



## Visual Shorthand and Meaning Production in Children's Theater Performances

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### ABSTRACT

The process of perceiving the reduced theatrical visual image takes place through the combination of subjective and objective factors on an ongoing basis. Thus, the reduced visual perception is considered the product of the recipient's interaction with his external world surrounding him, as the formation of the visual image is not just about arranging shapes, but it must go beyond that. It is an attempt to reduce everything that is surplus that does not fit with the mentality of the recipient. Reduction in the visual image works to draw the child's attention and motivate him to the proposed idea that is compatible with the characteristics of his age stage. Therefore, the research included four chapters. The first is (the methodological framework), which contains the research problem, its importance, and objectives, and defines the terms that the researcher concluded with the procedural definition. Then came the second chapter. (Theoretical framework), which was divided into two axes, a conceptual one: the first: a study of (the concept of reduction) and the second: (reduction of the elements of theatrical performance) and previous studies and the results of the theoretical framework of indicators, then came the third chapter (procedural) and the model of the research sample that was Purposefully selected from the research community, which receded in the year (2022), after which came the fourth chapter (production and conclusions), then recommendations and proposals.

**Keywords:** Reduction, Visual, Production, Meaning, Children's theater.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Research Problem:

Children's Theater depend on the visual aspect as one of the important aspects in the delivery of educational contents encapsulated in the mold of enjoyment and fun. The stage is through his senses, the most important of which is the sense of sight, which is at its highest level, in addition to what he perceives by what he knows, feels, and feels. It is presented to him within the theatrical performance, but there are controls that are overlooked by those interested in the theatrical aspect presented to children, which are the age groups. Children's audiences are multi-categories. Childhood psychologists are concerned with the issue of dividing ages and including them within separate categories from each other to occupy an important space in scientific research related to child psychology. And it is necessary for those who care about the affairs of children's theater to get acquainted with these categories for the purpose of presenting their artistic production in a way that finds success and acceptance among children, and in addition to that with The grace of how it harmonizes with the mental and cognitive perceptions of each age group, bypassing the occurrence of confusion and semantic chaos in the child, which distracts his mind in accepting the educational content. What children at the age of ten accept from theatrical performances and interact with them seems complicated and incomprehensible at the age of six. This basis for the visual image has become exploitation mechanisms that should achieve the desired goals in an attempt to communicate these ideas to the child's mind and feel the sensory and intellectual pleasure he has because he is looking for them above all and contribute to the development of his mental, sensory and educational ability on the other hand, so it has become imperative for the Scenography designer to It transcends composition, complexity, and displacement of abundance by reducing and simplifying the visual image.



Accordingly, the researcher formulated the title of his research as follows: (Visual reduction and production of meaning in children's theater performances).

**The importance of research and the need for it:** The importance of research lies in the fact that:

It Highlight on the concept of visual reduction and image production in children's theater performances as well.

As for the need: Benefit from technical institutions specialized in the field of childcare, especially the theatrical aspect.

**Research Aim:** The research aims to:

Identify the extent of the impact of the concept of shorthand in the production of the theatrical image.

**Research limits:**

Time limit: from 2012 to 2021 AD.

Spatial limitation: performances that were presented on the theaters of Baghdad

Objective Limit: Visual Reduction in the Iraqi Child Theatre.

**Definition of terms:**

**Reduction:** "Discovering the general order or the law hidden behind things so that their value appears clear to the educated opinion. This system or law helps him understand the phenomenon from which this law was derived, along with understanding other phenomena similar to that phenomenon" (Hossam, From Mythology to Philosophy, 1965, pg. 36).

**Procedural Refreshment:** (Visual Reduction) is the overall process of simplification, deletion, and dispensing of some structural elements of the visual image, in accordance with the target audience of children.

**Children's Theatre:** It is the theater directed to children and is committed to presenting new ideas, bringing out the interest of its young audience, and introducing them to different colors of art" (Wivnid, 1986, p. 152).

Procedural definition: It is the theater directed to children of different age groups, which aims to provide the child with intellectual, aesthetic and educational values, as well as fun and entertainment.

**The first Subject: The Concept of Reduction:**

**1- Shorthand in art**

The concept of shorthand preceded by artistic and aesthetic intent is more modern and more adherent in the (twentieth century). The chaotic and absurd practices of a group of artistic movements. "At the end of the sixties, a shift took place in the artistic movement as a result of reactions against the (phlox) movement and its absurdity in favor of a return to order" (Al-Wahhab, 2003, page 200), which led many artistic movements, in recent years, towards horizons A new movement aimed at returning to the system, and adhering to a new type in formalism, so a movement appeared that was called the art of (abbreviation), which was known by various names and descriptions, including (the doctrine of the minimum) or (minimalism). After that, it spread in the field of architecture, design, plastic arts, literature, theater and cinema, as it was distinguished by the style of austerity and extreme simplicity of form and the use of basic forms" (Qarni, p. 676). Concerning marginal values in formal construction, simplification in art "takes a style that adopts the philosophy of brevity" (Al-Munim, p. 223). On the other hand, the term (Minimalism) in the English language means (the minimum) of things.

Many artists they found in the doctrine of minimalism or (minimalism) and in the variety of works that he produced a clear point of intersection linking the art of theater and



plastic art, "and among them were such as (Michael Kirby) and (Robert Wilson) and the plastic artist (Vito Aiko) Noshi), who specializes in painting on the body along with creators in plastic performance art (Kay N., 1998). Through the aspects of convergence between plastic art and theatrical art, it was necessary for the researcher to return to the first basics of the development of the doctrine of the minimum, which falls under the umbrella of reductionism. In plastic art and theatrical art.

## **2- Shorthand in plastic arts:**

The roots of the (minimum) doctrine or the (minimalist) movement go back to (Russian constructivism) and to the work of (House of Mordian) between the years (1878-1935). The owners of this school were also influenced by the (Bauhaus) school, which aspired to develop art from simple tools. The (Bauhaus) school is to stay away from everything complicated, and therefore it was to stay away from the excessive decoration that characterized art in Europe during the pre-(twentieth century) era." Therefore, we can count that this spread in the process of simplifying forms in the arts and this penetration of the process of abbreviation is not visionary. Many artists, who later produced works that were satisfied with color, and in which the formal reduction and its constructions were reduced to the simplest possible, as in the works of (Mondrian), where the mass was abandoned in favor of the flat surface and the flat surface lost its identity to become just a space between the lines" (Magdy, 1974, p. 16 ), the reductionists seek through their drawings to achieve aesthetic perfection, whether in shape, color, or line, so their drawings began, although they suggest simplicity and moderation, bypassing complexity, but they constituted a qualitative leap in consolidating the meaning and lifting the veil from it, and so it was. (The French Paul Gauguin and the Dutch Van Gogh) by dispensing with many formal details, while Cezanne seemed to see natural shapes (in the form of geometric flats and draw them in the form of squares, rectangles, cylinders and other geometric shapes colored to varying degrees (see, Al-Agha, page 54)

The researcher believes that the doctrine of (the minimum) is a reductionist and simplistic method in the composition of the artistic achievement, which allows the workers within the method of reductionism to intensify the means of expression and deepen their creative path presented to the recipient. Logical persuasion: "One of the famous sayings about reductionism or the doctrine of the minimum is the saying of the German (Vess van), (less means more), which has become a slogan for reductionists, as they aim to achieve their goals away from details, and search for the true essence of things" (Behind, page 4). Formal abstraction that is not distorted, reduction, neutrality, and non-accumulation of elements in art are among the characteristics of reductionists, as the artist relies on a complex method to reach the minimum level of simplicity." The goal, as Frank Stella, one of the pioneers of reductionism in art, sees is that there is nothing in the painting except what is possible. To see, and for the works to be characterized by simplicity, regular straight lines, and the rejection of interpretation." (Bakr) It is a complex that refers the recipient to interpretation, while it clings to what already exists in the mind of the recipient, based on the elements of the old vocabulary, and through the relations between them" (Ibrahim, 1972, p. The recipient is in a state of stability and does not exceed the boundary values in art. This is one aspect. The other side is that man is by nature inclined to the easy and simple. He follows the internally generated psychological sense of comfort and reassurance that he always seeks, trying to move away from what is complex and complex, reflecting the feeling of comfort to Constant anxiety" (Fawzi, 2006, p. 268) Most of the artists of the (minimalist) school, especially in plastic art, are characterized by simplicity and avoidance of complexity. The plastic artist (Vito Aiko Nashi) emphasizes the simplicity of the idea and the clarity of the form, as it is one of the conditions for true and basic beauty. Whenever something is simple and clear, it is beautiful and understandable, and everything that is complex and incomprehensible cannot be wonderful." (Zsmirnova, 2001, p. 112) It is not in the excessive complexity that takes on the character of chaos, but rather the pleasure of receiving and the tendency to simplicity, brevity and the use of neutral spaces. This is confirmed by (Kazimir Malevich), the most prominent representative of (Russian



Suprematism) - that appeared in 1915. "Art should be liberated." From any symbolic or pictorial representation that turns it into a complex tendency" (Ismail, 2017, p. 42) in the sense that art must move away from the abstraction of form and become distorted devoid of any meaning and does not transfer the given material from reality with a complex subjectivity, which put a boundary between it and trends Which dealt with reduction in varying degrees, as the (abstract) trend does not represent a total reduction of the form in proportions on which the reductionist approach is based. A direction that depicts things moving away from the relationships and links that link the form to its visible reality" (Researchers, 1979, p. 41).

### **3- Reduction in theatrical art.**

Theatrical art takes stages of rapid development, as it mobilizes all possible factors in presenting its discourse in a new and distinct style that tends towards reductionism and economy in employing all the vocabulary of theatrical presentation in a way that approaches the style of (minimalism). Theatrical because it is employed in visual discourse to ensure the formal aspects and not to give the content a degree of clarity, as the most prominent characteristic of (minimalism) is the economy in formal means, although the effect is not a simple expression, but rather it is based on the geometry of space and its clever use, which makes it unique. A certain specificity and the importance of expressive meanings and connotations in the visual discourse becomes clear, so it had a wide and clear presence in contemporary theater, especially children's theater, as it is characterized by a reductive nature to present its artistic activity through the abbreviation and economy of the means of expression for the purpose of deepening its speech for the recipient, and as a result of the rapid stage of development it went through. The theater has worked to mobilize all possible factors in order to present the theatrical discourse in a new style that depends on reduction, condensation and economy in operating the vocabulary of theatrical performance, especially the visual aspect, being the main element in the presentation and is the channel that transmits the meaning of the performance to the recipient, so (minimalism) is the doctrine The minimum level in art, on which the theatrical performance is based, by abandoning the traditional vocabulary in the theater dictionary and adopting an eclectic style that belongs to modernity. Especially in (Russian Structuralism), which he worked to revitalize (Meyerhold and Pavlov), as he worked on "analyzing and dismantling the structural systems of the reality of the embodied visual form, and what is accidental in the construction of the form and the contexts involved in it in order to find simplified structural patterns for all that is fixed that was formed Through the liberation of the structural elements, which took their formation and familiarity, they follow a path of abbreviated simplification" (Fry, 1990, p. 83). The movement of the actor within the space of the stage, reductionism prompted changes in controlling the furnishing of the theatrical performance space with technical elements, which prompted the directors to consider the media and structures used in occupying the space and producing its connotations combined in an integrated and coherent unit consisting of a visual discourse devoid of any complexity, this is what prompted (Robert Wilson) is one of the adherents of the (minimalist) style, as the actress (Brooks), one of the participants in his performances, sees that "(minimalism) formed a prominent and influential element in the work of (Robert Wilson) by reducing it to the performance of the actor and other elements of the show" (Kay N., 1998 , page 72) At the same time, critics see that Wilson's first works were characterized by expressive simplicity in decoration and the use of theatrical elements such as music and lighting as a means of expressing his ideas in a concise manner, and searching for a distinctive method for the performance of the actor, where the actor does not perform the character in all its details, but rather takes Some of the distinctive features with the kinetic expression that resembles dancing. Many of those who participated with him in creating joint works go further, and they see that the influence of the minimum level in the years (1967 and 1968) was clear and evident in many of his works by returning to the simplest things in constructing discourse. Al-Basri" (Kay N., 1998, p. 72) As for (Kirby and Foreman) in particular, the doctrine of minimalism in their work was not related to the idea of the self-sufficiency of the artistic



work and its independence from the activity of the recipient, but was dependent on the relationship between the shorthand artwork and the recipient, which It gives a motive for the communicative force, "that (Kirby) was insured in this, that is, the impossibility of the existence of the artwork or its structure in isolation from the recipient by evoking forms that touch the reality of the recipient." Formal reduction in theatrical art is the process of shortening the non-active units in the artwork, i.e., pruning the extra forms that If it is omitted from the technical data, then this deletion is not affected functionally, semantically or aesthetically" (Al-Falahi, p. 25). Accordingly, the researcher believes that reductionism did not neglect the meaning at all, but rather directed it towards a simplistic process that allows the recipient himself to snatch the meaning and reveal its contents, as this formal displacement and semantic simplification raises multiple questions, it activates the interactive aesthetic gaps between the abbreviated work and its recipient. Therefore, it cannot be said that artistic reduction is empty of meaning, but rather that it is a simplification of meaning. All formal explanations are pruned through the denial of chaos. Its complexities and helps focus on the meaning, as unnecessary shapes and details act as visual confusion" (Ezzat, 1970, p. 16), which are perceptual errors in which the artist falls. Reduction is summaries at the level of form and content by visualizing basic forms and neglecting non-essential details. In a more precise sense, artistic reductionism presents a serious attempt to consolidate oneself with essential facts and deepen the link between the artistic giver and the recipient. As for the theatrical performance presented to children, it must arise from simplified reductive structures that produce A visual discourse that corresponds to the cognitive and perceptive sadness, as the process of children's perception of the theatrical show directed towards them, and the aesthetic, cultural and social connotations it carries, depends on the children's ability to evoke the mental image created by the symbols of the theatrical show, and to absorb what is presented to it. The child often interprets what he sees through his senses, the most important of which is the sense of sight, which is at its highest level for him, in addition to what he perceives by what he knows, feels and feels. In it and between what is presented to him within the theatrical performance, and accordingly, those in charge of the children's theater must seek to convince the recipient of the message produced by the visual discourse, which the designer reduced with the intention of compatibility between the child's perceptions and the theatrical signs, so through successful communication in the theatrical work between the sender who carries a message To be delivered to the recipient, the process of persuasion is achieved. Persuasion is the art of addressing the minds and hearts, and it is an art that only those who possess its tools are good at. To say that visual reduction is a method that many sinograph designers rely on through simplicity, repetition, simplification of technical tools, and reliance on cognitive and perceptual references of the recipient (the child). That is, in the sense that it simplifies and reduces plurality to a utilitarian oneness and removes all that is surplus.

### **The second Subject: reducing the elements of the theatrical show**

The theatrical space, when formed by scenography, is based on a system of transformation to produce a system that generates a visual discourse that is interpretive, represented by moving away from the center of the sign and penetrating the oppositions and fragmentation in adult theater, while in children's theater the space has a specificity when it is formed, as it is necessary that the elements of scenography be in the formation The child's spectacle is based on simplicity and is completely consistent with the presentation, moving away from abstraction and multiple readings in producing the semantics of the presentation, because the mental efforts of the child are very different from the mental efforts of the adult, as the recipient (the child) responds to visual stimuli (visual discourse) if presented with meanings and images Easy and fun, according to the requirements of suspense and influence, devoid of complexity, and a language commensurate with the method of presenting the speech addressed to it. Therefore, it becomes clear that the formation of space in the children's theater is a codified and harmonious painting that achieves a visual discourse that produces a meaning that moves away from ambiguity. The visual discourse in the children's theater is condensed and shorthand. By the action of the actor's movement and the elements of scenography,



the act of reduction in the production of visual discourse is like the case of brevity in language. Theater in general and children's theater in particular differs from the rest of the other arts, as everything is subject to the act of reduction by pressure of effort, cost and time to reach the best results, especially performance. Reductionism and the elements of scenography. Reduction is showing the value of broadcast signs by abandoning surplus signs by reducing or pruning them. On the other hand, the effectiveness of reduction includes the time of presentation. And then to death sometimes, because this short time on the stage has another account in the references as a long time that is calculated in several years. This development in time and personality transformations was made by the elements of scenography. A mockery in which all elements participate in a balanced manner, and the removal of everything that is superfluous and the elimination of everything that would distract thoughts and strain the recipient, so reducing the surplus signs is linked mainly to simplicity and clarity" (Ardash, 1979, pp. 52-54).

In order to obtain a harmonious composition, it is necessary to highlight those elements that make up the scenography of the show accurately, as it should start with space and what is its specificity in the theatrical show presented to the children's audience.

### **1- The Theatrical space**

The structure of the theatrical space constitutes an integrated language, and it is the first thing that the recipient encounters in terms of interaction with the theatrical performance, as it begins with an interrogation of the signs on the stage and the formations that constitute intended entities to complete the production of the general meaning of the theatrical discourse. Discourse requirements and affiliation. Space is an essential element in the theatrical performance as well as a means of expression, as it constitutes an infrastructure that contains all the active visual elements in the theatrical performance. It occupies a dramatic function parallel to the text. It uses the geography of the place to create and fill the empty spaces that are produced by the interaction of colors, shapes, lighting and texture. The surfaces that the designer deals with to produce the term theatrical space and time.

The concept of space opened up to divisions and classifications proposed by theorists and critics through three chapters:

- Dramatic space: what is called (text space) and is limited to the author's perceptions of the form and place of the show, and searches for the director's imagination to embody or transform it.
- The stage space: it is the pristine space on which signs are born, to be shaped according to the proposals of the modern traditional presentation, which depends on the vision of the director and his embodiment mechanisms.
- Theatrical space: the area of composition, formation, and methodological contrast, to create a new area that gives the show the opportunity to turn against the traditional embodiment of the prevailing shows. Designer and director on Space.

With this designation, the space is divided into several spaces, and what the researcher occupies and pours into the field of his research is the structural space or what is called the scenography space, since it is a means of expression, as it constitutes the framework for exploiting a large number of sign formats, and what is meant by the scenography space is "that tangible material field that accommodates viewing." (Al-Ammari, 2006, page 99) When we return to the child's theater, we find that space constitutes a perceptual and cognitive field as well as a behavioral field at the level of reception and communication, as it is governed by a set of objective conditions, such as simplicity of shapes, reduction of spaces and sizes, and curtailment of motor and visual surplus, meaning that signs The ineffective visual is a source of disruption to the theatrical space, in addition to the inactivity and regression that will be attached to the other signs, until it becomes a burden for the theatrical creation process, because the space action in the children's theater is expected from the objects on the stage to be more organized and harmonious between them, and to study (the designer - The director) intensively



distributed the mechanisms of distributing the components on the stage, as the stage of the children's theater should not be crowded with things, so the process of furnishing the space with the help of scenography elements is one of the most difficult problems that the designer faces, because the reception is related to the psychology of children who are considered a heterogeneous audience" (Qasimi, 1998, p. 107 ), There is a link between children's perception and what the signs of theatrical space broadcast and what they carry of aesthetic, cultural and social connotations, and with what children have the ability to evoke the mental image created by the symbols of theatrical space, so the designer is keen to make the signs' indications realistically acceptable and Feeling, as it can attract and excite children within the limits of the idea that the play carries, describing that the simplified and reduced scenography elements that contribute to shaping the space have an effectiveness to highlight the different or hidden meanings within the ideas of the play. for children, taking into account the psychological, linguistic and mental factors specific to each of the age groups" (Alaa, 2013, p. 24). Accordingly, the researcher believes that the scenography space is a means of conveying the contents of signs between the sender and the recipient, and it is required that the scenography space possess a pictorial language consistent with the category Age The children's theater is directed to a certain age group, as the children's audience possesses a limited mental dictionary. The process of designing space does not mean assembling vocabulary such as trees, plants, etc. without considering the laws of sensory perception among the children's audience.

## **2- Theatrical view:**

Theatrical scenery is a visual sign system that expresses the ideas and meanings of the text by referring them to visual signs and symbols, which reveals to the recipient the environment and events in which the characters live. Therefore, its aesthetic and intellectual value lies in attracting the attention and focus of the recipient due to its material designs and its plastic relationship, as it is the environment in which you live. The characters of the show, which is also "the artistic unit that gives the theatrical work its dramatic value" (Abd, p. 130). Thus, the scene contributes to creating an environment that represents a visual message that the recipient (the child) receives at the first moment of the show, as it aims to reveal the indications of other artistic elements that It combines with it, because the theatrical scene is not a single element in itself, but it is an art that coexists theatrically with the other elements of the show to produce the greatest significance. This depends mainly on how to coordinate shapes, masses, and sizes according to data and formats calculated and carefully studied and knowledgeable, away from the ambiguity and complexity that reflects negatively on the construction of the scene. The playwright in children's theater performances" (Brook, 1983, p. 109) Therefore, the designer in children's theater must always strive to ensure that the meanings of the scene are not ambiguous or ambiguous, and that they are very clear, otherwise the process of relaying and communicating by the spectator will stop.

Children's theater leaves the dialectic of conflict in the theatrical event, which undoubtedly results in a new event, which involves breaking a (fixed) realistic perception rooted in the mind of the recipient with a new (transforming) perception. Al-Khatib, 1972, p. 63) as the premises of the concept of transformation are based on the dualism of demolition and construction, and the overturning of prevailing concepts and the change of fixed marginal values, and here lies the task of the designer in the children's theater by moving away from The concept of transformation "which displaces ordinary things and turns them into symbols and connotations, as in the sofa that transforms and reduces during the performance to the mountain, the bed and the boat. This is what we find in the adult theater" (Bashar, D-T, page 255), but the reductive formulations of the decorative system in the children's theater It does not negate the realism of the vocabulary of the scene, but confirms its identity. The process of reducing the scene is the simplification of the signifier, but this reduction does not produce more than a signified, or it may negate the realistic significance and its conceptual stability familiar and rooted in the mind of the recipient to a different sign outside the scope of its reality.



Children using "(metaphorical inference) or what is called (scene entities) when the part appears to be representative of the whole, such as reducing the forest to a few trees. This is how the designer intends to create that common interaction between the recipient and the theatrical event (Tarek, 2008, pages 262-263) Based on that, the researcher finds that the scene subject to the technique of shorthand gives the recipient a wide space in capturing visual images, since shorthand stems from overcoming the use of means and vocabulary that bears the nature of complexity and ambiguity, and the exclusion of every decorative word that does not carry meaning and does not agree with the mentality of the age group that The theatrical performance is presented to her, which hinders the process of receiving. The designer must take into account the tendencies and desires of the child, and this requires that the designer be aware of the culture, growth, and awareness of the child who intends to send his communication message to him in order to be able to use the decorative vocabulary that achieves the child's conviction in the theatrical performance and the ability of those vocabulary To perform its functions and its semantic action through its clarity and simplicity, which gives the child a wide space for mental, emotional and spiritual participation. Convincing the child of the theatrical game and his communication with it requires the maker of the theatrical show to employ shorthand signs and similar to their references based on the sensory nature of the child, and this means giving it an iconic and simplified dimension in that One.

Hence, the researcher believes that the visual reduction that is supposed to be achieved in the formation of the visual image in general and the landscapes in particular, which the designer achieves through the general structural composition of the visual image by arranging its elements in a way that achieves aesthetic values. And interacting with it, which leads to adding information or changing the understanding of the recipient, and thus achieving rapid communication.

### **3- Lighting:**

The artistic world on the stage is a manufactured world in which the technicians, the director and the designer control all its particles, as the designer can select, by the action of light, a small detail on the stage or a limited part of the stage in which the events take place, and reduce the rest of the parts to one of the scenes, or he may divide the stage by light into Several sections, each section expresses a place where events take place by dimming the lighting, and accordingly the reductionist treatment in the element of light seeks to clear a visual center that is superior in its polarization from other optical elements due to the large number of visual signs and their crowding on the stage, which allows the sign subject to the element of light to Visual dominance and its inclusion in the visual field according to the order of its functional importance, which increases light in its effectiveness and the production of meaning, as well as reaching a visual balance in the receiving process. Optical reduction here limits exaggeration and temporarily isolates some structural and constituent signs of the visual image, by means of reduction that the designer intentionally seeks. It breaks the chaotic rules in employing visual signs by achieving visual forces based in a location, and here we can call this reductive process the element of light with sovereignty that works to exclude or postpone an element of the design elements, so the dominant element is striking in the unity of the artwork so that the rest of the elements are supplementary to show the general shape of the visual image" (Gilliam, 1986, p. 76). Accordingly, the designer must be professional and aware of the effectiveness of light, its color, and its physiological effect on the eye's retina to provide visual pleasure laden with significant intellectual symbols produced by the semantic homogeneity of both light and color with the other element. Color in lighting has an active and significant role for the recipient (the child) by increasing his ability to confirm The effectiveness of the sign that produces meaning and the displacement of signs that crowd the theatrical show, which results in lethargy in the process of receiving, in addition to that the relationship of color with light is a correlated relationship according to the physiological nature of light and its effect on the retina of the eye, as color cannot have an effect without the presence of light, and accordingly, "all colors used in The theater cannot affect the theatrical event unless there is lighting used from industrial





sources (Al-Amir, 2018, pp. 121-122) "The color is an inherent characteristic of the lighting that gives the display elements their colors and their formal and aesthetic characteristics, as well as clearing illusionary effects, which helps the designer to Achieving reductionist treatment that stimulates the process of visual attraction by clarifying the positional unit of the visual image and revealing its meanings, as we find that any sign falls within the boundaries of the scenography space whose designer depends on the appearance of color and the effect of light and its ability to visually attract the recipient and interact with the event is dramatic, so optical reduction is considered an act of value The chromaticity, its quantity, and the way it is distributed are the priorities of the artwork. It is certain that the formulation of the visual image in the children's theater requires lighting that affects the eye of the recipient and arouses attention when he sees what is on the stage.

#### **4- The Actor:**

The acting performance in the children's theater is subject to reducing the energy of the actor to inculcate the value of the transmitted connotations on the one hand and reduce the physical and psychological consumption of the actor on the other hand. To the shorthand system in order to be consistent with what the recipient's perceptions aspire to (Sami Y., 2013, p. 46), the nature of the actor's work in children's theater is subject to the act of motor and vocal reduction, which gives the theatrical performance an expression that achieves pleasure and communication with the audience, because the work as an actor in Children's theater is "a new color of specialization that has its consequences, and young children must be given an aesthetic art dominated by simplicity (Wivnid, 1986, p. 204). From the mechanisms of brevity and abbreviation, and from here we understand the position of (Stanslavsky) when he asserts that "it is necessary that we represent children as it is necessary that we represent adults, but our representation of children should be simplified (Berg, D-T, p. 30) and this preference is evident according to The teachings of (Stanslavsky) dispensing with everything that is superfluous and distorting the dramatic act. The actor in the children's theater must be characterized by high discipline, extreme accuracy, and pruning in the manner of acting performance. Until it becomes very disturbing and arduous (Al-Razzaq, 1985, p. 180), the pleasure of receiving in children's theater does not come with watching extravagant performance movements and gestures as much as it comes from watching a reduced acting performance intentionally simplified by the director that is consistent with the child's perceptions. A lot has been achieved (Wivnid, 1986, p. 209), so the degree of success of the show is mainly related to the work of the actor, as the most effective mediator in the process of communication between the show and the children, and this matter calls for a reductive performance act that carries in its contents intellectual and aesthetic connotations, as well as his potential as an actor who possesses The ability to control and control his well-known tools, such as the physical act, which is characterized by showing a pattern of meaning that is commensurate with the way he presents the idea of the character. When the actor could dispose of them and all his other expressive means to reach accuracy in the external and internal drawing of the character's body and ideas, as the proverb can be acted upon by the body and its flexibility. To transform the personality from one state to another, meaning from youth to old age, such as body trembling or slowness in movement, indicating fatigue and exhaustion that afflicts the old personality, in contrast to the vitality of the young personality.

#### **Theoretical Framework Indicators**

- 1- Visual shorthand does not give the recipient (the child) sufficient space to deconstruct the sign or the creative achievement and then synthesize it and interpret it.
- 2- Visual shorthand is based on the rejection of the dichotomy of demolition and construction, which puts the recipient (the child) in a state of stability and does not enter him into the labyrinths of interpretive questions.
- 3- Visual reduction in children's theater is the process of shortening non-functional units, i.e. pruning extra visual forms that, if omitted from the artistic data, this deletion is not affected functionally, semantically, or aesthetically.



4- Visual shorthand helps to simplify the form from its complexities and helps focus on the meaning. Unnecessary shapes and details on the stage act as visual confusion.

### **RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

**First: The research community:** Children's Culture House Theater / Shehab and the Secret of the Book (2022)

**Second: Research sample form:** The researcher chose the sample form intentionally. The sample is from within the research community objectively and temporally.

**Third: Research Methodology and Methods:** The researcher adopted the descriptive analytical approach.

### **Fourth: Research Tool:**

- 1- The researcher relied on the indicators of the theoretical framework.
- 2- Observation.

### **Analysis of the Research Sample**

- **The play of:** Shehab and the Secret of the Book
- **Written and directed by:** Directed by Hussein Ali Saleh.
- **Acting:** Saad Shaaban, Ahmed Shawky, Uday Al-Karkhi
- **Scenography:** Suhail Al-Bayati
- **Fashion:** Hisham Al-Rikabi
- **Location:** Karbala, Cultural Theatre, 2022

### **Sample form Analysis:**

The play (Meteors and the Secret of the Book) directed by (Hussein Ali Saleh) is considered one of the theatrical performances that belong in its formative structure to the doctrine of the limit (the minimum), which relies on the philosophy of (the least of the many things), which contained a high effectiveness in reducing the visual image and reproducing it in a manner that belongs to everything that is realistic but intense and simplified and not exaggerated and redundant, although the show deals with many realistic concepts that belong to the daily life of the child, but the director (Hussein) went to produce the show in an intentional manner that is shortened and simplified with existing plastic visual visions On the minimalist approach, according to what the reductionist school advocated (less means more) in the process of sufficiency in the production of the scenic image.

The theatrical performance begins with the appearance of a child character sitting on the right of the stage carrying a modern mobile device and wearing a space suit. The show belongs to the modern era. As for the visual image represented by the scenographic space, it contained one single item, which is the table that contains the children's books and educational purposes. Also, in the depth of the theater, there is a screen (the data show), which was intentionally employed by the director by reducing the physical decoration and using the modern screen. Which has become an inevitable necessity in the children's theater, these screens are in their process of moving away from the graphic simulation of reality and the sufficiency of presenting signs of this reality, and this was evident in what the director of the work did through the production of a theatrical show based on rationing, abbreviation, condensation and storytelling, as for a character (the book) that was shown to us by the lighting devices while she was wearing a (3D costume) and behind her a screen showing us (a group of books) as the recipient recognized it without the actor disclosing it, so the stereoscopic costume carries an effectiveness in producing the meaning without the actor disclosing the long narration, so the costume, as we know, is a structure One of the signals he transmits to us in order to reveal the social status of the dramatic character as well as to reveal the identity of the theatrical show, while the third character (ignorance) is employed in a fantasy form and in colors bearing physiological characteristics that cause discomfort to the recipient. This



is an attempt by the director to create a different performance as well as performative expressions which adds to the personality (ignorance), which gives the impression that this personality is evil.

The show (Meteor and the Secret of the Book) is a visual show in which all techniques are intertwined, to produce for the recipient a show devoid of complexity based on simplification and reduction, by excluding every sign that does not carry meaning, which the director bridged the gap between the theatrical show and the audience of children, so the director started through his experience in clarifying the visual image that touched the mind of the recipient.

## **RESULTS**

After analyzing the sample, the researcher reached the following results:

- 1- The designer reduced all material vocabulary from decor and other tools and replaced them with (Data Show), which gave the impression that the show belongs to the doctrine of the minimum or the reductionist approach.
- 2- The value of the anthropomorphic costume appeared in the application of the method of shorthand in the presentation of the play Shihab and the Secret of the Book. Thus, costumes reveal their meanings without the actor listing and introducing the character to the audience.
- 3- The show demonstrated that the scenographer possesses sufficient theatrical experience and culture that qualifies him to match the vocabulary of the visual image with the experience of the recipient (the child).
- 4- The scenographic space possessed a pictorial language consistent with the target age group.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings, the researcher concluded the following:

- 1- The reduced and simplified scenography elements have an effectiveness to highlight the different or hidden meanings within the theatrical show.
- 2- Visual shorthand eliminates and trims every decorative term that does not carry meaning and does not agree with the mentality of the age group to which the theatrical performance is presented, which hinders the reception process.
- 3- The doctrine of the minimum limit is a reductionist and simplistic method in the composition of the artistic achievement, which allows workers in the Children's Theater to work within this approach by intensifying the means of expression and deepening their creative path presented to the recipient.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Considering the conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

Emphasis on the designers of the scenography by knowing the age stages when forming the visual image in the children's theater

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