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Children's Theater

Dr. Cheima Omeiche

UniversityTlemcen

Email: cheimaomeiche@gmail.com

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***Abstract*—**This article explores the fundamental framework of children's theater, examining its conceptual definitions, core characteristics, primary objectives, and vital scenographic elements. Structurally, children's theater serves as an essential artistic, educational, and psychological medium that bridges entertainment with cognitive development.

The paper outlines the definition of children's theater as performances executed by professional or amateur actors tailored for young audiences, aiming at both education and enjoyment. It highlights the developmental stages of children—categorized into absolute fantasy, championship (heroism), and idealism—emphasizing how theatrical productions must align with the psychological, social, and cultural needs of each age group. Furthermore, the text details the multi-dimensional goals of children's theater, encompassing declarative, educational, entertainment, and artistic-aesthetic functions, which collectively foster socialization, safeguard cultural identity against external influences, and translate abstract concepts into tangible, sensory experiences. Finally, the article analyzes key visual and spatial components of theatrical production, specifically focusing on theatrical costumes (acting as the character's "second skin" to convey psychological and social status) and theatrical space (functioning not merely as a physical location, but as an expressive medium laden with linguistic and symbolic connotations).

***Keywords*—**Children's Theater ; Psychological Stages ; Educational Goals ; Theatrical Costume ; Theatrical Space

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1- the concept of children's theater

There are several definitions of children's theater through various dictionaries and references that dealt with this concept, including the Oxford Dictionary, which defined children's theater as follows :" it is the performances of professional or amateur actors for children, whether on a stage or a Hall prepared for it"[1].

As in the dictionary of theatrical lexicon, the concept of children's theater is: "a designation given to performances directed to a children's audience by child or adult actors, ranging in purpose from education

‘ to enjoyment "[2] ‘ So is the theater, which is provided by specialized professionals for children, in which the

little ones are represented alongside the adults in some performances." "[3] Which means that the theater has its audience and does not specify to whom...

- The children's play is presented by its actors, old or young.
- Its purpose is entertainment, fun, creating a motivational and educational atmosphere for children viewers.
- The children's play has specialists in this field (author, director, scenographer ...)

And " generally means all forms of children's theater, whether that in which the child is represented for the child or in which the adult is represented for the young.."[4]

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We also believe that the children's theater is one of the most important goals by which we can guide or change the child through the themes and intellectual contents on which the play is based , which is meant: "that theater in which the children themselves perform, which is of great importance, for a number of reasons, including raising the child to love dealing with others and The high art of others and the transformation of some school courses into cognitive games that children exchange among themselves [5].

Thus, we realize the importance of this type of two aspects, namely:

- Diagnosis of the child for actingrepresentative roles .(Motor, vocal, and sensory embodiment ...) On stage .
- Have an emotional and mental impact for the viewer who is a child.

2- Characteristics of the children's theater:

One of the most important characteristics of a child's theater is to take into account the age group and study the psychological state of all age stages, because this aspect is basically a fundamental and essential factor in following up the child's activity because its result is inevitable, hence we stand on two possibilities: (a child can absorb the idea of a theatrical performance, and A distinct age in its various dimensions and psychological, social and cultural components for the adult world and the culture of

society"[6] ‘ As the students of this noteworthy specialty, namely psychology, divide the childhood stage into

stages, each stage has characteristics, and what suits it from the child's theater, what are these characteristics ?

A-the stage of absolute fantasy:

This genre attracts a large number of viewers in various categories unlimited (young, adult) so that the way the show embodies social themes and a simple idea mixed with imagination in a clear way, contributes to changing society and leaving viewers space for assumptions and fantasies of the idea that the actors may put forward in the show.

B_ championship stage:

This stage is based on courage, adventure and heroism and seeks realism, and relies in writing its plays on scientific information, and is characterized by its educational and social character, while emphasizing religious and moral values and national and national affiliation in an implicit style.

C-the ideal stage:

It affirms high ideals, as the child's "higher ego" strengthens in it, and this stage invests historical and religious information that addresses the mind, and has educational and moral goals.[7]

‘ The concept of idealism is included in children through their desires, future orientations and self-confidence,

for example, they can declare and say, " I want to become a brave knight, like the character of Antara Ben Shaddad ..."This assures us that the child liked the role of Antara Ben Shaddad in his qualities, and also wants to become like him, it is very important here to satisfy his desires through his obvious interest, because" the theater aimed at young people, that is, to a specific age group with certain interests, takes into account the characteristics of childhood stages and fits them to perfection by satisfying their needs in The framework of ideals and sound impressions "[8]

3_ Goals of the children's theater

The children's theater is one of the most important awareness-raising, educational, educational and more than that, cathartic messages and getting out of the study crowd" from school to home", this is what develops the child's psychological state and knowledge of the people around him and the groups that go to the theater and participate with them, he even grows to have friends and communicate with them By discovering his mental and motor skills .... Theater is one of the most important arts, which has been providing its aesthetic activity to benefit it in developing the culture of the individual and increasing experiences, skills and information, no wonder about that, it was said, Give me a theater that gives you a civilized people, it is an important tributary of culture, and its importance is increasing day by day, especially in light of the current The identities of peoples, in terms of their influence on how they are brought up, and their social patterns, and where the importance of literature in general

and theater in particular is underestimated, as society has become vulnerable to foreign currents and imported cultures that have distorted its ideas, and we are in dire need of rooting this identity and fixing it in the souls, especially the younger generations, and theater is a key element in this rooting, and perhaps The child's literature and culture may limit the invasion of these savage cultures, by producing his own literature and culture, corresponding to his society, Customs and beliefs, as the most important components of the process of socialization, religious, moral, political and cognitive [9].

The theater is an important medium of culture, it contains dialogue, movement, colors, music, beauty and truth, and in all this, the theater is considered the most influential cultural medium for the

recipient..And the child is the most impressionable and emotional creature "[10]. The most important goals

achieved by the children's theater can be mentioned as follows:

- **Declarative function:** that is, the transfer of information to the child, a kinesthetic scheme, visual and sound effects.
- **Educational function**: it is one of the tools for building and consolidating the prevailing and targeted values.
- **Entertainment function**: where the theater can be a way to make the child happy and entertain him.
- **Artistic-aesthetic function** tasting beauty, releasing creative and imaginative energies. According to these goals, we see it heading to two destinations:

The first is to amuse the child and develop sensory, psychological and motor perception, he can taste theatrical work through aesthetic and life manifestations.

Second: raising him on noble values and forming his personality in accordance with social and national skills, useful Customs and traditions[11].

Thus, it can be said that the theater is one of the literary and artistic races that contribute to the development of the child's scientific and cultural achievements, for what, even physical or sensory media, including plastic art, which is available in decorative paintings on stage, music and sound effects to attract the child more and emphasize the dramatic scene and enhance the visual image in the theatrical presentation of the child . Other possibilities ..... The theater is "more suitable for presenting abstract concepts to children in a sensory form, because children's thinking is dominated by the sensory aspect that depends on tangible things, because the theater puts facts, people and ideas in front of the child in an embodied, tangible, visual and tangible form, which facilitates their perception of things, and understanding of complex things, and thus surpasses other media such as radio and television Which depends on only one or two senses, while the theater depends on all the senses "[12]

4- theatrical costumes (Costume) 4-1 the concept of the outfit:

To begin with, we can give a definition of theatrical costume as " the other skin of the actor on which

Tairov spoke at the beginning of the twentieth century, because the costume that exists in the theatrical work,

as a sign of character and disguise "[13] Ibrahim Hamada also defined fashion as " the clothes that an

actor wears to work on stage, as these clothes may be made for the actor according to the era, social and geographical conditions that he plays, and they may be the same as his own clothes in his ordinary contemporary life, but he returns them to the performer's personality"[14].

Therefore, the theatrical costume is not called a costume unless the actor wears it while performing a certain role on stage, because it appears in a different form and form from the truth when we find it outside the theatrical game . The role of the costume here is to confirm the intellectual core relationship between it and the personality, which is represented from a psychological and social point of view, and to reveal the intellectual and artistic meaning of the theatrical performance.

The theatrical costume is an essential element of the theatrical performance, which concerns the scenographic aspect of it, as it performs several functions, including symbolic, artistic and aesthetic, with its forms, colors and images, suggesting meanings and contents captured by the viewer.

Costumes have an aesthetic taste due to the color, shape and size, and therefore the costume has become the external appearance of a person, and it is not limited to only the pieces of clothing, its method of separation, shape, and color, but also participates with other means in complementing them, and making them as a method of employing the leather industry, and theatrical costumes are All the visual elements of the show are connected by an interconnected artistic form, harmoniously embodying the status of the actor, the scenic image of the recipient child.

It can be recalled at the beginning that costumes are everything that includes and covers the actor's body, except for the mask and haircut, and may contain ornaments that are for decoration, and do not have a use function, and one of the aesthetics of this element is that it expresses the taste of the character, its social reality, age and geographical affiliation, and may [15].

The function of the costume in the children's theater is to move from one situation to another, which is a communicative process through the use of color, shape and size ... Thus, when the child sees this visual image (costume), he is directly attracted to the presentation and reception of the events and dialogues that take place between the actors on stage . The difference of the costume according to the style of the character and her role in the play as the character of the "king" in his social and political status differs from the status of the "servant", and therefore the social status and psychological state play an important role in the embodiment of the costume on the actors, and therefore the psychological impact on the child when receiving these various roles is striking.

The designer relies on the basics and principles of aesthetic formation, which is driven by the form as a whole and a component within the theatrical performance system, where the theatrical landscape is considered an incubating environment for theatrical events, so the designer had to take care of the theatrical space by designing the scenery to make it an arena of interaction between the recipient and the dramatic The designer has his visions of the director, who forms the focus of the creative process, which builds the show on the basis of aesthetically moving foci according to the philosophical idea of the show, so the designer had to harmonize with that in providing a dreamscape and that act for this he uses different techniques to provide multiple readings of the theoretical vocabulary during the The generation of many connotations by the particles of the theatrical scene through the actor's gate by dealing with it, where he moves with it and through it, and here the little child is attracted to these actions and the image that occurs with its fusion with the view and there are aesthetic intellectual connotations.[16]

5- theatrical space:

Theatrical space is a well-defined concept that is absorbed by the mind and dictated by sensations, and it is embodied, and it is not only the place of dramatic movement, but also an idea in the head [17] “. .” That is, space is not only a location or a place where the performance is performed, but it is a means of expression

that has linguistic and non-linguistic connotations and signs, and because its material and tangible field embodies ideas that fit or express the general idea of the play .

For this reason, we find from the children's theater writers who prepare the built and architectural theatrical space, and the concrete framework in which the theatrical performance takes place, while others see in it only the place where the theatrical performance is located, so the design of the space is imaginary embodied in the author, and then the director, and the actor, and it is [18].

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Some of the children's playwrights consider the built theatrical space, the architecture and the concrete framework in which the theatrical performance takes place, while others consider that the theatrical space is limited to the place where the theatrical performance is located, so the design of the space is imaginary embodied in the author, and then the director and the actor, and it is visual in the.[20]

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