

Editorial

We were looking for a word that encompassed different strategies for the passing on of theatre knowledge. We wanted a word that contained the complexities of the independent auto-didactic reality as well as those of the master/pupil relationship; the practice of workshops and training as well as traditional western schooling; the transmission of a craft through apprenticeship as well as the absence of such reference points. We came upon the word **generation**. Compulsory schooling, the need to earn a living, the demand to produce quick results and the artistic process of live performance being taken over by mass events and television - all of these factors are influencing both the way in which theatre is generated and the different generations of theatre practitioners. Generation is also the creation of scenic material and performances. Generation can be looked upon as belonging to different ages or theatre traditions. It could also be seen as the difference between the ones born into a professional family, those who chose a family to be adopted by, and the "orphans".

The great Indian dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi complained that she could no longer find young people who showed her same commitment. In the USA theatre professors in universities cannot develop challenging training programmes because they are not allowed to extend their teaching hours. In Europe, students challenge authoritarianism and theatre schools ask themselves what kind of job they must prepare their pupils for. In Japan some of the most famous families of classical forms are no longer able to attract young apprentices. In Latin America collective creation, which originated from a search for autonomous identity, is now confronted by a completely different political reality. All over the world young people are desperate to learn and to put their learning into practice. Women especially look for references corresponding to their own needs which theatre history does not offer.

There is lightness in this issue of *The Open Page*. Having a life in front of you, or the recognition of the right to still be learning even later in life, are reasons for optimism. Connection to the social and historical context seems to be less present in the articles, because the individual quest, the personal process of growing - be it teaching or learning or both - is central. **Generation** is seen as a lifetime of growing. For the younger generation it is not so important to discuss gender in relation to the theme; other women have conquered the right for them to ignore that. But still it must be noted that the archetypal image of a master remains masculine and, although many women are recognised teachers in theatre, still the prevailing master talked about in the articles is male. Maybe women do not want to be called masters and are in search of alternatives.

Many articles place **generation** within a context: a network, a group, a whole life, a master or even photography. The main focus is on the pedagogical process and a section entitled *Mothers and Daughters* includes some very young authors. The younger generation appears exclusive and sure, as every generation has before. We discover generations within a generation and that things other than age form generations. The question for all is how to find your own way while learning from each other.

Julia Varley
Holstebro, March 2000