much more enriching experience than that of making up sentences based on a list of adjectives supplied by the teacher, or writing an essay about *the layer of snow that covers the fields*, an exercise which, as we all no doubt remember, is not exactly designed to excite passion and enthusiasm!

The story, which should be set during a certain era or epoch, may require a certain amount of historical research: what type of clothes did they wear during the Middle Ages? What did a fortress look like? What was life like around a castle? The story should also take place in a specified place or region: where exactly are the Alps? How can we represent them? Are they very high mountains? Higher than those in the students' own region? In some cases, the story may even lead students to explore the world of science and nature: Where do rhinoceroses live? What do they eat? How do they reproduce? It is true that babies are brought by storks?

As before, manuals, documents, CD-ROMs, encyclopaedias and even the personal experience of those who have actually visited the place concerned can prove extremely useful.

The process of making their own puppets enables students to begin expressing themselves right from the moment at which they select the character or animal itself. The decision to accentuate the character's aggressive or gentle features is also a form of self-expression, and it is important for the teacher not to interfere in this creative process. Teachers should limit themselves to offering practical assistance, helping the student to express his or her ideas and feelings in physical or material form - making the puppet more fearsome or painting the mouth in such a way as to express goodness and kindness, for example.

Language and student/teacher dialogue is also vital at this stage: 'I've chosen this puppet because I want to play the role of an old, evil witch...' Teachers should also strive to foster students' critical skills: 'Do you really think this witch looks frightening?'

In order to build the puppet, children will have to assess, compare and measure (is the puppet big or small enough to fit in the castle?). They will have to use glue, paper and thread, and

learn to sew, paint, cut and use body language. Handicraft skills will also come into play. Providing they are handled properly, all these activities will contribute to developing students' aesthetic appreciation.

Similarly, the process of creating the scenery and backdrops either by painting, handicrafts or by using backlighting, also enables students to express themselves in many different ways. Children can choose to paint a horrific scene or create a pleasant, relaxing atmosphere. It is vital that language not be the only means for students to express themselves, since some children are unable to transmit their feelings or the concept they wish to communicate through words alone. Sometimes paintbrushes and pens are a much more fruitful channel for expressing feelings, fears and dreams.

Schools often underestimate the value of these channels of expression which are given free rein in the world of puppet theatre.

The process of building the scenery for the play also provides students with the opportunity of measuring, tracing geometric shapes, using a ruler and set square, cutting, superimposing, comparing and counting, etc.

The use of different sets also forces students to organise the time sequence of the play.

When we think of scenery, we usually envisage only the backdrop of a scene or castle, etc. Nevertheless, the sounds of birds singing, the wind blowing, the waves crashing, an axe chopping and cars roaring, for example, are also an intrinsic part of the atmospheric setting.

In this sense, children are free to create their own atmospheres, using a wide variety of instruments ranging from saucepans to sheets of paper. The same can also be said of the background music: children can choose gentle, relaxing music or something more violent. Since students must be careful to select music that best suits the play they have chosen to perform, they will make much more of an effort than if they are simply told to listen to a *beautiful* melody for no apparent reason. They may also learn that the music they like best is not necessarily the most suitable, while a tune they are not so fond of personally, may be the better choice in this particular case. Once again, the idea is to situate singing and music within a practical context, thereby fostering exchanges between children and adults: comparison of impressions, the need for dialogue and the ability to listen to someone else's point of view, make a decision and abide by the group decision, regardless of personal preferences.

The next step is puppet manipulation, since the whole purpose of building puppets, a stage and sets, etc. is to perform a play. In order for the performance to be a success, students must learn how to handle their puppets. This exercise may prove fairly complicated, but it also enables students to enjoy the satisfaction of mastering a difficult task, such as making their character's anger believable, for example, or simply keeping their puppet visible above the stage during the entire scene. This may seem simple, but it is not. It requires immense dexterity in arms, hands and fingers, a high level of control of physical movements and an adjustment and co-ordination of gestures that may prove very useful in other areas of children's development, or during their professional training later on in life. Motivated by the desire to create an existing spectacle, children will often make a considerable effort to master a difficult skill or technique.

The project also requires a great deal of collaboration and teamwork, teaching students to respect others and their work and to share and assume responsibilities. In short, it helps further their social education and promote solidarity.

As a finishing touch, students can also design posters and write invitations and press releases. Once again, students are encouraged to develop their written and even oral language (if these activities are accompanied by telephone calls, for exmaple). Mathematics can be used to calculate costs, control and distribute the money available, compile estimates and carry out a range of different conversions (calculating performance time, converting hours into minutes or seconds, etc.).

Puppets as a means of expression

Puppets also enable children or young people to express emotions, desires and feelings rejection, etc, that they may not otherwise dare articulate because, in their experience, it is not 'the done thing'.

Safely hidden behind the castle walls, some students talk through their puppet. Sometimes, as the result of an excessively strict or coercive education, there are things children or young people are not able to exteriorise. Consequently, in some cases we see a puppet beating its father, shouting that it hates school, or sobbing that its mother does not love it.

Teachers should be constantly on the alert for these signals, since this type of reaction is sometimes a cry for help. They should reflect on what they have seen and heard, in order to adapt their behaviour and relationships accordingly and, where necessary, contact a qualified specialist (from either inside or outside the centre) in order to discuss their observations.

Puppets can also serve as a tool for teachers themselves, enabling them to teach their students a range of different things, from washing their hands before eating, to learning how to write or check over their work.

Some therapists and psychologists also use puppets as a professional tool, although this use goes beyond the boundaries of education.

Let us hope that puppets and puppet theatre, along with other functional activities, succeed in breathing new life into the educational system and making school an enriching, enjoyable experience for both teachers and children alike!

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PUPPETS AND EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA

Oscar H. Caamaño

Summary

After the immigration policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries turned Argentina into a 'cultural and racial melting pot', the country constructed its cultural identity on the basis of formal education. Schools became the institutional model designed to legitimise all socially valid knowledge; and all knowledge had to pass through the common school structure or be systemised in specialist institutions. It is perhaps for this reason that Argentina has opted for the development of specialist schools as a means of systematically developing puppetry arts. Puppets also form an admittedly underdeveloped part of the general school syllabus and teacher training courses. Within this context, the paper outlines a number of possible activities, in particular with regard to experimentation and research, designed to ensure a richer and more advanced development of puppetry arts in children's education. These activities are: a) training children and teachers as spectators; b) child puppeteers; and c) puppets as a teaching resource. Similarly, the paper also encourages creators and puppeteer associations (and UNIMA in particular) to focus their efforts in these directions, forging links with teachers and those involved in educational and theatre-oriented research.

The Argentine Republic is a country that, to a large extent, has constructed its cultural identity through formal education. During the 19th century, a multitude of cultures and focalised and (in some cases) fairly isolated regional economies existed within its immense borders, while other areas had yet to be integrated and remained under the dominion of the desert, jungle or diverse indigenous populations, often ferociously defensive of their territory. The so-called 'Conquest of the Desert', followed by the Chaco campaign, which rounded up, reduced and 'tamed' the indigenous population by means of annihilation, subjection and cultural indoctrination, in addition to the immigration policy of the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds that attracted large numbers of Europeans and Asians, mainly Spanish, Italian and Syro-Lebanese, but also French, English, German, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Armenian and Polish, among others, and the prior existence of a mixed or white Creole population with its own traditional culture, turned Argentina into a 'racial and cultural melting pot', and forced it to build a new identity, since its traditional identity, ignored or disdained by the members of the governing classes, dazzled as they were by European culture, economic freedom and prevailing scientific optimism, was no longer deemed valid for a country struggling to become a 'new and glorious nation'. Schools became the fundamental tool for the construction of this new identity, and in doing so, evolved into the institutional model responsible for legitimising all socially valid knowledge. According to this model, all knowledge must pass through the school system, or have been systemised in specialised institutions that defined a profession, trade or art.

This is one possible (although brief and simplified) explanation as to why Argentina has so many important puppet schools, a phenomenon that is highly unusual in both Latin America

and perhaps, the world also[1], and surprising when compared to the official number of permanent groups dedicated to puppet theatre in the country.[2] While other countries have tended to prioritise the creation of permanent groups as the means of developing puppetry arts, Argentina seems to have opted instead for the establishment of schools, a phenomenon that is even more surprising if we consider that the driving force behind the creation of each puppet school is always a practising puppeteer. Although it does not figure as a subject in its own right, puppetry is also an integral part of the country's primary school syllabus, especially as regards infants and teacher training. The objective of this brief overview is set the context for a series of reflections that I will now explore regarding the application of puppets and puppetry arts to education. It cannot be denied that puppet schools, in particular those which focus their activities on primary schools, have had a long and fruitful history in Argentina since their creation during the final third of the 20th century. Their focus, highly structured in some cases and freer in others, could be categorised under the term *education through art*, an approach that values the educational nature of artistic activities on both the perceptive and intellectual, and, above all, the emotional and ethical planes. This approach emphasises the cultivation of our sensibility, a harmonious relationship with nature and the social and socialising aspects of learning and education. Nevertheless, despite the fundamental value of these schools, both as regards the training of their students and their external impact through the organisation of special courses and performances, they exert only a limited influence on the general population of a country as vast as Argentina.

The puppetry training received by future nursery school and primary school teachers is insufficient both as regards the time dedicated to it and the general approach adopted, since it is mainly imparted by teachers with no specialist experience in this artistic discipline. In consequence, the subsequent application of puppets to infant and primary school education is also poor, and although some teachers do try to extend their knowledge of the art through reading, participation in courses or workshops and attendance at various functions and events, the government's efforts in this area are sporadic and half-hearted.

In any case, the concept of a modern system of teaching through puppet theatre applied to infant and primary education is still in its initial stages, and its development will require much effort, experimentation, research and theoretical systemisation.

In writing this paper, I wish to make my modest contribution to this effort, identifying and offering a brief outline of some possible approaches to linking puppetry and education, which, in my opinion, could prove both beneficial and productive if supported by specific programmes set in motion by the government and educational institutions, and promoted by diverse puppetry associations and, in particular, UNIMA.

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[1] Argentina has the following official puppet schools: the Tucumán Provincial Puppet School (which runs courses for both children and professionals); the Puerto Rico Provincial Puppet School-Workshop, Misiones, (for children); the Montecarlo Provincial Puppet School, Misiones, (children), the Neuquén Provincial Puppet School (children and teenagers); the Avellaneda Puppet School, Buenos Aires (professional training); the San Martín General Municipal Theatre School for Puppeteers, Buenos Aires, (professional training); and the Rosario Provincial Puppet and Theatre School, Santa Fe (puppet teacher training). Advanced puppetry courses are also run at the Neuquén Puppet School; the General Roca Advanced Puppet School, Río Negro; the Advanced Theatre School of the Central University in Tandil, Buenos Aires; and the La Plata Puppet School in Buenos Aires.

[2] The San Martín Theatre Puppeteer Group in Buenos Aires, the Santa Fe Municipal Puppet Theatre, the Córdoba Permanent Puppet Theatre, the La Pampa Puppet Workshop and the Trigal Group from the Esperanza Municipality in Santa Fe.

Training children and teachers as spectators

Good puppet shows are always educational, bringing the audience into direct contact with socially acceptable values and knowledge, whose dynamic presentation encourages us to view them as active attitudes. Thanks to its synthetic (in the twofold sense of a combination of diverse languages and the search for the essence of things) and participatory nature (it is something that unfolds before us, with us, that happens and happens to us, with no intermediaries), puppet theatre touches, rocks and moves the audience's cognitive and emotional spheres like no other art.

If we, like many contemporary productions, consider puppet theatre as a visual, rather than dramatic spectacle, we are able to strengthen the aesthetic experience provided by its physical nature through the magic of animation. Shadow theatre, object theatre, figure theatre and all modern-day variations of animated theatre are unparalleled incentives to the audience's imaginative development. Within this context, we should strive towards two goals.

Firstly, we should engage in a practical and systematic exploration of all possible means of forging closer ties between puppet theatre (as an artistic spectacle) and schools, either through diverse training strategies such as the creation of permanent theatre groups, programmes to ensure decent contracts and the earmarking of funds for production, all specifically designed to offer schools the possibility of developing regular theatre attendance and/or theatre group visit plans; or through the promotion of independent and/or amateur theatre groups with the advice and training required to ensure quality performances and inclusion into school event programmes. In short, we should explore any method deserving of consideration and research by those responsible for cultural and educational promotion. Secondly, we should investigate the way in which puppet theatre is received by viewers (both teachers and children) with little or no training as spectators. As puppeteers, we are constantly surprised by the diversity of audience types that can be defined when attention is paid to the way in which our performances are received and the correlative strategies we develop on the basis of the different communicative situations that arise. It would be extremely interesting and useful to carry out a diachronic analysis of a child or group of children's experiences as spectators.

It may also be interesting to study the behaviour of teachers and their reaction to a puppet performance attended by their students. Some forget all about the children themselves, some repress their participation, some encourage it and some mediate between the children and the performance by giving explanations. What impels these different behaviours? What is the relationship between their role as teachers and their role as spectators? What prior knowledge and experience do they bring to the experience? Do they try to prepare their students for this experience? If so, how? These would be some of the issues whose study may prove both fascinating and extremely useful.

Child Puppeteers

The organisation of puppet workshops in schools has deep roots in Argentinian history. Puppet theatre offers the possibility of experiencing diverse languages, enables children to express themselves freely and promotes creativity, co-operation, sociability and tolerance. From the 1940s to the 1970s, many schools had their own extracurricular groups of child puppeteers. Although for a number of reasons (many of them economic) this trend gradually decreased later on in the century, a new integrative approach to artistic education resulted in

the creation of integrated workshops in which puppet theatre found new avenues of development. Within this less formal context, based mainly on dramatic games, puppetry recovered part of the ground it had previously lost within the field of the expressive education of children and teenagers.

Nevertheless, serious research projects are required in this field to study educational strategies in relation to the objectives set by the workshops. Is puppetry merely a resource for children's expressive and emotional development, or should it strive become an introduction to the subsequent aesthetic training of those children who demonstrate a special talent for or interest in the art? Is the use of play and games an exclusive methodology, or should it incorporate a series of more formal or systematic strategies designed to develop dramatic and puppetry language? How do these workshops affect other learning areas?

Puppets as a teaching resource

Being animated characters, capable of telling stories and engaging in natural dialogues with children, puppets have long been used as a teaching tool in the fields of language, elemental and social sciences and even mathematics.

Nevertheless, this type of use entails a certain risk for both the puppet and the spectator, especially when the former is stripped of its artistic character and delegated to a badly-manipulated object used without imagination that simply repeats information or imposes rules via dialogue with its audience.

It is quite another thing when children themselves take control of the puppets and, hidden behind a screen, try to bring them to life and speak through them, thereby developing their ability to project themselves without the restrictions imposed by self-consciousness and inhibitions.

In this sense, the work carried out by Horacio Tignanelli in conjunction with his educational play 'A Piece of Sky' is extremely interesting. The play teases out children's pre-existing or idiosyncratic ideas about astronomy and then contrasts them with those of the characters in order to create a cognitive conflict. No 'correct' solutions are offered, and each child is encouraged to reach his or her own conclusions through a process of internal or explicit deliberation. Obviously, this approach is closely linked to the concept of education as an active process carried out by the learner, in which previous ideas are constantly challenged by means of the conflict between them and reality. It is also linked to the idea of education as the creation of conditions conducive to this constructive development. This approach leads us to another area of pedagogical research, aimed at applying new concepts of learning and education to the field of puppet theatre and monitoring their application and the assessment of their results.

Argentina is a country in which puppet theatre is, as I mentioned earlier, closely linked to the world of children and education in particular. Nevertheless, it is also a country in which educational research is a relatively new phenomenon, especially as regards its application to puppets and puppetry arts. Although there is a wealth of practical knowledge, the systematic knowledge that enables a full and comprehensive understanding of the processes involved and the establishment of principles and theories is very scarce. I image this is not only the case in Argentina, but in many other countries also, notwithstanding regional differences and peculiarities.

One possible task would be to undertake the systematic study of the relationship between puppets and education. But who would assume responsibility for this vast and, as yet, unexplored field? We should exhort teachers and puppeteers involved in public education and the development of special educational programmes, and researchers working in the field of education and dramatic arts, to assume responsibility for their own individual areas in a common effort that, despite its inauspicious beginnings, should nevertheless aim to spread to all corners of the world. UNIMA has both the authority and ability to bring this issue to the attention of general educational authorities, puppet schools, universities and researchers with the aim of persuading them to begin dedicating their time and resources to the development of studies of this nature. Many individual initiatives may already exist in certain countries, and it is up to our Union to identify them, bring them together, strengthen them and initiate dialogue.

We should not forget that puppets need humans in order to come to life, and that both puppets and puppeteers need an audience to lend sense and meaning to their performances. Since our aesthetic education begins during our infancy and youth, puppeteers also need to expand on their knowledge of children and their relationship with them. Often working alone and preoccupied by the need to make a living, puppeteers dedicate little time to developing areas which enable both them and their profession to grow. We must make a greater and more generous effort to study, experiment with, investigate and reflect on areas of our professional field that have yet to be explored, and encourage educationalists, anthropologists, theatre workers, psychologists and other experts to consider and begin to explore the vast and mysterious world of puppets and puppet theatre.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF THE AUTHORS

Ida HAMRE, Denmark

Member of "The UNIMA Puppets in Education-Commission". Broadly educated in esthetical subjects, among theese arthistory and drama in education. Lecturer at Teachers College and Royal Danish School of Educational Studies. Ph.d. 1994 with the thesis "Animationtheatre as an art and as an element of esthetic development in education". Present research project: "The educational potential and figurative language of animationtheatre" at Danish University of Education.

Amateur player and instructor. Teacher in various professional and academic courses, PhD advisor, workshops and lectures at home and abroad. Interculturel project in Westafrica: "Marionets and Acting Competence". Author of articles and books, latest "Marionet og Menneske" 1997.

Helena KOROŠEC, Slovenia

Helena Korošec was born in Ljubljana in 1969. She worked as a teacher in primary school (1996 - 2000). All this time she was trying to find out different creative ways, how to use puppets and drama as a teaching tool, as a learning medium.

Now she is teaching as a teaching assistant at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education the subject Puppetry and Drama.

She leads puppetry and creative drama workshops for primary school teachers and educators. She is an author of »Joy of creative drama workshops in school« (handbook for teachers,1996) and editor of »Puppet from kindergarten to school« (colletions of papers about use of puppets in kindergarten and school, 2002).

She writes articles focusing on puppetry in education:
- Puppets and creative drama as a way of symbolic play in classroom,
- Multicultural education with puppets,
- The puppets can help us in mother - tongue lessons.

She is finishing her Master's degree "Puppet in a child everyday life in school".

Milda BRĖDIKYTĖIVANAUSKIENE, Lithuania

Born 1958 in Vilnius, Lithuania, had finished her Masters Degree Studies at Saint-Petersburg Theatre Arts Academy in 1982. She was an actress and puppeteer in the State Puppet Theatre Lele and directed a dozen of puppet shows in theatres and national TV of Lithuania.

Afterwards she dedicated her interest to Educational Sciences and in 2001 defended her doctoral dissertation titled *DialogicalDrama with Puppets as a Method of Fostering Children's Verbal Creativity* at Vilnius Pedagogical University, where she is from 1998 a

lector at the Faculty of Pre-school Education. She is continuing her second doctoral studies in Finland, Oulu University, Kajaani Department of Teacher Education. Fields of her research: Early childhoodeducation, developmental/creative drama, puppet theatre and it's developmental potential for children, computer supporting narrative learning environments (the fifth dimension) developmental learning, facilitation of child's creativity, applied research in early childhood settings. She is deeply engaged with the problems of creating new understanding of teaching, holding many courses for professionals and collaborating in forming special curriculum programs. As the redactor she realized two books in the program "Step by step", where she was coordinator of the International Child Development Program by the Open Society Found. She presented her papers and experiences at many important international meetings/conferences on the field of the child's creative development. Her work, experienced in practical artistic work, is very precious also on scientific level, being one of rather rare researchers combining theory basis with practical evaluation.

Edi (Edvard) MAJARON, Slovenia

Born 1940 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. After studies at The Academy for Music Ljubljana he had finished postgraduate study of violoncello and puppetry at AMU in Prague.

He worked as freelance puppet-director and musician-cellist. In 1979 – 84 he was artistic manager in Puppet theatre Ljubljana and later founded a new puppet group Freyer Teater. He directed over 80 shows in different professional puppet theatres in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia&Herzegovina, Poland, Byelorussia, Italy…His directions on texts of Aristofanes and Shakespeare until contemporary authors for adults and for children are recognisable trough engaged message to the contemporary audience, using different kinds of puppets, supposed to alive actor in metaphorical function. Great number of them were presented at important international festivals. He founded the international puppet festival LUTKE in Ljubljana and was a member of Executive Committee UNIMA from 1980 until 2000, collaborating especially in Commissions for Professional training, Research and the newest Puppets in Education.

From 1991 he teach Puppetry for students of different departments at University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education as associate professor. He holds workshops "How to use puppets" for pre-school teachers and primary school teachers in Slovenia. Croatia and Italy. Beside, he had lectures and workshops "Importance of Theatre and Puppet" at the universities in Bari (Italy) and Oulu (Finland).

Edmond DEBOUNY, Belgium

Born in Verviers, Belgium, 1943.
Primary School Teacher, manager of the Athénée Royal de Verviers.
Special Primary School Education Inspector since 1983.
With the support of professional puppeteer Hubert Roman and UNIMA, he worked for introducing puppets as teaching tool in ordinary and special primary school education, within the French and German-speaking communities of Belgium. He organises a numerous of training courses for teachers, with performances at the end of the course.

He has been one of the founders and an active member of the UNIMA Puppets in Education Commission since its creation in 1996. Edmond Debouny works with teachers to compile a number of educational documents aimed at teachers at all levels. The latest one is entitled *The pleasure of learning with puppets* and was published in 2001 to enlarge his former contribution to library for teachers.

Oscar H. CAAMAÑO, Argentina

Born in Argentina.

Puppeteer. Arts graduate at the Catholic University of Santa Fe with a long career in Puppet Theatre and Higher Education.

He currently directs the *El Retablo de las Maravillas* company (Santa Fe – Argentina) and is Director of the Admiral G. Brown Num. 8 Advanced Teacher Training Institute, where he teaches Spanish Language and Literature. He also teaches at the Prof. Juan Mantovani Visual Arts School in Santa Fe.He has carried out research into the following areas: literature, puppets in education, and has published numerous papers in periodicals, books and specialist magazines.

He is President of the Commission for Latin America and a member of UNIMA's Executive Committee.

ABOUT THE UNIMA PUPPETS IN EDUCATION COMMISSION

The Puppets in Education is one of the youngest commissions of the International UNIMA and it was founded at the Budapest Congress in 1996. Its initiator and first president was Edi Majaron, and its first members, active today in the Commission, were Ida Hamre and Edmond Debouny. Since the Magdeburg Congress in 2000, the president of the Commission has been the writer of these lines. The Commission has been expanded to include new, corresponding members, including Oscar H. Caamaño (Argentina), Milda Brėdikytė (Lithuania), Helena Korošec (Slovenia), Maki Koda (Japan), and Ingvild Birkeland (Norway).

Why is this Commission an important one? Because it is starting out at the very beginning, from early childhood, from the smallest hands and small, bright, imaginative heads which can experience the puppet as a miracle and can create miracles using it. As Prof. Majaron says: „children have a right to the puppet, and their teachers a right to the knowledge of how to use it". In this way, not only is socialisation made easier for children as they acquire new knowledge, and increase their joy in play and learning, but also, if their teachers are correctly trained, a new generation of critical spectators and cognoscenti of the puppetry medium is created, while some of them will grow into real puppetry artists.

Over the last few years, our Commission has tried clearly to define its objectives and the means of their being attained. These are our objectives:

- to support the idea that animation of puppets shuld be part of theatre and drama education
- to persuade compilers of curricula for pre-school and school teachers that students should be informed professionally about the possibilities, use and animation of puppets and objects
- to encourage use of puppets in the education of pre-school and school children
- to encourage collaboration between professional artists and teachers.

And how do we hjope to achieve them? Among other, with the help of this book, and similar publications, with brochures and written texts through which we will be exchanging know-how, perceptions and ideas. We intend to accumulate an extensive bibliography about this subject and place it on our web pages. Members of the Commission will also be prepared to travel and hold seminars, workshops and demonstrations of work with puppets for both children and teachers.

What could be more fitting than that a commission fully oriented to children finds a "home" at one of the world's best-known festivals for children? The International Children's Festival in Šibenik, Croatia, has offered to be host on an ongoing basis to the Puppets in Education Commission, and, in return, the Commission's members are offering seminars and workshps for children and teachers. On this occasion, too, we would like to express our thanks to our hosts, the organisers of the International Children's Festival, let by their director Mr Dragan Zlatović, for the wonderful hospitality we have enjoyed in this enchanting Dalmation city on the shores of the Adriatic Sea.

Livija Kroflin
President of the UNIMA Puppets in Education Commission