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Dimensions of Educational Values in Children's Theatre A reading of the play Samir and the school trip by the storyteller Kahman Massouda as an example

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ABSTRACT

children's theater interrogates, in its intellectual dimensions and serious content, the culture of creativity and its role in activating and directing the child's thinking. It highlights values and cultivates perceptions that contribute to constructing the child's character on ethical, personal, and social levels. These aspects assist in preparing the child with a sound and effective foundation within the community.

Keywords: Theater, Child, Creativity, Values, Ethics, Society

INTRODUCTION

Theatre for children is an expressive effectiveness that moves from the realm of the written to the audible and visual, activating and training the senses of the child. This is not an easy task when the product is linked to another productive effectiveness called the artistic or influential goal, through which the creator seeks to program it within the intellectual system of the child. The issue of promoting values may seem easy, but in reality, it requires constant awareness, a practiced and conscious artistic strategy, and a serious approach suitable for the level of the child's perception, in a way that touches the essence of the self within the essence of existence that lies behind it.

For this reason, sincerity in art directed towards children is necessary through instilling values that contribute to building the greater part of their personality through the taste that undoubtedly appeals to the child. Here, the role of the creative artist comes into play, as they endeavor, through their brush, to illuminate the desired values. This involves artistic thinking, the culture of creativity on the part of the producer, and the importance of the interaction between this age group and the artistic elements on the other hand.

The Concept of Children's Theater

Firstly, the concept of children's theater is defined as "the designation given to performances aimed at audiences of children and adolescents, presented by child actors or adults, with its purpose ranging from entertainment to education. " This is because theater is undoubtedly one of the most influential factors close to the child's taste and psychological inclinations. The goal is to "entertain the child, stimulate their knowledge and ethics, and their sensory perception, " while also stimulating their latent potential and creative ability to create an educational atmosphere blended with the spirit of excitement that occurs in their imagination.

Theater plays a distinguished role in directing and developing children's perceptions, training them for life, and achieving positive training filled with lessons and ethical judgments. It is a school of eloquence and controlled emotions. "Theater is not only literature, but also includes other influences" that work on building the child's edifice from all moral, personal, social, and other aspects that help in preparing them in a sound manner.

This sound preparation can only be achieved by promoting values through the training of the child's senses using this artistic expressive material that combines the power of enlightenment, awareness, attraction, and influence to encourage the child, instill in them the desire for contemplation, learning, and discovery.

In this intervention, we attempted to delve into the serious theatrical text directed towards child in its content and intellectual dimensions, undoubtedly touching upon the prophecy of the creative moment of writing. It has undoubtedly breathed the fragrance of the soul to whisper in the child's ear, with symphonies whose melodies are in the rhythm of innocence and the scale of childhood. Therefore, the writing was filled with a wealth of experiences and depth of things.

Thus, how was the creative able to activate that creative energy in directing the child's thinking and behavior through the act of theatrical writing in the play 'Samir and the School Trip'? Does the prominence of values in the body of the play directed towards children exemplify a culture of creativity that seeks to guide the trajectory of childhood in the future, and thereby build a generation capable of confronting reality and life?

The Educational Values in the Play 'Samir and the School Trip'

"Secondly, the educational values in the play 'Samir and the School Trip' were diverse and varied. The creative artist presented them in an intriguing and stimulating manner through the art of movement and mastery of shaping in an atmosphere of excitement that plays on the child's imagination and cognitive perceptions, aiming to develop their sensibilities and flexibility of thought towards their surroundings. Among these values, we mention:"

Social Values

First: Sense of Community

The social values were prominently represented in the play 'Samir and the School Trip' through the sense of empathy and community, as interaction with the community makes one an active and integral member within society, shining and pulsating within its embrace. This awareness generates the starting point for advancing towards the social aspect to understand the dynamics of relationships, highlighting one's role as a member or an indispensable part of this community.

This sentiment played a pivotal role in the theatrical work 'Samir and the School Trip,' especially as young Samir experienced the profound connection with his mother. This exchange of emotions reached its zenith during the scene where Samir empathizes with his ailing mother. In the opening act of the play, he eloquently expresses, 'I implore your recovery, for I sense your pain acutely. I do not conceal the fact that I feel a sense of trepidation when I remain alone, and you are confined to the hospital. I go to your bed, embracing your pillow, seeking solace until I am enveloped in a reassuring embrace and find tranquility to sleep.'

The creator of the theater skillfully wove this social value (the sense of empathy and community) in a remarkably adept manner to achieve the intended moral objective. This was achieved by delineating young Samir's emotions towards his mother, recognizing the mother as a pivotal educator. Often, a child gravitates towards the source of strength, cohesion, and harmony within the household, as the genesis of this value system originates from the initial direct interactions within the family, primarily with the mother. It then evolves to extend beyond the familial realm, manifesting in various interactions between groups and individuals.

Second, Enhancing Sense of Responsibility and Respect

Secondly, the dramatist delved into another facet of social rituals, guiding the child's mind towards a different social scenario, firmly establishing it at the pinnacle of responsibility and respect awareness. In the same scene, the party capable of regulating its social conduct is none other than the mother, not far from young Samir. She expresses discontent towards the impending rejection that threatens the enjoyment he anticipated from the school-organized trip. In this instance, the contours of mental distraction become apparent, accompanied by a fleeting sense of detachment and hesitation in reiterating the desired request within Samir himself.

Because the creator aimed to impart her impactful touch on the child and his social behavior, she consistently positioned the mother as a guide towards rebellion against blind obedience to rules, orders, and directives. This choice stems from the understanding that a child undoubtedly mimics and emulates, a behavior at odds with societal norms and the delicate act of writing directed towards children. Samir's exceptional creative performance compelled him to inevitably yield to the principle of respect, stemming from awareness and a sense of responsibility. He articulates, "I will exert every effort to make you the happiest mother in the world. I will face, alongside you, all challenging circumstances until we conquer them together, God willing."

The circumstances the mother faced due to the loss of her husband, the daughter Huda, and the financial pressures acting as barriers to fulfilling the child's aspirations were inhibiting factors for the mother's determination in playing her role and providing comprehensive care for Samir. The writer, facing these challenges, resorted to a remedial action for the character of the child, who was both a reader and a recipient. This was done to construct a barrier that shields him from any adverse reactions within the societal framework. Hence, the creative manipulation, skillfully wielded by the creator, served as a luminous guide, infusing its radiance into every corner pulsating within the child's cognitive experience.

Thirdly: Enhancing a Sense of Keeping Promises

Within the realm of social values, another impactful action highlights the child's need for ethical frameworks embodied by the creator through the concept of fidelity to promises. This is evident in the encouragement of the mother to her son Samir to adhere to this virtue.

She expressed, "You didn't have to promise them... tell them the truth."

Samir replied, "Tell them the truth after I promised them that I would accompany them... no, that's not possible."

The mother advised, "Don't promise anyone anything until you are sure that you can fulfill your promise."

Samir justified, "I thought it was my right, and I feared they would look at me with compassion and pity if I told them about the circumstances."

The mother concluded, "The truth always earns people's respect. You've never done this before; you used to consult with me and not let your emotions or appearances deceive you. What happened?"

Secondly: Ethical Values

The creator also emphasized, through her theatrical achievement, the necessity of building a child's ethical foundation by instilling a set of values aimed at shaping the child's behavioral actions. Among these values are:

1. Obedience

At first glance, instilling the value of obedience may seem like a simple task in the child's psychological reality. However, in the context of theatrical and creative expression, it becomes a challenge. The artistic skill of the creator becomes crucial in choosing a context that manipulates the child's perception with a high degree of precision, allowing the child to receive it calmly and facilitating the investment of that positive energy in the future. The creator embodied this value in the relationship between Samir and his mother, weaving it into various scenes within the play through Samir's voice as he says:

"Sister... sister! (He paces around the room, unable to find Huda) Was I dreaming? Unbelievable. I felt her presence, yet I couldn't catch a whiff of her pleasant fragrance. I angered my mother... What happened to me, the sinister thoughts that plagued me just to please my peers? I must ask my mother for forgiveness; I can't bear losing her. She is all I have left. (Seeking forgiveness from Allah) (He exits the room, calling for his mother and searching throughout the house but cannot find her). "

Then he exits the house, filled with the joy of triumph over the opposing spirit that almost took control of him at some point. He chants in a euphoric atmosphere:

"Mother... O Mother... O dearest to me,

You are the twin of my soul, the flower of my life.

You are the smile of my days, the light of my dreams.

O Mother, O Mother, O Mother,

My Lord commands me to obey you, and your satisfaction is the key to paradise.

And paradise lies beneath your feet; forgive me, O Mother, forgive me,

Until I enter paradise,

Until I enter paradise."

Through this passage, the creator instills a pulsating spirit that educates the child, urging them towards the value of obedience. Undoubtedly, obedience is a moral value that contributes to the child's self-development within society's ethical framework.

2 Contentment and Patience

Not far from the value of obedience, other values within the ethical framework that the creator artistically portrayed within the context of the play include patience and contentment. Undoubtedly, patience and contentment are values that, as mentioned earlier, work to highlight effective and successful plans in building the child's character both psychologically and ethically. This is evident in the following passage:

Samir (bewildered): It's the necklace... the necklace that Dad gave you when he returned from Umrah.

Mother: Yes, you thought I sold it, but I didn't because I intended to present it to you as a gift on your wedding anniversary, to remain as a memento from your late father, may he rest in peace.

Samir: I know you were considering selling it for my sake. No, Mom, this necklace is precious to you. I don't want you to even think about selling it.

Mother: But I want to make you happy. What's the point of the necklace if you're sad and deprived of things your peers enjoy, and you deserve more than that?

Samir: As long as I have you, I lack nothing. If we sell this necklace today and need something important again, what will we sell?

Mother: We won't need to, God willing.

Samir: You asked me for patience and contentment, and indeed, I became convinced by your words after calming down. I wanted to tell you, but I couldn't find you, and the result of your words was evident in the session when the principal visited us and informed us. (Samir falls silent).

Thirdly: Character Development

In this aspect of character development, we have focused on aggressiveness and the negative venting of emotions in children, resulting in the formation of negative values that impact a child's personality and behavior. This was evident in several scenes within the play. However, the creator did not leave the impact and void without addressing it. The goal here is to assess within the artistic and creative arena the negative behaviors that directly affect the psychological structure of the child. Some behaviors indicative of this in the play include:

"Samir moves angrily in his room, throwing his books and anything in his path.

Samir: What do I do now... is this how my life will end? There must be a solution. (He takes some books and throws them.)

Samir: These are worthless. (Then he rummages through his clothes, looking for something to sell.)

Samir: These are old clothes, not even beggars would wear them. What should I do, I wonder. "

Here, we witness the internal aggressiveness that overcame Samir due to specific circumstances. However, the creator, with a touch of skill and impact, adeptly redirected and addressed it in a flexible and influential manner.

Fourthly: Cultural Development

Within this play, the creator also engaged in cultural enrichment, cultivating cultural behavior in the child. This was achieved by embodying the value of intelligence in Samir when facing life's difficulties. His realization of the responsibilities on his mother's shoulders and the circumstances she endured due to the loss of her husband and daughter added depth to the cultural context, emphasizing the impact of such losses on both husband and daughter.

Similarly, the value of learning and knowledge is highlighted, as the caricature crafted by the creator for Samir is designed to instill a positive charge and energy in the receiving child towards progress and advancement in studies. Samir's academic achievements make the educational environment for the receiving child grow and evolve further. This emphasizes the importance of learning and knowledge in shaping a child's mindset towards success in education.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that

- Theater presented to children should conscientiously consider the child's nature, behavior, inclinations, and habits in order to engage and stimulate their perception and sensibilities. The essence of this art form lies in its ability to resonate with the child's psyche. The creative genius behind the play "Samir and the School Trip" offered diverse perspectives and enriched elements, providing the child with a multifaceted artistic experience. This not only served as a platform for the child to navigate through a range of values but also opened windows of challenging communication.
- In the play "Samir and the School Trip," we observe an expressive and sincere writing style, accompanied by profound knowledge, vibrant energy, and genuine educational values and concepts. Undoubtedly, the playwright has achieved comprehensive educational benefits.
- The creator embarked on this play with a fundamental artistic objective, namely the activation of the role of dialogue within the child, addressing all aspects, dimensions, and meanings. This encompasses social, cultural, artistic, and humanitarian dimensions, turning it into a dynamic force for engaging the child's perceptions. It creates an atmosphere conducive to instilling educational values and facilitating the learning experience.

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