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School theatre between the pupil's awareness and the ambition of performance

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Abstract. The article talks about the educational theater in schools, pupils have ambitions and great desire to roleplay, because they get this desire by nature. Theater is considered as a father of all arts, which contributes to the development of child's brain during his early stages of life. However, the educational curriculum failed to include theater as a school subject; on the one hand, cultural centers and other bodies strive to create a theater space that match with the little child's mind. Therefore, authors should deal with child's intellectual and imaginative level. Among the examples of child's love for theater is his simulation and imitation to his teacher when delivering courses in the classroom, he indeed loves and is inclined to act.

Keywords. theater, school theater, educational theater, acting, puppetry, shadow play, puppet play

Introduction:

Theatre is the arts' source. It belongs to the direct arts contributing to the child's mind development. It deals with several topics and issues regarding the children's reality, environment and society, especially at their schools.

Despite the educational institutions' curricula under a certain educational system, they don't give the enough amount of consideration to the child's tendencies and talents in the field of theatre. So, teachers and playwrights have to make theatre shows, which should be appropriate to the children's educational level and immature intellectuality. They should rather improve their imaginative level, which makes the child imitate his teacher while teaching him at classroom.

So, looking after the child, as a creative in performance and theatre, the educational institutions aren't the only places where the child receives knowledges, values, trends and skills. According to the modern studies' results, in various societies, it's practically clear that the educational institutions give the smallest amount compared to the other social institutions such as: kindergartens, cultural spaces and youth spaces, whose role becomes parallel to the educational institutions. So, we've to ask the following questions:

What's the child theatre? What does the school theatre signify? What're its kinds? How can we prepare this generation's audience to be of the next one? Do the educational programs

include play texts reflecting the pupil's reality? What's the theatre's educational significance for the pupil? What're the school theatre objectives at the primary stage?

Firstly: the child theatre

The term Drama is used as a synonym to the term theatre; the word drama is derived from the Greek verb "Droo", which means "I do". So, it has the meaning of "to do". It expresses life with its distinct nature. Thus, it's a literature devoted for performance, which means acting the event. Aristotle considers it the drama's main part, spirit and reality, since it's life on-stage.

The child drama is considered as one of the most important kind of drama. It's one of the art forms. It's not a different activity, it's rather a real behaviour through which the child discovers life¹.

The researcher Souhir Abd Elhamid considers the child theatre as the human or puppet show, which directs the children towards acquiring a set of experiences, knowledges, skills, cultural, literary, artistic and educational ideas helping them to develop the aesthetic feeling and artistic moral for building a human complemented personality.

So, the child theatre is a set of human and puppet performances presented by the proficient child theatre, where roles are performed by persons with puppets whether they're glove puppets, strings puppets or shadow puppets, besides the black theatre shows².

Secondly: the school theatre definition

It's the theatre devoted for the child be it his production, which is presented to children by him, or the production of an adult, with or without the child's contribution, and it's presented to children by adults³. So, it belongs to school in terms of ideas, performance, experience, function, influence and effectiveness. Child belongs to theatre, especially throughout his primary stage.

The school theatre has a determined and specific scale; the school represents its profuse walls and borders. It's whether presented at classroom through the teacher's guidance or at the schoolyard, especially during religious or national events or parties.

The school theatre is like showing an educational material attractively and amusingly⁴. It makes the pupil pay attention to it until the end. It's repeated in street by other characters, who aren't those who performed it previously. They're rather the school audience. It's usually shown in street in an excellent way without being embarrassed from the teacher or the other workers. This is called the educational theatre, which has an educational message to transmit. The school theatre belongs to it, since the educational side includes the school as an educational institution. It also includes every theatre with a guidance or educational dimension⁵.

Thirdly: the school theatre kinds

It has four kinds, and they're mentioned as follows:

1. The educational theatre: it's presented by children from previously prepared texts. It can be used for explaining lessons and the educational curricula excitedly so that the child gets a positive impact in the learning process.

2. The spontaneous theatre: it's also called the creative drama. It's based on the idea that children imitate adults. In this kind, the teacher presents a topic, and the children express it freely⁶. So, they can conceive it in their imagination and perform it on-stage. Thus, the child, through time, becomes creative and productive.

3. Puppet theatre: it's figured out with puppets, which move, think and speak. They raise the audience emotions⁷. It includes all the puppets' types:

A. Marionettes: a form of theatre, where the roles are performed by marionettes rather than real actors, especially glove puppets. They're the most amusing puppets for the child. They require a great skill to benefit from their several expressive and actional potentials⁸.

B.



Figure 1: Puppets theatre

Figure 2: Puppets theatre



Figure 3: Marionets theatre



Figure 4: Marionets theatre



C. **Shadow puppets:** a form of hiatus with a dramatical nature. The characters are performed by puppets moving behind a white shade. The light is shed behind them so that the audience view their shadows⁹.

Figure 5: Shadow theatre



Figure 6: Shadow theatre



Figure 7: Image theatre



D. Stick puppets: the play characters are performed by puppets. Some of them are pinned on stick, and others are horizontally moved through iron or wooden bars controlled by the puppet master¹⁰.

Figure 8: Stick puppets



4. The educational theatre: it's an educational art in which the style is gathered with objectives. It's linked to its cognitive and creative origins. It restores heritage in an educational activity whether through referring to the educational and popular literature or to the symbolic stories and songs of dance for children¹¹.

Fourthly: the educational significance of the child theatre

The child theatre is one of the most significant high influencing educational means, since it addresses the child's various senses, besides being one of the most prominent influencing effective mass communications means, so it's better than all the other educational means because of its direct characteristic and the easiness of addressing the receptors. It also gives the model with more figuring out with keeping the depth. It's¹²:

1. A mean for developing the complemented personality: it contributes to the development of the child's personality with its new perspectives whether about things, people or events. It's considered as a complete mean for activating cognitive and mental sides. Furthermore, it achieves the emotional balance and fulfilling the motivations.

2. A mediator for presenting the human experience: theatre clearly contributes to show the children various life experiences so that their minds would be broadened to understand life.

3. An informative mean: it's the relationship between singing arts, action and music, from one hand, and the linguistic skill consisting in performance and speech, from another hand. It's also a visual and hearing communication mean, since it depends on the hearing and visual awareness, which leaves an everlasting impact in the child's memory and his imagination components, which would contribute to form the child's personality on the long-term.

4. An educational mean: it's one of the most important human knowledge sources, besides being one of the most vital factors in the process of the civilizational and cultural progression in every society. Since it's the source of all the arts, it's one of the most significant educational means looking after the ethical, behavioural and aesthetic sides.

5. A teaching mean: through presenting the educational curricula in the form of theatre, which means putting the academic material in theatre course i.e., changing the academic material nature from letters in books to an actional nature performed by a group of persons for the sake of making it easy for the child.

Basing on the fact that theatre relies on a set of arts, it plays the role of steering up the children's creativity. Since it's one of the artistic activities, it should be practiced at our educational institutions for the sake of using it to present the educational curricula and materials.

6. An entertaining mean: it contributes to the use of reality through fantasy; performances make children happy. The entertaining and educational sides contribute to the enrichment of the child's linguistic attainment with new words and expressions given by theatre. Some studies have indicated that the children, who visit theatre, have a great ability of distinction, linguistic potential and social consensus¹³.

Fifthly: the school theatre objectives at the primary stage

The school theatre is significant. It has educational and teaching objectives for the pupil including¹⁴:

1. Enriching the ethical and educational values.

2. Strengthening self-confidence and surpassing inferiority complex, introversion and isolation.

3. Fulfilling the desire in performing the characters' roles and creating situations with facing them.

4. Raising emotions through feeding imagination and strengthening observation, concentration and disciplinary.
5. Entertainment and pleasure.
6. Grasping the school theatre terminology and techniques and enriching the linguistic attainment.
7. Strengthening the control over actions, features and some body parts.

Many principal concepts and ethical, religious and national values might be developed in the school theatre whether through the theatre text per se or the stage show with all of its components and influences¹⁵. This activity has the ability to steer up all the child's pent-up energies. It can solve the human problems through acting, drawing, speaking, music and work in team. It restores the psychological balance. Children feel spontaneous strong pleasure in the idea of performing events and stories on-stage. They figure out the characters, which avails them the opportunity to enter the adults' world so that they can make decisions. So, their performing experiences are formed at the primary stage. This would often be through performing the school plays. So, theatre achieves attraction on the aestheticism and mind levels¹⁶.

Finally, we think that the children theatre has to be appropriate to them in terms of understanding, awareness, decoration, reality and language. It's a complemented world playing a main role in the educational process, since it's an activity performed by the learner with the teacher's supervision for achieving appropriate objectives to his nature. It's the space where the topics are spontaneously treated without a commitment or foreign pressures on the pupil's psyche, without forgetting the parents' role in watching theatre shows with their sons whether at home or at theatres.

Footnotes:

¹ Iman Alarbi Ennaqib. (2002). The educational values of child theatre. Shebel Badran, University knowledge publishing house, Alexandria, Egypt, ed.1, pp.65-66

² Ibid, p.97

³³ Hamid Moustaqar. (1989). Child and school theatre. Education and teaching journal, p.14

⁴ Naim Aouda. (2011). Childhood theatre oasis -plays and songs-. Ghaidae publishing and distribution house, Amman, Jordan, ed.1, p.21

⁵ Mary Ilyas, Hanan Qassab Hassan. (1996). Theatre dictionary: theatre and performance arts' concepts and terminologies. Lebanon Library publishers, n.ed. p.137

⁶ Ahmed Ali Kenan. (2011). Theatre effect on developing child's personality. Damascus University Journal, v.27, columnist: 1 2, p.111

⁷ Ibid, p.107

⁸ Iman Alarbi Ennaqib. (2002). The educational values of child theatre. P.122

⁹ Ibid, p.189

¹⁰ Ibid, p.211

¹¹ Ahmed Ali Kenan. Opsit, p.112

¹² Iman Alarbi Ennaqib. (2002). The educational values of child theatre. Pp.98-101

¹³ Iman Alarbi Ennaqib. (2002). The educational values of child theatre. P.102

¹⁴ Abd Alwahab Almeqadmi. School theatre role in constructing the teaching-learning act at the primary school. A web article

¹⁵ Kamel Eddin Houcine. (2000). Observations about teaching theatre: definition and objectives. Revised by: Cairo, Egypt, n.ed. p.10

¹⁶ Mahmoud Hassan Ismail, Mahmoud Ahmed Mazid. (2000). Elements and forms' emergence, development, objectives and characteristics, Cairo, Egypt. Ed.1, p.63

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