

Dramatization of philosophical stories in the education of educators^{1 2}

Dramatização de contos filosóficos na formação do educador

Theda Cabrera Gonçalves Pereira^①

^① University of São Paulo – USP, São Paulo, SP, Brasil. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8066-8574>,
thedacabrera@yahoo.com.br

Abstract: This article focuses on the use of the *dramatization* of *philosophical stories* with initiation *mytheme* in the cultivation of *mastery* in the initial education of educators. The researcher put her proposals into practice in the conduction of curricular experiences between 2012 and 2016 with Pedagogy and Teaching-degree undergraduates. The scope of an *education of sensibility*—which does not exclude rationality but is not restricted to the Western rationality of Aristotelian, Cartesian, Illuminist, and Protestant nature—has enabled a more critical (counter-ideological), reflexive (*constructos*) and sensitive (*perceptos*) reading from the participants, leading them to have, as a personal option, the task of assuming—as a professional and existential project—the more coherent search for the *modulations of being*.

Keywords: dramatization, philosophical stories, initiation mytheme, education of educators

Resumo: No presente artigo o foco é a utilização da dramatização de contos filosóficos com mitema iniciático no cultivo de mestria na formação inicial de educadores. A pesquisadora colocou em prática suas propostas na condução de vivências curriculares entre 2012 a 2016 com estudantes de Pedagogia e licenciandos. O âmbito de uma educação de sensibilidade – que nem por isso exclui a racionalidade, mas não se restringe à racionalidade ocidental de caráter aristotélico, cartesiano, iluminista e protestante – tem possibilitado uma leitura mais crítica (contra ideológica), reflexiva (*constructos*) e sensível (*perceptos*) dos participantes, levando-os a ter, como opção pessoal, a tarefa de assumir como projeto profissional e existencial a busca mais coerente de modulações do ser.

Palavras-chave: dramatização, contos filosóficos, mitema iniciático, formação de educadores

¹ Supported by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

² English version: José Pereira Queiroz - ze.pereira.queiroz@gmail.com.

Prologue

This article originates from a Doctorate (supported by CAPES 2011-2013/FAPESP 2013-2015) and Post-Doctorate research (supported by FAPESP 2016-2018), both at the School of Education of the University of São Paulo, supervised by professor Marcos Ferreira-Santos. In the present article, the focus is on using *philosophical stories* (Carrière, 2004, 2008) with an *initiation* (Eliade, 2004, 2010; Gusdorf, 2003) *mytheme* (Durand, 1988, 1996) as instruments for *curricular experiences* cultivating *mastery* (Gusdorf, 2003) in the initial education of educators.

As a researcher, I have had the opportunity to put into practice curricular experience proposals in the initial education of educators through internships conducted at the *núcleo de dramatização de contos* [stories dramatization group] of the *Laboratório Experimental de Arte Educação & Cultura* [Experimental Art-Education & Culture Laboratory] (Lab_Arte) of the University of São Paulo's School of Education. Lab-Arte is a didactic laboratory, a post-graduation research center, and a permanent extension and culture program, from an anthropologic frame of reference and with an interdisciplinary educational activity from a curricular experience perspective. Its official initial date is 2006 and it articulates initial teacher education with post-graduation (Master's, Doctoral, and Post-Doctoral) research with support from several agencies (CAPES, CNPq, FAPESP, and international entities). Lab_Arte is currently structured in several experience and experimental groups in each form of artistic expression, monitored by undergraduates or postgraduates who abound expertise in the areas. Among the regular activities held at the laboratory, the *stories dramatization group* operated between 2012 and 2016 and was the main locus of the empirical research discussed in the present article.

These curricular experiences took place in four inconsecutive semesters, between 2012 and 2016, once a week for 1 hour and 30 minutes, totaling around 18 hours per semester. Approximately 15 Pedagogy and Teaching-degree undergraduates from the School of Education or other institutions from the University—educators in their ongoing education—with ages ranging from 18 to 50 years old, assiduously and punctually attended the curricular experience meetings in every semester. From this groups, only one Pedagogy student attended all of the four semesters in which the meetings were held; the other participants only attended one of the semesters.

The curricular experience internships were conducted using *dramatization* (Cabrera, 2015, 2017) of *philosophical stories* (Carrière, 2004, 2008) with *initiation* (Eliade, 2004, 2010; Gusdorf, 2003) *mytheme* (Durand, 1988, 1996) as instruments for cultivating *mastery* (Gusdorf, 2003) in the initial education of educators. Further along this article these five concepts will be presented and the relationships between them will be discussed.

As the conductor of the *dramatization* practices, I predicted that we would address one *philosophical story* per meeting and that the whole group would work over the same story. Sometimes I selected two versions of the same story to be worked in a single meeting. What I tried to guarantee was that, for the participating educators, each meeting would have its own unity. At the same time, when planning the semester, I tested different sequences for the selected stories, so that the “main theme” of *mastery* could be complexified and unfolded towards a somewhat “intriguing question” as a “conclusion”. In each semester, mostly using different *philosophical stories* or, only a few times, previously used stories placed in a different sequence, the planning sought for an interior narrative which permeated the selected stories, weaving, at each encounter, a different aspect of the fabric dialogically warped from the dramatized *philosophical stories* and the questions asked by the participants themselves.

Following the contemporary questions posed by interdisciplinarity and by the concept of *complex thought* (Morin, 2007), I understand education to be a way to provide people with the exercise of achieving their true human potential, their *humanitas*, considering their *neotenic* nature (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012)—their incompleteness—and their *autopoiesis* ability (Maturana & Varela, 1997)—their self-destination and their recreation within themselves. This research focused on “learning how to be”, especially through experience and experimenting as educational instances.

I favor the composition of an initial curriculum for the education of educators based on a non-linear notion of time, the *kairological time* (deriving from the ancient Greek word *Kairos*, meaning “opportune moment”, an indeterminate moment when something special happens). It is the time of the opportunity, of the enjoyment of the present moment. It is not the time for the nostalgia for a glorious past, such as in the Golden Age myths, which relates to the “*eternal before*” (Ricoeur, 2013). It is also not the expectation of a redeeming future present in the messianic myths, the “*eternal not yet*” (Ricoeur, 2013). The opportune moment is the moment of the epiphany, of the “*right-non*”, of enjoying the opportunities that come from the questions,

form the conflicts, from the difficulties experienced by the apprentice, by the master, and between them, prompting the composition of proposals and of follow-ups. Learning how to play as we play it, creating the rules of the game when facing the need for rules, freeing ourselves from past conventions which no longer serve our present purposes.

Extraordinarily, we can, sometimes, under certain artificially assembled conditions, experience, also, rare instances of the *aionic time*. This notion of time is related to the intensity of the moment of the experience, not to its duration. It is the intensive time-happening, a sacred and eternal time, with no precise measure, a time of creativity in which hours do not go by chronologically. It is “the time when there was not time, the place where there was no place”, as Regina Machado (personal communication, 2006, my translation), a storyteller and full professor at USP, would say. Regarding the experience of such a time, we can only hope that it passes through us (Larrosa, 2016), and we make ourselves available to it.

Moreover, I favor the *knowledge of experience* (Larrosa, 2016), exposing myself to risks, to dangers, in a journey into the unknown, which changes me and transforms me while I accept and allow experience to work on me. It is the possibility of an *education itinerary* (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) of existential (without being existentialist) and *poietic* (without aesthetic pretensions) nature. Knowledge of experience (im)presses me towards elusive moments. Propositions which avoid “information in excess”, “opinions in excess”, “lack of time”, and “work in excess” (Larrosa, 2016), aiming to offer a subversive and, at the same time, ancestral perspective.

An education perspective which does not ignore or undermine the importance of the imaginary and its repercussion in the learner’s education, but rather one of the initiatives which recognize the influence of the imaginary and uses this power in favor of a humanistic ethico-poetics.

One of my starting points is the observation that nowadays, in the so-called Western society, means of mass communication continually broadcast, to millions of people, poor and crude impressions (Durand, 1988). This partially responds, in a deviant manner, to a real human need: the need to feed from refined impressions, derived from the symbols, from the invisible and ineffable dimension which, paradoxically, requires, from us, the phenomenological effort of expression to try to apprehend it (Merleau-Ponty, 1992).

The absence of these impressions, or their retrieval in a poor manner, causes uncountable damage to the full health of individuals, forcing people to lonely live their angsts, while, otherwise, they could, as Haar (2000, p. 96) suggests, find help in art to endure this unbearable destitution and to cut through this night of the world that is the technological day of the current times. I defend, thus, that an *education of sensibility* (Duarte-Junior, 2010; Ferreira-Santos, 2005; Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) *in the initial education of educators* can be a way to enable access to what Haar (2000, p. 96) calls the sacred sustenance which art can express and, perhaps, preserve. When confronted with internal and external barriers that seem so big, sometimes I look for scraps and clues which might bring me energy to face these barriers—“soul-survival” strategies when facing the angst endured in daily life. It is in questioning and in searching for answers in our daily lives that the possibility emerges to relate the macro- and the micro-sociological levels (Epinay, as cited in Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012). I believe that it is in daily life that we can recognize the products of the hierarchizing logic of the social system and of the current education paradigms. It is also there, in daily life, that there is a fortuitous opportunity to rupture (or suspend for short while) these alienating mechanisms, through what Ferreira-Santos (2005, p.77) defines as an active reflection of a reflective action, in an ethical-poetical conduct of hermeneutic-phenomenological, of *myth-hermeneutic* nature.

More than the proposition of one more “new”, “unprecedented”, and “saving” curriculum for the initial education of educators, it is an approach in which the production of knowledge is seen as an indirect process with no claims for a previously envisioned result (project) and no purpose outside of the act of learning (instrumentalization). Answers are only possible when people face their lived experiences, when people are accompanied by others, facing others, and facing themselves. Skliar (2010, p. 154) defends an education as a never-ending, never-ordered act; education as *poiesis*, i.e., as a time of creativity and of creation. In other words, the author defends an educational journey of the subject as a subject in the world.

I believe in the possibility of guiding an act of *teaching-learning*, which Ferreira-Santos and Almeida (2012, p.54) qualify as the indissociable nature of teaching and learning as simultaneous processes towards making masters and apprentices discover themselves and the many things yet to be learned which interest them, so they can open their own education paths. They share a common experience, but each party potentially experiences a certain level of self-realization. Learning to belong to the collective while exercising their singularity, being awestruck by others

while recognizing the similar humanity each person bears. It is, as Skliar (2010, p.149) points out, a search for the other's vibration, for the living experience of an unexpected outburst of the other, of the other-being-who-is-unwavering-in-their-otherness. This calls for an ethical-poetical conduct which is non-reductionist of the other and has the other as one of its functions, a path of conversation and confrontation with otherness. It calls for the exercise of the construction of oneself and of one's *education itinerary* accompanied by others as they are—which Mounier (as cited in Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012, p.130) describes as each person completely making oneself according to their own path.

Therefore, I understand the curriculum more as a set of work principles, as precepts and procedures (curricular experience), than as a predefined script or schedule. It is important to consider the people, the place, the time, and the lived experiences to, in the meeting of masters and apprentices, compose an *itinerary* for the initial education of educators.

Initial education of educators

From the beginning of its official functioning in 2006, Lab_Arte has received a great demand for its courses from Pedagogy, Teaching-degree, and general-community students. Lab_Arte activities are not mandatory for students, but they count towards students' internship and guided activities hours. The laboratory is an opportunity of Pedagogy and Teaching-degree undergraduates to get in contact with practices to foster the artistic modes of expression in art-education.

In contact with the practices of Lab-Arte's *stories dramatization group* between 2012 and 2016, several Pedagogy and Teaching-degree undergraduates have declared (Cabrera, 2015) that a significant part of their initial education as educators only stimulates verbal-rational faculties and that the *philosophical stories dramatization* activities offered students an *education itinerary* (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) complementary to those of an illuminist, protestant, Aristotelian-Cartesian, Eurocentric schooling inclination:

“The dramatization course was as fun as possible, keeping things light and flowing, making the didactic aspects contained within it almost unnoticeable, or, even better, it is the very essence of the didactic form developed by it (Guilherme, History undergraduate, University of São Paulo)³.

The living experience of having participated in this process was extremely meaningful to me, in many ways. I, who used to be a person “who speaks and writes a lot”, have been a person “who feels a lot”, and the opportunity to intensely explore this “feeling” resonates with this period of my life.

Until recently, I idealized learning as something rather concrete, without noticing that, actually, I was seeing it as something completely abstract. Let me explain: to me, learning was a synonym to verbalizing and rationalizing, that is, I could only learn when I managed to (or thought I did) theorize about a matter. This process was so habitual that I believed I was living an objective experience when I was actually living an abstraction or a fantasy. Gradually, this realization became clearer to me and, during this process, the place of writing became more distant than the place of sensations. I began, slowly, to not need to write long texts narrating my (supposed) impressions or my (supposed) experiences. Slowly, this ability of really experiencing the moment became much more important. Today, I know I am only starting to understand the dimension of this way of being in the world, together with other ways I know so far.

This overview of how I perceive myself and how I fit in everyday reality has helped me apprehend, with a great deal of sensibility, the teachings transmitted during the dramatization of the stories, while, at the same time, this dramatization was building in me, slowly and at every meeting, the possibility of fine-tuning this perception, revealing a process of mutual feedback. (Sarah, Molecular Sciences undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

When facing practices which stand as alternative to their previous school education, students start reflecting on and questioning also their current academic education paradigms. *“I think that, of so many teachers I have had in my life, almost none asked for students’ opinions at the end of the course, no one asked for a feedback, so this is not something I am used to...”* (Mayumi, Pedagogy undergraduate, University of São Paulo).

Participants began thinking about their professional options, questioning the market and the work relations they would belong to as educators. The following account is a fragment from a letter by a Pedagogy undergraduate who participated in the group’s activities. Through her letter we can know the undertones of a market reality, seen from the perspective of an intern in a private Early Childhood Education school who is already facing the contradictions between an “ideal pedagogy” and the conditions by which she has to abide in her everyday work. It is also possible to notice how the praxis proposed by the *group* served as a counterpoint to the paradigm lived by the intern:

³ Data collected during the research process. Participants’ names are fictitious to follow the principles of the *Comissão de Ética da Faculdade de Educação* [School of Education Ethics Committee] from the University of São Paulo. The participant’s quotations in this paper were translated from Portuguese into English.

Due to the whole situation, to the lack of interaction this child had with her peers, I had the impression that, with her, I had lost myself as a child, as an educator, as a teacher. I was locked inside my body, like the children, I felt like I was simply there but was not existing. I did not have that spark, that will to play, to run, to jump, because I had always done these things with my students. When I attended the group's meetings, I knew that there I would find a way to find myself inside of me. Of feeling myself. Of knowing that the child who always existed in me somehow was still there, and this made me extremely happy.

Even though I was exhausted, I knew that if I applied myself to this moment, it would make me feel lighter. (Rebeca, Pedagogy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

To Jaci, another participant, questioning her work conditions as an intern in Basic Education brought her elements to devise a direction:

When I questioned my capacity as a teacher and blamed myself for doing a disinterested and forced work due to extreme fatigue regarding beliefs which were not my own, I held a “precious stone in my hands”⁴ long enough to realize that if I did not know well and learn to love what I desire as a profession, I would never be a confident and accomplished professional with what I chose to practice. (Jaci, Pedagogy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

I can observe the importance of a balanced nurturing of motor, instinctive, intellectual, and emotional functions (Ouspensky, 2009), or, to put it simpler: body, mind, and feelings working in harmony. These functions, operating in harmony, would allow for the full practice of human ontological characteristics which have been neglected, asleep, or forgotten in the urban, Western, and so-called civilized individual. These characteristics, nurtured by the educator, could constitute a calling for students to also positively desire something of better quality for themselves and for others.

The perception of the absences and gaps deriving from the initial education of this research's participating educators, might make these individuals feel the need to go on a search. The need produced by this perception creates a genuine feeling of searching, of trying, of experiencing *modulations of being* (Merleau-Ponty, 1992). One of the many ways to exercise these *modulations of being* is when educators in their initial education establish contact with the characters and the characteristics of the masters of traditions and of the initiators who often appear in certain *philosophical stories*.

⁴ The student is referencing the story “A pedra na mão” [The stone in the hand] (Carrière, 2004, pp.158-159), the starting point of one of the curricular experiences of the *stories dramatization group*.

Dramatization

There are many forms of performing arts which value improvisation. At the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, performing-arts improvisation resurfaced under varied forms with different purposes. It can be used as the basis for the construction or for the deconstruction of the theatrical text, but also as an exercise functioning as a vehicle for several forms of communication and expression. I am interested, overall, in that modality of improvisation which, as Pupo (2005, p. 227) describes it, comes from a clear principle: performing arts carry within themselves the elements which can contribute to human growth.

In my approach to performing-arts improvisation, I privilege a self-education and self-unveiling work in the initial education of educators by *dramatizing* (Cabrera, 2015, 2017) *philosophical stories*. These are practices towards an *education of sensibility* (Duarte-Junior, 2010; Ferreira-Santos, 2005; Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012). According to Ferreira-Santos and Almeida (2012, p. 69), from a sensitive reason, from the exercise of imagination, from poetic experimentation, and from valuing the imaginary when dealing with otherness without ethnocentric mechanisms, *education of sensibility* considers education as an end in itself and not as a means to reach instrumental objectives.

Because it is an *education of sensibility* practice, my approach is not instrumentalist: it is not about educating “multipliers”—educators in their initial education are not encouraged nor demanded to multiply curricular experiences in their potential students. This approach also does not entail the multiplication of learnings related to the theatrical language or to the strategic processes of attempting to comprehend the *philosophical stories*. It also is not a professional education for actors, storytellers, lecturers, orators, occupational therapists, psychodramatists, sociodramatists, human-resources psychologists, art therapists, etc.

The curricular experiences of the *stories dramatization group* are located in the art-education context. By adopting the generic expression of art-education, I am not addressing the innumerable nomenclatures which also refer to the intersection between education and art in their respective historical trajectories and whose context is not the purpose of this article. As I understand it, art-education can provide experiences and experiments with performing arts, for the exercise of oneself, in the self-education processes of educators in their initial education. They are curricular experiences related to *play*.

I am articulating here Huizinga's definition of *play*: a temporary, ruled, conventional situation, which “creates order, is order” (Huizinga, 1980, p. 10). I refer to a specific type of *play*, one from the *mimicry* category (Caillois, 1990): a *play* which calls for the temporary acceptance of an illusion physically materialized in a behavior, thus characterizing the *play* with a sense of miming, disguise, simulation, simulacrum.

Caillois (1990) recognizes *play* as an anthropological phenomenon and indicates that it can have different levels in several categories, including mimicry: from *paidia* (less regimented, more chaotic), to *ludus* (more regimented, more systematized). In the theater-education context, we verify that *play* from the *mimicry* category includes simpler levels, such as young children's dramatized play (*make-believe* dramatized play), and more organized and complex performances related to theater shows at school. From our non-hierarchizing perspective, each of these levels has an intrinsic value.

My ethical-poetical choice has been, in the last years, of using *dramatization* (Cabrera, 2015, 2017), a praxis from the *mimicry* category, which does not fit the category of *dramatic play* or *jeu dramatique* (Pupo, 2005)—in its English and French senses—nor of *theater game* (Pupo, 2005). *Dramatization* is inserted among these possible levels as an “intermediary” form between *dramatized make-believe play* (Lopes, 1989)—to which youth and adults could have access too—and possible developments of the *dramatic play*. Taken as an intermediary form, *dramatization* does not need nor should be an end in itself, but it can constitute the basis for a simultaneous or posterior theatrical work: it can be the preparation and/or the complementation of other long-standing techniques and poetics such as the dramatic game and the theatre game.

Dramatization regards itself as a poetic experience of the roleplaying game, in which actors are willing to play as if they were someone different from their habitual, daily-life selves. Similar to other forms of *play* from the *mimicry* category, even within *dramatization* there are levels of this involvement (or not) of the actor with the fictional situation presenting itself; there is an artistic-pedagogical trajectory to be searched for by the actors while they are cultivating their *metamorphosis capacity* (Lopes, 1989). Lopes (1989, pp. 61-62) affirms that the player's *metamorphosis capacity* is manifested, as a genuine response, by the player interested in becoming an *other*, amplifying his or her communication universe, expression ability, and creativity. The metamorphosis is a moment in which individuals overcome themselves to develop the circumstance and the personality of an other who does not depend on the determination of the

individual's ideal desire, interest, and personal, physical, ethical, moral, economical, and political characteristics. According to the author, during the dramatic practice, metamorphosis as a basic phenomenon demands the growth of the abstraction, conception, and individual decentralization abilities, i.e., a growth towards communication. Thus, the more individuals are distanced from the evolutions surrounding themselves, the further their actions and interferences can reach.

Dramatization is, therefore, an authorial way to foster actors to cultivate their *metamorphosis capacity* (Lopes, 1989), providing them with experiences directed at the discovery of the relations between inner life and physical expression (Santos, 1975, p. 69) in a universe in which sensations, emotions, movements, and sonorities are resources for receiving impressions both of oneself and of others. In *dramatization*, as we propose it, receiving impressions is the basis of expression. As Grotowski (Grotowski & Flaszen, 2010, p. 172) affirms, every authentic reaction begins inside of the body; the exterior is only the end of this process. And, I might add, when expressing ourselves, we continue to impress ourselves and others, as is posited by the Hermesian formulation of Delsarte (as cited in Cabrera, 2004, p. 21), who affirms that there is no truth in expression if the external expressive modality does not correspond to an internal impulse. Therefore, as the author affirms, there can be no “truth” in human expression if the manifestation, the external expressive movement, does not agree with a corresponding interior impulse or movement (and vice-versa). Delsarte then concludes that each intonation, gesture, or word which does not obey this fundamental *Law of Correspondence* will be false, affected, or conventional.

Any expression will be false or conventional if it lacks an act of feeling (and of feeling oneself). Through movements and actions, the players are led to discover the lived and not-lived dimensions of their inner worlds (Santos, 1975, p. 111), always with the certainty that the technical education comes from the need to elaborate a speech (Ryngaert, 2009) and does not precede it, especially regarding non-professionals.

I chose to focus on the etymology of *drama*, which, according to Slade (1987, p.18) in its original sense, derives from the Greek word *drao-*, “I do, I fight”. This author also affirms that doing, searching, and fighting are attempted by everyone. Hence, everyone is a *doer*, which is a principle of this research's entire empirical work.

Dramatizing does not necessarily mean abstaining from the other's look. It means, rather, taking part in a roleplaying game, a simulation game, in front of a more *intimate* audience. During the *dramatizations* there might and might not be anyone watching the improvisations, but many of them, soon afterwards, might experience similar processes. And this alters *how* you see, *from where* you see, *for what* you see, and *why* you see. The *players*, in this context, share their processes with *witnesses*, trying to reach them through *resonance*. As Barret and Landier (1994, p.15) affirm, in this game for oneself, with the other, to the other or others, watching the improvisation of the other means receiving the impressions felt by this other, to, perhaps, feed back one's own search. The authors further indicate, thus, that we get to know someone better after having played with them. I would add that we can also get to know ourselves better while playing with others. And by better knowing ourselves, it is possible to establish contact with others in a more intense, more vertical, and full-of-life manner.

Philosophical stories

Philosophical story is an expression I use to refer to traditional and Teaching Stories (Grillo, 1993; Grillo & Grillo, 2014; Machado, 2004, 2006; Shah, 2010; Varela, 2009), *Philosophical Stories* (Carrière, 2004, 2008), oral-tradition stories, and stories belonging to many cultural traditions (Zen, Sufi, Hasidic, Indian). They are short stories directly transmitting the knowledge accumulated by human beings in their civilization processes, in a reading of their deeper layers and vertical dimensions. As in Tahan's (2002) "*Fábula sobre a fábula*" [Fable about the fable], the truth is disguised as a fable to enter the palace and, only then, be accepted.

Existing in several cultures, *philosophical stories* are an instrument for containing and transmitting precious teachings, literally *extra-ordinary*, in the sense that they extrapolate the ordinary aspect of everyday experiences. Listening to and narrating these stories is, ancestrally, a way of educating children, youth, and adults.

This concept, within this tradition, does not include fairy tales, mythical accounts, fantastic tales, moral tales, parables, or didactic stories; which are usually based on primordial (timeless) beings and times, as in origin myths. The Anthropology of the Imaginary does not consider symbolic narratives such as myths and *philosophical stories* as belonging exclusively to primitive, irrational, backward populations. According to Ferreira-Santos and Almeida (2012, p.

72) there is an anthropological invariance, there is effectively no progress—anthropological data is not overcome, but eternally returns in the symbolic universe.

Even though *philosophical stories* contain humor, and several of them can make us smile and laugh, they are not jokes. *Philosophical stories* are ripe with regenerative power. It looks to me as if the teachings contained in them dig deeper in the listeners while they are laughing.

Philosophical stories always narrate meetings, transformations, and surprises usually in a daily-life context; as Carrière (2004) indicates, these stories make our guards go down and put us in a state of attention. Many of these narratives do not allow reader/listeners to get to a conclusion, even though they tend to unsettle moral conventions.

The knowledge present in the *philosophical stories* is veiled and depends on the listener's effort to be learned, on the storyteller's conscious effort to be exposed, and on the circumstances and contexts in which the double event—narrative and listening—experience is happening.

Philosophical stories are the raw material for sensitizing and developing a *sensitive reason* (Ferreira-Santos, 2005); they help dealing with apparently impossible situations; they provide us with the opportunity of laughing at our own problems, putting these problems phenomenologically in perspective; they help us notice the *object* and the *background*, preventing the hyperdimensioning of the *object* (personal communication, Grillo, 2012). The oral-tradition story is ripe with a concept of cosmos situating human beings in a scale in which they are not in a superior hierarchical position, but which they compose with other natures of being. Through the double event of listening and narrating an oral-tradition story, we can observe that every life experience is unique, at least for each one of us, experiencing for the first time what is ancestral or archaic.

According to Bachelard (1996, as cited in Ferreira-Santos, 2012, p.17), these stories are converters of mind energy, i.e., they are the necessary shock to access mind energies (in an anthropological sense, distant from psychologisms) with which we are not in touch in our daily lives.

For artist-educators and storytellers, a way of “personal achievement” is working, hermeneutically, with these stories. Self-achievement is understood in Socratic terms: knowing myself and becoming who I am. Hence, I experiment with the highly educational and indirectly

“healing” properties of these narratives. Healing understood as *pharmakon*, as medication or, more precisely, as re-mediation, reestablishing plots whose threads were previously cut from ourselves (Ferreira-Santos, 2010).

Traditional stories reflect an internal cosmogony (personal communication, Grillo, 2012), they do not have a prevailing spatial-temporal ideology (as more socializing perspectives might assume), because they serve, among others, the purpose of teaching self-observation.

In the *philosophical stories*, every character are potential aspects of ourselves, as a concise and direct form of *monodrama* (Mostaço, 2011, pp. 149-156). *Monodrama*, as proposed and theorized by the Russian symbolist Nikolai Evreinov (1879-1953), is a dramatic representation in which every character is an aspect or expansion of the protagonist’s identity, according to an altered state of perception in which these aspects discuss, negotiate, and interact in a short speck of time and in a single space.

The double event of listening and narrating these stories enables an experience of the power games continually acting over the human being, it expresses inner conflicts in external situations. In the *philosophical stories*, each character embodies a different “I” existing inside of us. Facing the same situation, each internal aspect reacts a certain way, having diverse and sometimes contradictory tendencies. *Philosophical stories* expose the duality of wanting and not-wanting which cohabit and continuously alternate within ourselves at every moment.

These stories connect generations, because they describe inner processes which are common to people of several ages living in different parts of the world. They touch the *double structuring of the imaginary* (Durand, 1997; Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012), that is, the concomitant existence of a deep invariable structuring of anthropological nature underlying to the human species and, at the same time, the variability of the sets of images which the spatial-temporal and cultural preponderance presents us in the multiplicity of human cultures; this converges with the Renaissance notion of *unitas multiplex*, nowadays updated to the interdisciplinary *complex* thought (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012; Morin, 2007).

Rarely understood is the function of so-called “bad” characters or of apparently immoral acts in the actions of some characters in traditional stories, because they serve the purpose of correcting a “magical” (or naïve) though that everything is achieved without effort. Certain characters, or the actions performed by them, are “propellers”, i.e., they show us, as the narrative

unfolds, that there must be a lot of voluntary effort and conscious suffering to develop the protagonist's craftiness and the overcoming of oneself through conflict (personal communication, Grillo, 2012). These propellers are the external expression of inner enemies. Traditional stories suggest facing great challenges with craftiness and ingenuity, because, by listening to a story, the reference is surreptitiously the listener's own living history and existential repertoire.

As Shah (2010, p. 31) indicates, stories should speak with each person according to their level of understanding; should pretend not knowing words listeners consider "known". These indications made us reflect upon the nature and the function of the *teaching stories* and the *philosophical stories*, understanding that the knowledge obtained in these narratives has its own way of being taught because, according to Shah (2010, p. 47), nothing actually worth it can be achieved without a minimum dose of effort; each thing requires an adequate amount of effort.

Resignifying oneself through fabulation depends on who receives the story, and on how and when they are being received (Shah, 2010, p.47). Or still, what matters is the context, "the time, the space, the people, and the talent"⁵ of the double event of listening and narrating. The meeting of the narrative and the listener happens when the narrative resonates with the people experiencing it.

Philosophical stories "speak" with each person according to one's level of understanding, but they have enough power to, at least, make each person intrigued or curious with the conversation established with one's own lived repertoire. In contact with these narratives, something extraordinary might happen, impossible to put into words, but physically perceptible by the senses: an electricity, a magnetism, an impression of something unhabitual, with a very specific flavor. A silence of a rare, unhabitual quality is made present. As if something mental, associative, was being silenced and, paradoxically, something wise could be heard inside of us.

Philosophical stories belong to another time, are beyond and behind the counting of chronological time, of the mechanical time, of the homogenous time of daily-life obligations. And *philosophical stories* can only be processed when we are in touch with this timeless, spaceless

⁵ Referring to the story "O dervixe e o cantor famoso" [The dervish and the famous singer] (Carrière, 2004, pp. 164-167; Shah, 2010, pp. 125-128).

space-time. These narratives can only be enjoyed and understood when we enter an extraordinary rhythm.

The *philosophical stories* used in our investigation belong to philosophical traditions and systems which possess, also, their own symbology and terminology. Trusting the direct and precise power of these stories, I dared narrate them to the *group's* participants during our curricular experiences, sometimes at the beginning, others at the end of the meetings, hoping these stories would reach not only their ears and mental connections, but their deeper listening, the one from the heart—the capacity of educators in their initial education of establishing intuitive, analogical, silent, and living connections.

Initiation mytheme

In this investigation, *philosophical stories* have the function of a symbolic narrative encapsulating in words what were previously actions, rites. I began realizing that in the *philosophical stories* chosen to base the *stories dramatization group* there was a recurrent reappearance of the characters of the master and the apprentice and of the act of learning and teaching. Stories with different origins, from “secret” traditions, which, in an accessible language even to the uninitiated, expressed the matter of the transmission of a teaching and of the continuity of a tradition. Moreover, in the selected *philosophical stories*, through a *poetic arrangement of images* (Bachelard, 1996), the figure of the wise old man was also recurrent.

In the selected *philosophical stories*, this wise old man undertakes disconcerting, unexpected attitudes, many times resulting in comicality and strangeness. Far from being “bastions of truth and certainties”, the masters portrayed in these *philosophical stories* are not always socially accepted people who possess renown of “official authority” to transmit any knowledge. Sometimes they are characters who cause even repulse or scorn.

These are stories in which the *initiation mytheme* is present. Mytheme is the minimal significant unity of a myth, the most basic structure of myth composition (Durand, 1988, 1996). In the Durandian *mythodological* (Durand, 1996) style of decomposing a myth (or a story, as in this investigation) into *mythemes*, the most recurrent one found in our selected stories was the *initiation mytheme*. Initiation is here understood as a rite of passage or a change of ontological regime or of social status (Eliade, 2004, 2010). However, I have not worked directly with rites of birth, marriage, or death. Perhaps the initiation present in the selected *philosophical stories* is a type of initiation to responsibility deriving from the contact with knowledge. By knowing, the individual becomes responsible for acting according to this knowledge. It is through the living experience of a series of rites of passage that one can reach maturity and can achieve a full existence (Eliade, 2004, 2010). Ritualizing a passage is a way to avoid forgetting the challenges which were overcome, the ontological capacity of overcoming them. Remembering is crucial to preserve acquired or received knowledge and to take it further, honoring a chain of transmission to which we start belonging. Ritualizing an initiation is also a way of broadcasting that a process of change has already been completed by the initiate, illuminating something blooming in the dark depths of the being.

Therefore, from all the possible initiations, I was interested in working specifically with the initiation to mastery (Gusdorf, 2003). Gusdorf (2003, p. 70) makes an important distinction between the teacher, who teaches everyone the same thing, and the master, who provides each person with a particular truth and, should one be worthy of the master's work, the master expects from this person a particular, unique answer, and an *accomplishment*.

The importance of the master-apprentice relationship is undeniable in the unveiling of knowledge, this relationship between a human being and another, in the acceptance of the radical contingency of the initiation process in which the master actually requires an apprentice to become a master; and apprentices require someone to help them perceive they are already initiated, but still do not know it. A relationship in which masters have responsibility for being the more experienced ones, but in which they still learn from their apprentices, because, while teaching, they learn. And apprentices learn by asking, questioning, transgressing.

The master-apprentice relationship is more accepted and developed by education forms related to the tradition of the Greek philosophers, of Eastern, Slavic, African, and American indigenous cultures, and those related to popular education and unschooling education.

The curricular experiences of *dramatizing philosophical stories* with an *initiation mytheme* were a way to put young Teaching-degree and Pedagogy undergraduates in touch with this possibility of initiation to the master's craft, a master with Eastern features, with a Socratic style, but who can—with willingness—be updated to contemporaneity and to the conditions of the Brazilian school with its American-indigenous and African roots.

This initiation to mastery means what Gusdorf (2003, p. 74) calls a change in direction, a conversion; in the unequal master-apprentice relationship, humanity's worth is unveiled—an unsuspected worth.

Looking for ways in which educators in their initial education could experience the roles of masters and apprentices in the selected *philosophical stories*, it was interesting for them to experience the unique flavor resulting from the master-apprentice meeting, since, as Gusdorf (2003, p. 78) affirms, whoever meets their master is finding, at the same time, their vocation.

In a meeting from the *stories dramatization group* we undertook a “round of Nasreddin”, when we read, in a shared reading, several selected stories in which the character of Nasreddin appeared. It was possible to know more about the varied facets of this character who perfectly embodies the role of a disconcerting master-apprentice, an “idiot” who reveals our most ingrained habits and who, surprisingly, is also able to teach through action. One of the participants of the investigation, a student of the Teaching degree in Philosophy, was impacted by the similarities between Nasreddin's and Socrates' strategies:

The only thing I can say about Nasreddin is that he is the representation of a wise man. To me, he is very similar to Socrates. Socrates would say: “I know that I know nothing”. Nasreddin thinks similarly... The true wise man does not want to teach something to people, the true wise man awakens the knowledge within people. Socrates considered himself akin to a “midwife” because he would help people “give birth” to the knowledge they had within. (Adriano, Teaching degree in Philosophy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

Another student was surprised by the impatient aspect of Nasreddin, the standard “idiot” man, functioning as our own mirror, causing laughter and, in some instances, allowing us to distance ourselves a little bit from our ordinary situations:

In parallel, I was reading and re-reading my story about patience. A smile of identification rose. How could it be different? I, so anxious, could not identify with Nasreddin, asking for patience RIGH NOW?! Patience with the Teaching degree (which provoked many moments of crisis at the beginning), with resettling at home after a year away, with the last and decisive year at college,

and with every long and incomprehensible process of life and of writing! (Therese, Pedagogy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

Nasreddin's story assigned to me was very convenient, since it coincided with the questions I was asking and the research I was doing about myself. I had the impression that you apprehended what I was feeling and expressing in those days, or I have imagined so. I still cannot understand... it allowed me to put the intellect aside and to feel myself in relation to it. (Murilo, Teaching degree in Philosophy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

Another participant was impacted by a story in which Nasreddin confessed his “not-knowing” about something, recognizing that, when you do not know something, you become open to the possibility of learning it:

The story I directly worked upon, “Difficult questions”, came in quite handy, because, in my constant attempt at answering things through theory, I noticed myself caught in a net of readymade mechanisms, limiting some of my choices, and not proposing anything new to me. Like I had a formula for each topic I faced, and these formulas adequately fit each one of them, making it not necessary for me to reassess or even reconsider the necessity of such formulas.

This clearly prevented me from giving room to the possibility of the unknown and, not even, of doubt. When faced with Nasreddin's attitude regarding his son's questions, I was surprised with the genuine honesty of his “not-knowing” and with the staggering observation of the opening of learning possibilities when facing situations to which we have no answers. Such a simple fact, which remained dusty in a corner of my self during the construction of my giant imaginary rational building. (Sarah, Molecular Sciences Undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

I believe the teachings contained in the selected philosophical stories were very pertinent to a broader understanding, by the educators in their initial education, of the nature of the teaching craft they had chosen for themselves. One of the participant's comments point in this direction:

When we began the stories about the master and the apprentice, the first character I performed was the apprentice and it is the one I identify the most which until today. I always feel an angst to learn things, I want everything to happen fast, and this story made me understand this in not the way, that everything has its own time. I think we are always learning from each other and from the situations. I am aware that we teach, too, but for me the feeling of learning is more present and meaningful. The story about patience made me think a lot about what was happening to me, about being an apprentice, about how to wait, how to have calm, because we can learn from everything, even from situations which are not so good. I started paying more attention to myself, to my body, and even to all the space limitations of the school I was an intern at. I tried making children pay more attention and be able to express themselves, somehow. (Rebeca, Pedagogy undergraduate, University of São Paulo)

(In)Conclusions

In Lab_Arte's *stories dramatization group*, I have noticed that, similarly to other experience and experimentation groups, the usual support of an anthropological perspective and of a perspective directed to otherness has enabled the project's development in a significant and satisfactory manner, evidencing its symbolic efficacy and its educational pertinence in this concept of curricular experience.

Participants' feedback, both in the final conversations in which we assessed the semester and in their textual production, has served as stimulation for the continuity of the experience with other groups of educators in their initial education, broadening the scope of the data which confirms, until the present moment, the practice's beneficial aspect and the potential it carries to enlarge students' repertoires.

The experience of the practice and of the experimenting solidifies a meaningful teaching-learning (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) which, going beyond the purely theoretical resources, prepares students for a careful listening (Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012) and for a more coherent practice with alternative (and, contradictorily, more ancestral) educational possibilities when these students are, themselves, performing their functions as educators, in situations which are formal or informal, systemic or with a social connotation, or even in popular education.

The scope of an *education of sensibility* (Duarte-Junior, 2010; Ferreira-Santos, 2005; Ferreira-Santos & Almeida, 2012)—which does not exclude rationality, but is not restricted to Western rationalities of an Aristotelian, Cartesian nature—as was exercised in the curricular experiences through *philosophical stories* (Carrière, 2004, 2008), has also enabled a more critical (counter-ideological), reflective (*constructos*), and sensitive (*perceptos*) reading by the participants, leading them to have, as a personal choice, the task of assuming—as a professional, personal and existential project—the more coherent search for the *modulations of being* (Merleau-Ponty, 1992).

References

- Bachelard, G. (1996). *A poética do devaneio*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Barret, G., & Landier, J.-C. (1994). *Expressão dramática e teatro*. Porto: Edições ASA.
- Cabrera, T. (2004). *Uma aprendizagem de sabores: a palavra cênica construída a partir da conexão entre movimento, emoção e voz*. Dissertação de Mestrado, Instituto de Artes da Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2005.
- Cabrera, T. (2015). *A ético-poética do trabalho sobre si por meio da dramatização de contos filosóficos de mitema iniciático na formação inicial de educadores*. Tese de Doutorado, Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de São Paulo, 2015.
- Cabrera, T. (2017). Dramatização de contos filosóficos na formação de educadores como campo de experiência. *Cadernos GIFE-CIT- UFBA*, Ano 21, 38.
- Caillois, R. (1990). *Os jogos e o homem: a máscara e a vertigem*. Lisboa: Cotovia.
- Carrière, J.-C. (2004). *O círculo dos mentirosos: contos filosóficos do mundo inteiro*. São Paulo: Ediouro.
- Carrière, J.-C. (2008). *Contos filosóficos do mundo inteiro*. São Paulo: Ediouro.
- Duarte-Junior, J. F. (2010). *O sentido dos sentidos: a educação (do) sensível*. Curitiba: Criar.
- Durand, G. (1988) *A imaginação simbólica*. São Paulo: Edusp.
- Durand, G. (1996). *Campos do imaginário: textos reunidos por Daniëlle Chauvin*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget.
- Durand, G. (1997). *As estruturas antropológicas do imaginário*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Eliade, M. (2004). *Ritos de iniciação e sociedades secretas*. Portugal: Ésquilo.
- Eliade, M. (2010). *O sagrado e o profano: a essência das religiões*. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes.
- Ferreira-Santos, M. (2005). *Crepusculario: conferências sobre mitobermenêutica & educação em Euskadi* (2a ed.). São Paulo: Zouk.
- Ferreira-Santos, M. (2010, julho/dezembro). Fundamentos antropológicos da arte-educação: por um pharmakon na didaskalia artesã. *Revista @mbienteeducação*, 3(2), 59-97.

- Ferreira-Santos, M., & Almeida, R. (2012). *Aproximações ao imaginário: bússola de investigação poética*. São Paulo: Képos.
- Grillo, N. (Org.). (1993). *Histórias da tradição sufi*. Rio de Janeiro: Dervish.
- Grillo, N. (2012, setembro). Oficina. O processo criativo na arte de contar história. Boca do Céu. In *Encontro Internacional de contadores de histórias*. São Paulo: Oficina Cultural Oswald de Andrade.
- Grillo, N., & Grillo, J. G. de Q. (2014). *O guerreiro invisível e outros contos do tempo: uma antologia da tradição viva*. Rio de Janeiro: Jaguatirica.
- Grotowski, J., & Flaszen, L. (2010). *O teatro laboratório de Jerzy Grotowski 1959-1969* (B. Rauliono, Trad.). São Paulo: Perspectiva; Edições Sesc SP; Pontedera, IT: Fondazione Pontedera Teatro.
- Gusdorf, G. (2003). *Professores para quê? Para uma pedagogia da pedagogia*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Haar, M. (2000). *A obra de arte: ensaio sobre a ontologia das obras*. Rio de Janeiro: Difel.
- Huizinga, J. (1980). *Homo ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*. Londres: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Larrosa, J. (2016). *Tremores*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica.
- Lopes, J. (1989). *Pega teatro*. Campinas: Papyrus.
- Machado, R. (2004). *Acordais: fundamentos teórico-poéticos da arte de contar histórias*. São Paulo: Editora DCL.
- Machado, R. (2006). *Acordais: a arte de contar histórias - Paço do Baobá*. Curso, São Paulo/ SP.
- Maturana, H., & Varela, F. (1997). *De máquinas a seres vivos - Autopoiese: a organização do vivo*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1992). *O visível e o invisível*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.
- Morin, E. (2007). *Introdução ao pensamento complexo*. Porto Alegre: Sulina.
- Mostaço, E. (2011). Evreinóv, o homem teatro. In A. Cavalière, & E. Vássina (Orgs.), *Teatro russo: literatura e espetáculo*. São Paulo: Ateliê Editorial.
- Ouspensky, P.D. (2009). *Psicologia de uma evolução possível ao homem*. São Paulo: Pensamento.

Pupo, M. L. de B. (2005, julho/dezembro). Para desembaraçar os fios. *Educação e realidade*, 30, 217-228.

Ricoeur, P. (2013). *Amor e justiça*. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes.

Ryngaert, J.-P. (2009). *Jogar, representar: práticas dramáticas e formação*. São Paulo: Cosac & Naif.

Santos, A. (1975). *Persona: o teatro na educação, o teatro na vida*. Rio de Janeiro, Eldorado Tijuca.

Shah, I. (2010). *Histórias dos dervixes: histórias de ensinamento dos mestres sufis dos últimos mil anos: selecionadas de textos clássicos sufis*. Rio de Janeiro: Roça Nova.

Skliar, C. A. (2010). Entre a diferença e os diferentes: retorno do outro ou poética de um Eu que hospeda? In Ferreira-Santos, & E. S. L. Gomes (Orgs.), *Educação & Religiosidade: imaginários da diferença* (pp. 185-215). João Pessoa: Editora Universitária UFPB.

Slade, P. (1987). *O jogo dramático infantil*. São Paulo: Summus.

Tahan, M. (2002). *Minha vida querida*. Rio de Janeiro: Record.

Varella, F. (Org.). (2009). *99 contos de Nasrudin*. Rio de Janeiro: Caravana de Livros.

Submitted in April 26, 2017; reviewed in November 13, 2017; accepted for publication in December 20, 2017.