

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**Children's Drama: Technical and Educational Approaches to
the Development of TV and Theatre Drama in Oman**

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

in the University of Hull

by

Dr. Khalid bin Abdul Rahim Alzadjali
B.A the Higher Institute of Cinema, Egypt 1989
Ph.D. the University of Film and Theatre, Romania 1999

September 2002

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how Omani children's drama, in schools and theatres and T.V. can be developed and enriched to become a useful educational tool for the nation's development, while also meeting children's cognitive and emotional needs. In order to do so, the origins and development of Arab and Omani theatre and T.V. are traced, the goals of the Omani development strategy and the expected roles of theatre and T.V. are discussed, and examples of good practice from the Arab world and the West are considered.

The work is qualitative in nature, depending largely on writings on drama, on the researcher's extensive experience in television and theatre production and direction, and on visits to observe children's theatre in the U.K., United States, and Arab Gulf States. In addition, a small survey was carried out among Omani teachers to explore their perceptions of the role and practice of drama in schools, and a seminar was held in which various experts came together to discuss issues in Children's Drama and Theatre and to identify obstacles.

As a practical experiment a play, *Titi and Toti*, was directed and produced by researcher to demonstrate the feasibility and value of developing theatre for children in Oman.

It is shown that drama in Oman is in the early stages of development and is dominated by television. Children's theatre as a distinct form hardly exists at all. Obstacles include lack of resources, inadequate training , and conservative social attitudes which associate drama with pagan superstition, time-wasting, and

alien cultural values. Nevertheless, a few successful experiments suggest that useful Western models such as Theatre in Education can be reconciled with elements of Oman's rich cultural heritage, to produce works for children that are entertaining, informative, and consistent with local values. Recommendations are made for the development of Omani children's theatre and drama in line with the nation's overall cultural strategy.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the great artist, Professor Noel Witts who is possessed of wide knowledge and creative art from which I benefited a great deal and also for his encouragement and assistance which helped me conclude this thesis. I am greatly indebted.

My deep thanks go also to the academic staff of the University of Hull, The Department of Theatre Studies in Scarborough, Graduate Research Institute in Hull, and artists and children's theatre staff, who, provided me with all the assistance and information I was in need of throughout my studies.

I extend special thanks to all my friends and artists who helped me in producing the play "*Titi Toti*" which gave me inspiration, creativity and ultimate aspirations. I thank all people who I met or interviewed and who participated in seminar and questionnaire surveys, who offered me assistance, information and encouragement to undertake this thesis.

Also I thank all the American artists and academic Staff whom I interviewed in the United States of America, and who provided me with materials for this research.

Last but not least, I thank every person who provided me with material related to this study and directed me in my research work, readings and analysis.

Dr. Khalid Alzadjali

Contents

Children's Drama : Technical and Educational approaches to the Development of T.V. and Theatre Drama in Oman

• Introduction	1
1- Benefits of children's drama	3
2- Goals of child's theatre/drama	7
3- The concept of research	13
4- The research endeavour	16
5- Previous studies	17
6- The aims of the study	19
7- Significance of the research	20
8- Methodology of the study	20
9- Chapterisation	22
• Chapter one:	
A Cultural History of Oman	26
Introduction	26
1.1. Geography, Topography and Population	26
1.2. Political History	27
1.2.1. Pre Islamic Period	27
1.2.2. The Coming of Islam and the Early Imamate	28
1.2.3. Portuguese Occupation	28
1.2.4. The Ya'aruba Dynesty	29
1.2.5. The founding of the Albu Saidi Dynasty	29

1.2.6. Sayyid Said bin Sultan 1804-1856.	30
1.2.7. Faisal bin Turki, 1888- 1913	31
1.2.8. Taimur bin Faisal, 1913-1932	32
1.2.9. Said bin Taimur 1932-1970	34
1.2.10. Sultan Qaboos bin Said	37
1.3. Culture	40
1.3.1 Traditional Music	41
1.3.2 Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra (ROSO).	41
1.3.3 Folklore art	42
1.4. Education	44
1.4.1 Adult Education	45
1.4.2 Teaching of English	45
1.4.3 Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)	46
Conclusion	47
• Chapter Two	
The Impact of Arts on Society	49
Introduction	49
2.2.6 The Era of the Spread of Television	49
2.3. Media challenges to Arab civilization	52
2.3.1. Civilisation Challenges	54
2.3.2. The Contemporary Arab Culture	55
Conclusion	59
• Chapter Three	
The Development of Children's Theatre, Drama and Creativity	60
Introduction	60

3.1. Drama (Theatre) by children	62
3.1.1. The Relationship between Play and Drama	62
3.1.2. Drama as an Educational and Artistic Process	68
3.2. Drama (Theatre) for children	73
3.2.1. Nature and content of children's theatre	73
3.2.2. Features of Children's Theatre	76
3.2.3 Educational benefits	80
3.2.4 An example : <i>Titi Toti</i>	83
Conclusion	85
• Chapter four	
Various Aspects of Children's Drama in the Arab World	88
Introduction	88
4.1. The Development of children's theatre in the Arab world	88
4.2. The elements of theatre	91
4.3. Childhood stages and appropriate types of drama	102
4.4. The theatre and children's valuable needs	114
4.5. Types of children's drama	118
Conclousion	121
• Chapter Five	
Drama movement in Oman	
5.1 Introduction	122
5.1Historical introduction	122
5.2 The shift in emphasise in TV drama in Oman	126
5.2.1 The first stage	127

5.2.2 The second stage	128
5.2.3 The third stage	130
5.3 Deficiencies and problems in Omani theatre and drama	133
5.3.1. The technical problems	134
5.3.2. political and social problems	137
5.4 deficiencies of children's theatre	139
5.4.1 Technical problems	141
5.4.2. economic problems	145
5.4.3. Quality of Content	146
5.4.4. Weakness of the artistic form of play	147
5.5. Weakness of the theatrical performances	147
5.6. Empirical Findings	152
5.6.1. Questionnaire Results	152
5.6.2. Seminar Results	157
5.6.3. Interviews	160
5.11. Suggestions emerging from Surveys	161
Conclusion	162

• **Chapter six**

Cultral, Scientific and Educational Development Programmes	164
Introduction	164
6.1 Television and knowledge explosion - an overview	164
6.2. Cultral Development and its Position in the Sultanate of Oman TV	166

6.3. The Educational Role of T.V programmes in the Sultanate of Oman	173
6.4. Evaluation of the Role of Drama Serials for Adults and Serial Programmes and Cartoon for Children	178
6.4.1. Evaluation of the Role of Drama Serials for Adults in OmanTV Programmes	178
6.4.2. Evaluation of the role of Serials, Programmes and Cartoons for Children in Oman TV	182
6.4.2.1 Children's Serials and Programmes	186
6.4.2.2. Cartoons for Children in the Sultanate of Oman TV	196
6.5. Environment Programmes in the Sultanate of Oman TV and Radio	200
Conclusion	201

• **Chapter Seven**

Omani TV and Theatre in relation to Oman's Modernization

Introduction	203
7.1. Development Requirements	203
7.2. Reciprocal impact of the Omani TV and Theatre, and the cultural situation in the country	208
7.3. Reciprocal impact of the Omani TV and Theatre, and the social situation in the country	215
7.3.1. Information from a social point of view	214
7.4. Reciprocal impact of the Omani TV and the educational situation in the country	221
7.4.1. Classical Arabic in the Mass Media	228
7.5. Open Sesame, a pioneer experience in children TV production	230
7.5.1. Training of the leading staff	233
7.5.2. Classical Arabic is the language of the programme	233

7.5.3. Production of research	234
7.5.4. Methodological objectives	235
Conclusion	236
• Chapter eight	
Drama and Various Types: British Models	
Introduction	238
8.1A brief History of Children Theatre in British	238
8.2. Different Aspects of Children's Drama	242
8.2.1. Theatre in Education/Drama in Education	243
8.2.2. Theatre workshop	254
8.2.3. Children's Theatre CT	257
8.2.4. Creative Drama	257
8.2.5. Young People's Theatre (YPT)	268
8.2.6 Theatre for Young Audience (TYA)	268
8.2.7. Participation Theatre	269
8.2.8. Theatre by Children and Youth	270
Conclusion	271
• Chapter nine	
Conclusion	
Introduction	275
9.1. Lack of Personnel	276
9.2. Technical and Programme Deficiency and their Impact on Development	277
9.3. General Assessment of Oman TV Role in the Cultural Development of Oman	280
9.3.1. Childhood	280

9.3.2.Children's Cinema	282
9.3.3. Adults' Cinema	283
9.4 Increasing of the Arab and Foreign Satellite Channels	285
9.4.1 Positions Regarding Foreign TV Programs	287
• Chapter Ten	
recommendations	290
10.1. Condition that must be available for Children's Plays	294
10.2. Television and Children	297
10.3. What is to be done	297
Bibliography	303
Appendix	312

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Polka and Tricycle Theatre	312
Appendix B	Children's International Theatre Festival Productions	313
Appendix C	Details of International Visitor Programme in United States	315
Appendix D	Omani History	347
Appendix E	Poster: Titi and Toti	349
Appendix F	Output of Omani Youth Theatre, 1980-2002	350
Appendix G	Omani TV Drama, 1980-2002	352
Appendix H	Survey Questionnaire	355
Appendix I	Questionnaire Data	357
Appendix J	Seminar Questions	358
Appendix K	Interviewees	359
Appendix L	T.V. Violence	362

Children's Drama: Technical and Educational Approaches to the Development of TV and Theatre Drama in Oman.

Introduction

Since the beginning of amateur theatre in Oman, half a century ago, school theatre and theatre bands have been presenting their works for students of both public and private schools. This type of theatre enjoys certain characteristics and values that render it suitable for performance in the private education sector. On the other hand some of these performers do not comply with educational requirements but they go on performing - without any hindrance - that type of commercial theatre that has low educational value. In such a situation, the questions arise: "What is children's drama? Do children deserve their own theatre or drama? Why is there no specialised drama for children in Oman? What are its functions and educational horizons? How do school theatre and theatrical education for children differ? Meanwhile the openness to Western culture has led to the spread of many consumer products, especially cultural products, which have become dominant because of the non-availability of local products that meet Omani needs. The global spread of this phenomenon represents an extraction of the roots and the replacement of one culture by another, which will affect the development of the current generation of children and youths. Children's life has changed from the local traditional one to a hybrid cultural pattern, and been gradually moulded into the western, especially American pattern. Many values and customs of the Arab Islamic community, relating to food, clothing and social behaviour were seriously affected, as a result of the alienation and drifting from the traditional values of Omani society. Globalisation changes values, behaviour and style of life. In so doing, it destroys the

basic human values of the personality. Globalisation becomes the cause of deterioration of values, internationally, as the multinational companies come to dominate peoples' lives' and their destinies and their future and finally their fortunes. In the face of globalisation, humans need to assert their cultural, spiritual and educational values, to protect themselves.

In this study, therefore, the importance of strengthening the culture, spirit and mentality of society is emphasized. One way in which this can be done is through an educational curriculum that reflects Arab Islamic values and culture. This will help the recipients to fortify themselves against what is transmitted from other cultures and the materialistic life style that dominates the community.

From this perspective, children's theatre emerges as having religious, moral and spiritual value it has a significant role to play in the fortification of values and faith, to help children to know their culture and face life, now and in the future.

In the absence of a curriculum that promotes intellectual values in order to face emergent changes, the local culture fell down in its first test. There were two main responses. Some people completely rejected the products of progress, while others adopted indiscriminately the imported values and behaviours. The resulting tension led to the crumbling of the mass media and culture, and a downgrading of intellectual output, with a focus on commercial products designed for quick gain without concern for spiritual and moral values. The result was the wider spread of many programmes, plays, stories, novels and drawings designed to titillate, which can have undesirable influence on those with an insecure intellectual foundation.

In this situation, it is important to exploit the value and significance of children's theatre to fortify tomorrow's generation with culture.

To achieve this, the general goals of children's theatre and drama must be consistent with educational policy and both theatre and public media need to be developed and staffed with personnel capable of achieving these goals.

1. The Benefits of children's theatre and drama:

Before displaying the benefits of children's drama, we should classify the main concepts used in this thesis; to distinguish the various types of dramatic work. The following are some key terms used in this thesis. It should be noted that none of these definitions is attributable to any single source; they are the product of reading, discussion with fellow professionals, and experience over many years of involvement with drama in Oman.

Drama: The word is derived from the Greek verb "to do", and denotes the creation of perceptible forms (such as movement, gesture, and speech) expressive of human feelings. Drama is the broadest in meaning of the related terms used in this thesis; it refers to any work performed by actors on a stage, in the cinema or on television, as well as in special contexts, such as school lessons (see also Drama in Education).

World drama is used in two main ways: first, to describe the performance of this work, its production. Thus the text of *King Lear* is drama, and Shakespeare, as writer, a dramatist; while a performance of *King Lear* is also drama, its players engaged in a dramatic activity.¹

¹ Huxley, Michael Witts, Noel, (ed.), *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader*, (Routledge, 1996), p.369.

Theatre: Sometimes people confuse drama with theatre, believing that drama and theatre are one and the same. The drama is the literature, the actual script, and includes those featuring musical elements, thought, scene, plot, character and dialogue, regarded collectively as a form of art. But theatre is the actual production and contains the drama, all elements of production including actors, the space, and the audience.

Children's theatre/ drama: Drama and /or theatre designed specifically to be performed by professionals specialising in work for children, where adult and children share in some shows, taking account of their interests, cognitive development and emotional and psychological needs. In this thesis, children cover the ages 3 to 15 years.

School Theatre/drama: This is like an experimental laboratory or an exhibition of students' activities, which forms a part of the curriculum, aiming to discover and develop the student's talents.

As our study is concerned with School Theatre as “drama in education” we will present its benefits on many levels as follows:

1- Psychological Level:

Acting is the most important medium used to achieve psychological recovery. Playing a role in a drama or watching a movie can remove psychological tension and relieve suppressed emotions when the actor or the viewer becomes involved with the atmosphere of the play. Acting can treat many psychological problems, such as shyness, introversion and speech problems.

The psychological benefits are in many cases even greater than in the adult theatre. By seeing problems solved, one learns: a) that problems can be solved, and b) that the specific problems one may have currently, have been encountered and solved by others, at least by fictional others.

Psychologists say that children like drama because it is a type of delusion, which forms an important part in the child's mind. Drama can drive children to take actions to satisfy their imagination. Other psychologists say that drama looks like a dream to the children, where they can find similar characters to those in real life. Children, through their engagement with the drama's events, can discover themselves.

Some people may think that the aims of acting are amusement and recreation. This is a deficient concept because drama is an effective communication medium to express an idea, notion or feeling, depending on language, body movements, facial expressions, gestures and manner of utterance. All these make acting a significant social force for education, influence and guidance, in addition to amusement and recreational purposes.

It is noticed that the main reason why students' problems are neglected in some schools is that psychological aspects in their lives are ignored, due to the unavailability of activities including art, sport and other activities. This forces the students to express their capacities, talents and abilities in less desirable ways, creating problems and unacceptable behaviour.

Failure to allow expression to children's emotions is psychologically dangerous, causing them to lose their emotional balance, as they will feel a strong internal pressure

and their unutilised mental capacity will make them feel oppressed and deprived of a suitable position in society.

The function of theatre starts from this point to treat cases of shyness, which affects speech causing stammering and stuttering. These defects could be treated when the theatre instructor gives the student self-confidence, training him to face people during the show, whether by acting or reciting some short poems or prose.

Theatre can explore the energies suppressed inside the child, altering the psychological balance on two levels, the aesthetic and the cognitive. At the aesthetic level, theatre (using music, dancing, painting...etc) contributes to human emotional need. At the cognitive level, it contains a distillation of human ideas.

2- Economic Level

When students work to produce a show, they learn how to save by the proper use of the materials such as paint, not to leaving the tins open, cutting pieces of wood, using old furniture to make the stage set...etc. All these activities teach students a good economic lesson in how to maintain materials in order to use them at the proper time.

3- Level of Co-operation and Obtaining Skills

A theatre show and it requires co-operation among the students in many activities. Some students can be involved in lighting, others in making decorations. During these tasks, students will acquire different skills and also learn the need for co-operation and orderly conduct in social life.

2. Goals of Children's Theatre/drama

According to Mark Twain,

Children's theatre is considered one of the greatest achievements of the twentieth century.²

Children's theatre/drama work includes:

1- Astonishment and enjoyment

The child's astonishment and enjoyment arouse his/her diligence, curiosity and taste for beauty. Children's theatre is artistic work aiming at fun and entertainment in the first place and then to educate the child. It helps to develop the habit of attention in the children. This is really the first step in scientific thinking, which is based on attention and awareness in order to collect data, assure their validity, and classify and interpret them. Theatre also aids in the acquisition and development of moral values.

Children's theatre tackles in its subjects the problem of their life in a very easy expression with the ease of the situation and clarity of its depicted characters. Therefore, the child can face his own problems in their normal size as the plays suggest to him solutions and ideas (fear of death, fear of the unknown, anxiety, and fear of separation from the parent³

Often, actors, drawing from real life and human nature, represent evil and goodness. This duality crystallizes the moral problems that children must deal with. Evil may sometimes overcome goodness, but finally goodness will be triumphant. In children's theatre, the punishment or fear of punishment in plays has a slight influence in protection from crime. But the children's perception that crime does not benefit its perpetrators is the most effective concept in human psychology in general and in child psychology in particular.

² Mohammed, Awatef, Qannawi, Huda, **The Arabian child and theatre**, (Anglo almassriya 1984), p17

³ Mohamed and Qannawi, Ibid, p.17.

As a matter of fact, the virtue of overcoming sin at the end of plays does not provide the moral tendency of child but the child's reincarnation of the play's hero and identifying himself with him and his imagining that he is sharing him the struggle against the prevailing evil, at the same time sharing with him his own sufferings during his struggle against obstacles and difficulties that he encounters his way till goodness overcomes evil at the end. This spontaneous emotional identification of child with the hero, in addition to the internal and the external conflicts that the child suffers from the play hero, leaves an impression on psychology of the child who is watching and the listening of the moral meaning that the play directs.⁴

In children's theatre, it is obvious from the beginning whether the character is good or evil; some characters represent greed, ugliness and laziness and indifference to work.

Generally speaking, this juxtaposition of the two opposites in the morality of the play's heroes allows the child to realize easily the differences in the modes of character behaviour. The child cannot perceive this thing in his actual life, as its protagonists' characters are more complicated. For the child to perceive this contrast in life, he would have to wait for a long time to stabilize his personality. Moreover, the child can realize the differences in characters from one to another upon the basis of positive identification with the heroes that are presented to him. The child then has to make up his mind on the character he desires to create on life's stage. This decision or choice will anchor the basis of the personality and lead to the development of his personality.

This choice by the child is not based upon the encounter between evil and good or upon whether the character appeals to the child's admiration or his hatred, but, the better and clearer the dramatic character is, the more the child identifies himself with it and his refusal to imitate the evil character will increase.

⁴ Mohammed and Qannawi, Ibid, p.18.

The child usually does not ask himself whether he wants to be evil or good. Rather he wishes to be one of these characters, i.e. he says, "I hope to be the same as these characters". In fact, the child decides when he find himself in that character in the sense that if it is good, he will be the same⁵

From this, springs the importance children's theatre in making children acquire and develop moral values.

2- Providing children with new experiences

Naturally, the individual, whether a child or an adult, leads a narrow type of life unless he passes through some fruitful experiences, and looks forward to new experiences, most of which are impossible to be fulfilled. In fact, most of us lead our life within a limited scope unless we enrich it and enhance it with reading, travelling, or watching plays or movies or by our intellectual contact with the friends and people we meet in our ordinary life or on the pages of books and magazines.

From this angle, we find that children's theatre is a means for communicating valuable experiences to children, experiences that widen their perceptions and make them more capable of understanding themselves and their families, as a result of questions that recommend the spirit of inquiry, investigation and searches. If books, magazines and other mass media achieve this goal to different degrees, it is simply because the child's experience, and his interaction with the characters, cannot have the same degree of vitality and excitement that they do when they are presented on stage effectively.

⁵ Ibid, p.19.

3- Providing emotional release

Children's theatre has psychological significance and achieves many tasks for the child; one of these is developing the child's ability to transcend the social constraints imposed by his environment and social reality.

The second task is developing his ability to relieve himself from resentment, anger and the psychological pressures that the environment imposes.

The third task is supporting him to overcome the circumstances that annoy or disappoint him in his real life.

The child re-enacts modes of behaviour and distinctive life styles of the various characters, adults or children that he perceives with his eyes and interacts with emotionally. In this type of acting game, the child reflects examples of the surrounding human life and develops his reactive capacity, so that he is influenced by the patterns of life within the environment he lives in.

In fact, acting games include originally a lot of the child's imagination, and here comes the creative value of theatre. Torrance (1961), in relation to "invention" states that much of what children learn in the pre-school age is based on imagination, speculations, enquiries, consultancy, and observation, which the child reflects in playing the theatrical roles that he lives in usually and in reality sometimes.⁶

4- Satisfying children's eagerness and their love for adventure

⁶ Torrance E.P. **Guiding Creative Talent** (N.J, Prentice Hall 1961), p.20-25

It would be foolish to ignore children's eagerness and their love for adventure during their middle and late childhood (from 8-12 years approximately), since this characteristic is an inseparable part of their psychological entity.

Drama has seized this characteristic in children and provided them with a series of mysterious detective stories that have aroused and increased their love of suspense and adventure.

However, there is a problem that these adventures reflect a strange environment compared to Omani society. Therefore, theatre should decrease the presentation of these adventures and omit what the child cannot comprehend visually from them.

Drama basically relies on the processes of imagination by children, i.e. the creative imagination, which is very different from the imaginary. The first one is characterized by new elements that did not exist in the child's former experience, while the second involves merely recalling what is found in the child's experience. Whilst children love imaginary objects that are far from real life in middle and early childhood, this faculty gradually declines in later childhood.

Therefore, drama must take into consideration the following:

- 1- The formulation of children's imagination in a productive way, whether scientific or literary.
- 2- Facilitating by all means possible the child's transfer from the state of ambiguity to understanding of reality by directing his good tendencies in the field of general information or in field of handiwork and creative acting.

3- Reflecting children's inclinations, which start to specialize at the late childhood stage (8-12 years), and directing them to what is practical in their environment, provided that this involves children's own participation. Children may resort in this case to any means that they can use, regardless of the type: words, ideas, balls, small tools or colouring brushes.

7- Preparing children for adult drama

Studies and researches on children prove that children watching the best type of drama are more able to appreciate new plays when they grow older and, when the authors of these plays appear, thus, the status of drama will be elevated.

Drama can never be accorded a dignified status unless people consider theatre as a means of struggle for the best life instead of considering it as a means of escape from life. When spectators persist in demanding progressive forms of plays to be presented to them, in future they will never object to the drama that appeals to their ideas and abilities. Furthermore, when a generation of children grows up with awareness of good types of plays, the theatre will not be able to depend on exhausted businessmen. The current impoverishment in the artistic field is a reflection of the failure to develop critical appreciation among prospective audiences. If today's adults had been able to see good types of drama during their childhood, they would not have accepted these types of bad plays.

8- Developing the child's innovative thinking

Psychological studies of children prove that the growth of children's mental abilities and the growth of their independence from others progress in line with the growth of their creative abilities. These abilities are very useful for children who live in the age of

the new technology as they not only help them to adopt to their environment, but facilitate their making the environment congenial for satisfaction of their biological and psychological needs. In this, the child's invention becomes a defensive means against his changeable environment.

In order to emancipate the child's ability to innovate and creativity, certain requirements must be met.

A- Children should be given the chance to make choices from among alternatives presented to them.

B- Parents must not be too hasty to intervene in solving children's problems, but give them chance to try for themselves.

C- Children's imagination can be freed by organizing events from time to time in which the children re-enact the characters of imaginative stories whom they admire, choosing their garments and masks under the supervision of their teachers in an entertaining social atmosphere.

In order to develop the child's imagination, nurseries in the United States of America make stick puppets from some photographs of figures familiar to children, mounted on card and attached to a small piece of wood (stick) and then tell stories about them. Typically, these are accompanied by soft songs which please the children. In this manner, children experience drama at the age of three years old.

3. The concept of the research

The idea of establishing a promising drama movement for children is a major concern preoccupying the Omani dramatists at the present stage. The drama movement in Oman

is still young, not exceeding thirty years of dramatic experiments. It could be framed in the sphere of amateur, not professional art, dealing mostly with realistic social issues.

One inevitable question has then to be asked here: What pillars can we rely on, first to establish children's drama in Oman, and then to develop its contribution and achievements?

Here we need to clarify two fundamental terms. They are authenticity and contemporaneity. Authenticity is the fact that drama penetrates deeply into the conscience of society and becomes an integral part of its concerns, culture, customs, arts and rituals. It is the work of all the effective drama movements through history - starting from the Greek drama that emerged from the festivities and religious rituals that were strongly linked to the seasonal popular feasts, on one side, and on the other, to the ancient Greek philosophy which marked the Greek civilization. The concept of authenticity in Western drama in terms of the close association between drama and the social and cultural context can be understood from a brief review of the changing roles and forms of drama through the ages.

During the Middle Ages, drama was very much associated with the church. Dramatized versions of Bible stories from the Creation to the Resurrection played an important part in the transmission of Christian doctrine and Bible history. By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however the revival movement of the English culture and the drama movement intermingling with the classical literary heritage, on the one hand, and the folk literary heritage, on the other, resulted in shows being taken out from the Church to the public squares during festivals and different public occasions.

In this way, the English drama shows plunged into the street. A few factors such as the local language, some realistic characters and throwing light on contemporary current events had therefore to be introduced that gave the English drama its distinguished independent identity, which flourished and reached one of its peaks in the Elizabethan era and came to its perfection with the appearance of the great playwright William Shakespeare.

The development of drama was undoubtedly linked to the philosophies that prevailed in the 19th century, particularly the industrial revolution, Auguste Comte's positivism and Darwin's theory about evolution, the origin of species and the survival of the fittest. All this was reflected in the rise of natural and realistic drama. Drama was subsequently influenced by the development of analytic psychology and the change in the artistic view from an outward to an inward view that penetrated deep into the human soul and dug as deep in the suggestions stemming from that soul, in symbolism and expressionism.

As for the 20th century, drama can never be looked at separately, isolated from the great events that occurred in the world during that century, such as the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the two World Wars and the spread of existentialist philosophy. The modern Irish drama based on the cultural heritage, particularly what is related to the sea, is worth mentioning here. So is the modern Spanish drama, which was strongly linked with the Spanish cultural heritage.

Some pioneers of the modern drama movement, such as Peter Brook, have stretched the idea of linking drama to the cultural heritage even further. Peter Brook is not content with the English cultural heritage for his inspirations, but he resorts to Indian, Persian

and African legends. He has selected legendary masterpieces and presented them to Europe in a dramatic frame.

Having said all that, what authenticity can the Omani drama rely on? We can confidently point to that great wealth of literature and arts manifested in poetry, prose writings and folklore, represented in chants, dances, tales and legends, as well as in the different customs and rituals that are practised on public and national occasions.

As for contemporaneity, it is the second pillar on which the development of Omani drama can rely. For the heritage as it is, and the locally marked folk arts as they are, can not be presented on the stage in their existing form. We should take advantage of what the world drama movement has achieved, such as the advanced methods to use the cultural heritage as both contents and frameworks for drama. Therefore, it becomes clear that contemporaneity for us means that the Omani drama, with its distinctive features, should be an integral part of the world drama movement, while taking advantage of all its achievements.

4. The research endeavour

The basic purpose of this research is to develop and enrich Omani children's drama in order to make it a useful educational tool. It seeks to do so by looking closely at the western, more particularly the British and the American models of drama in education. The Omani tradition of drama, generally, and children's theatre, particularly, is in a poor state of development, crying out for real cultural roots, and authenticity. This research seeks to fill this gap, both with the help of dramatic tools as developed in the west and also by looking more closely at the cultural scenarios at home.

5. Previous studies

Due to the novelty of the drama experiment in the Sultanate of Oman, studies of this kind, particularly about the Omani drama, are still new. Nothing has been published about this subject in Oman, except historical overviews of Omani theatre, for instance, *Theatre experience in Oman*" issued by Abdulkarim Jawad 1988, in 43 pages only, *The Theatre in Al-Ahli Club*, issued by the club in 1970, and *Glances at Education in the Past* by the Ministry of Education in 1986. All these books give historical accounts of the activities of school, club and youth theatre. So the researcher has depended on his own experience in writing for the press about TV drama in Oman and also his previous research, *The Contribution of Television Programs in Cultural Development in Oman*, which was a doctoral thesis presented to the University of Film and Theatre in Romania in 1999, and also some scattered works, most of them unpublished, by the students of drama of the Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.

Although the uniqueness of the Omani drama experiment, and the aspects of the traditional arts and the cultural heritage have been emphasised, it is necessary also, to stress the fact that the Omani heritage is an integral part of the Arabic heritage and the Arabic culture in general. So in no way can it be dealt with or treated in isolation from its Arabic cultural environment, for language, faith, customs, traditions, environment and worries are all common factors. So in this regard, emphasis is placed on the importance and the development of children's drama in the Arab World. In this context, some useful publications on children's theatre/drama were found, such as *Educational Theatre* by Marea, Hassan, 2000, 2 books, *Children's Theatre in Kuwait as an Artistic and Educational Approach* by Almuel, Fadhel Abbas, 2001, *Towards Children's Theatre*, edited by Aydabi, Yousif, 2002, *The Art and Music and Drama in Children's Education*, by a group of writers, 2001, *The Effect of Economic and Social Changes on*

the Gulf Theatre, by Alattar, Habib Ghulom, 2001, besides some other publications in the media field, particularly related to T.V.

As for English children's drama, studies about it are available in abundance, but most of them are very old, though there is information on the internet.

The English concepts and practice of drama in education (DIE) and theatre in education (TIE) appear to offer suitable models for establishing a brand new children's theatre in Oman. Particularly useful is Peter Slade's introduction to his ideas in his book *Child Drama*⁷ and his other publications. This can be regarded as a pioneer not only for Omani children's theatre but for children's theatre world wide. Besides the Peter Slade model of children's theatre in school, ideas have been gleaned from visits to many youth theatres and children's theatres and festivals at the Polka Theatre and the Tricycle Theatre in London (Appendix A), the International Children's Theatre in Edinburgh (Appendix B), many American theatres in New York, Washington DC, Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania (Appendix C) and the Gulf region, in addition to many other world festivals for film, TV and Theatre. All these afforded opportunities to find out the current practices and theories of children's drama. Use will be made only of what is consistent with the Omani experiment. The sources will be cited in the appropriate places where they are used.

A visit to the United States was particularly useful because it was possible to gather first hand experiences of American children's drama in theatre and T.V, besides the pioneer production between the United States and Arabian Gulf region of an Arabic version of *Sesame Street*. The researcher had a wonderful opportunity to be involved in a special

⁷ Slade, Peter, **Child Drama**, (London: University of London Press 1954)

adaptation of *Sesame Street* called *Ifteh ya watani abwabek*, of which he directed fifteen episodes for the Arabian Gulf region.

Thus, this work draws on the writer's personal experience as producer, writer and director of T.V and theatre in Oman and the Gulf region and also as member of many art committees in Oman and the Gulf region, as well as the above reading experiences, to identify a variety of aspects of drama and its uses which are believed to be of importance for children's drama in Oman, where there is no theatre for children yet.

6. The Aims of the Study

It is hoped through this study to

- 1- Understand the Omani drama strategy -especially children's drama- and the goals which it seeks to attain;
- 2- Trace back the origins and development of the Omani T.V. and theatre;
- 3- Provide the best possible theatrical experience from Arab World and British models for Omani children's drama.

Throughout this research, the focus will be on drama in the Sultanate of Oman in T.V. and Theatre -especially children's drama- and its use for cultural, educational, artistic, moral, and spiritual purposes as a means by which the child may judge his thoughts and actions and deepen his religious sense of values. So this research will show how children's drama should take account of the developmental stage of its audience, and will contribute to establishing a new separate theatre for children, as a contribution to Omani cultural development, which is the most important aim of this research.

The other aims are: to give children's theatre directors and teachers who use drama in the classroom some starting points for reflecting on its nature, and provide them with stimulus for creativity, and the desire for information and research.

The research seeks to suggest some ways in which they might begin to tackle the problems of assessment and evaluation, giving them some interesting ideas for considering the role of drama in education, and also to suggest some possible ways in which drama could be organised in the curriculum in consideration of the requirements of children's drama.

7. Significance of the research

Omani drama plays a major part in mobilising every citizen for the building up of a modern country. It also strives relentlessly to give a real picture of the development process in the Sultanate of Oman because it reflects truly the situation prevailing in society.

This is the first study undertaken to deal with the contribution of the Omani drama to the country's cultural, educational and social development and it is the first study dealing with children's drama. It also seeks to stimulate a series of studies, which can be undertaken in the future, in the following areas.

- Analytical studies of the contents of the T.V and Theatre drama in Oman
- Field studies with children drama in T.V and theatre.
- Field studies on the Omani audience.
- Studies on the Omani drama directors

8. Methodology of the study

By the methodology of study, is meant the ways information and data available are dealt with in order to achieve the objectives of the study. This process starts with the collection of data, their classification and analysis in the light of the research objectives.

Given the very nature of enquiry and the subject matter of research, this study adopts a qualitative approach and does not deal with variables that can be quantitatively measured.

A survey was carried out of the academic heritage pertaining to the topic of the study. This involved the review of publications, empirical work, and theory that can contribute to the achievement of the goals of this study.

In order to explore the attitude of teachers towards children's drama, a questionnaire was given to teachers, containing sixteen questions.

Further information was obtained from a seminar on children's Theatre and Drama held with various professionals in the field (for details of the questions posed, and the outcomes, see Chapter Five).

The major part of the research is based on practical experience gained in the course of staging plays and other co-operative activities as follows:

First, we need to mention the staging of the first Omani Children's play, "*Titi Toti*". Many specialists worked together on the play which was produced especially for research purposes, although admission to the theatre was by ticket. The play was a co-operative effort between Lebanese and Omani artists. It was written by Fadi Shaaban, and directed and produced by the researcher. The actors and actresses included both adults and children, and the audiences were small children aged 3 - 9, and children with special needs.

Second, the researcher and many media and drama specialists worked together as a group to find out the most important problems and deficiencies facing the Omani drama in general and children's drama in particular. The meeting took place in the Press Club in Oman, where we discussed the subject matter and ways to establish Omani children's theatre and addressed some suggestions, which we thought could be useful for our approaches.

Finally, examples and cases relevant to the study topic were analysed. The historical method was used due to its importance in information research. The past has to be retrieved in a methodical and objective way through the gathering and evaluation of evidence and putting it in its context to draw accurate conclusions.

In order to link the problem of the research with its objectives and methodology, the researcher defined the main axes for the study. The focus is on the Omani drama strategy, comprising the origin and development of the television and theatre, and children's drama in Oman and the thinking under these developments. By this method, the data were analysed in a scientific and systematic way.

9. Chapterisation

Chapter One sets the research in context with a brief history of Omani culture, including the political history. It includes the pre-Islamic period, the coming of Islam and the early Imamate, Portuguese occupation, the Ya'aruba dynasty, the Al bu Said dynasty in Muscat and Zanzibar and the current Sultan of Oman, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who has taken the country from darkness to enlightenment, and undertaken to make Oman one of the most developed and peaceful countries on the world.

An introduction is given to the culture and civilization of Oman and its arts, folklore, traditional music and Omani orchestra, besides the education system in Oman and its levels and its most important strategies. The implications of these contextual factors for the current research endeavour are highlighted.

Chapter Two is about the mutual impact on society of the arts. It is shown how drama, more especially since the advent of film and television, affects viewers, mentally and emotionally. In the light of these influences, the perceived challenges to Arab culture posed by the media are highlighted.

Chapter Three is about the development of children's creativity by personal and projective playing and the relationship between play and drama. The chapter will explain also the part played in children's education by school theatre as an educational and artistic process, and its features. This chapter depends mostly on Peter Slade's pioneering model and ideas of child's theatre and child's plays.

Chapter Four is concerned with the common cultural context of children's drama and theatre in the Arab world, of which Oman is part. Traditional Arab forms of theatre are described and the Arab perspective on the key elements of theatre is presented. The views of modern Arab writers on the relationship between children's development and various kinds of theatre, as well as the educational and social value of theatre and drama for children are considered, and an indication is given on the main types of stories on which plays for children may be founded.

In **Chapter Five**, the focus moves more specifically to the theatre and drama movement in Oman. It is shown how, after its early beginnings in youth theatre, drama in Oman has become identified predominantly with television. The practical and cultural obstacles facing the development of drama and theatre in general, and for children in particular, whether in schools, theatres or T.V. are discussed with reference to the author's professional experience and to the empirical work carried out for this study.

In view of the domination of television in Oman, as the main forum for cultural and educational presentations, **Chapter Six** examines this medium in more detail, and an attempt is made to evaluate what is transmitted, especially for children. It is shown that the current output is dominated by foreign broadcasts which raise concern in relation to their low educational value, alien values, and high violence content.

Dissatisfaction with the current offerings for children in Oman raises the question, what should be the alternative. Any new developments, if they are to gain official and public support, must be in line with the cultural trend of society. **Chapter Seven**, therefore examines the role expected of the dramatic media in Oman, in terms of contribution to the nation's development. A pioneer work for children, the T.V. programme Open Sesame, is cited as an example of how modern educational theory and technology can be reconciled with local elements to produce material that is entertaining, educational and culturally acceptable.

Whilst some good beginnings have been made in children's television, drama and theatre for children are lagging behind. In **Chapter Eight**, therefore, Western experiences such as Drama in Education and Theatre in Education are presented, which

may provide useful models for the development of drama and theatre for children in Oman.

Chapter nine concludes the discussion by examining and assessing the problems and prospects of children's cinema and theatre in Oman and the Arab world. This discussion paves the way for the presentation in **Chapter Ten**, of various recommendations, which are the outcomes of this research. The recommendations relate to ways of improving children's theatre and the development of other aspects of drama like TV, theatre and cinema.

University
Library
Hull

Chapter One

A Cultural History of Oman

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set the research in context by presenting background on Oman and highlighting features of its history and culture which may have particular implications for the concern of this research, namely, the development of an Omani children's drama.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first is geographical in focus, in the second; Oman's political history is briefly outlined. The cultural traditions of the Sultanate are highlighted in section 1.3, while section 1.4 is concerned with the country's education system. The implications of these elements for the current research endeavour are pointed out in the conclusion section.

1.1. Geography, Topography and Population

Oman is an Arab country in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula. It is firmly established and was well known in pre-historic civilization. Oman has an area of about 120,000 square miles -almost as big as England - and 1700 kilometres of coastlines running all along the eastern side of the country from north down to the south, which provided the basis for the emergence of a maritime society depending on fishing and maritime commerce.

On the western side of the country lies the desert; the population live in scattered nomad groups that are always in search of water and pasture due to their being essentially herders. These nomad groups form what we can call the Bedouin society.

However, between the two environments - the coastline and the desert - there are chains of high mountains crossing the country from East to West. In between them, there are many oases and flat green valleys, which can be farmed. So people, here, depend on agriculture for their living, and can be called the rural society.

Each of these societies has its own customs, traditions and different folk arts. This is particularly due to Oman's intermediate geographical position which has directly linked it to the civilizational sites that have been influential through history, such as the Indian subcontinent, Persia and the Eastern coast of Africa. These have naturally marked the Omani traditional folk arts.

1.2. Political history

A timeline of Oman's history from the 3rd century CE to the present can be found in Appendix D. The most significant developments are described below.

1.2.1 Pre-Islamic period

Little is known about Oman's pre-Islamic past but it is clear from recent archaeological discoveries and research that early civilizations existed at least 5000 years ago.

Sumerian tablets refer to a country named "Magan" as a source of copper. It seems certain that they referred to Oman. Evidence from excavations near Sohar shows that the copper mining and smelting industry was well developed by the year 2000 BC.⁸

Frankincense from Dhofar, which was so important in the social and religious life of ancient peoples, provides evidence of the existence of an early trading community. It is also clear that there were farming and fishing settlements from the earliest times.

⁸ <http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/2.htm>, [10.2.2002].

The ancestors of present day Omanis are believed to have arrived in two waves of migration over a number of years, the first from the Yemen and the second from northern Arabia at a time when the Persians occupied various parts of the country.

1.2.2 The Coming of Islam and the Early Imamate

The call of the Prophet Mohammed to the Omanis to become Muslims altered the course of their history.

It was around 630 AD that Amr Ibn al-As arrived in Oman bearing a letter from the Prophet to Abd and Jaifar, the two sons of al-Julanda, who ruled Oman jointly. Having embraced Islam, they were instrumental in defeating the Persians.⁹

The early Imamate in Oman arose out of a vision to create the true and ideal Muslim State. The first Ibadhi Imam, Julanda bin Mas'ud, was elected in 751 AD but he died in battle and it was not until 801 AD after a period of turmoil that Warith bin Ka'ab was elected. There then followed a period of peace, stability and prosperity lasting more than 300 years

Maritime trade flourished and Sohar became one of the greatest seaports in the Islamic world. As they travelled and traded, the Omanis spread the message of Islam, as well as Arabic culture and language, reaching as far east as China.

1.2.3 Portuguese Occupation

In the early 16th century, after the Portuguese under Vasco de Gama had discovered the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope to India, they occupied Muscat for nearly 150

⁹ Ibid

years in order to dominate the trade which had until then been an Arab monopoly.

The Portuguese were expelled from Muscat in 1650 by Sultan bin Saif al-Yarubi.¹⁰

1.2.4 The Ya'aruba Dynasty

Since the expulsion of the Portuguese, no other foreign power has ever occupied Oman, apart from a brief period when the Persians made a partial occupation. The Ya'aruba Imams introduced a period of renaissance in Oman's fortunes both at home and abroad, uniting the country and bringing prosperity. It was under the Ya'aruba dynasty that many of the imposing castles and beautiful buildings that have been restored recently, such as the fort at Nizwa and the palace at Jabrin, were built.

Unfortunately, on the death of the Imam, Sultan bin Saif II, in 1718 civil war broke out over the election of his successor. Persian troops occupied Muttrah and Muscat but failed to take Sohar which was defended by Ahmad bin Said, who continued to fight the Persians and drive them from Oman after the civil war had ended.¹¹

1.2.5 The founding of the Al bu Saidi Dynasty

In 1744, Ahmad bin Said, who was a man of outstanding personality and courage, was elected Imam. He faced a number of difficulties in reconciling the rival factions after the civil war, but managed to build up the Omani navy into a power to be reckoned with, personally leading expeditions against pirates and driving the Persians from Basra.

When he died in 1783, his son Said was elected Imam but he was not popular, and was replaced by his son Hamad, who had been de facto ruler in Muscat while his father remained in Rostaq. Hamad died suddenly in 1792 and his uncle, Sayyid Sultan bin Ahmed, assumed power until his

¹⁰ <http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/2htm> ,[10.2.2002].

¹¹ Ibid

death in 1804. He had exercised such tight control over Oman and trade in the Gulf that European powers dealt with him as the effective ruler of the country.¹²

As a regional commercial power in the nineteenth century, Oman held territories on the island of Zanzibar off the coast of East Africa, in Mombassa along the coast of East Africa, and until 1958 in Gwadar (in present-day Pakistan) on the coast of the Arabian Sea. When its East African possessions were lost, Oman withdrew into isolationism in the southeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

Another of the Gulf States with long-standing ties to the British, Oman became important in the British-French rivalry at the end of the eighteenth century, when Napoleonic France challenged the British Empire for control of the trade routes to the East.¹³

Although nominally an independent sultanate, Oman enjoyed the protection of the empire without being, *de jure*, in the category of a colony or a protected state. With its external defences guaranteed and its overseas territories lost, the sultanate had no need for armed forces other than mercenaries to safeguard the personal position of the sultan.

1.2.6 Sayyid Said bin Sultan 1804 - 1856

Sayyid Sultan was succeeded by his son, Sayyid Said bin Sultan, who consolidated his father's achievements at home and abroad during his reign from 1804-1856. It was in this period that Oman reached its zenith as a regional power with possessions on both sides of the Gulf and in East Africa. Sayyid Said concentrated on developing his country's economy and commerce.

He made Zanzibar his second capital and concluded agreements with the European powers, as well as sending a special envoy to the United States, making Oman the

¹²Ibid

¹³[http://cweb2.1gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+OM0091\)](http://cweb2.1gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy:@field(DOCID+OM0091))' [4.2.2002].

first Arab State to establish diplomatic relations with that country.¹⁴

During this time his influence reached also other parts of East Africa in addition to provinces in Persia and Baluchistan. Muscat became an important commercial centre and meeting point for the entire Gulf area.

It was Sayyid Said, incidentally, who introduced the clove to Zanzibar, which he brought originally from Indonesia. These plantations provided a third of the Sultanate's budget.¹⁵

Thereafter, however, there followed a period of decline and, at the time of the First World War, Oman's share of international commercial activities was very limited.

1.2.7 Faisal ibn Turki, 1888-1913

On assuming power in 1888, Faisal ibn Turki gradually found his authority over the interior weakened, as tribal leaders increasingly perceived his dependence on British advisers an inherent weakness.

In 1895 he was forced to seek refuge at Jalali fort after Muscat was captured. British political agents frustrated his efforts to recapture Muscat, compelling him to court the French. He granted the French coaling facilities for their fleet at bunder Jissah near Muscat.¹⁶

Determined to thwart any growth in French presence in what Britain considered its sphere of influence, Britain presented Faisal ibn Turki with an ultimatum in 1888 ordering the sultan to board the British flagship or Muscat would be bombarded. Having

¹⁴<http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/2.htm>, [10.2.2002].

¹⁵<http://www.inforamp.net/emous/oman/history.htm>, [[7.2.2002].

¹⁶<http://rsb.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field> (DOCID+OMOO53), [6.2.2002].

little recourse, Faisal ibn Turki capitulated. Publicly humiliated, his authority was irreversibly damaged.

In 1903 he asked Lord George Nathaniel Curzon, viceroy of India, for permission to abdicate, but his request was denied. Responsibility for the capital was delegated to Said ibn Muhammad Al Said, while affairs of the interior fell to an ex-slave, Suleiman ibn Suwaylim.¹⁷

By 1913, control over the interior was completely lost, and a reconstituted imamate was again a threat to Muscat.

In May 1913, Salim ibn Rashed al Kharoosi was elected imam at Tanuf and spearheaded a revolt against the sultan that combined both Hinawi and Ghafri tribal groups.

So Nizwa become the spiritual capital of Oman in the interior district. The elected imam's strategy was to terminate the sultan's regime, to finish the British authority and rebuild the imamate in whole Oman. It's noted that this strategy is the same strategy of all imamates in history¹⁸

1.2.8 Taimur ibn Faisal, 1913-32

Taimur ibn Faisal succeeded his father as sultan in October 1913. When he assumed suzerainty over the country, he inherited an external public debt and widespread rebellion among the tribes.

Between 1915 and 1920, the sultan's forces were aided by British financial and material support against the rebel tribes, ensuring adequate resistance but not total victory. An uneasy situation of no war, no peace, existed, with the sultan controlling Muscat and the coastal towns and the imam ruling the interior. This was tacitly codified in the Treaty of Al-seeb in 1920, brokered by the British political

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Joseph, Rand, *The World Politics*, (USA 1995), p123

agent in Muscat. The treaty was between the sultan and the tribes, represented by Sheikh Isa ibn Salih al Harthi, leader of the Al Hurth tribe.¹⁹

In return for full autonomy, the tribes in the interior pledged to cease attacking the coast. The Treaty of Al-seeb was, de facto, a partition agreement between Muscat and Oman, serving Britain's interest in preserving its power through the office of the sultan without dispatching British troops to the region. The Treaty of Al-seeb ensured political quiescence between Muscat and Oman that lasted until the 1950s, when oil exploration in the interior reintroduced conflict.

In return for accepting a truncation of his authority, the sultan received a loan from the government of British India with an amortization period of ten years, sufficient to repay his debts to merchants. When Sultan Taimur ibn Faisal abdicated for financial reasons in 1932, the twenty-two-year-old Said ibn Taimur inherited an administration that was in debt.²⁰

A United States Department of State bulletin on the Sultan of Muscat and Oman in February 1938 describes the situation in which Sultan Said ibn Taimur found himself after assuming power:

The young Sultan found the country practically bankrupt and his troubles were further complicated by tribal unrest and conspiracy by certain of his uncles, one of whom immediately profited by the occasion to set up an independent regime. The Sultan tackled the situation with resolution and within a short time the traitorous uncle had been subdued, unrest quelled and most important of all, state finances put on much more solid footing.²¹

¹⁹ <http://1ewb2.1oc.gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy@field> (DOICD+OMOO54), [4.2.2002].

²⁰ <http://1ewb2.1oc.gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy@field> (DOICD+OMOO54), [4.2.2002].

²¹ Ibid

1.2.9 Said bin Taimur 1932 - 1970

In February 1932, Sultan Said bin Taimur came to power as a young man of 22, on his father's abdication, and determined seriously to tackle the problem of Oman's growing debts.

By measures of strict economy he controlled the deficit and his proudest claim was that "from 1933 until this present day there has been no financial deficit in the government's budget".²²

Under these circumstances, of course, there was no development either. The people struggled on with a subsistence economy, many of them living in extreme poverty.

James Morris, who made an epic tour in the interior with the Sultan in 1955, described the people who came to greet them as poor, thin, crippled, bent and pock marked. And the children, he said, had "such pitiable thin bodies, and such big protruding goggle eyes".²³

Over the years, too, the Sultan's fear that western ways would corrupt his people had led to numerous petty restrictions. The people were not allowed to smoke in the street, or to wear glasses or western clothes, or play football. Singing and dancing were banned, men could not move away from their own district without permission; and women had to stay in their village. There was little traffic on the road; to import a car or truck or tractor the Sultan's personal permission had to be sought (about 1000 vehicles had been imported by 1970, most of them for the army and oil companies).

When he tried to exercise his nominal control in the interior of the country in the early 1950's, the British

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

who felt that there was oil there backed him. And in order to look for it, they needed the Sultan to have actual control of the area and for Oman's indefinite borders with Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi to be clearly defined and drawn.²⁴

The ultimate result of this was a territorial dispute over the Buraimi oasis involving Oman, Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. With British help and his own bravado, Sultan Said in the end was the winner and the Buraimi oasis is today firmly within the borders of Oman.

Sultan Said bin Taimur was, in the words of one British writer, "an arch-reactionary of great personal charm". He wanted no change of any sort in Oman and did all that he could to isolate his country from the world. All visas were issued personally by him. He forbade travel to the interior by coastal residents and vice versa. Believing education was a threat to his power, he opposed it.²⁵

In general, Omanis were not allowed to leave the country and those who did were seldom allowed to return. The Sultan's only contact with the outside world was through his British advisers and Muscat's merchant families. He allowed these last to establish enormously lucrative monopolies for the import of goods, which he saw as crucial to his survival. In exchange, the merchants stayed out of politics and imported nothing which Sultan Said felt reeked of progress or the West (radios, books, eyeglasses). Through their customs receipts, the merchants provided the Sultan with most of the country's income. Aside from a few rich merchants, most of the population relied upon agriculture and fishing.

Muscat's control depended very much upon the opinion of the Sultan held by the tribes of the interior. In the early 20th century, the sultan's power to control the interior of the country was felt to have decreased.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ <http://1ewb2.1oc.gove/cgi-bin/query/cstdy@field> (DOICD+OMOO54), [4.2.2002].

Trouble erupted again in the late 1960s, as his people again grew weary of his Spartan rule. This time the rebellion centred on the southern province of Dhofar where Marxist backed forces from neighbouring Yemen attempted to annex the southern oil fields.

After 1958, Said ibn Taimur established his residence at Al Hisn near Salalah, in Dhofar, where he remained permanently except for periodic visits to London. By retiring to the south from Muscat, Said ibn Taimur was not only more secure from assassination but was also no longer obligated to meet frequently with tribal sheikhs and distribute subsidies and thereby avoided depleting the treasury. He married Dhofari wives, one of whom bore him his only heir, Qaboos ibn Said, and two daughters. Above all, Said ibn Taimur created his personal fiefdom and sought to arrest modernization by enforcing antiquated laws, public executions, and slavery of people of African descent. The isolation and xenophobia that he forced on the country and on Dhofar in particular left Oman grossly underdeveloped, despite increasing oil export revenues in the late 1960s.

An agreement between Sultan Said ibn Taimur and the British government in 1958 led to the creation of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the promise of British assistance in military development. The agreement included the detailing of British officers and confirmed the existing rights of Britain's Royal Air Force to use facilities at Salalah in Dhofar region and at Masirah, an island off the Omani coast in the Arabian Sea.²⁷

Sultan Said ibn Taimur was ultraconservative and opposed to change of any kind. Kindled by Arab nationalism, a rebellion broke out in 1964 in Dhofar, the most backward and exploited area of Oman.

²⁷<http://1cew2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/cstidy:@field> (DOCID+OMOO91) Oman a country study4.2.2002].

Although begun as a tribal separatist movement against a reactionary ruler, the rebellion was backed by leftist elements in the PDRY. Its original aim was the overthrow of Said ibn Taimur, but, by 1967, under the name of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf--which in 1974 was changed to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)-- it adopted much wider goals. Supported by the Soviet Union through the PDRY, it hoped to spread revolution throughout the conservative regimes of the Arabian Peninsula.²⁸

In 1968 the Marxists took over leadership, having the support of the PDRY, the Soviet Union, and China. Conservative Dhofaris broke with the movement, and when Qaboos ibn Said seized power in 1970, many agreed to support him against the insurgency. By the mid-1970s, as many as 2,000 rebels had surrendered, been retrained, and incorporated into the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) as pledged under the terms of the amnesty declared shortly after the 1970 coup.

1.2.10 Sultan Qaboos ibn Said

Sultan Qaboos ibn Said was born in Salalah in Dhofar on 18 November, 1940. He is the only son of the deceased Sultan Said bin Taimur and is of the 8th generation of the Al Busaidi dynasty.

He received his primary and secondary education in Salalah, and at 16, was sent to a private educational establishment in England. At the age of 20, he entered the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. After passing out of Sandhurst, he joined a British infantry battalion on operations in Germany for one year and also held a staff appointment with the British Army. After his military service, Sultan Qaboos studied local government subjects in England and, after a world tour, returned home to Salalah in December 1964 where he studied Islam and the history of his country.²⁹

His father, however, refused to entrust him with a responsible role in the government or

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ <http://www.omanet.com/sultanQaboos-htm> ministry of Information, [9.2.2002].

military and instead sequestered him in the palace in Salalah. Qaboos ibn Said's more cosmopolitan and progressive views were incompatible with his father's conservatism and isolationism, which Qaboos ibn Said considered detrimental to the country's development. With the tacit endorsement of the British, who saw thirty-year-old Qaboos ibn Said as an agreeable alternative, Qaboos ibn Said and a number of alienated political elite overthrew Said ibn Taimur in a palace coup d'etat on July 23, 1970. Said ibn Taimur withdrew to London, where he died in 1972.

Upon his accession to the throne on 23 July 1970, Sultan Qaboos moved to Muscat where he declared that the country would no longer be known as 'Muscat and Oman', but would be united as the 'Sultanate of Oman'³⁰

The speed with which their new Sultan intended to work was demonstrated to his people within that first week when a radio station was installed and Sultan Qaboos addressed his people. His words were ones of hope:

Yesterday it was complete darkness and with the help of God, tomorrow will be a new dawn on Muscat, Oman and its people.³¹

The government's policies and strategy after Sultan Qaboos ibn Said's ascent to power diffused much opposition. Pacification occurred through the dual strategy of carrot and stick--military pressure and economic rewards.

Qaboos ibn Said engaged neighbouring states, apprehensive of the growth of left-wing movements in the region, in dispatching economic and military assistance. . In addition to British troops and advisers, the new sultan was assisted by troops sent by the shah of Iran. Aid also

³⁰ <http://1cew2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy:@field> (DOCID+OMOO91) Oman a country study,[4.2.2002].

³¹ Said, Qaboos **the Royal Speeches of H.M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said 1970-1990**, (Printed by Oman Newspaper House, 1995). P.11

came from India, Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Trucial Coast, all interested in ensuring that Oman did not become a "people's republic." ³²

In December 1975, having driven the PFLO from Omani territory, the sultan declared that the war had been won. Total Omani, British, and Iranian casualties during the final two-and-one-half years of the conflict were about 500.

Qaboos ibn Said directed a disproportionate percentage of government revenues to the southern region. The shift was designed in part to augment military capabilities in the event of resumption of hostilities and in part as economic appeasement. The construction of schools, hospitals, roads, and other infrastructure ameliorated the underprivileged status of the south.

The way of life for Omanis had changed hardly at all over the ages, until the discovery of oils a little over twenty years ago. True, prosperity had fluctuated through the centuries, the best times being linked to the expansion of overseas trade, but wealth only ever came to the few.

There had always been a fairly sharp division, too, between the coastal towns and those of the interior. The towns of the coast were the first to enjoy the results of foreign trade; they suffered less often from inter-tribal strife, being rather set apart, but they were subject every now and then to devastating attacks by foreign powers. Today the divisions, which often made Oman a series of separate and more or less independent areas have dissolved in the general wave of prosperity. Development has touched even the most remote areas; motor tracks and concrete houses have reached all but the most

³² <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field> (DOCID+OMOO57), [7.2.2002].

physically in-accessible villages. Much of traditional Oman is still there to be explored, but as Oman moves further forward into the modern world, old Oman recedes into the past. Oman today has an excellent health service, a clear road network and many educational establishments for girls and boys, from nursery levels to university degrees.

His Majesty is a renowned peacemaker and the fact was acknowledged in 1998 when he was presented with the International Peace Award by the National Council on US-Arab relations. He also forges and maintains good relations with other Arab States and partners in the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (AGCC).

Each year, Oman celebrates the reign of Sultan Qaboos on National Day, 18th November. Festivities take place all over the country with lavish displays in the Sultan's honour.

1.2 Culture

Arabic is the official language of Oman, although there are many local languages, like Balushi and Persian, and Swahili, all of which have spread because some Omanis and their families have lived in Omani Colonies in Guader, Zanzibar, Mombassa, and many other east African countries, or travelled to neighbouring countries in the Sultan Said bin Taimour period and subsequently returned. English is widely spoken in business and education circles. In the northern coastal areas one finds traders and a large number of expatriates from the Indian subcontinent who also speak Urdu. But there are also some ancient languages like Shuhi in Musandam in the north part of Oman and Jabbali in Dhofar in the south part of Oman.

Despite the modern appearance of much of Oman, the country remains intensely

traditional. In the countryside hamlets and coastal villages, day-to-day life has changed little in centuries. Men can frequently be seen sporting bright blue, loose-fitting, floor-length shirt-dresses called *dishdashas*, often with a curved *khanjar* knife dangling from the waist. Women's dress is far more colourful than the simple black cloaks common in much of the rest of the Gulf region. Bright printed dresses are wrapped with even more colourful shawls and veils.

Oman has devoted a great deal of effort to preserve its traditional arts, dance and music, though one is more likely to see traditional dancing staged in a museum than spontaneously breaking out in a village street. Some key features of Omani culture are described in the following paragraphs: first, traditional music; second, the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra; and third, the folk tradition of dance, poetry and song.

1.2.1 Traditional music

The Centre of Traditional Music is responsible for the collection and documentation of the traditional folk music of Oman. It has an impressive collection of videotapes, sound recordings and colour photographs of the songs and dances, which have been handed down from generation to generation. The collection is now indexed on computer in Arabic and English. Since its establishment, the Centre has produced a number of publications.

1.2.2 Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra I (ROSO)

In 1985 His Majesty directed that a Royal Symphony Orchestra be formed under the aegis of the Royal Guard of Oman. The project was unique from the outset, because unlike every other venture where Western classical music was introduced for the first time to a country, only Omani nationals are employed as players. There has been no

support from experienced expatriate performers except in a teaching capacity. Moreover it was decided that all training should take place in Oman rather than in a foreign country, in order that the young Omanis selected remain within familiar surroundings.

The ROSO gave its inaugural concert on 1 ST July 1987, only one-year after the beginning of music training. The first public concert followed on 5th July 1988 and His Majesty the Sultan attended both concerts in the Oman Auditorium in Muscat.³³

Initially all players were boys, but in November 1988 girls joined for the first time. During the following years, the standard of achievement has risen steadily and demand for the ROSO has grown considerably. Not only does the orchestra perform an important personal service for His Majesty, but Oman is one of the few countries in the world where distinguished visitors are greeted by live performances of classical music. The ROSO has a lively series of public concerts each year. These events bring to Oman classical masterpieces, often for the first time, as well as distinguished international soloists and conductors. The ROSO also contributes to many cultural, commercial and diplomatic events.

1.2.3 Folk tradition

The Sultanate is rich in different types of folk art, such as dance song, associated with various occasions and festivals. These differ from one region to another according to the difference in traditions, habits and physical nature of the regions itself. Some examples are:

1. Al Razha:

³³ <http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/10.htm>, [10.2.2002].

This is a dance performed by men only, throwing their swords high in the air.

2. Al Aazi:

Al Aazi is a form of poetic song. The singer starts with the name of Allah and ends by greeting the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him) there are three categories of al-Azi:

- Alphiya (Alphabet): each verse begins with a different letter of alphabet.
- Addadiya (Numerical): The first three parts of the poem start in numerical order: The poet says (The first is ... The second is ...)
- Mutlaq (free): Not bound to alphabetical or numerical order.

3. Al Wanna:

These are songs of the Bedouin when travelling, riding his camel. Sometimes they are sung seated on the floor with the audience gathered around the singer.

4. Al Huboot:

A famous dance in Dhofar Governorate expressing horsemanship, bravery and dignity. Participants queue in short lines singing in turn in a systematic way, holding their weapons, swords, daggers and guns. The dancers are mounted by youth rising up their swords.

5. Al Nadba:

A well known art in Musandam Governorate expressing dignity and gratitude. People gather around the singer who sings in a high voice, with raised hands.

6. Al Madar:

A traditional art widely spread in Dhofar Governorate. It is usually performed on happy occasions and national festivals. It was associated in the past with the harvesting season.

It is performed by men and women together, in short rhythms and tones.

7. Al Manai:

Women sing on marriage occasions, clapping their hands and using the drums.

1.3 Education

The education of girls and boys is given high priority in Oman. In 1970 there were only three schools for boys with a total of 909 pupils and around 30 teachers. There are now more than 1000 State schools and more than 200 private schools, which are regulated by the Ministry and more than 25,000 Omani teachers.

The total number of students in State education is 600,000 of whom nearly half are female. In addition 24,000 students are in private education, more than half of whom are in schools mainly concentrated in the Capital Area. The Ministry makes special arrangements in three schools for the education of just over 500 children who are blind, deaf and dumb or have other learning difficulties and are therefore unable to attend normal school. Some are sent to an appropriate institution in neighbouring countries.

The first Teacher Training Institute opened in 1977 for students who had completed their preparatory stage education. These institutes were later upgraded and in 1984-85 they became Intermediate Teacher Training Colleges, whose students were secondary school graduates destined to become primary school teachers. In 1995, the intermediate colleges were further upgraded and became colleges of education, which granted university degrees in education to their graduates. During the same year responsibility for these colleges passed to the Ministry of Higher Education.

At the start of the academic year 1998-1999, the Ministry introduced the new basic education system in two phases: a basic education phase, over 10 years and a secondary education phase for two years. This will gradually replace the existing system of six years of primary, three years of preparatory, and three years of secondary schooling. Under the new system there will be greater emphasis on science, maths and the use of computers. English will also be introduced from the first year of basic education. The new system has been introduced gradually, starting with 17 schools from different regions. In the-school year 1999/2000, the new system has been introduced in 25 more schools. It has also been introduced in some private schools. It is hoped to have at least 100 schools following the curriculum in 2000/2001. New learning resource centres are being established, complete with laboratory equipment, audio-visual systems, computers and other teaching aids.³⁴

1.3.1 Adult Education

Adult education operates in parallel with the regular education system, allowing advanced courses and examinations to be taken. Great importance is attached to allowing those who, for one reason or another, have been unable to complete their education to continue with their studies. In 1999/2000, there were 6,758 students, of whom two thirds were women, enrolled in different centres throughout the Sultanate. An additional 4,205 students attended classes for the eradication of illiteracy.

1.3.2 Teaching of English

The teaching of English has assumed increasing importance in recent years, particularly with the opening of Sultan Qaboos University and higher education colleges where science-based courses are conducted in that language. In 1987 the Ministry launched a major project to develop the teaching of English in schools with materials specially designed to suit the Omani school system. Teacher training plays an important part in

³⁴ <http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/9.htm>, (Human Development-Education) p3, [11.2.2002].

raising the standard of English in schools. Omani teachers of English are given additional programmes during their training.

1.3.3 Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)

In September 1986 the first group of students was enrolled. Originally there were five colleges: Education & Islamic Sciences, Medicine, Engineering, Science and Agriculture. The College of Arts was established in 1987 and in 1993 the College, of Commerce & Economics was added to the University.

For the last few years, The Sultan Qaboos University has established graduate programmes offering Masters' Degrees. In 1993, the first programmes offered were in Education and Arts and in 1995, environment sciences were added. In 1996, a graduate programme in agricultural economics was offered and the College of Medicine also plans to offer a graduate programme. New buildings for the College of Agriculture were opened in 1996.

In April 1999, it was announced that the University's Science College would offer a one-year National Certificate and Diploma in Computer and Information Systems in order to create a pool of skilled manpower as requested by the Ministry of National Economy.

There are no plans at present to establish a second university at Government expense. The policy is to encourage the private sector to fund tertiary education. Royal Decree 41/99 was issued to regulate the private sector involvement in tertiary education. In 1999, His Majesty endorsed the recommendations of the Higher Education Council to establish private universities in Nizwa, Salalah and Sohar.

Conclusion

Oman's location close to some of the major civilizations of the ancient world, its early prosperity and influence, and its Arab heritage, have combined to produce a rich and distinctive culture. However, a period of decline and isolationism, particularly during the reign of the previous sultan, led to cultural and economic stagnation. Since 1970, under the present sultan, the country has, however, undergone rapid modernization and increasing exposure to foreign cultures and traditions, raising the question of how traditional and modern values can be balanced, for example, in future activities in the arts, including children's drama and theatre.

The traditions of music, poetry and dance suggest that elements already exist which may be incorporated into new dramatic forms with appeal to children. At the same time, the experience of the Omani Symphony Orchestra shows that Oman has already succeeded in introducing new artistic developments without becoming dominated by foreign influences. This lesson leads us to hope that a similar development in the field of children's drama may be culturally acceptable.

Finally, the recent expansion in education at all levels not only reflects the regime's concern for youth welfare, but may also lay the intellectual foundation for artistic development, particularly in view of the new attention to communications technology and the planned expansion of university programmes which will provide the writers and technicians of the future.

In this context, the development of Omani children's drama and theatre would appear to be a worthwhile and feasible endeavour, which would be consistent with the prevailing

trend in the country for openness and modernization balanced with concern to retain a distinctively Omani identity.

Future chapters will shed light on the history and existing status of dramatic media, both in the Arab world and in Oman, and on ways of providing drama and theatre for children. First, however, it would be appropriate to discuss in general terms the reciprocal relationship between the arts and society, in order to understand the influences and challenges involved in artistic development.

Chapter Two

The impact of Art on Society

Introduction

In attempting to evaluate any artistic endeavour, and to develop any art form, it is necessary to take account of the fact that art is situated in a historical, social and cultural context, by which it is influenced. At the same time, artistic output influences those to whom it is disseminated. The purpose of this chapter is to explore those relationships, which are of particular interest in Oman at a time when society is increasingly exposed, through the media, to the cultural products of other societies. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first discusses the social and cultural impacts of stimulated by art, and specifically drama. In this respect, particular attention is focused on cinema and television, as the main sources of most people's exposure to drama. The second section of the chapter explains the particular challenges posed by these socially influential dramatic media, in the Arab world.

2.1. The Era of the spread of Television:

Cinema and television are the most important mass media. There is a continuous interaction between the mass media as a whole, including cinema and TV, and society. Mass communication is a social process that takes place in the environment it interacts with. Social studies have established that television and other mass media do not operate in isolation, but through shared political, social and cultural intermediaries.

Therefore, the mass media grow and develop parallel to social and economic development. Each development stage witnesses the emergence of media, which match the stage of growth achieved. However, a certain segment of society may develop more

quickly than the remaining segments at a given period of time. Still, in the long run, all developments will be the same.

Thus, we have entered the era of television, which controls our behaviour and forms our ideas and habits, to the extent that it competes with our will. Television has had more impact on people than any other mass both medium in the advanced and Third World countries. The negative or positive influence of television on people depends on how individuals perceive its impact on their lives. Television becomes the alternative means of entertainment and occupies a larger part of each family's time. Therefore, its threat increases, to the extent that it matches the growing living problems faced by most of the people of the developing countries.

Television is undoubtedly the master of the mass media such as newspapers, radio, cinema and theatre. Study carried out on teacher in Oman revealed that over 100% of the study sample favoured television.³⁵

Yusra Alriyam, a teacher as well as drama worker, asserts that:

Television differs from other mass media television and represents a powerful force in the field of mass communication. It has as a matter of fact brought about changes in many existing institutions and social relations.³⁶

When we compare television with cinema, we find that the former surpasses the latter because television is like a guest, who visits us at home, whereas to see a film we have to follow many rituals. First, we have to get dressed in a suitable manner. Then, we have to queue up for a long time to buy a ticket. We have also to wait for the beginning of the

³⁵ Survey done for Children's theatre in summer 2001, see in chapter 8

³⁶ Yusra Alriyami, a teacher, seminar done for Children's theatre, April 2002, see chapter 5

film. Then we experience a total darkness, which looks like that of a temple for its solemnity and veneration. But television does not require any movement or extra expenses. Moreover, television brings films and plays to the viewer at home.

Television has various roles attributed to it. They are either cultural and educational or pertain to advertising, information, civilisation and cultural exchanges among nations. Television may also contribute to the change of existing values. These roles may be either positive or negative.

Since television is an electronic tool, it has caused a change in our perception of reality and in our mutual relations as well as that we have with the surrounding world. Television has introduced changes in the social criteria and has had huge influence on the family, cultural and social life.

Television undoubtedly leads all the mass media in terms of its spread. Television enriches experience. Consequently, its impact has increased, especially in the field of information and ideas. We only have to look at ourselves and the environment surrounding us to realise the amount of knowledge we have acquired from television. We can review the number of countries, peoples, faces and cultures we first knew of through T.V. We can say that television educates, even if this mission is carried out through entertainment programmes and news, which are favoured by the illiterate audience, compared to educational programmes. A seminar which was held in the Oman Press Club in this regard discussed the impact of television on the individual and summarised it in two points:

Firstly, as the press brought about democracy in education, television instilled democracy in experience. Yet, this experience is a dissident one, although we all share experience. No government, court or law can put an end to this dissidence created by television because it exists inside the TV set.

Secondly, television brings us a lot of information, knowledge, news, stories, tales and advertisements at home. Therefore, we feel compelled to go out because life looks beautiful on television. But in reality it is not. This is in fact the big gap which television creates.³⁷

So television is in this way a double-edged weapon. Hence, we have to take into consideration the negative aspect of the programmes to be shown on TV and study their impact on the audience. This issue is currently of particular concern in the Arab world, including Oman, as will be seen in the next section.

2.2. Media challenges to Arab Civilization

As the previous section has shown, television has had a huge impact in the political and social fields. At the political level, it has created an interest in local and foreign events, by continuously following live events. It has also increased international association, to the extent that citizens all over the world consider they belong to the same political unity.

Due to the rapid and ever-changing innovations in the field of the communication technology, television has had a tremendous influence on people's way of living, behaviour and culture. It has also affected their social, political and economic life. This is why the Arab countries are paying particular attention to information technology innovations, in order to speed up the development process and offer their citizens a

³⁷ Seminar Children's theatre in Oman Press Club, April 2002, see chapter 5

better life, because rapid development takes place if there is a free mind and flow of information in society.

Television is potentially the most dangerous mass medium in the world, since it has the biggest impact on viewers. Television is an entertainment medium, but provides also information and culture for its audience. Therefore, serials and shows which carry western concepts and values greatly influence Arab values, both directly, and indirectly. Satellite TV channels have created competition in the field of commerce and advertising that disregards Arab values and traditions. Since the early nineties, Arab TV channels have been broadcasting via Arabsat and reaching Arab homes. However, there are some Arab societies, which have not had the chance to open up culturally. As a result, they reject any intellectual interaction as well as the sudden information flow aimed at them. Other societies have interacted with the negative pictures they receive and which have had a big impact on their social and cultural life.

Television can either benefit its viewers through the information revolution and open satellite channels or be used to spread beliefs and ideologies, which are contrary to the traditional culture. The latter could create distorted pictures in the Arab viewer's mind. Arab TV stations are still too weak and have not yet reached the required cultural level. Besides, they are governed by commercial and material considerations. Most of their programmes are adapted or translated from western works and suffer from technical mistakes, especially those aimed at breathing life into the Arab-Islamic heritage which becomes deformed. Hence, Arab TV organisations must play their part and really contribute to the revitalisation of the Arab-Islamic heritage, in line with the Arab nation's requirements and aspirations.

2.2.1. Civilisation Challenges:

The word “challenge” in this context means the commitment undertaken by a given nation or society to struggle against unusual and strange circumstances created by another nation or society. The word “conflict” means a contradiction between conflicting motives or inclinations leading to an emotional tension, which involves great concerns. The “conflict” concept can be defined as a struggle aimed at preserving values, social status, and power and scares resources. Thus, opponents either neutralise or eliminate their enemies.

The notion of conflict involves the idea of a nation or society challenging another nation or society for the same thing and at the same time. So, it comprises the idea of struggle against others and results mostly from conflicting interests. Challenge can involve individuals, politicians or countries.

Assuming that the spiritual, mental and material elements determine the life of a society or nation, and assuming that all these factors combined make up culture in principle, the racial, moral and linguistic characteristics and traditions of all the peoples who embraced Islam contribute positively to the diversity of the Islamic culture. In fact, all the researchers who attempted to study the history of Islamic countries split culture into its linguistic, racial, moral and geographical components. In some instances they consider these factors separately to determine the culture of a given people. Besides, history plays a major part, not only in defining and shaping the cultural identity of a certain region or country but also in creating local diversities within the single widespread culture.

The process of borrowing from the West's culture has taken place in a very different way compared to the same process, which took place in the early Islamic ages. During the Abbasid era (2nd and 3rd centuries A.H.) the Arabs attempted to engage in an open-minded dialogue with other civilisations at a time when they were powerful and prevailing. They were very self-confident. Therefore, they managed to assimilate foreign cultural elements and reshape them according to pure Arab and Islamic values. However, the Arabs' process of cultural interaction with the western culture has taken place in modern times under political subjugation, a waning of the Arab sovereignty and foreign colonialism. This situation was due to the fact that Arab intellectuals were subdued, colonised and politically powerless. Hence, the attempts of Arabs to benefit from the contemporary western culture were not a natural requirement resulting from the self-development of the Arab thought. Such attempts were, in fact, embodied in the Arabs' relying on the West to face up to its own material and spiritual tyranny. Therefore, concepts derived from the western culture have always suffered in Arab societies from alienation in both their form and contents.

Arabs must assert the moral values and principles enshrined in their cultural heritage. They are the factors, which define the Arabs' identity and prevent it from dissolving into other cultures. In this way, the continuity of the nation's cultural and moral ego, as well as its originality, can be secured. Yet, the concept of originality is related to other concepts such as interaction, adaptation, imitation and renovation. Each culture has its own originality.

2.2.2. The Contemporary Arab Culture:

The study of the contemporary Arab culture reveals fundamental issues, which should, in our view, be addressed. The first issue concerns the impact of the European culture

on Arabs. The second one is the self-reform attempts while the third issue pertains to the nature of the contemporary Arab culture.

Arabs have reacted to modern social development in different ways. One school of thought calls for wholesale adoption of the new civilisation, on the basis that the new culture is the fruit of century's long studies and covers all aspects of life; therefore, no individual or society can live without it. Another school of thought is that Arabs and Muslims must take from the western culture, but in a cautious way. They say that Arabs must adopt only positive factors that suit their own culture. A third group, however, call for the revival of the Islamic heritage and culture. The proponents of this view call on Arabs to free themselves from obsolete thought and adopt a new culture and new values. Some of them have even reviewed the Arab-Islamic heritage, trying to interpret the Islamic history in a modern spirit. The resulting conflict of ideas among Arab intellectuals has created a gap between a small number of intellectuals and the Arab peoples. It also contributed to the emergence of New Left wing and right-wing trends, including socialism, which stresses the socialist and nationalist way while preserving heritage.

Undoubtedly, that heritage can only be followed if it is revived and studied in a critical and scientific way. We can thus select the best elements that can benefit us today. The heritage can then be reflected in our lives, laws, systems and all the aspects pertaining to our cultural and civil life. But we have not yet come to terms with our differences and agreed on a common trend for all of us. Moreover, we still rely on adaptations and imitations. We are not able to innovate while preserving our originality.

We have to view innovation in the context of the confrontation of ideas requiring new visions that define the relationship of creators and intellectuals with their heritage on the one hand, and reality as well as social interaction on the other hand. This would put contemporary Arab culture on the right track.

Our aim in this rapidly changing world is to materialise our cultural knowledge, express abstract values in an entertaining form, change our static thought into a living world and come down from the academic towers to social reality. Our new experience must be based on previous experience. Our rebellion against the present situation must derive its strength from a rebellion against ourselves. Thus, we can build a new human model, which combines an open-minded culture with science and contemporary knowledge.

We must make sure that the cultural instruments are used in a correct way, in order to serve the revival of our heritage and make it suit the aspirations of the Arab nation. Sound traditions as well as the patterns of social, national and Islamic behaviour of the Arab citizen can thus be affirmed. We should stress the importance of integration and co-ordination between the Arab culture and educational institutions. This aim requires the development of educational programmes taking into account our Arab-Islamic culture on the one hand and the cultural developments taking place in the world, on the other hand.

However, the Arab educational institutions suffer from inertia and rely mostly on the imitation of foreign programmes, which are derived from a social and cultural environment, which differs from ours. Therefore, our educational programmes are deformed, leading to a deformation of the identity and behaviours of our future generations.

We must review our educational programmes and co-ordinate our efforts with the Arab cultural institutions. We must also select from the contemporary culture the elements that suit our cultural and moral values. Thus the Arab and Islamic nation can get rid of backwardness and division and confront the dangerous cultural challenges it is facing.

We can protect our society through educational and cultural efforts. A new generation can thus emerge and be in a position to promote the true Arab culture in a scientific and convincing way. We should also build an integrated culture that combines various elements, taking into account human considerations and needs.

After all, it is not possible to achieve a balance between originality and modernity in a short period of time. This task requires intensive and sincere scientific efforts to be made by our generation and the generations to come. As a matter of fact, there are examples in the Arab thought where old ideas were combined and reconciled with new ones, and interpretative judgements made in harmony with existing laws. Yet this process took a long time and involved generations of scholars and intellectuals.

We are living in a contemporary civilisation, which is characterised by a diversification of origins and philosophies. Therefore, we must come to terms with it by achieving harmony between the modern culture and our specific values.

Yet, this is a complex task because the history of mankind has taught us that the dialogue among civilisations does not only involve the form but is also based on values, for each civilisation has its own values and history. Any endeavours, which do not take this fact into consideration, will yield no fruits.

Conclusion

Like other forms of art, drama influences society. These influences are particularly apparent with the rise of the modern media of film and television, with their wide availability and enormous popular appeal.

Although these new dramatic media may have beneficial effects by informing and enlightening, there are concerns in the Arab world, in particular, that such cross fertilization may be detrimental to traditional values and culture. Thus, a major concern in an Arab society such as Oman, in developing theatre and television drama, will be to identify and exploit what is beneficial from outside influences, without sacrificing or undermining the values of the cultural heritage, particularly for children. The important role that appropriate experience of drama, whether as actor or spectator, in children's cognitive and emotional development, is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Development of Children's Drama and Creativity

Introduction:

To those nations who have innovated and built up distinctive civilizations in human history, theatre and arts have been accorded a dignified position and they have used them to reflect their own progress. Theatre has become an essential part modern human civilizations and it has become also more than a form of entertainment, but rather, a means for the exploration and development of individual and social identity.

Jan Dovino in his book "The Theatre Sociology" stated that "The group resort to theatre once whenever they want to prove their existence or to perform a crucial work that their destiny demands, we do not appeal to people unless we act on stage a drama based on their actions and we cannot relieve them from laziness unless we present them the theatrical scene for their dynamics whereby throughout the theatre or dramatised things Man can get along or accommodate himself, and the child's fun, which is of the modern theatre component at any age civilisation seeking perfection."³⁸

Mark Twain³⁹ was of the view that children's theatre was one of the greatest discoveries in the twentieth century and that it has great educational value as a source of examples of morality. It is really the best teacher that Man's genius has discovered since its lessons are not conveyed throughout school books in a boring and tiring way, but rather throughout the movements seen that stir zeal and enthusiasm in children's hearts. The artist who works in this type of theatre is with the child in play, and should learn from him and with him.

³⁸ Aidabi, Yousef, **Towards Theatre for Child**, Qasim Mohamed, Cultural and Information (Department, Alsharjah 2001), p36

³⁹ Aidabi, Yousef, 2001, Ibid.

Many people think that the production of a play for children needs only a conflict between good and evil, an enthusiastic and brave hero, in some adventures, a number of songs, dances, an acting process different from the common one, besides the evocation of unnatural sound levels. This is a big mistake. The whole matter is more complicated, on the level of preparation and execution, theoretically and practically. The question that asks itself here is, "Are children's plays are written in the same way plays written for adults?" The right answer is 'No', even if the writer's interest and attention and talent will be the same. And the same question will be raised in talking about acting and the actors and embodying the text visually and embodying its sound effects and lights. There is no doubt that theatre is for both adults and children, but the syllabus of audible and visual embodiment differs in terms of the direction and goal behind the presentation. The understanding of this difference does not mean ignoring the small beholders. They are really active beholders, since they receive what was presented before them intellectually and emotionally. This audience will normally be one third of the population at any of our communities. Such an important group should not be ignored. Children's theatre aims to meet to the needs of this group. It is the artistic and educational establishment that aims at comprehending the children's power and guiding it into the required educational direction. Children's theatre aims at constructing and building the small spectator's personality, artistically and educationally and accustoming him from childhood to comprehend theatre and its arts, considering it as spiritual need and aesthetical taste that must be available in his life, through all his bodily, mental and psychological stages.

In this chapter, the valuable educational and social role played by drama performed by or for children, is explored. The first section considers drama in which children are involved as performers, the second concerns drama enacted for children as spectators.

3.1. Drama (Theatre) by Children

Children's involvement in drama can be seen as an extension of their early imaginative play, and is similarly valuable in their development. In this section children's drama is traced to its role in their play, and educational and artistic process of drama is explored.

3.1.1. Relationship between play and drama

Games that children play in groups to set rules are part of the total play life of children, and that play in itself is the most significant aspect of childhood. Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood and what is in the child's soul. It is the purest and most spiritual product of the child, and at the same time it is a type and copy of human life at all stages and in all relations.

Children's play is essentially the expression of childish imagination and ideas. There is imitative play on the one hand, which copies those adult activities constantly seen, and there is play that expressed ideas conjured up by a vivid imagination fed by stories from books and by things seen and not completely understood.

The child's drama is one of the forms of art, and not activity made out of someone's activity; rather it is the realistic behaviour of human beings. Peter Slade in his book "*Child's Drama*" includes more comprehensive study of the subject, while in this regard I have tried to generate a framework for this method. Since the roots of child drama are play, therefore, it has become necessary that we pay a lot of attention to play.

Play is an instinctive and organic behaviour in the life of the small child, an activity that expresses the child's way of thinking, working, remembering, testing and creativity. It really represents the external world and understanding of it. In fact, it is really life itself.

The best form of playing to the child happens when he is given the chance and encouragement intentionally by an adult, i.e. the task of the adult is to feed the child's play without interfering in it. To do so, is necessary to acquire the child's trust in friendship, and create an environment full of love and care.

Referring to Slade: there are some moments during a child's playing in which he imitates or acts in the same way as characters do, also there are certain emotional situations and this has pushed us to call this kind of play "Dramatic Playing".

This term always seems very useful, simply because when we think about children we have to distinguish carefully between drama in its broad sense and theatre as we as adult people understand it. Theatre means an opportunity that was designed for entertainment and interactive common experience.

In addition, Peter Slade adds that:

Theatre involves actors and spectator, while we can distinguish between them, but the child cannot feel this difference – the difference between the spectator and actor - unless his method of thinking is aborted in thinking and behaviour especially in his early years in the sense that every individual is an actor and spectator at the same time.⁴⁰

So, this is the significance of the word "Drama", it is derived from a Greek word meaning "striving and doing". It is where the child discovers life and psyche throughout his psychological and interactive suffering and also through repetitive training. This is dramatic play.

⁴⁰ Slade, Peter and Nixon, John, translated by Kamal Zakher Latif, **Child's Drama theoretically and practically**, (Arabic knowledge' office, 1997), p.30.

Furthermore, individual experiences can be developed into collective experiences. But in individual experiences or collective ones, there is no consideration for theatre in the sense that is understood by adults. Perhaps there are some interactive and intensive moments that we call theatre while it is actually drama. At the same time, we can see an action or movement everywhere around us but we cannot tell who is the spectator and who is the actor.

And this is really an interesting experience in which the role of the teacher is similar to the role of the lovely friend, and in this type of drama we can easily recognize two important features; indulgence and faithfulness. Indulgence is the complete fusion in what the individual does to the exclusion of all other ideas, including the will for the existence of spectators' or even perceiving their existence. It is a drama where the child uses his personality or his psyche. At the same time he is characterized at this stage by movement and scrutiny and also dancing, in addition to the experience of representing characters and things. In personal play, the child sets for himself the task of undertaking a certain role. He also tends to use his voice and bodily actions in this type of playing.

In fact, personal play develops the feature of faithfulness in the child in the sense that he fully trusts the role he is playing. Personal play becomes evident during the fifth year; its clarity increases as the child's ability to control his body increases.

The child who is given good opportunity will try during his personal and imaginative play to reflect his thinking and acquired experience, and this happens between the first and fifth year of his age. Although indulgence may precede faithfulness for a long time,

thus, the two features will appear sufficiently powerfully for the non-trained person to notice some times in which he acts very clearly.⁴¹

For this reason, drama develops gradually, becoming clearer and more distinctive, at the time it maintains certain features in all stages of its development.

These two forms of play enhance each other and they also give special trends to the person who practises them. So, these two early behaviours have a big influence on man's structure and his behaviour in general and also his ability to be a good member of society. In doing so, they will fulfil their purpose. In addition, it is possible to have the emergence of music, arts, fishing and non-violent games, for instance, developing the child's ability for reading and writing and ability for patience, concentration, organizing, and wise administration, besides interest in puppets, theatre and theatrical production.

To the child, play is an independent creative activity that can be simple or complicated and it may also reflect the external trend for the work or to the psychology of human relationship. Therefore, the organization of play requires very accurate, diligent, and professional supervision. Encouraging children to compose songs, dances etc, to invent embellishments and embroideries and draw, helps in activating the creative imagination. It is necessary to move from games that have theatrical touches to games with dramatic touches. The process of artistic, aesthetic and creative growth in the small pupil cannot be complete without involvement of the great arts, such as music.

Music helps to develop within the child a lively spirit and imagination. In fact, without the creative spirit it is impossible to perform any successful work in any area. Much

⁴¹ Slade, Peter and Nixon, John, 1979

evidence has been accumulated that testifies to the role of music in developing creativity. It is possible that the child will not become an artist, poet or musician, but he might be a doctor, teacher or an excellent mathematician, but his creative imagination, inclination and his attempts at work will start in a better way. As such, music, imagination and this very creativity are ways of developing the child's spiritual and creative powers.

All these games and others are nothing more than different phases of acting. Through them, the ability for leadership and personal control is developed. Also, the ability for acting might be developed, in the sense that acting for a child consists of a mixture of imagination and imitation.

Peter Slade stated that it is such wonderful and important fact that drawing and painting will be promoted once the child's perception and feelings of the distances while moving on the ground increases in the sense that the child we may see running from "S" or triangle or star, will paint the same figures on paper.

He also added:

The training that is granted by drama may stop the phenomenon of dislocation among them at an early stage; this leads to improving art itself. Therefore, art will stay as it is – a subtle plan for the child's development and progress.⁴²

It is really a step on the way to mental coordination and growth. Moreover, a significant degree of social progress is achieved when the child starts to be interested in the needs of others.

⁴²Slad, Peter and Nixon, John, 1979, p.38.

Personal play is supported by less encouragement in the sense that it is hard to find someone to pay attention to the child at its beginning or encourage its beginning, because it needs the proper place and also includes some sort of enthusiasm and exaggeration. Perhaps it is a type of drama, but it will never create a theatre that can be understood by adults, simply because drama is less clear on projective play compared than personal play, although it has traces of clear drama that emerge when children attribute life to sticks, stones and puppets, and we hear their voices. Usually, the child leaves these things in their primitive forms after he has finished playing. This primitive form is nothing more than a symbolic expression of the live story that runs on the child's mind during the projective play, whether he has voiced this story in speech or not. And this particularly happens when the child draws pictures or colours them.

What needs to be mentioned is that personal play develops when children become able to control their bodies and monitor the things that they play with. The type of drama engaged in by children expresses their style of life. This is their natural method and the preferred one in developing their actions and speech. Now, the outcome of this method is faithfulness, which is actually a very authentic feature of personality that starts at the early years of age. It usually coincides with the moment in which the child acquires his full trust in real life by being under the pressure of the world of adults and the orders and preventions it involves. In this regard, we – as adults – unintentionally create problems that we complain about and resent later, simply because these pressures will be the reasons that cause children to look for other ways to exteriorize their emotions in ways that we do not usually prefer.

So whatever the child does, whether with or without the guidance of family or teacher, is intimately connected with the state of the child. This activity, in a wide sense, has a close connection with special forms of action, or obvious drama.

The participant learns gradually how to plan independently in order to create the realization and to achieve this task as per the plan and by separating the main thing from the secondary one.

3.1.2 Drama as an Educational and Artistic Process:

Arab educationalists of the past have placed heavy emphasis on logic the individual. Among them are Al-Jahedh in his book 'Al Haiwan" (The Animal) and Tibri in his "Majmoa'at Al Tafasir" (Collection of Interpretations).

The need for recognition of each child's individual nature was greatly understood by the oriental philosopher, Ibn Sina, who asserted that:

The child's teacher must know that the child cannot understand any job or craft except those which go in line with his own nature and if it is easy for him to acquire fine arts he should select literature which is the best skilful and noble craft. And we see that one child has a strong tendency towards coherence, while another one towards grammar, As such, the teacher must take into consideration the child's nature and study his instinctive faculties and his psychological features accurately in selecting the task for the child. Consequently, he –the teacher- must select task that are appropriate to him. ⁴³

- **Parental efforts for development of the child's talents**

⁴³Almuel, F.A, **Child's theatre in Kuwait as artistic and educational approach**, (Ministry of Information, Kuwait, 2001), p.117.

The researcher Dr: Fadhil Abas Almuel says in his book, *"Child's Theatre in Kuwait as artistic and educational approach"*

If the organization of the creative art education at school is the subjective factor in developing the creative artistic talent, the family will stand instead of the self-factor. This is the smallest basic unit in society-performs different social tasks be they demographic, economic, cultural, and educational.⁴⁴

The family has a very significant role in developing the child's creative tendencies, since the child spends a very large portion of his time in the family. Keeping in touch with children and co-existing with them allows many artistic and creative faculties to emerge. The parent must perform significant preparatory work with regard to organizing spare time for small children, in which experience can be accumulated and the individual's characteristics developed.

The relationship between child and parents is based on the acquisition of tangible experience within the group, which leads to learning to share feelings, and offer mutual assistance. The parent should pay attention to what the child reads, in addition to the heroes that attract his attention, who are his models, who are his friends, and what his ambitions are. The child can learn more and more from his parents.

It is necessary for parents to pay careful attention to the child's individual characteristics, reactions, and intellectual development. Writing on psychology gives the chance to the parents to understand the role of the sensory curriculum in laying the foundation of knowledge.

⁴⁴ Almuel, F.A, 2001, P.54.

The parent's conversation with the children plays an important role in creating active thinking and in developing the child and preparing him to ask questions. The emergence of such questions by children is a crucial factor in developing their intellectual activity, in the sense that the questions posed by children mirror their intellectual and spiritual needs in addition to their natural inclinations.

But the most important goal for the family concerning the innovative, creative, artistic development of the children lies in the accumulation of life experience.

Teacher Yusra Alriyami refers to the significance of paying a lot of special attention to games that involve the power of commonsense and a tendency towards disassembly, assembly and reasoning.⁴⁵

We see that the special work of developing the child's artistic and creative faculties requires a reasonable accommodation between two factors; the external (school) and the internal (family). On the basis of the discussion above, we can arrive at some conclusions.

In this regard and according to the logic that is widely known in education with regard to the understanding of intellectual activity, it is possible to assert that the development of small children's artistic activity is a development of its component parts, the evaluative, didactic, operational, reactive and the voluntary.

- **Role of Supervisor**

⁴⁵ Al Riami, Yusra, interview for children's theatre, summer 2001, [13.3.2001].

Dealing with this kind of work requires a study of theatrical principles and practical acquaintance with theatrical action, as one of the essential means of expression of the dramatic art.

Ultimately, we see that theatrical speech is a very important factor in forming acting ability in the sense that it is very necessary that the words are projected from the stage clearly and professionally, so that the idea is communicated to the beholder clearly.

Literary texts can be used that require imaginary states and emotional response. They are very useful because they direct attention towards the surrounding speech and the coincident visionary analysis of the speaker, besides the attempt to explore his own nature and some of his individual characteristics.

Samir Nova views artistic activity as a process of complicated composition that includes the transformational, intellectual, and instructive activities. Now, the question arises how intellectual, artistic and critical ability can be developed.⁴⁶

The Supervisor of children's needs to possess a body of knowledge in the field of theatre art, acting and directing skills, the richness of theatrical speech, and some knowledge of the various artistic genres and the history of culture and the development of society. Academic and pedagogical skills in the field of theatrical preparation are also significant. Activity, emotion, liveliness, knowledge, steadfastness, and a love of children are necessary characteristics of the supervisor.

⁴⁶ Nova, Samir, **The Management of Clubs**, (Moscow, Inlightment House 1980). P.239-268.

The leader of an amateur theatre group must possess distinctive educational abilities in the field of theatrical art. The nature of the supervisor's work in the children's theatre imposes certain complex requirements on him in many cases. On the one hand, he must have sufficient professional readiness, since he is dealing with unready children; on the other hand, the physical and technical readiness for the amateur theatre is weaker than that of the professional theatre and it requires a great deal of care by the organizer or the supervisor.

From this we conclude the necessity of organising lessons in such a way that the educational benefits are not restricted by a narrow concept of the acting activity. In this regard, examples of aesthetical and artistic creativity and culture (taking into consideration the children's age) should be chosen to allow excellence in some field. The choice of creative tasks should reflect the recognition of every participant's abilities and the pursuit of effective learning.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion we can conclude that children's theatre, as one kind of professional or non-professional theatre, has distinctive features related to the strategic targets of its educational and creative work. The task of amateur theatre, including children's theatre is not orientated only towards the play as tangible outcomes. The aim is also to develop the participants' creative powers. This requires special expertise on the part of the supervisor.

- **Practical requirements**

F.M. Rojdisfinski has concluded the following:

With regard to amateur theatrical activity it is necessary to consider the case of putting forward a curriculum that

facilitates the possibility for profitable education in a good formula.⁴⁷

In order to introduce the children's theatre applications in the field of theatrical education developed by Stanislavski and his followers, discovering the participants' unique qualities and develop their characters, it is necessary make appropriate physical provision. In a school, this can be done simply in the sense that there is a hall and a stage. It is also possible to use some of the school funds to buy costumes, and properties and materials for scenery.

3.2. Drama (Theatre) for Children

3.2.1. Nature and Content of Children's Theatre

In Europe and the United States, and particularly the U.K, children's drama is considered an art itself, and for that reason alone is important; it brings joy to its audience and also helps them to become better human beings. Children's theatre is a theatre with little prestige, few artists, and not much dramatic literature. Actors perform plays to children to entertain them, and to introduce them to theatre, with theatrical elements like professional actors and written script, rehearsed and performed in a formal manner with a director.

Generally speaking, it is all forms of theatre by and for children. It rarely includes the idea of classes about theatre, but does include nearly every other form of theatrical artistic education for children.

Drama in education and theatre in education both essentially rest on the ability to adopt roles and characters, where the child can explore his actual social relationships. They

⁴⁷ Rodjifinski, F.M, *The directing art among active theatre amateurs*, (Leningrad vol. 55, 1981) , p57-85

are based on the principle of treating children not as objects to be acted upon but as persons, who can and do, feel and create. Children's drama is not only the best method of learning in school, and raising the child's standard of achievement, but it also provides a future adult who may be of value to himself and to society. For that to occur, the child must be fully engaged in viewing, valuing, questioning, and take over the moral responsibility for good behaviour. The child, through drama, can develop his personality and gain greater experience while using the voice, language, body, and associated media of light, sound and space.

Child drama takes a significant step towards reality and practicality, in a controlled form, though it may originate in the realm of fantasy. Even adults seek some dramatic form of behaviour, particularly at times when their instincts get the better of them, and more particularly in the unbalanced type of leader⁴⁸.

Artistic expression takes many forms and uses many media. To some extent the content of a particular art form is determined by the medium itself. Moses Goldberg, in his book on children's theatre *A Philosophy and a Method* proposed that:

Plays and performances should be fashioned, both in content and artistic sophistication, to match the stages of a child's psychological growth.⁴⁹

Although in the West there ideas are now regarded as somewhat dated, they appear to be appropriate to the current stage of development of Omani culture, where age and gender related roles and interests are still more traditional then in the West.

Goldberg divides the life of a child into four phases:

⁴⁸ Slade, Peter, *Child Drama*, (University of London Press Ltd. 1954) p110

⁴⁹ Goldberg, Moses, *Children's Theatre; A philosophy and a method*, (Printice Hall, 1974),p80

-Children under seven are active, curious, idealistic, optimistic, use other children merely as catalysts in their playing, enjoy trying out roles in recognisable settings, and have short attention spans. The theatre they need is visual, participatory; its favourite subjects, fantasy creatures and animals.

-Children from seven to nine are preoccupied with rules and roles. Social mores become important and “fairness” is at a premium. They like the good and bad clearly defined and distinguished and are strongly involved with stereotypes. Animals they still love, but myths, fairy-tales, mysteries and tales of foreign lands enter the arena. As this child is starting to choose the values he needs, theatre should offer a wide range of experiences and the more detached “fourth wall” theatre should join participatory theatre in the repertoire.

-Children from ten to thirteen do not merely try out roles but examine them in order to make choices. Children of this age worship heroes and admire physical prowess. Boys love adventure, girls’ romance. Both need to be reassured that other people have the same weaknesses as they do and manage to survive.

- Young people of fourteen to eighteen also need recognition but also need to accept the limitations of being human. The choices with which they are now faced may be between different kinds of good and different kinds of evil. Actions can be both good and bad.

Another leading international figure in this field, Brian Way, similarly asserts that theatre for youngsters should take account of the developmental stage of its audience, including the needs of young children to play and the shortness of their attention span⁵⁰. The kind of theatre he favours is participatory theatre and he distinguishes three kinds of participation: spontaneous, stimulated and directed.

⁵⁰ England, Alan, *Theatre for the Young*, (Macmillan Ltd 1990), p6

- In spontaneous participation, children are so emotionally involved that they bombard the actors with advice.
- In stimulated participation, actors provoke the audience by word or deed to make suggestions.
- In directed participation, the help of the audience is actively sought in making decisions, which will move the play forward.

For children up to nine years of age, the audiences remain in their seats, and from nine to twelve, some of the audience might join the actors on the stage. But teenagers are always ready for “conscious theatre” and can be rehearsed for participation in crowd scenes.

Drama has a magic influence on the audience and resembles in this case rituals. Man cannot help being tied to what he sees, according to all drama schools from the pre-Aristotle era to modern times. Drama is defined as an act or even a will aimed at a goal. Throughout history, drama works have formed the mind and feelings of peoples. This aspect will be demonstrated in later chapters on theatre and TV drama, which are the most important and up-to-date drama instruments.

3.3.2. Features of Children's Theatre:

The children's theatre is similar to the adult's in many aesthetical and artistic structural features, simply because it is theatrical but children's theatre has certain unique characteristics that distinguish it, based the goals and tasks of this type of theatre. The following features are distinctive:

1- The presence of the small spectators in his own theatre takes place in the context of certain special studies and an organized course, in order to see a theatrical presentation appropriate to the age category that he belongs to.

All aspects of children's theatre artistic, cultural, aesthetic, or educational, are subject to the same course and organisation, related to the age category divisions. Each age category has its own content, designed to achieve particular educational goals.

Based on the classification of the age categories, the type, text and presentation of each performance is selected in accordance with the comprehension ability of the target audience. In other words, this division means that the theatre, artists and audience grow together from stage to stage, until required results are ultimately achieved.

The spectators of children's theatre range from the naive child of three years old to the young man who is about to finish secondary school at about eighteen years old. Successful experiments in children's theatre therefore depend on awareness of the requirements of educational science and psychology, taking into consideration the requirements of each stage and the features and the abilities of each year.

It is serious mistake to confuse age categories without distinguishing and grouping them in theatre performances; if a performance is viewed by those who are too young to understand it or too old to be stimulated by it, the educational benefits will be lost.

2- The theatre is a unifying influence. What is significant to be mentioned in this regard is the impact of the family in Omani society. The disparity of progress in each region is less than the impact of the external world like the quarter, street and everyday life, such

as the club, school, and spare time activities such as T.V, video, cinema, computer, the internet and the play station. The careless unmonitored use of such facilities can be very damaging for the child and sow inside the child the seeds of destruction, as well as doing nothing to develop his personality, so the artist encounters a problem of how to unify the small spectator's personality socially, educationally and culturally.

Also, children may live in different houses, and come from different schools, but in the theatre they find themselves accommodated in such a way that they receive an education that unifies them and overrides the impact of contrasting external influence. They are bound together by their knowledge of artistic figures and stories, characters, creatures and symbols. Therefore, the children will enjoy the acquisition of new experiences that enable them to receive the ideas with ease and joy.

3- The aesthetical aspect of children's theatre is very important because it provides models of artistic treatment in performance and organisation and also in the design and creation of images, colours, lighting, views, costumes, sound and visual effects. This develops the audience artistically and mentally, so they acquire artistic taste and will refuse anything unreal and artificial in their theatre. Thus, another important characteristic of children's theatre is reality and credibility.

Unsuitable performances will cause much harm to the child. When he passes the childhood period and encounters life and patterns of reality that differ from what he saw, then he will get frustrated and fail due to the absence of objective posing of phenomena and the reasons for them and the absence of outspokenness and subtlety in building up theatrical character components and supplying all its negative, positive, right and wrong aspects.⁵¹

⁵¹ Aydabi, Yousef (ed.), **On Theatre for children: Culture and Information** (Department, Alsharjah, 2001) p47

One of the child's theatre characteristics is really imagination and the imaginative play that is based on drifting of imagination into worlds that do not constitute reality but speak about it and carry its meaning, significance and symbols of reality. This type of imaginative play talks about the freedom of imagination, which is limitless and the small beholders will go for these plays that have imaginative content and the artistic treatment and the internal design, complementation and the far embodiment of the intimacy and mode of reality. Children admire this type of play and comprehend its own meanings and different targets that those presentations in which the vital element is missed. But the most important thing is that too much imagination must not lead to a state of escape that hinders the growth of the small beholder's perception for the surrounding reality and its troubles, and must not be an obstacle to the emergence of realism, and perceptiveness in his own personality. The dramatic presentation that is based on the imaginary characteristics of children's theatre must express the child's desires, and wishes, the achievement of which is difficult.

4- Simplification is a very distinctive characteristic of children's theatre, but that does not mean that theatrical presentations lose their artistic feature and techniques, and impressive aesthetics. Furthermore, this does not necessarily mean that the children's theatre and its artists do not give any importance to the element being simplified. Rather, simplification is a characteristic associated with children's theatre which enables its small spectators to use their own minds and perceptions in and arouse their thinking in a way that enriches their developing experience, since it enables them to comprehend the form and the content competently and easily.

5- The building up of the general dramatic atmosphere of the performance and the accuracy of its production on children's theatre has its own importance in the sense that

perfection of creating this dramatic atmosphere will make the child move into the world of dramatic play and focus his attention easily. It will arouse the feelings and ideas of the spectator which will finally lead to his taking the required actions and forming the right opinion about phenomena, events and characters at the end of the presentation. The creation of dramatic atmosphere takes place through in all presentation components, starting from the building design, and continuing in the dramatic presentation with regard to lighting, effects and so forth.

6- Finally, fun and enjoyment are one of the essentials of children's theatre, since it is associated with pleasure and happiness, but not at the expense of addressing the different difficult forces that face human being throughout their lives. The presentation of difficulties and their influences in life and people will fortify the child with power and experience to resist or encounter difficulties and overcome them.

The skilfulness, talent and knowledge of the artist subtly convey these issues. The problem here is that fun and kidding and intimate laughter must not degenerate into cheap clowning that distracts the small beholder from watching the play, comprehending its meanings and perceiving its artistry and aesthetics.

3.3.3 Educational Benefits

Stanislavski was of the idea that imagination in the theatre genre has to be lenient, mobile, obedient and able to accommodate all circumstances.⁵²

The child -since he is participating at the theatre- must possess faith and confidence in his goal, direct comprehension, activity, and bright reactive responsiveness. The

⁵² Stanislavski, K S, **Actor preparation**, (Moscow, Art House, 1990)

supervisor is also required to find out these traits in his work with the children and the way of developing them. The sensation of the theatrical rhythm and its echoes in the course of the development of action and the sensation of the verbal actions is a very important characteristic. Usually, this sensation varies among children. What is worth mentioning in this regard is that the creativity of the collective or the group on a theatre stage contributes greatly in harmonious development.⁵³

All these things develop in the child characteristics which will be applied later in all kinds of activities and not only the artistic activity; hence, aesthetical appreciation and aesthetical imagination are developed. So, the ability to create imaginary characters in line with the text facilitates to a great extent the study of geography, arts and history in the later educational stages. The development of creative imagination is necessary to develop scientific thinking in an effective way, while an awareness of verbal rhythms facilitates the tasks of teachers, lecturers and poets in the future. Such a method of developing the individual's creative characteristics while solving a complete set of artistic, creative and educational tasks is really the required process for participants of a child theatre band. The task of the amateur child theatre organiser is to organise the creative educational process in such a way that internal feelings are interpreted into abilities and skills that are related to the theatrical event.

The performance of drama contributes in developing the skills of self-assessment and self-control by participants, in order to fulfil their allocated roles.

Drama is not only a group of efforts made by participants but also a correlated, compound and collective interaction. In this regard, people with lesser talent are

⁵³Almuel, F.A, **Child's Theatre in Kuwait Artistic and Educational Approach**, (Ministry of Information, 2001), p66

supported by the more talented people during the collective work, while the weaker “actors” exert much effort and offer their creative contribution as part of their feeling of responsibility towards others. And they also do their best in the final presentations in order to achieve as much as possible. At the same time, they gain a wonderful joy as a result of these efforts and due to the success that the whole group achieves. The experience of mutual contribution, support and sharing in a joint task can touch on the children's whole life if the supervisor is able to attract attention to these features at the time. Thus, children’s dramatic performances constitute an extension of the educational process.

In the field of art education it has been recognized for a long time that the topic of child's theatrical creativity is strongly influenced by the professional theatre. But the theatrical creativity is itself a part of art. Therefore, participating in it leads to comprehensive artistic, creative and intellectual development.

Children’s creative and artistic education through children's theatre assumes the establishment of the educational process in such a way that children are developed in all aspects in a comprehensive way. Children’s artistic education has been a subject of study and analysis by researchers in educational science and psychology. B. J. Likhatshof, for instance, shows considerable interest in the origins of learning art at school, particularly when he said that the most important thing is not what is said by the instructor (supervisor) but what is explained by him.⁵⁴

The researcher B.F. Sapigin, in his own meditations on amateur areas of work, has determined

⁵⁴ Likhatshov, B, **The educational side of studying**, (Moscow, Enlightenment, 1982)

The significant role of theatrical education science regardless whether the director's preparation was for the professional theatre or the amateur one.⁵⁵

The instructional work in a school, similar to that of the amateur theatre, is directed to the complete preparation of the participant in the amateur creativity. With regard to this process of preparation, feelings, imagination, fantasies, interaction, memory, intellectual faculties, the physiological system (voice and body) and the ability to work are all developed in a very active way on the dramatic stage, as well as knowledge being acquired about theatrical art.

Educational work that is well studied in terms of its own curriculum and not result-oriented (acting quality) is the major issue in the work of a children's theatre group. The focus is on the creative process itself, the participating child's creative development, and the accumulation of abilities (creative and artistic) that will be useful in the community. Acquaintance with the classical arts and literature leads to an understanding of shared culture and develops the aesthetical and spiritual sense.

The understanding of artistic and creative development as a constituent part of a comprehensive aesthetical education becomes the theoretical base to put forward the required study. The organization of the aesthetical education is possible only after taking into consideration the distinctive features of the area. Also, aesthetic education theory currently abounds and reflects the mutual relationships between education and creative art. Aesthetical education in the process of developing artistic faculties becomes the basis for the applied artistic and educational practices. When that kind of

⁵⁵ Sabiguin, B. F, The art directing work for theatrical amateurs, (Leningrad, 1981), P.3-16.

education is mingled with the practices of artistic creativity, the constitution of high aesthetical standards, tastes and needs will be more acutely felt.

One role of schools, since the first days of teaching has been to inculcate into the children a sense of what is beautiful, and to develop their appreciation of the world and the creative ability to see, listen, feel, remember, watch and imagine.

3.3.4 An example: Titi and Toti

The writer's own play, "*Titi and Tuti*" (see Appendix E) was the first musical comedy for Omani children presented by a private theatre. Music was used successfully in games and races, and the play was fully understood by the audience due to the harmony between acting and music. "*Titi & Tuti*" was an experimental creative work reflecting the search for what is new in art. The spirit of newness differentiates the play from other plays in the Omani theatre. The play was filled with music, singing and dancing. It was designed to appeal to children, with pretty costumes and animal characters, which children normally love. Everything on stage moved, making the watching children laugh. The characters were very familiar to children, from cartoon films. The play was prepared, and the sound recording done in Beirut, while the stage performance took place in Oman. Preparation and proofs on stage took one month; the production cost was £10,000. The stage and other theatrical and advertisements facilities were provided by Muscat Municipality, and Alshabiba newspaper. More than 1200 people attended the performance over a three day period.

Most children go to the theatre only for fun and amusement and they understand only the play's external events and they sometimes respond to instructions. In many cases the aesthetical standards for judging the theatrical direction, the playwright's idea, the

standard of acting and the originality of musical and artistic preparations are still beyond their capacity. This play, however, created a free and non-threatening introduction to children's theatre, which captured and held the audience's attention.

From the children's expressions, it appeared that the play greatly pleased them, and they asked to see it again. Its success can be attributed to its meeting the target audience's need for expression and exteriorization of their inner feeling. These small children had acquired some knowledge, a certain aesthetical experience, and the ability to generalize phenomena in the world around them. They were reaching the stage of self-openness, and had sufficient understanding to appreciate the goal behind the play. This experience highlights the importance of selecting plays that reflect real life on stage, namely current phenomena that stir children. The more the play goes deep into aspects of life, the more influential it will be in terms of affecting the spectator's feelings and sensations.

Conclusion

Children's drama has its own dynamics and its own rewards. It is quality theatre for children, which opens the door to a new world of excitement, imagination and thoughtfulness. It is logical to assume that exposure to good theatre as a child will make the future adult more likely to be a theatregoer. Good theatre is valuable to children for entertainment, as an aid to psychological growth, as an educational tool, to encourage aesthetic appreciation, and for the development of a future audience and cultural awareness. To gain their interest, children need their own theatre, which appeals directly to their world, pleasures, fears and their experiences. The three basic areas of the values of children's theatre are aesthetics, pedagogy, and psychology. The primary aesthetic value is emotionally stimulating entertainment through participation in an act of creation. Pedagogically, children's theatre can be a powerful force of far-reaching

consequence. All learning is increased by motivation, and the motivational situation of an enjoyable diversion has obvious advantages over the typical formal classroom. And psychological values are also important benefits, in most cases more than in the adult theatre. By careful understanding of the audience's needs, and some control of which age group sees which play, the normal psychological values of good theatre can be heightened enormously in the children's theatre. In general, the theatre can offer the child enjoyment, a chance to participate creatively, an opportunity to learn, and a stimulus to psychological growth and mental health.

The final rationale for children's theatre is the use of theatre as a tool by the society of adults. Society's need for children's theatre could depend upon the values of the leaders, usually political leaders, of that society. They use children's theatre as one tool to achieve their purpose. These uses of theatre could represent an important part of any campaign to convince business and political leaders of the need for children's theatre.

The best theatre is that which adults and children can enjoy simultaneously. According to David Wood:

Theatre should be about entertainment; "message", "theme" or "moral" are possible, and sometimes, though not always, desirable.⁵⁶

Thus from the point of view of theatre as an art-form, educational developments have had positive influence; they have asserted the power of drama to enlighten and civilise the young and this has a spin-off for the status of children's theatre.

⁵⁶ England, Alan, **Theatre for The Young**, (Macmillan Ltd 1990) p10

The system of creative artistic education for children in Oman should deal with the perfect logic to study different kinds of arts. This logic embodies the principles of modern aesthetical education theory. Such a theory contains the following elements:

- Perfect programme should be formulated for development of artistic creativity through theatre. Such a programme should involve active participation at all levels of educational institutions and establishments, such as school, family, theatre, cultural establishments and the Ministry of Information.
- Children should be prepared for creative artistic work at home.
- Work should be organised to develop the aesthetical and artistic awareness. Children should be taught both to understand and to appreciate the presented dramatic work.

With these theoretical considerations in mind, we turn in the remainder of the thesis to the development and application of drama for children, whether in schools, theatres or on T.V, in Oman.

Chapter Four

Various Aspects of Children's Drama in the Arab World

Introduction

Although little has been written about children's drama in the specific context of Oman, insight can be gained by considering developments in the Arab world as a whole, which shares a common cultural heritage. In this chapter, therefore, this cultural context is explored. The chapter consists of five sections. In the first, the development of traditional Arab forms of theatre with an appeal to children is outlined. Section two describes the key elements of theatre, while section three presents the current thinking of Arab scholars regarding the stages of children's development and the kind of theatre appropriate to each age group. The potential value of those dramatic productions in meeting children's intellectual, social and emotional needs is discussed in section four. The fifth section describes the main types of stories on which children's play may be founded.

4.1 The Development of Children's Theatre in the Arab World

The ancient Egyptians were the forerunners in presenting children with "Movable Anecdotes" that gave children some sort of fun and entertainment.

The old pharaonic antiquities prove that the first child's theatre in the world was the old Egyptian theatre where many plays were presented at that time such as 'Izis & Ozoris', 'The Eloquent Farmer', 'The Drowned', 'Lies & Truth', 'Shepherd Snowheath', 'Khokho & Magic', 'Elf', 'The Body' and 'The Head'. All these were imitated by the Greek, Roman and Chinese theatre.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Mohammed, Awatef Ibrahim and Qannawi, Huda Mohammed, **The Arab Child and the Theatre**, (University of Tanta, Cairo, 1984), p. 7

These plays were usually presented at temples or on Nile boats and children greatly enjoyed them. They were also fond of Puppet Theatre 4000 years ago.

With the beginning of acting in the child's world, four types of theatre appeared.

First: World Casket:

This was an enclosed casket in which a glass screen enabled children to watch a complete serial presentation of a group of images telling a story.

The image presenter sang or narrated the events while projecting the images or the portraits. This was done in accord with a certain rhythm, and he varied his voice according to the needs of the events and the situations of the story.

In the world casket, the images were on a tape wrapped round a pulley, run by hand in order to rotate the tape so that photos or images would be presented. The images might be enlarged or reduced through a lens. The spectators were usually a small number of people, who would sit on a bench about half a metre from the casket. Their heads were covered with a piece of cloth that helped them to focus on what was presented. This casket was moved from one street to another, carried on the back of its owner. Normally, the spectator paid a petty sum to watch the stories. The topics were comic, religious and social, including parts of the epics of Anter & Abla epic and Abu Zaid AL Hilali.

Second: The Karakoz (Puppet):

This is very well known in Arab countries, and embodies a very significant stage of children's theatre development. The number of puppets used in this kind of theatre

does not exceed three per show. The Karakoz is similar to the world casket in that it is made of wood that can be moved by its owners from place to another. However, it differs in that it has an uncovered front hole in the form of a rectangle, which determines the frame in which the puppets are moved.

The Karakoz does not need any special kind of lighting. Its upper part is uncovered, which enables the presenter to disappear inside it. The presentation is done in a special voice (similar to a reed sound) that varies according to the situations and the characters dealt with.

Generally, the art of Karakoz is characterized by its naiveté in presentation and content and it is always aimed at amusing children.

Third: The Shadow Play

This is actually an independent authentic art having eastern origins. It is performed by photograph and shadow together; therefore, it needs a darkened room so that light can be focused on the dynamic acting.

This type of art is characterized by flexibility of movement that makes it possible to be performed in schoolyards or inside a simple tent. It can depict many impressive incidents, imaginative stories, and legends. The characters of this type of art are usually flat, made of leather and coloured. They are provided with articulators that are controlled by iron levers that the player presses. The puppets are held behind a cotton curtain, behind which there is a light, while the spectator sits in front of this curtain to see the shadows.

The shadow play presentations in Egypt depicted the feudal system and its latent contrast and it also launched attacks and criticism against oppression.⁵⁸

Fourth: The Dramatic Theatre:

With drama, however, we come to that form of creative expression which deals with the person directly and entails only himself as the instrument of expression, his outward appearance and vocal impressions under the guidance of mind and imagination. This guidance can be either instinctive or impelling or carefully thought out to produce a calculated effect on an audience⁵⁹

With this type of theatre, the children's theatre entered a new era of development. It relies heavily upon: -

A- The translations of some foreign texts such as *"Cinderella"*, *"The Red Shoes"* and *"The Small Prince"*.

B- Some quoted texts such as 'Happy Surprise'.

A few Egyptian texts were presented to fit the child's environment, but the efforts of workers in this area were interrupted for many reasons: non- availability of full time specialists in drama for children, scarcity of children's theatre authors and the poor budget allocated for composition, directing or presentations.

4.2. The Elements of Theatre:

The play is often characterized by certain elements that differentiate it from other versions of children's arts. A play is only a story or an idea translated by the author into the movements and dialogue of the characters, presented on stage. The play is divided in a special way that gives the play the movement and the interactive form that characterize it. The key elements of plays in the Arab world are as follows:

⁵⁸ Mohamed, Qannawi, Ibid, p.9.

⁵⁹ Gabriel Barn field, *Creative Drama in School*, (f.s.c 1968), p8

First, the idea of the play

The idea of the play represents the essential topic that the play is based upon while other events and situations and details are accumulated around it in order to disclose them to the minds of the spectator. The author usually starts his creative work by searching for and settling on a basic idea that is clear, which the whole play is based upon. Later, he starts searching for events that are appropriate to express and clarify the play. This basic idea is called "The Logical Exposition". The author usually selects a suspenseful idea for his play, whether from his imagination or from his previous experiences, from history or from modern daily events, provided that it fits the intellectual level of the audience to whom the work is presented. So we can consider the idea of the theatre or its subjects the spirit of the play and its fundamental base, because the play without an obvious idea expressing it is nothing more than movements and words that are meaningless. There is no doubt that a good idea is really the one thing that gives the author the opportunity to present before the spectator the meaning of life as he sees it, and that provides him the appropriate opportunity to imbue his art with meaning.

In fact, without a basic idea for the play, the literary work will be disintegrated and becomes difficult to understand and also its impacts on spectator will be decreased. It is necessary that the major idea of the theatre is hidden always or invisible, i.e. the author organizes the events inside it and does not state them overtly in the form of publicity or overt spreading, simply because this will weaken the play's literary value and also detract from the impact of the idea on spectators. If the play does not contain a basic idea that is the centre of the events, this play will definitely fail as a valuable literary work that has its artistic value. There is no doubt that literature is not a process of narrating episodes for acting or stirring the feelings. Rather, it offers a very significant

task in the sense that it communicates to people social facts and the life they lead. If literature has nothing to say it will be valueless.

People who have studied this matter know that the most of things that adults are interested in do not influence children, due to their lack of experience. In my view, plays that are based essentially upon good neighbourhood- which highlight the importance of work and its significance-have a very influential impact on small spectators, whether boys or girls, if free from a didactic tone. Among the most important sources of ideas for children's theatre are:

A- History

The author may select an event that he finds appropriate to treat a human problem that applies to all ages or he may choose what he finds appropriate to treat one specific problem of his age.

The author in this case does not offer the historical facts in an abstract way. Rather, he uses some historical characters or ordinary people who embody special values, and presents their life and behaviour in a distinctive manner. Arab historians report that a lot of historical events and heroic actions are very rich and fertile material for this type of children's theatre, providing that the selection takes into consideration the children's characteristics and their level of understanding.

B- Myths

Authors find myths a very rich and fertile material for their plays, but some of the myths are characterized by ambiguity which make them impossible to adapt into a play that is

presented for children. Old dramas contained many myths in which there were characters and events that appeal to children.

C- Public Epics

Public art usually contains fertile material for children's theatre in the sense that epics and public stories have an expressionistic and rhythmical power that characterizes their words and has an impact on children's emotions. Among the most important of these epics are Abu Zaid AL Hilali, Anter & Abla, Al- Zinati Khalifa, One Thousand Nights and Night.

D- Ballads

Ballads are considered a very rich and fertile source for children's theatre. There is no doubt that children at the age of four to five years enjoy this type of play, simply because these ballads can be depicted in puppet theatre and offer a proper atmosphere for the poet's ideas, combining movement melody, and metres in a wonderful entity. In fact, the effect of the words set to a melody of words heightens the suspense of the children and helps them to memorize them. A typical example in this regard is "The Great Night".

E- Contemporary Social Problems:

Contemporary social problems are considered as very significant source of theatrical subjects that can be presented by the children's theatre. But the idea should be formulated in a suspenseful and wonderful way so that the author will be able to attract the small beholders' attention for a long time.

The author faces many difficulties to embody a problem on stage without missing its meaning. The author must have a wide range of information and be aware of the small spectators' characteristics so that his treatment of the idea will be in accepted way.

Second: The Characters

Actors in a play perform the task of embodying the idea of the play through their performance of their roles. Through their actions and speech, the ideas will be communicated to the spectators; therefore, the skill of the author in drawing the play's characters supports the success of the theatrical work. In fact, the ability of the writers varies in achieving this. The giants of literature such as Shakespeare and Moliere were able to create immortal characters and human patterns that are full of life on the theatre stage. These characters of Shakespeare and Moliere have proved their existence in people's minds as if they were real characters all over the ages, for instance, "The Miser", "Tartuffe" and "Romeo and Juliet". Characters in children's theatre must have easily recognizable features and have little cunning and complexity. Children also admire, in the early years comic characters, and animals and trees that can talk and imitate human behaviour. In addition, they also admire bold heroes and bold female characters who can achieve as much as men in overcoming obstacles.

Generally speaking, children are attracted to heroic characters who overcome evil powers. Furthermore, it is necessary that each character's behaviour and speech are in line with its nature. Therefore, when the author draws the limits of characters based on his life he should take into consideration the following:

A- The External Dimension

We mean by this the physical and age features that differentiate each character. These features translate the idea of the play throughout what the character says or shows and wears, his/her use of things, the conflicts he/she faces, and what the problems he/she causes. The dramatic character must present to us a human being with his/her external life that we see before our eyes in state of turbulence on the stage. Also, the dramatic character must explain to us the person's interior life, so that we see a reflection of real life in everything the character states or does; work, conversation, the character's positive and negative participation in the conflicts that happen between the character and other dramatic characters. The character's vitality depends on the participation on conflict, and its ability to develop through the event of the play.

B- The Psychological Dimension

We mean by this the psychological attributes that differentiate each character, which are reflected by the words and actions and his personal behaviour. In other words, the psychological dimension of the calm and thinking man differs from that of the rash person in that the psychological dimension is reflected in the behaviour of each of them.

C- The Social Dimension

We mean by this the social attributes the character enjoys in the play. There is no doubt that the social environment and the economic level of each character, and even the job he performs in the play, will be reflected in the character's behaviour and speech.

In fact, the accuracy of the play's character depiction gives characters the ability to convince and facilitate the events of the emotional and intellectual impact that the

author is after. The skilful determination of the character's dimension can make us, the spectators, sympathetic or resentful and antagonistic to them.

Third: Conflict and Movement

Conflict is considered as the basic stance in the traditional play and in the child's play in particular, this conflict might be internal, that is to say, inside the hero. Such a conflict is based on two opposites: love and duty, desire and conscience, revenge and tolerance. Alternatively, the conflict might be external, between one character and another, or between a character and group of social customs and traditions.

Generally, the conflict generates the dramatic movement in the play, and movement itself is a very important element of the play. Also, the dramatic conflict provokes the spectators' interaction and stirs their emotions, attracts their attention and captures their feelings.

In brief, the successful author can stir some sort of sympathy and emotional bridge between the spectator and some of the characters of his play when they feel in the same way as those characters, and interact with their problems, wishing them victory and success in their struggle against evil power. In children's plays, the elements of conflict must be in line with the children's needs and their interests, so that the child's concept of the character will be determined as a struggle among ideas and each character is an embodiment of a certain idea that the character believes in and defends.

Some writers think that drama is about the fusion and conflict of minds and they build up their theatre on controversy, in which the characters fight with each other and continue this controversy in a series of intellectual movements through which the characters' minds are developed and they either become triumphant or are defeated or

even destroyed by the flood of ideas. The most typical example in this regard is the famous Irish writer, George Bernard Shaw. In other words, the dramatic structure of the child's theatre cannot be complete unless it reflects to us in the characters of the plays, the situation that faces people in life. We can say that people are in conflict and strive for perpetual movement.

In fact, the play does not aim at depiction of only people but also at depicting their actions, because these actions are what bring life and at the same time determine people's destiny of happiness and misery. In addition, the movement in the play distinguishes between the play as an art form and the other versions of writing. The movement of a novel or story can be decreased without harming it, while plays are greatly harmed if their movement is deleted or decreased.

Consequently, it is necessary that all the characters and dialogue of the play are put in the service of the movement; otherwise the play will lose its artistic value.

Fourth: The dramatic structure

A play is something organic. In seeing it, we find ecstasy in watching, harmony of movement, coincidence between form and content. All organs serve each other and the dialogue in the service of the artistic plot in a perfect dramatic structure. This dramatic structure involves three elements:

A- Integration

This means that play must have an organic unity that makes it one unit or an organism with harmonic parts and composition in such a way that it is not possible to change any part of the play nor delete it. After the author chooses the main idea for the child's play,

he should determine the main event in the play that represents the skeleton of the play that the events are all about. Then, he should improve upon the basic event through the facts and the consequent detailed events, based upon a very rigid pattern of cause and effect in the sense that each event will be the reason and the exposition for the event that follows in a very persuasive way that is free from exaggeration and artificiality. In so doing, the author is working upon building up his play in a dramatic and sound way in order to reach, through the conflict and movement, a dramatic climax that represents a crucial end for the development of the sequence of events. Accordingly, the structure in a good play develops is a hierarchical form, and starts with exposing the events, then introducing a conflict or crisis and developing it through the consequent events that orbit around the main event of the play till it reaches a climax, after which the action moves towards a resolution or denouement.

Moreover, the complication must be in line with the children's level of children's perception and their intellectual perception.

Further, the play must move towards the climax directly, and then stop. Children usually admire well-arranged events that increase the complication, but this leaves them puzzled at the end of the play, and they cannot form a clear idea about its subject. Many directors worry about the final scene that precedes the final curtain at the end of the play; it might be ambiguous, leaving children puzzled. Therefore, the author must study carefully the final moments before curtain down; these moments represent an important element in choosing the subject of the play. The author must not ignore the psychological state in which the children leave the theatre, because it is a very durable evidence of the success or the failure of the play. Therefore, the moments that precede the climax must be clear, comprehensive, and satisfying to the spectator.

B- The elements of suspense

The author of the play must take into consideration the element of suspense, simply because it attracts the attention of the beholders from one act to another during the play. Hence its events flow leaving the spectator in a state of tension and uncertainty until the end of the play.

Children often demand to see a particular play many times and the reason behind this is that it has moved their feelings. Plays that have good plots arouse various sensations among the spectators, such as fear, scorn, admiration, astonishment and surprise. When these feelings are stirred in the child in a sound way, it will lead to the development of sound perception, noble feelings and good behaviour, but if they are aroused in a bad and trite way, it may cause great harm to children.

Fifth: Dialogue

The dialogue of the play is considered as a very important part of the artistic work, whose structure enhances the play's literary value. In fact, the dramatic dialogue will not be fully clear on reading it, but when it is seen on stage, it is brought by the tongues of the actors accompanied by their actions and voice tones, and the dialogue usually depicts the idea what the play is about besides depicting its events and characters. Furthermore, it is really the dialogue that attracts the attention in order to make the spectators moved by the character's actions and by listening to them. The most important characteristics that must be present in the dialogue of children's plays are the following: -

- 1- truthfulness in expressing the habits of characters during the presentation of the play;
- 2- helping the spectator to know the personality of his friend by what the dialogue adds to the knowledge of spectator about the speaker or his companion or both;
- 3- its direction towards a goal, i.e. the dialogue of each event moves the play's plot forward;
- 4- its connection between the past, present and the future in the play, as well as between exposition, development and denouement;
- 5- its variety in accordance with each character's different nature because each character's dialogue is a self-dialogue that differs from that of other characters.

While fulfilling these roles, it must also have specific features that render it appropriate to the young audience, such as:

- A- It must be correlated with their linguistic levels;
- B- It must be in simple Arabic language that children understand;

- C- Speeches should be no longer than necessary, so that it is easy for children to follow them.
- D- It must not unduly slow down the action on stage, which would cause boredom for children.
- E- It must not be bombastic or didactic, or the literary work will lose its artistic merit and authenticity.

In brief, the dialogue must be easy and should not be characterised by discussion that cools the action and leads to the spectator's boredom.

Moreover, the dialogue must have a dynamic movement that is vital, swift, and closely related to events, avoiding digression, so that it stays in the service of play and its development.

4.3. Childhood Stages and Appropriate Types of Drama

After the foregoing presentation of the basic elements of children's theatre bases, we have to ask the question, "How does the director select a play that fits the intended age category of children?"

Khalid Abdullatif, the critic in *Alwatan newspaper*, disputes whether a play should be tailored to a single age group. He argues that

The show should be suitable for all ages, as children go to the theatre with older people. From this point of view, some conditions need to be met in order to make the show suitable for all ages. These conditions are:

- 1- It should use simple language to be understood by children.
- 2- The idea should be simple and clear.

- 3- The show should be exciting and dazzling.
- 4- Dance, movement, humour and joyful features should be included.
- 5- There should be an educational moral.⁶⁰

But Dawood Alhamadani, an expert in the Ministry of Education, believes that drama should take into consideration the children's ages. In his view:

What is presented to the child should be suited to their ages. Psychologically, children will try to run away from works that are above their level, while educational materials that suit them have a big meaning in their minds and assist them to develop their knowledge, increase their experience and achieve many aims, such as developing their characters in the desired social direction.⁶¹

I agree that the material presented to the child should be suitable to his age.

As Dawood said:

What is accepted by five year-old children will be silly for those of eleven years and what attracts these children will frighten five year-old children.⁶²

This raises the questions: Are there fixed stages in children's lives? On what basis could we specify stages?

To answer these questions:

The beginning and the end of each stage cannot be specified perfectly, any more than day and night. A stage will not end on a fixed day and the next stage start directly after that with its new features and characteristics. This is a very important point for parents and anyone dealing with children, as we can notice differences between children in the

⁶⁰ Children drama, Seminar, Khalid Abdul latif, Press clubs April 2002.

⁶¹ Children drama, interview, Dawood Alhamadani, Hull May 2002

⁶² Ibid

same age, which we call individuality. These differences depend on hereditary, environmental and cultural factors.

Although it is not possible to specify accurately each stage of childhood, because of the difference in children's needs, drives and tendencies, in order to make the artistic and spiritual support presented to the child suitable to his/her level of growth, some psychologists give a general description of child development in successive stages, as follows:

- 1- Reality and Limited Imagination Stage: 3 – 5 years.
- 2- Unlimited Imagination Stage: 6 – 8 years.
- 3- Heroism Stage: 9 – 12 years.
- 4- Ideal stage 12- 15 years.⁶³

Differences in children's inclinations during the stages of childhood as a result of differences in physical and psychological growth will be presented, to give theatre writers a broad understanding of this matter so they can make the form and the content of their writing compatible with children's interests.

Reality and limited imagination stage (3-5years)

The quality of the child's accommodation with his environment in the first two years is based on the correlation of simple actions with each other (pushing, beating, filling, and evacuating), and his sensual perception of this correlation. This accommodation is based on the child's getting to knowing his physical and social environment and creating images of it. Children's recognition of things and organisms is facilitated by contrast. In other words, encountering things, colours, sizes and figures with regard to their opposites makes it easier for the child to distinguish the features of his environment and

⁶³ Marea, Hassan, *School Theatre*, (Ahilal Publication House, Beirut, 2000), p. 21.

culture. This should be taken into account in what is offered for such children: short stories, bright glowing images of simple shapes made from thick paper. In this type of children's literature, the stories are related to their games, their favourite animals, birds, trains and the like. Narration usually depends on a very clear and simple story about things the children like. During the story, there are song intervals with simple, repeated tunes.

Regarding the characteristic features of children between four- five years old, Awatef Ibrahim added that:

At this intuition stage of life, the child has not yet acquired sufficient linguistic information to enable him to perform abstract thinking in the abstract issues, but his intellectual processes are concerned with his feelings and imagination. The child always feels pain and enjoyment in his actions and their consequences and his thinking will still be far from logical.

The thinking of children in this early stage focuses on avoiding pain and satisfying their desires and motives. This matter explains justifies the fondness of children's at this stage for imaginative stories.

This fact does not mean that we, as adults, should exaggerate in presenting these literary genres from stories, puppet shows, shadow plays that inspire and move his own imagination. Their imaginative subjects must be derived from his external sense so that they (literary genres) help children of this stage to cross peacefully the gap between their imaginative world and the social reality surrounding them.⁶⁴

In fact, what helps us, as adults, to choose the subjects of their literary works are the following:

A- Their desire to discover the facts of the environment they live in.

⁶⁴ Mohammed and Qannawi, 1984, Ibid, p43

B- Their wish to understand the social relationships and the social systems that are prevail in their environment.

C- The type of questions children ask, that determine the orientation of their mental growth one hand and the type of response that children's literature has to answer those questions, on the other.

At three years old, the child's interactions are unstable. But, he soon starts to form abiding relationships with certain subjects and people that he is interested in, usually his mother. The child's imagination is fertile, which generates different personal interactions such as fear, enthusiasm, indignation and wrath. However, his lack of participation in the social life surrounding him prevents his imagination being challenged.

Therefore, it is not surprising that we find the heroes of stories and children's theatre are animals, flowers and talking birds that sing, dance and get angry as a child does, for the same reason that the adventures will be plausible or probable, at least from the child's point of view.

What the child learns, according to the pleasure principle and pain principle, he adds to his stories and plays. So, whatever the child sees and thinks is really reflected in his plays and stories. Even strange things might take place in the literary work, simply because the relationships among the things and organisms are influenced by the child's idea about the world he lives in.

Step by step, the child starts feeling the resistance of things and here starts the second stage of his imagination, called "Fiction", in which he still believes in its reality and

sometimes escapes from it because he has invented it. In fact, the end of this growth stage is characterized by new factors such as the emergence of criticism that challenges his imaginary creation and discourages him from imagining. On the other hand, the emergence of criticism prevents the child from confusing the strange and familiar. Furthermore, these feelings are the portents of the child's feeling of reality and his desire to interact with others, be they adults or children.

Unlimited imagination stage (6-8 years)

It is very difficult for the child up to the age of seven to think in the abstract, i.e. verbal thinking rather; he resorts to thinking in terms of visual pictures of things that he sees daily. At age 6-8, the child's thinking will start to take a more realistic ring and show less fantasy, due the pressure of reality on the child's imagination, which will be turned into a practical imagination that tends to construct and assemble things and themes. This stage may coexist with the previous stage in the sense that each one of them follows a parallel and independent course, and therefore, we can notice that some children might be very observant, while at the same time they might also be prone to day-dreaming. Children tend to memorize songs automatically, because their capacity for recall has not been filled yet.

At six and seven years old, the child cannot focus his attention on a particular subject for a long time especially if the subject of his attention is verbal speech. Furthermore, we also notice his tendency towards what is practical. The extent of the child's interaction with the external world or its subjects, or the abstract side of it such as customs, traditions and religion, and other issues that the child should practise positively and actively, is increased.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Mohammed and Qannawi, 1984, Ibid, p.44.

In fact, this variation of child's communication helps him to focus his interactions on more than one issue. He distributes his attention among his surroundings on the basis of how these subjects arouse him.

The child's idea about the artificiality of the material will continue five years to seven and eight years. If the child in his early childhood depends on his imagination to violate the constraints of time and space and to surpass the needs of reality in order to contemplate a new reality made by him and out of his imagination, it is simply because the seven and eight year old child has a love of imagination that goes beyond the realistic physical phenomena that he himself knows. Therefore, he imagines unfamiliar things in his environment. That is why he takes flight in a free imaginary environment, such as the world of witches and jinni, such as the stories in "*One thousand nights & night*", "*Alaa' Al din's lamp*" and "*Ali Baba & the forty thieves*".

Customarily, the child who is brought up in a strict environment, confined to the facts of daily life, becomes lazy and narrow- minded and has a poor imagination, due to lack of mental growth, as a result of not using the imagination that helps him to flourish. Training the imagination prepares the child to face reality in a creative and innovative way. Adults find great pleasure in writing theatre for children who have a developed imagination, simply because they find in stories, myths and the public heritage very attractive material for their plays.

Heroism stage (8-12 years)

At this stage of middle childhood, the child's increasing imagination attracts him to a variety of T.V. series and the imaginative stories. This characteristic explains to a great extent the child's enjoyment of adventure stories and detective stories that he beholds or

has recited to him. If the literature provokes the child to learn love rather than domination, competition and bravery, then this age is called “the stage of adventure & heroism”. The child longs for curiosity and to know about things beyond his environment. The follows people around him with more questions about meanings. Then, the child will be interested in the past and switches his attention to translated works, stories, and biographical plays and the life of the nation. Generally, we notice an organisation in his social relations; this organisation is based upon a group of relations and tendencies. Finally, the child will be committed to the moral norm.

The child’s ability of thinking grows and his ability to pay attention to wider subjects is increased, provided that the subjects are specially organised so that they become one unit when presented to him. The child’s ability to integrate new subjects by himself is still not mature. In addition, the child cannot be aware of any group of subjects, whether they are external things or ideas, unless the number of subjects is limited and the relationships among them are simple. Because the child’s attention, span is still limited, it is necessary to select simple subjects in the plays which are composed for this stage.

It can be clearly seen that the child’s memory is increasing from the age of seven till eleven and he can remember by replying but it is difficult for him to understand things by reasoning. Furthermore, he is still thinking in visual images and for this reason we have to take into consideration that what is presented to audiences at this stage must be realistic so it can be visually and easily imagined and closely associated with the child’s direct experience and his daily environment.

Heroes who perform daring acts and avoid risks and dangers at the critical moment arouse the child’s zeal at this stage. Moreover, children like to laugh, especially at

stupid characters or cowards, and they enjoy endings in which the hero triumphs and evil is punished. There are also stories of historical bravery that satisfy the needs of the child and his eagerness for bravery.

At nine and ten years old, girls enjoy the same things as boys, though more focused on reality, but they are content provided that the play has a heroine beside the hero. Girls usually prefer famous imaginative plays, especially when the process of direction fits their age level.

The playwright and director targeting this age group ought to select a story with a good moral, because some of these dramatic stories are not honourable in their goals, as they include incidents that encourage rashness and theft the formation of gangs that engage in foolish adventures. Such types of bad plays may encourage deviation from the rules of family and society, particularly when the youth finds encouragement from his friends.

The child of ten and eleven years old will be more self-conscious. He tries to prove himself, to deal with his private emotions and to search for values and interaction with the world. As a result, he deals with his problems. Consequently, the child is in need of literature that is closely related to current events. The child starts learning about model people from the theatre and people other than his parents, such as movie or cinema stars or T.V. actors at this age. Therefore, he needs to do something that provides him with ideals from which he can choose a good role model. In addition, at this stage the child needs to read literary works in which the spirit of adventure, bravery and violence are predominant. In this regard, the child will keep in his mind a lot of plays and detective stories (T.V. series and war stories that display the hero's bravery

and gallantry). In Arab history, there are a lot of heroic adventures that satisfy these needs.

At this stage, the feeling of humour is developed and also the taste for it is developed. The child tends to joke with his schoolmates and neighbourhood children as a part of his independence from adults.

Therefore, children need versions of arts that reflect these developments in their social life.

Ideal Stage (12- 15 years)

At the beginning of this stage children move from the stage of relative emotional stability, which is called by psychologists “the Potentiality Stage” to the complicated and more sensitive stage of adolescence. The dimensions of space and time do not bind them. They can find facts about the past with its information, ideas and cultures as well as the facts of the present world.

Some theatres place emphasis on presenting subjects that engage the interests of the preparatory stage of study. There is no doubt that there is an opportunity for plays that suit this age from the ideal theatre in the sense that the individuals of 12 – 15 years old may see drama that is suited to and admired by adults. At this stage, it is recommended that adventure is mingled with the emotion and reality decreases, while idealism is elevated more than in plays for younger children.

Drama is a medium that presents all these things in a way that makes children familiar with them, and drama as a result, becomes a resource of excitement, happiness and

enjoyment. Drama can play a more important role because it can present a stream of information to the child, which enables him to find answers to many questions related to the nature of things and facts around him. Dramas with ideas, characters and events beyond the child's experience will be an important resource to develop his concepts about things. For example a fatherless child is eager to have a complete idea about fathers. A child, who lives in a family where the parents frequently quarrel, can find that there are many families who live peacefully. Also, he can discover how to solve problems in a different way instead of quarrelling. Drama can provide a child with new experiences and a means to treat his stress and to satisfy his psychological needs.

We can notice the influence of drama clearly from children's involvement with the scenes. Sometimes they laugh for a long time, or they cry and hide under the chairs when they watch an exciting scene. Also a drama can teach them many ideals such as courage, honesty, beauty etc. For example, if we want to teach an ethical lesson, every student can share in a simple show playing the role of the hero or heroine. The behaviour of the protagonist will be an integral part of the actor's character.

Additionally, drama presented in the theatre can be used to treat undesired conduct. Psychologists notice that representation has a big effect on treating individual problems including shyness, especially when an acting student represents a character suffering from the same problem. In this case the student will give vent to his suppressed emotion, recovering his balance and self-confidence.

The theatre instructor can use drama to move the student away from regulation by punishment and encourage him to carry out positive actions in his life; the ideal is "not to deal with the child as guilty, but as a person under ethical training".

Therefore, we find that knowing the characteristics of children's growth is considered as a very important element in presenting plays that fit each and stage of development, that satisfy the prerequisites of growth and suit the situation of children's condition that is required at the stage they are in.

But, it is obvious that presenting a series of plays that suit the different ages will be very difficult unless the necessary human and physical resources are available and spectators can cover the cost of preparation. Therefore, there are three options:

- 1- To choose plays that fit a particular age, as needed, even if they are not suitable for children of other ages.
- 2- To present different plays, some of them suited to small children and others suited to older ones (from 8-15 years old).
- 3- To choose famous plays making use of some the children's characteristics and the theatre's characteristics, bearing in mind that:

a) The children identify with the play's characters and interact with the roles within the situation; they live the interactive atmosphere of the literary work as if they were themselves the heroes of the play;

b) Children's thinking is of two types:

1. Sensual and dynamic thinking which are closely associated with tangible things in their environment.
2. Thinking in images, especially as children's thinking in the three stages that we are focusing on has not yet reached the level of pure abstraction.

In fact, theatre corresponds with children's method of thinking in the sense that it presents concrete, sensual and visible images similar to those which take place before the children in real life. The characters of the play interact with each other and the elements of theatrical illusion interact with the child's imagination.

4.4 The Theatre and Children's needs

There is no doubt that the child's psychological needs are an influential factor on the selection of the quality of theatrical subjects that are presented to children.

Since, the psychological needs are really the instinctive motives that influence the child's behaviour; accordingly, we have to study them so that the child's theatre satisfies them in good ways. Moreover, the child may get nervous during his interaction with his environment to fulfil his needs and goals and he tries to get rid of this situation. If the child is unable to do so, there would be tension as a result of the needs that the child was unable to satisfy. Therefore, we have to study the needs of childhood in order to know the way in which the subject of the play satisfies them.⁶⁶

Such needs include the following:

Need for Love

The child, from his early years, needs love, i.e. that type of emotional continuity that makes him feel he is loved and desired by his family. Humans love others and exchange love with them, because love is something emotional, abiding and reciprocal. This love forms an essential support in the maturity of the personality and the individual's good performance of his role. The child who suffers from emotional hunger feels that his society rejects him and becomes psychologically turbulent. Consequently, plays that present children with various forms of relationships among people, or

⁶⁶ Mohammed and Qannawi, 1984, Ibid, p.54

between the play itself and organisms, really widen the range of love within them and develop good intentions towards others.

The child usually grows up loving others, learning to accept their weakness, share their agonies, and comfort them for the losses they undergo, he unites with the universe respecting the elements of power in it and fearing them; at the same time he appreciates the forms of weakness and sympathises with them.

Need for security and serenity

The child's need for security and serenity appears as one of the most important human needs, in terms of its both significance and the efforts paid to satisfy it.

Security is the centre of the child's activity. This need grows side by side with the child's need for social effectiveness. This need is jeopardised by, excessive criticism, and imposing high standards of performance on him that go beyond his real ability.

Children's theatre can satisfy these needs by presenting dramatic events that depict those who suffer poverty, for example, and are able to overcome these obstacles and difficulties due to their efforts and perseverance in work, and to constitute a new life of stability and physical security. Such drama inspires children with the power to face their life circumstances hero whom the child regards as a model and imitates. Of course, in religious plays there are different types of striving that satisfy the needs of children for security.

Need for Joining

The most important thing that the child needs in his life is to feel that he belongs to a group of people who accept or welcome him and whom he accepts. The most terrible thing for a human being is the feeling of being rejected by people. This need arises in the child once he starts to ensure that he has special status within his family and no one competes him for this status. Since the child's life relies on adult people, the child aims at satisfying them by his physical and psychological behaviour. As he grows, the child learns to seek appreciation from the people who play a significant role in his life, for instance, his parents, teachers and friends. At the same time he does his best to be an acceptable member of the social community of which he is part, and has a sense of belonging and loyalty to them. Plays that deal with the movement of the child in this circle meet the child's needs to belong by depicting the good relationships between the prominent character in the play and his/her family members or teachers and neighbours, which give the character self-confidence.

Need for Appreciation

The child's need for appreciation is related to our acceptance of children and dealing with them as individuals who have their own value. In fact, each one of us, whether child or adult needs to be appreciated. Appreciation of his company and activities is fundamental in widening the self-realization of the child and developing his personality. Adult people's encouragement fosters the spirit of bravery in him. Psychology teaches us the danger of feelings of inferiority.

Children's theatre can encourage and support the child's need for appreciation and respect. A child who is deprived of appreciation in his life can meet this need through

his identification with the play's hero, when the hero's condition is similar to his own and they have things in common.

There is no doubt that plays in which the children enjoy special status in their family, or those plays in which the family treats children kindly, making them feel that they are good people, desired, and can undertake responsibility, are the most desirable ones.

Need for success & self-realization

This need springs from the child in order to express himself and display his personality in his speech, games, actions, drawings, activities he participates in and services he renders to others in line with his ability and competence. Maslow⁶⁷ argued that every person can do something, for which he has ability and skill, and will manipulate these abilities in order to achieve a goal. In fact, the child's feeling of his ability is very important to determine his ideas about himself, his lifestyle and future. The child can meet this need by acting a role in the play or participating in it, or through identification with its heroes, especially in heroic plays and the plays that depict Arabian figures that have a dignified social position.

Need for knowledge, understanding, discovery and survey

Once the child opens his eyes to the surrounding world that he lives in, soon, he will feel a need for discovery and a sense of curiosity about the environment which he influences and which influences him.

Moreover, the child poses questions for which he needs answers; Maslow explains this by saying that desire and need is the real motive behind the individual's inquisitiveness.

⁶⁷ Mohamed, and Qannawi, Ibid,1984

Perhaps this desire is really the one that makes parents buy books for their children to develop their thinking. In fact, the role of children's theatre is very significant in this regard, in the sense that it satisfies the child's motivation, curiosity and love of knowledge, in addition to uncovering mystery through presentation of subjects, action and suspense that make use of child's imagination and his intellectual abilities.

4.5. Types of children's Drama:

- Animal Stories

All studies confirm that the stories, which most attract children up to 10 years old, are stories about animals. The older children become, the less interest they have in such types of stories and they are concerned with the content only.

Many psychologists find that the main reason for the use of animal stories in most national cultures is the inherent trend of humans to express their thoughts by using a close medium.

The use of animals in dramas as a symbol is subject to limitations imposed by the childhood stages. Simple animal dramas are suitable for the stage related to environment, but children in the next stage like plays about imaginary animals. After eight, they again like stories about real animals, especially strange animals that live in remote places.

- Heroism Dramas

Children are attracted to heroism and adventure. The reason for this is psychological, because a hero should be able to overcome difficulties. Skills should be created to enable the hero to defeat any enemy. Such drama, that makes a hero its centre, invites

children to imitate the hero and his conduct. Some educators recommend that writers insert real great men in their dramas to enable children to study their lives in order to imitate them as a superior exemplar. This imitation will have a positive effect on the child's character.

- Superman's Dramas

This type of drama deals with a metaphysical hero who can perform miracles, an indestructible person, who can win victory over his enemies. He can destroy, and sparks come out of his mouth. These types of dramas represent what children desire to achieve in their life. The influence of such characters appears in children's behaviour, when they try to imitate the superman. We should take into consideration, however, the negative effects which create aggressive tendencies towards life and society. Also these influences encourage a tendency to opt out of problem-solving through reasoning, since they lead children to expect miraculous solutions to problems.

Fabulous dramas with strange creatures can have very dangerous effects on children's psychology. Dr. Malak Jirjis said in his books, "*Children's Psychological Problems*"⁶⁸ that the frightful, strange pictures in some school book and children's magazines have a very bad effect on children. Dramas with magicians, devils and genie's will create a cowardly child suffering from a psychological anxiety and fear of the unknown.

- Comedy Dramas

Comedy dramas are the most important types of dramas which children are attracted to. A comedy drama offers them enjoyment and happiness. Some educators say that the best way to educate children is to let them laugh before the education process.

⁶⁸ Marie, Hussan, " The school Theatre", (Beirut: Alhilal House and Library 2000) p.33

Comedy drama represented in the theatre should be simple and take its subjects from the child's daily life. At the same time it should aim to stimulate his mind, develop his enjoyment and offer optimism. Through comedy drama, we can fight illusions and misconceptions, which the child may have about life. Additionally, comedy drama is an important source of recreation.

- Historical Dramas

Experiments show that it is very difficult for a child under 9 years old to understand the time element of history. For this reason, we find that the child's assimilation of historical events will not exceed learning the dates of events by heart, without any ability to follow historical periods or connect them, or to show any understanding of sequence.

Accordingly, historical drama presented to children under 9 should be simple. The most effective way is to present dramas as a series of stories narrated by their grandfathers.

For children over 9, we can present brief, uncomplicated drama. It will be better to concentrate on the lives of great people.

We have to indicate here that the writer of historical drama should evoke the atmosphere of the period, by presenting the natural and social environment, clothes, manners, habits...etc. He can imagine that period to create an effective background to the events.

- Scientific Dramas

This type of drama is widespread in the developed countries of Europe and America as a result of the prevailing situations in these societies. Writers of scientific dramas extract the material of their dramas from the scientific field, which is full of inventions. This field helps writers to release their imagination to write dramas about the future. Scientific Imagination dramas represented in the theatre are not available in Arab countries because of the big budgets and high technical capacities needed.

Conclusion

In the light of the above presentation, we can conclude that the Arab world possesses traditional forms of dramatic presentation for children and modern writers on drama recognize that it can enrich children's life through the utilization of their growing characteristics, offering support for the requirements of this growth and satisfying their emotional and cognitive needs. The question now arises, how these forms have developed in Oman, and whether the theatre that has developed there embodies the principles set out in this chapter. In the next chapter, therefore, the development of drama in Oman will be described and its status evaluated.

Chapter Five

Drama Movement in Oman

Introduction

Oman has witnessed a new era in its modern history since 1970. Directed by the authorities, Oman has since then welcomed, helped and encouraged all means and ways to progress and to develop contemporary modern life. This progressive tendency was not carried out in isolation from its cultural heritage. Instead, it was carried out side by side with an authentic and persistent movement for reviving the public and cultural heritage of the country. The young Omani drama is an example. Omani drama is not a drama movement deeply rooted in history or with a cumulative lot of experiment and experience. Consequently, although there have been significant achievements. There are also notable deficiencies. This chapter outlines the process of development of drama, in a broad sense, in the Sultanate, and evaluates its current status and shortcomings. There are six main sections. The first presents the historical background of drama in Oman. There follows an account of the development of television drama, which has come to dominate the drama field in Oman. The shortcomings of drama in general in Oman are explored in section 5.3, while the fourth section highlights the problems facing children's theatre and drama in particular. These problems are confirmed by the empirical findings from a questionnaire survey and interviews, presented in the fifth section. There follows in section 5.6 an overall evaluation of the current status of drama in Oman, and its future prospects.

5.1. Historical evolution of Omani theatre

The first evidence of a type of theatre activity appeared in a book issued by the Ministry

of Education in 1985, little *History of Education in Oman*⁶⁹. The book mentioned three schools in Oman, named Al Saidia Muscat, Al Saidia Salalaha and Al Saidia Muttrah, but the first one was the most famous because it was in the country's capital, where an annual festival was used to be organized and attended by VIPs and parents, to see some theatre shows, songs and other school programmes. Those who have seen the theatre shows mentioned that the shows reflected only the school syllabus, especially history and religious stances, in addition to recreational situations. Expatriate school masters from other Arab countries, who had better knowledge and experience of this art,⁷⁰ supervised these shows. The schools had poor resources, and the Omani students had only simple ideas about the theatre, but these were quickly developed, when those students pursued higher education in other Arab capitals like Cairo and Beirut, which have experienced big theatre movements, and have links with the European theatre movement. When the students returned home in the early seventies, they had good theatre experience which they developed by forming theatre groups within leisure clubs that had previously been confined to sports activities, and rivalry grew between the two activities. The club groups enthusiastically continued for many years, producing various theatre on various topics; some were local comedy, others were folklore drama; some expressed the national philosophy, thinking and enthusiasm.⁷¹

The club's drama experience was distinguished with common features, extended through its development, which were important for the subsequent theatre movement in Oman. The most important are:

Clubs depended mainly on the actors; limited budget did not allow them meet different

⁶⁹ **The History of Education in Oman**, (issued by Ministry of Education, 1985).

⁷⁰ Jawad, Abdulkarim, **Theatre experience in Oman**, (issued by Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman 1987)

⁷¹ **The theatre in Al Ahli club**, (issued by the club 1970)

shows' requirements in terms of decor, costumes, light and sound etc.

On the other hand, the attention paid to the individual actors in clubs, resulted in rapid development in their performance, and they found a real response from the audience, coming to see them in this newly introduced art called theatre.

The audiences attended the annual theatre shows organized by the clubs, according to the records of Al Ahli Club, were estimated at 2500 persons per show. This may be an exaggeration, but shows the popularity of the new drama.

The club theatre also gave the first chance to women to participate, side by side with men. This was without doubt an important development in Oman theatre movement.

The club's activities, strengthened to some extent, the principal tools of theatre experiment, and the principal aspects of theatre editing, and produced a number of actors, who may be considered the pioneers of the theatre movement. Some of them founded a special theatre style, through the shows they played, and used their talent to embellish the play's incidents.

In 1980 a youth theatre group was found, which is considered the first semi specialized theatre group. The theatre activities in the clubs had slowed down in the 1970s for many reasons, the important being that the actors began to be frustrated by the limited opportunity, and they began to search for another outlet to participate in theatre activity. This situation met with the goals of the Ministry of Information, which was the official body responsible for youth activities at that time. Therefore, the youth theatre group was established and an expatriate producer from Egypt was recruited to supervise it. The

Omani actors gathered round him and rendered their efforts to establish the first official theatre group under direct administration of the government body, which responsible its budget and supervision. Although the members of the group are amateur and not full time actors, since the beginning of the group's establishment, even today, the "Youth theatre group" is at the forefront of Oman's theatre movement.

Enthusiasm was the main factor which contributed to the establishment of this group. With both enthusiasm and availability of an Arab producer, the group overcame all the initial difficulties, and its first work was a difficult classic play of Shakespeare "Merchant of Venice". The group was compelled to accept the challenge, and worked hard to stage this international work to an audience used to watching simple local theatre sketches. The producer organized workshops over a period of six months, where he trained members, and provided them with academic knowledge of the principles of theatre technicalities. The training led to the success of this first theatre show, which made the group members enthusiastic to undertake a second experiment, which was from the Arabic theatre. Play after play continued, until the Youth theatre group became the base of Omani Theatre art.

A few years later, the group was expanded, and was not satisfied with staging its works in Muscat (the capital) only, but transferred its shows to the different regions of the country. These tours stimulated the formation of new regional theatre groups. Today, there are seven youth theatre groups scattered in the Omani regions, which stage annually between ten and fifteen plays. A list of the Youth Theatres, main output from 1980 to the present can be found in Appendix F.

Through the Youth Theatre Group, also outside participation in different festivals and

cultural weeks, on Arab and GCC levels took place. As the ideas and experiences of the members of the youth group matured, they began to establish private theatre groups in the second half of 1980s under the supervision of Ministry of the National Heritage and Culture, as a continuation of the Omani theatre movement. A Drama department was opened at Sultan Qaboos University in 1990, with branches for Theatre Performance, Production, Criticism, and Decor designing. This department started to provide theatre movement with graduates bearing academic qualifications. It staged a number of high technical theatre shows.

Despite all these efforts to establish a strong foundation for the theatre movement, no real Oman theatre audience bases exist, for a number of inter-related reasons. One is the amateur type of Oman theatre work; another is the seasonal nature of theatre shows which are confined to specific occasions, which makes them, seem like festival activity rather than real theatre work.

There may be other reasons more complicated, but we think that the main reason for Oman theatre's lack of a broad audience base is that the theatre is a modern art introduced in Oman, without roots in the local culture. Therefore, efforts are needed to develop original theatre, integrated with the national artistic and folk cultural heritage.

5.2. The shift in emphasis in TV drama in Oman

Television drama is a social, cultural, and artistic phenomenon, which owes its influence to the fact that the easiest way to communicate information to individuals is through images. Most films refer to existing social problems or they anticipate them and many of them have participated in changing the viewpoint of society on existing social values and even led to change in the law.

Drama was for a long time confined to theatre and cinema halls to which the recipient went at certain times and paid for entry, but now, through T.V. people can see drama free of charge at home, and in shops and cafes. Therefore drama writing for T.V offers the opportunity to enrich the Arabian screen with many wonderful works that elevate the status of the beholder's taste, and enrich his culture and link him with his national roots at the time of lethal attack by the foreign drama. With the growing interest in modern communications technology and lack of opportunities elsewhere, T.V. has become the main vehicle for Omani dramatists and directors. The development of T.V. drama can be divided into three stages, as follows:

- The first stage from the foundation of sultanate of Oman TV in 1974, until the mid 1980s.
- The second stage from the latter half of the 1980s till the first half of the 1990s.
- The last stage from end of the second stage and up till the present.

5.2.1 The first stage

The Ministry of Information and Tourism of the Sultanate of Oman signed in March 1974 an agreement with Siemens Company providing for the establishment of a T.V station. The agreement also stipulated that the German firm "Global" would run the station for a five year period.

Another T.V station was inaugurated on November 25th 1975 in the city of Salalal to cover the Governorate of Dhofar and the southern region. The first link between the two stations via satellite took place on June 1st 1979. This achievement, consequently,

made it possible for the Omani T.V broadcast to cover the whole territory of the Sultanate and link the country to the external world.

At this time, Omani T.V drama was not separate from the Omani theatre and its early works reflected the characteristics of theatrical writing in Oman at that time. Those works were comedies based on theatrical heroes and caricature characters in funny and laughable situations.

Among the pioneers of the Omani drama were Saleh Zaal, Fakhriya Khamis and the late Juma Al Khusaibi and Saleh Showered who is now retired who was a writer and actor.

Among the works that they presented at that time were “Shanjob & Faghorah”, “the Wild Jaws”, and the character of Khalef the old man in the drama series called “Musafer Khana”. The basic features of the local T.V drama in the 1970s were as follows:

- Most Omani screen-writers, actors and directors had no specialist training.
- The works were simple and comic and very similar to photographed sketches.
- Talent was the basic motive for writing for TV, in the absence of experience and professionalism and T.V. drama depended on individual assiduity.

5.2.2 The Second stage

From the mid 1980s until the mid 1990s, T.V. drama became established as many screen-writers and directors were recruited to Oman TV from Egypt, Jordan and other countries with extensive experience in the field of T.V drama production. Thus, a form of professional writing was achieved simply because those writers had prepared and composed many dramatic works, such as TV drama series and films and others in their

own countries. Nevertheless, although writing standards improved. Subject matter was still limited. Shows tended to comedy did not tackle social issues. The works were generally far from the reality of Omani society, starting from the dialect used in the dramatic work, because the expatriate writers wrote first in their own dialect which then had to be translated. Since the Sultanate has many different dialects from one region to another, arriving at a generally acceptable form was a very difficult matter and many people failed to achieve this task. Therefore, the Omani drama was strange to Omani people, both in its dialect in and the artificial matter that it dealt with. The informative guidance for Oman at that time contributed in creating mediocre drama, because the Ministry of Information focused solely on praise of the Omani renaissance, and turned its back on pure in favour of propaganda. Dramatists were expected to address a limited range of topics such as excessive dowries, the marriage of old men to young girls, the disadvantages of housemaids and other such topics that were tackled in every dramatic work. At the same time, there were exceptions, both directors and writers. A notable example in this regard was Amin Abdul Latif, who he presented dramatic works with a different vision, as if he were an outsider. He dealt with the issue of keeping the land and emphasized its importance and the role of time in creating fables. He told us how dreams and illusions play a significant role in formulating human destiny. This period was characterized by a number of famous TV's drama films such as "Wedding" and "Munataha" by the researcher, which press and audience considered as qualitative leap in photography, direction and composition, simply because it departed from the customary the walls of the studio and fixed cameras. This attempt was followed by many successful attempts, for example, "Alfarrash" by Malallah Darwish and "Only an Employee" by the same director, "The big Drawing" and "Eucharist and the Victim" by Sami Mohammed Ali. This one-camera style of movie later became a habit and way of saving money. This period, in 1995, witnessed the production of huge Omani T.V

series by the name of “Oman in History”, which was the mixture of many Omani and Arab experiences in the field of dramatic preparation and direction, the artistic techniques and other film techniques. Moreover, there were other dramatic works have achieved less success at that stage, such as Ahmed Alhamdani’s “Said & Saida Diary”. This work began as a radio series, but was translated to TV, where it was highly welcomed by audience. This was a successful local experience in presenting a series that had separate items or parts with the same heroes. The press hailed Alhamdani a the saviour of Omani drama. In fact, Alhamdani went on to write many other works and presented new patterns of the plotted texts, for instance, “At the middle of the way”, “Spring is Coming” and others. In other words, this era or period can be considered as the acme of dramatic production in Oman, in the sense that many T.V series and evening programmes were presented at that time by Omani directors and some expatriate Arabs.

5.2.3 The third Stage

1995 heralded the coming of a number of people who had studied Direction outside the Sultanate, and whose dramatic work reflected their formal study. Among the most important are Anis Alhabib and Mahboob Mousa, who concluded that a basis for the Omani drama had been established. They started to work with the same teams that existed before and collaborated with some new faces, namely, young actors, to present some works such as “Ahlam Raba’a”, “Springs of small hops” and “The tale of every house”. This period witnessed the entering of the private sector as a party in the process of dramatic production; many private companies took part in producing the Omani drama in the form of T.V. evenings or T.V series. In fact, a film was produced by one company under the title of “Treasure” that was very important in terms of its writing, directing and use of artistic technology. However, private sector involvement was due

to a crisis that hit dramatic production owing to Oman's economic crisis caused by the fall in oil prices. As a result, the allocations for dramatic works were substantially decreased. This resulted in a only small number of works being produced compared to the previous period. Consequently, the Omani Ministry of Information opened the door for the private sector to participate in dramatic production. Furthermore, coordination was made with the other Governmental Bodies such as the Ministry of Commerce & Industry to facilitate the establishing of private dramatic production companies. Unfortunately, the result has a return to the low standards of the late 1970s and early 1980s, because some private companies are more interested in easy profit. Nevertheless, Amin Abdullatif has presented a masterpiece produced by Oman T.V, called "Reading a forgotten Note", a masterpiece which demonstrates that the literary work depends largely on the artist. In the same context, the researcher has presented "Radiance" a TV series written by Abdulkarim Juwad, which presented another vision of the suffering of drama and T.V.

Moreover, Abdullah Haider and Alhamadani presented a number of good works that are usually referred to as being lofty. The new directors who have already entered the field of drama have not changed anything regarding the strategy of writing the screenplay; rather, they place heavy emphasis on the contents of the dramatic texts that they have directed. At the same time they place emphasis on the problems of youth and their issues such as unemployment, the wish to be rich quickly, love stories and matters related to the metropolitan community. One of the most important characteristics of the current dramatic period is the participation of Oman T.V. as a producer of dramatic works, in the sense that it finances them while other establishments carry out the work away from the disturbances of TV.

The main features of T.V. drama works in Oman are the following:

1. T.V. drama in Oman is still immature and in a state of development, and there are few Omani writers.
2. Screen-writing in Oman is usually done by people who are not specialist in the art of writing for T.V. and are unaware of the process of Direction. They focus on the dialogue and there is little aesthetic depiction of the direction. At the same time there is an absence of specialist scenarists who earn a living by writing; the screen writers are really employees from different bodies who consider writing as a hobby and not a craft to live by. Reliance on directors and actors for writing screen-plays scenario and production, although they are not qualified in these areas, causes the artistic work to suffer from many defects.
3. The subjects of the dramatic works are far from the Omani society in general in the sense that they are either sheer comedy, depending on caricature characters, appealing to a mass audience, such as “Words from Traditions”, “Old Man Khalef”, “Saloom The old Man”, or propaganda that flaunts the achievements of the renaissance, irrespective of artistic merit. Drama aimed at propaganda moves in accordance with the instructions of development, yet it lacks the maturity in dealing with its subjects, relying on slogans rather than dramatic plot
4. Most Omani drama works are characterized by the absence of a serious creative spirit, perhaps because it is not really respected as an art form. Poetry is still the most popular art-form in Oman, since Oman has historically been a country of poets, while drama has not yet attracted the Omani people, since it is a new art that competes

basically with the human psychology of the reserved Omani person, and is reluctant to talk to others. Drama by nature is a dialogue.

5. Most of the screen-plays are original scenarios that have been composed especially for acting and not drawn from stories or novels that have been adapted for T.V., so there is a gap between drama writing and the literary tradition. This reflects the inability of those writers to produce dramatic works that fit the Omani environment from stories and novels that are available.

6. There is a lack of specialist knowledge in the holds of direction, photography, sound, lighting, scenery and costume. It is very rare nowadays to refer to someone as being creative in the field of lighting, photography and production; there are only one or two unstable examples, out of 300 or more.

In the light of the information above, we can safely say that T.V drama in Sultanate of Oman is still an immature art or newly born art that doe not have its own identity yet. This doesn't mean that there has been no success. For example, many prizes have been given to Omani T.V works at competitions at two levels; the Gulf and on the Arab homeland. But still there are many weak aspects in the writing of drama in Oman.

5.3. Deficiencies and problems in Omani theatre and drama:

The rise of the theatre in Oman is accompanied with many hardships and obstacles related to the nature and structure of the society, as well as some technical problems interrelated with the human resources and the financial support.

In this section I will focus on the problems facing the theatrical performance in Oman, which are shared among all the theatrical applications in the country.

5.3.1. Technical Problems

Theatre is based in great part on human resources. Theatre in Oman lacks experienced cadre and staff with proper knowledge of theatrical techniques. Another crucial issue is the absence of good scripts for production as well as an absence of a clear strategy for the theatre as a whole. Theatrical companies have limited human resources. Moreover, they lack the spirit of team-work, they work in isolation and in a parochial style. The aim is centred on establishing numerous theatrical companies with no consideration to its negative impact. As a result of dispersal of efforts, and the lack of clear strategies, a fragmented audience and a many of setbacks in the overall evolution of the theatre is noticed.

The Omani theatre could not develop the directing profession on the Omani stage. It rather settled for borrowing from Arab and international productions, which resulted in poor and underdeveloped scripts.

One of the most important problems the Omani theatre faces in the unavailability of well-trained and educated personnel, despite the existence of the Higher Institute of Theatrical Performance in Oman, which plays a crucial role in forming many generations of directors, actors, set designers, critics, and writers. Despite all the efforts made by the theatrical institute, Oman still lacks specialised individuals with a primary interest in theatre. Hayat Jasim comments on the situation by saying:

Lack of skilled and trained personnel tops the problems facing the Gulf theatre: the progress of the theatre depended heavily at its inception on dedicated individuals who sought no recognition or material rewards. The situation changed as the economic boom created material aspirations, and now the theatre is full of businessmen⁷².

There have been some attempts made to enrich the theatrical world in Oman by asking some Egyptian writers to produce scripts reflecting the Omani heritage and culture. The task of those writers was nearly impossible due to their different cultural background and the role played by censorship. That deters some talented writers or turns their attention away from politics to social topics. The majority of theatre writers are unaware of the practical techniques required. They may be academically informed, but lack connection with or knowledge of the real needs of the public.

The shortage of competent writers has led to the current crisis of meagre scripts and consequently [has led to] adaptations from the Western theatre, which belong to a different environment.⁷³

With respect to the actors, the Omani theatre lacks qualified individuals, the actor generally rely on their own talents and personally work to develop them without a proper professional guidance. Another problem is the shortage of female performances.

Theatre critics are also part of the problem. Criticism is mainly capricious or arbitrary; not to mention the fact that there are not many appropriately educated critics. The scene is now fraught with outsiders, who have never studied criticism as a science. A critic must have a vision with a wide cultural background, and perhaps hold to a philosophy

⁷² Al-Zayd, Khalid Saud, **The Theatre in Kuwait, articles and documents**, (Kuwait: Arabian for Publishing and Distribution, 1997) p. 139

⁷³ Al- Rai, Ali, **Al- Arabi Magazine**, "The Arab Theatre's Problems" "Kuwait: vol. 228, November 1977", p. 164

or school that promotes certain beliefs. Theatre criticism in newspapers has no artistic grounding.

Therefore, those responsible in the newspapers should verify the backgrounds of such critics before allowing them to write in cultural and artistic magazines or newspapers. Such incompetent critics do more harm than good by stating their personal impressions. Educated and qualified critics should leave their academic posts on campuses and rejoin the theatrical movement.

The other problem, which is as important, is the lack of theatre archives for the different wrings, seminars, dialogues, audio and visual recordings, along with other documents recording the issues tackled by the different productions. The poverty of documents in theatre archives represented a major stumbling block during the preparation of this thesis, as sources information was only available through personal contacts with some of the individuals interested in the theatre.

5.3.2. Political and Social Problems:

The establishment of the theatre in Omani communities has been connected with popular initiatives away from organized state support. Theatre activities were always related to schools and clubs.

The official state intervention in the theatre was mainly through granting financial and moral support through sending individuals abroad on study missions, hosting Arab theatrical troupes, and establishing of new theatres. But later, nearly all the theatre institutions came under the auspices of state bodies, distancing themselves from popular institutions such as schools and sporting clubs.

Thus, it can be said that the scripts present half of the truth or that the truth is uttered by gagged mouths with the eyes of the authorities on constant watch.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Al-Rai, Ali, 1977, Ibid, p228

The economic renaissance has impacted on Gulf societies as a whole, causing sweeping changes to the social structure. A state of turmoil has touched most values, customs, and traditions handled by the theatre, although a few inherited values remain unchanged. There is still a misconception by a number of hard-liners and fundamentalists that theatre is forbidden in Islam, as it is viewed to be satanic, apart from being a waste of time and effort. Many Muslim clerics or Imams believe that the theatre is a devilish work; such persons call on the authorities to close down theatres and ban all theatrical activity.

However, the majority of Arabs are prepared to permit the art, but only if it complies with Islamic laws and refrains from inciting sexual desires, as al-Qardàwi states in his book *al-Halāl wa'l-Harīm*:

But deviant thoughts and forbidden doctrines are absolutely inadmissible and should not be viewed or encouraged by Muslims.⁷⁵

The religious factor is probably behind the delay in spreading a theatre movement in Oman, apart from social customs that have banned women's acting or performing on stage.

The issue of women acting has been a controversial one. Finding female performers has been an impossible task that could not be overcome except by calling in actresses from other Arab states. Most Gulf families would object to the idea of letting their girls enter an acting career. This issue of women's reluctance to appear on stage has led writers to alter material to remove or reduce female roles. Polygamy, for instance, cannot be presented for discussion without the woman's contribution. Spinsterhood and forced

⁷⁵ Al- Qardhawi, Mohamed, *Permissible and forbidden*, (Cairo: Wahba Library, 1980) p.256.

marriage are other feminist issues that have become pressing in the light of the social upheaval in the Gulf, and cannot be handled on stage without female participants.

5.4. The Deficiencies of Children's drama:

The first children's theatre was established in the Arab World when the pioneer of Egyptian theatre Zaki Tulaimat submitted a letter in 1936 to the Ministry of Education regarding theatrical teams in schools. The letter stated that a theatre should be established in every secondary school. This theatre should be easily removed and fixed in any place. The Ministry of National Guidance established two children's theatres, one in Cairo and the other in Alexandria.

The other types of theatres were presenting programmes for children and adults, such as puppet theatres, which spread widely in Arabic and foreign countries. Puppet theatre continued its diffusion and boom till the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when the commercial entertaining arts such as cinema and spectacular theatre began gradually attracting people. The puppet theatre was restricted to a small field to entertain children, but in the course of time the puppet theatre flourished as a high-level art with its own professionals and audiences spreading pleasure, happiness and culture, especially among youth.

Through the efforts of pioneers in the theatre, the concept that creative potential exists within every human being, has become generally accepted. In order to recognise the full development of each individual and to foster independent thinking in a free society, our educational system has come to include this aspect of learning in its curricula.

The youth theatre is the only professional theatre in Oman. On the other hand children's theatre is the weakest part of youth theatre, and all of it suffers from low quality of

production and a lack of trained actors, writers, and technicians. It is one man show theatre. Only directors are trained, and the private companies are very young companies that do not have enough experience to deal with children. Their adults' plays are similar to amateurs' plays; experienced theatre does not exist yet. However there are many directors, who have graduated from Department of Theatre Arts in the University of Sultan Qaboos in Oman, or from the Institute of Theatre Arts in Kuwait, and a very few who graduated from Egypt and Romania. They call their plays experimental plays. Problems with children's theatre include:

- Many practitioners do not understand their audience and how to create productions to involve and enthuse them.
- The writing often lacks clarity and focus, expecting too much, or worse, too little of the audience.
- The acting often lacks sincerity and is characterised by surface enthusiasm rather than honesty and depth.
- Many directors take their own adult understanding of dramatic theory and superimpose it unchanged on to children's theatre; consequently their productions miss much of the potential humour, excitement and energy.
- The general overall attitude toward children's theatre is unhelpful its practitioners still tend to relegate it and them to the second or even third division; there is a failure to recognise theatre for children as a separate art form. Such theatre gradually passed many stages before reaching its present position, whether in the texts of the programmes, way of acting and directing, or the resources allocated by countries to serve this type of theatre. Some particular problems at present are explored in the following sub-section.

5.4.1. Technical Problems

Along with the appropriate script raising new ideas, any theatre is based on a number of human resources. Although there are many willing to participate in the theatre, such people are mainly inexperienced, without proper knowledge of theatrical techniques. There is a lack of good scripts for productions, as well as an absence of a comprehensive strategy for the theatre.

Theatrical companies are underdeveloped and there are not many of them. Furthermore, human efforts within the company are dispersed and there is a lack of the spirit of teamwork, while some are attempting to work in isolation in a parochial manner, wishing to establish numerous theatrical companies with no regard for the negative consequences of these irresponsible attempts. If all these dispersed efforts were concentrated in a few outstanding troupes, it would be much more beneficial for Omani theatre.

The crisis of children's theatre is in no way separate from the crisis of adult theatre. There has been no clear interest in preparing future theatre works, as the majority of graduates from the theatre department of SQU wind up being state employees or join private businesses.

Proper techniques play a key role in the success or failure of artistic life; poor technique will destroy a play. This should not be overstated, as modern theatrical technique is heading in the direction of simplicity, despite the fact that most Omani productions tend to use complicated techniques to impress the audience. That they serve to distract the audience may be because of poor scripts or deficient technical elements.

The first problem that the children's theatre faces is the unavailability of well-trained and educated theatre personnel. Because the theatrical sector still requires more specialized individuals with a primary interest in theatre. In its early life, the success of theatre was based on the will of certain individuals who worked faithfully towards developing it.

But the problem remains acute, despite the number of graduates from the theatre department; this can be blamed on the social aspirations of the graduates, who take part in performances once or twice on graduation and then shift to the business world and leave the theatre behind.

Maybe poor scripts are also to be blamed for the current crisis and this account for the number of adaptations from global theatre, and the lack of suitable scripts for children by local writers is another problem.

The poor quality of scripts has exacerbated another well-known issue in the theatre, i.e. whether precedence should be given to the writer or to the director. The writer believes he is the creator of the piece and should have the final say, while the director is reluctant to agree to this, believing that the script is meaningless without the director's touch. This struggle has led to the stiffening of positions by both the director and the writer, as the latter refuses to alter the script in any way, while the former believes that he is entitled to do whatever is right to recreate the script. Furthermore, poor scripts have sometimes led the cast to interfere to make changes to solve deficiencies they detect. Another problem plaguing Omani theatre is the interference between colloquial Arabic and the formal language.

Regarding the third element of theatre techniques, acting ability, we are faced with a lack of qualified individuals, as most Omani theatre actors and actresses rely mainly on their own innate talent and personally developed skills.

In addition, materialistic aspirations have emptied the theatre with all efforts being concentrated on television programmes, where the pay is better.

A telling proof of this was the field survey of teachers conducted in summer 2001 and a seminar with T.V and theatre workers in April 2002 in Oman⁷⁶. A questionnaire was posed to teachers about their knowledge about drama in school, while seminar questions were on the major problems confronting children's theatre development in Oman. The results of the survey and seminar of those involved in the theatre indicated the following:

- 1- Absence of awareness of theatre by the teachers
- 2- Reluctance of females to become involved
- 3- Lack of state encouragement
- 4- The role-played by television and the poor foreign and Arab series shown
- 5- Lack of plays recorded and presented on television
- 6- Inadequate theatre scripts dealing with the public's concerns
- 7- Lack of good scripts that deal with the public's concerns
- 8- Scarcity of good actors at the local level
- 9- Absence of theatre awareness
- 10- Scarcity of good directors

⁷⁶ Full details are presented in section 5.5.

The above seminar reveals a serious gap in understanding between those involved in the theatre and the teachers. The first group attributes the lack of interest on the part of the public to a lack in the theatre of awareness, which makes them unable to comprehend the issues presented. They also blame the public's interest in soccer and other sports, along with the lack of encouragement and financial support by the state. In addition, they consider elements like the scarcity of women on the stage and the negative role-played by television as beyond their control. On the other hand, we find that the public holds a different opinion about the problems, one that seems less defensive and less sensitive.

The citizen has simply turned to the basic needs of consumption, only looking for fun on the stage, so that serious theatre has become history and public interest in the theatre has declined. The interest of sporting clubs in the theatre has diminished, the resources allocated to theatre are margin, scripts are low in quality, and the women who are necessary for any theatre movement are totally unavailable.

The issue of the public's lack of interest in the theatre needs a further study to determine the reasons, and a look into the other distractions that make unwilling to read or increase their knowledge of the theatre. Such a study should unveil the future consequences of this phenomenon to enable the Gulf to deal with the challenges lying ahead.

The European and American style of life and their way of socializing fascinate Omani people. In fact citizens have become preoccupied with too much television viewing, and have turned their backs on the theatre, which in their view presents boring shows, with no women. Furthermore, the tropical weather in the Gulf region makes people unwilling to leave their air-conditioned houses and take the trouble of going to the theatre. The use of VCRs, or the video, has made things worse and digital television, cable, and the Internet are about to make television obsolete, as individuals pay for whatever shows they want to see. With all these factors and given the social restrictions imposed on Gulf societies, one can easily understand why the Gulf theatre is in the current crisis.

5.4.2. Economic problems:

Funding and building new theatres are the major economic problems for the Omani theatre. Theatrical activity owes its origins to schools and sporting clubs, where the need was more for human resources than for money. However, the rapid growth of the theatrical art made the need for money even greater and thus theatre artists thought state financial support was essential.

The negative aspect of state intervention is the control that has been exercised over productions and the limits placed on what is said or done on the stage, making compliance with state demands a prerequisite for continuation of state support. Some non-governmental troupes have sought to free themselves from government control, but failed to get anywhere without financial support. The problems facing the theatre are massive and will never be solved without government support. For example, there is no suitable place available for rehearsals or productions for private companies and this blocks the way to many young people ambitious to learn about this art.

Recommendations have been made by artists to save the theatre from its current crisis by providing these theatres with the sophisticated technology and equipment needed, and train competent individuals by sending students abroad.

5.4.3. Quality of Content

We mean by this that the child's theatre lacks plays that are different in their contents according to the child's needs. There are differences in children's intellectual, psychological, social and moral abilities at different stage and failure to cater for these means theatre will not satisfy them psychologically. It was noticed that children, despite their different age levels and intellectual abilities, attend all the theatrical presentations that are presented for children, therefore, the benefit that could gain from targeted productions is lost. The weakness of the content is attributed to:

- a) The absence of academic studies of children's interests;
- b) Scarcity of theatres that are dedicated for children;
- c) Weakness of the allocated budget for composition and directing; and
- d) The short period of theatrical presentations; two days in the countries with low-density population in the Gulf States, and two weeks in States that have high-density population like Egypt, Morocco and Tunis. Persons working in this field have left to have a chance of acquiring the required experience for artistic work, be they actors, authors, or directors.

5.4.4. Weakness of the Artistic Form of Plays

The theatrical presentations that are presented for children lack a sufficient budget. Therefore, the theatre is not able so far to present children's productions effectively in terms of theatre decoration, furniture or garments.

There is no doubt that this incapacity places the biggest burden of effort on the shoulders of actors in the sense that they become the major elements and the essential structure in the success of the theatrical presentation. This challenge can be met only by those with experience and this experience needs for its acquisition continuous and frequent practice that is not available so far.

5.4.5. Weakness of the theatrical Performance

Authors often stop writing for children as they switch their attention to what adults are interested in; therefore, the field of theatrical composition is still too young and suffers a lack of theatrical works designed for children. These performances should involve two important elements:

A- The text or the content that must be communicated to children.

B- The style of communicating this content. Concerning content, there are certain things that must be taken into consideration:

1) The level of understanding of the whom to the content is addressed. This level always determines the children's intellectual, psychological, social, and moral characteristics, in addition to, the behavioural expectations that society has of those children.

2) Selecting diction suited to their perception and understanding.

3) The style of presentation and performance.

It is noticeable that there are two kinds of performances for plays that are dedicated to children:

A- Plays that are acted by the adult in front of child spectators:

This type of plays depends heavily on professional actors from adults who have very lofty abilities and the basic term is to take into consideration the ability of understanding children to whom the artistic work is presented. This kind of plays must deal with children's interests in

order to attract them to sit for a long time to see the work. The incidents or the events of this type of play must be simple and uncomplicated so that the children will be able to follow the play's events and correlate between them to understand the content.

Some workers on children's theatre think that making children laugh is one of the most important goals of a play; therefore, it happens many times that they go far from the written text and utter some words or actions that made children laugh, but they do harm to the content of the theatrical work and cause distraction to beholders from the appropriate course of the play.

In fact, the way sentences of the dialogue are articulated or spoken must be calmer and clearer than in adult theatre.

B- Plays prepared to be acted by children themselves:

When children are to perform for children, children's performance ability must be taken into consideration in addition to the ability of understanding. Furthermore, it has to be in accord with the children's understanding. Also, the ability of their performance must be taken in consideration whether they are linguistic or artistic.

Generally speaking, there is a dialogue that children can understand when they hear but they cannot perform it when they are asked to do so. Also, there are some movements that some actors perform on stage that are perceived by children and gain their acceptance, but they cannot perform them when they are asked to do the same.

So Arab children's theatre has a long way to go to become equal with its counterparts in the progressive countries. In order to be effective, this art needs children to live and co-exist with it so that it will not be separate from their life and environment.

5.5. Current status and future perspectives

In spite of the relatively short life of the Omani theatre, it has witnessed sweeping and rapid changes, probably the most dramatic of which were the consequence of the discovery of oil in the Gulf States and the economic boom that followed with oil become which was to the life blood of the entire region. Undoubtedly, economic upheaval has caused enormous changes in the life style of the Gulf citizen, who has become a significant consumer. The deteriorating scientific and cultural levels of most theatre personnel is another factor in the theatre's crisis, along with an acute deficiency in the technical equipment required for the, shows, the shortage of theatres, and the absence of qualified theatre critics. The above elements have led to the current crisis facing the theatre in Oman.

The earlier problems lay in establishing a connection between the heritage and the contemporary arts, as the Gulf artists were obsessed with the question, "Should we build a strictly Arab theatre or import the essentials from Europe?" Some started to look into the popular heritage but that ended in failure, while others were convinced that reliance on European theatre was inevitable.

Later, adaptations of European shows dominated the Arab stage, after which came the period of benefiting from Arab theatrical experiences and the exchange of theatre expertise. This led to the creation of important institutions and other fruitful activities, such as the establishment of the Theatre department at SQU.

The official perception of theatrical activity is still unclear. The authorities see the theatre as a means of entertainment, not a vital system that would help deal with problems plaguing the country by shedding light on the faults and inviting free, unrestricted discussion of the weaknesses of society in order to find a cure. Oman has neglected to develop an awareness of the theatre in schools, even though young generations fond of the theatre could contribute a great deal to cultural foundations. Education institutions should adopt the theatrical arts by the inclusion of drama into the school curriculum in order to build generations with a clear vision.

Control over the theatre brought a number of problems, including the isolation of the theatre from causes of critical concern to the public. The strict limits imposed by state authorities on the theatre cripple creativity. Nevertheless, despite these obstacle the theatre has been trying to discuss issues of concern to society but under historical cover by focusing on past events redolent of political innuendo in order to deal with sensitive issues banned by state authorities.

New wealth has also brought peculiar problems for the theatre:

The Gulf theatre is at a crossroads now as the oil boom brought negative behavioural patterns into the Gulf with unpleasant repercussions on the quality of shows being met ⁷⁷

Development is an ongoing process with the ultimate objective of enhancing man's abilities not his financial standing. Actually the Gulf is witnessing growth, not development, according to recent statistics released by Western economic analysts, since materialistic developments have not coincided with social changes in the Gulf's tribal community.

⁷⁷Jawad, Abdulkarim, **The experience of theatre in Sultanate of Oman**, (Ministry of Education and youth affair 1988) p.31

The new values brought to the Gulf, like consumerism and bragging about wealth and stature in society shall never lead to the desired forms of development so long as the traditional social structures remain unchanged.⁷⁸

The positive results brought about by the oil boom in the arena of theatre are the building of new and well-equipped playhouses, the delegation of theatre scholars on study missions abroad, and the hosting of Arab and international troupes to perform in country. However, negative impacts are also felt, such as the shift by Gulf citizens into consumerism rather than production and their parallel quest for entertainment rather than confrontation with serious issues and society's problems. As a result, many theatre workers have fled the scene in search of more lucrative business elsewhere. Television serials have had a devastating effect on theatre, as the actors are too busy with television work to think about theatre's problems. Nobody has sought to resolve the problem of women's refusal to contribute to theatrical activity.

Rather than concluding with this bleak view of the Gulf theatre, we may close instead by indicating one of the brighter hopes for future, that is, the growing number of theatre scholars who have obtained degrees in drama from various academic institutes all over the world. This new generation is beginning to return home with enthusiasm to apply their knowledge to the theatre arena in Oman. The experimental shows conducted currently are a proof that we are seeing a different phenomenon in this generation. It is noticeable that the quality of shows performed by these scientifically and academically qualified young people is extraordinarily high, centering on pressing issues of politics and religion, indicating new vision and rare courage in dealing with these sensitive and "off limits" causes. We may be confident that the

⁷⁸ Tirk, Tirk Mohammed, **The Ideology and the Development in Gulf** (The First Though Meeting for GCC Country, Abu- Dhabi: 1990, p.59.

future will thrive as a result of the concerted efforts of these young people who believe in the urgency of keeping pace with theatre developments across the globe.

5.6. Empirical Findings

5.6.1. Questionnaire results

Surveys were concluded in summer 2001 at four schools. (see Appendix H) Each school was given 25 questionnaires. But the response was weak because only 28 teachers, male and female, out of the total of 100 responded. These schools were: Ahmed Bin Majed School, Jamila Bint Thabet, Zubaida Um Al-Amin and Dohat Al-Adab School. The choice of all schools in Muscat was owing to the fact that those schools are near the cultural, artistic and theatrical movements of the country. There were 16 questions, out of which 5 questions were deleted due to the fact that 91% of teachers left them blank.

Consequently, emphasis was heavily placed upon the other 12 questions left in which the response was high, up to 100% in some cases. The responses are tabulated in Appendix I and discussed below.

1-Do you know what is Drama?

The answers were very high in the sense that 89% of teachers answered this question “Yes” while only 11% answered “No”. This indicates the relative knowledge of the meaning of the word ‘Drama’. However, if we compare the case with teachers in Britain, the response would definitely be “Yes”, because if people in Britain do not know the meaning of this word – in my view – it is a mark of their being unaware of the old and the new educational methods and relying on instruction. In addition, drama is an educational system from which we can make use of the child and the teachers’ consciousness and what testifies to this idea is the response to the second question:

2-If you know, what is your favourite medium?

The response clarified and supported that to question no 1 in the sense that all respondents expressed their opinions; 54% regarded T.V. as the best medium for watching drama, 25% chose theatre, 11% chose school, 7% cinema, and 4% for radio. This indicates that T.V. drama has really imposed itself on a very big number of the category that we are talking about, in addition to the public. Furthermore, this underlines that a lot of people comprehend T.V. drama more than other forms due to the efforts and abilities exerted in directing T.V., in order to make it more realistic and influential on people.

3-Is drama taught as a separate subject?

To this question, as many as 75% answered 'No' and only 25% believed that drama was taught as an independent or a separate subject. I suspected that teachers did not understand the question, so I referred to Ministry of Education to check the answers of the 25%. Dr Dawood Al-Hamdani, an expert of the Educational Curricula at the Ministry of Education, states that there is no separate subject of drama for any class of High School Education except in some foreign schools such as Muscat Private School, or the American - English School. I do not know if that was the case with other private schools.

4-Is drama taught as part of another subject?

The answers were very positive; 68% said it was taught within Arabic, 7% in Art Education 21 % in other subjects such as Mathematics, Sciences, Islamic education and the Scholastic Activity of theatre.

5-Which of these activities was included?

21 % replied “production of scripted play” and 21 % “role-play on issues”, 14% “play reading”, 7% other, which shows that the use of drama principally depends on teachers, and may vary according to difference of their cultures and their artistic and educational experiences. The indication is still so far very good –as I believe -since the activities were used in a style of communicating the information that was to be explained to the pupils.

6-Where do drama lessons take place?

Regarding the locations in which these conclusions or activities are used, more than 82% of teachers agreed that they practised this activity with pupils in the classroom while 14% indicated other locations such as theatre and the school yard, which proves that school theatre still takes place in classrooms on the days of some annual anniversaries and celebrating Education day or celebrating the end of the scholastic year. In other words, there are no more than two or three events and most of them depend on reciting verses, while drama is very rarely given importance.

7- Activities within lessons. Do you use: (Tape recording, Radio broadcasting, Video recordings, Improvisation, Movement without speech, Mime, Speech, Discussion, and others). In answering this question concerning the activity and the methods used during the subject, each teacher indicated more than one method. All methods were used by some teachers, but they were not used consistently, the most widespread being “Discussion” (68%), “Tape Recording” (57%) and “Video Recording” (50%) in addition, (11%) used “Radio Broadcasts”, (21%) used “Improvisation”, (18%) used “Movement without speech”, (36%) used “Speech” and 4% others. This indicates a wide variety of methods.

8- Were you appointed to be responsible for drama or have become involved out of interest?

The question was whether the teacher was required to use this approach or did so with interest and understanding. In fact, the response was very weak in the sense that only 11 teachers out of 28 answered, but of these only one answered “Appointed” while the rest participated in this subject willingly without any influence by anyone. This testifies to the idea that dramatic work does not need a command in order to be used as a teaching method; the most important thing is that the teachers must understand that it is a very useful curricular method, as much so as any other scientific methods in teaching. It is particularly important because it facilitates the development of the child’s personality, which lays the foundation for subsequent education. Question nine below was formulated with this in mind

9- Have you any training to teach drama?

The answers were frank, but not very encouraging: only one respondent had undergone a short-term training course with theatre company, while others relied on instinct. This raises a question whether teachers had sufficient skill to use drama effectively in education.

10- Is drama taught to every one in school?

This question concerned whether drama is accessible to all or whether the members of the band are chosen from a certain category; (18%) answered “Yes” and (68%) replied “No”. Identifying children’s talents and developing them is valuable, but there is a danger that if the teacher focuses on the talented, never choosing the shy pupils who do not raise their hands, so the latter will be deprived of opportunities of developing their personalities and feel inferior to other pupils.

Much needs to be done in this area so that most, if not all, get a chance. In this regard, a contradiction can be seen with answers to the seventh question, when teachers said that they used different ways of introducing drama in education, and the answers to this question imply that the

teachers used these methods with pre-selected pupils only. Rather, opportunities should be given to all pupils.

11- Of the three, what is your normal approach? Group work, whole class, individual, or all three above? The most common answer was “Group Work” (50%). Only (3%) answered “Whole class”, (7%) “Individual” and (21%) “All three above”.

It is clear from the above that most teachers understand what drama is, but T.V. has the biggest dramatic influence on them, with theatre second. Drama is not taught as a separate subject but used in various subjects and activities, especially, Arabic. The most important means that the teachers use are discussion, audio and video recording. This is done in the classroom and these activities are rarely presented in school theatre. Moreover, teachers’ efforts are not based on previous experience studies or qualifying courses that they have undergone; rather it is depends on their instinct and interests in using some of the elements of drama in the illustration of theoretical and scientific subjects for pupils. Moreover, a cause for concern is that opportunities to participate may be restricted to selected pupils.

The findings suggest that it is very important for teachers to undergo a training course on the concept of drama and how to use it as an educational, philosophical, and instructional style and as a part of curriculum for teaching and strengthening the skills of all pupils. Even if courses were held in the form of sporadic lectures for teachers to explain some positive aspects of using this approach, it would be difficult to accept the idea of introducing drama and theatre in the Sultanate’s schools in a direct way, as a separate subject, because it is likely to meet with opposition from the more conservative elements in society. Lack of social acceptance of drama

and theatre generally is one of the issues raised in the seminar on theatre and television, reported in the next section.

5.6.2. Seminar results:

To find out the opinions of critics and artists concerning the obstacles that face the establishment of children's theatre and drama, a discussion took place in a Seminar held on 13th April, 2002 attended by a number of artists and critics who have participated a great deal in the theatrical movement in the Sultanate (see Appendix J). Saif Bin Nasser Al-Mawali⁷⁹ was of the opinion that the most important obstacle is children's being unaccustomed to freedom of expression. They feel afraid to express themselves due to non-existence of a specialised children's theatre group and he also thought the youth theatre does not contribute in this respect; I believe that the youth theatre could potentially play a big role in the participation of children and shaping their talents, although except for the first effort by Mohammed Noor,⁸⁰ the youth theatre does not serve children at all. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour is really the only Ministry that has presented several works for children, yet it has not met their needs due to the small number of works, though the play, "Cinderella" directed by Abdul Kareem Jawad attracted the attention of many children and was presented twice a day. Al-Mawali believes that children's theatre is in need of a good foundation and that this can only be achieved by starting in the schools and introducing drama in the curricula. Nasser Al-Akhzami⁸¹ suggested that it would be appropriate for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development to take responsibility for establishing and administering children's theatre, since the Ministry of Education has the main responsibility for children at school, while the Ministry of Social Development has established a

⁷⁹ Saif bin Nasser Almawali, director of TV and theatre [13.4.2002]

⁸⁰ Mohamed bin Noor Alblushi, youth theatre director of Batinah region, the first official director, who worked with children in 1980s.

⁸¹ Nasser Hamdan Alakhzami, TV and theatre actor, [13.4.2002].

General Directorate of Women and Children and the question is often asked, what the Ministry offers for these groups.

Mohsen Suleiman Al-Balushi⁸² argued that even adult theatre has not been properly established so far and there is no professional theatrical company that belongs to the state, and he went on to ask the question, “How can we hope for a theatre for children in view of the chaotic situation for art and artists?” Al-Balushi added, if the private artistic companies were strengthened and supported, they would be a means of introducing good plays for children such as “Goose Wishes”, a popular play which has spread all over the Sultanate. Therefore, the family theatre can solve the problem.

Al Mawali argued that the private theatres are not powerful, and have no qualified staff to meet children’s needs, and so, the state must take responsibility. The question asked was: “For how long will self-efforts suffice as the means and the end?”

The problem, according to Malallah Darweash,⁸³ is that the arts are not accepted by Omani society, especially those who take a more conservative view of customs and traditions, and of Islamic rules and norms. A possible solution would be to introduce drama gradually and subtly by integrating it into hobbies, popular games and other activities. In this way, children may learn to get along with the theatre and parents will be satisfied when they see how it helps in educating children.

⁸² Mohsen Sulieman Alblushi, actor and producer, [13.4.2002].

⁸³ Malalah Darwish Alblushi, film and TV director, [13.4.2002].

The critic, Khalid Abdullatif,⁸⁴ raised the point that actors, producers and ordinary people look upon the children's theatre as second class theatre, and therefore, people in charge of children's theatre in the Arab homeland are unsuccessful in the professional theatre in the sense that they turn their back on the educational and social role of theatre. He noted, in addition, that children's theatre is not school theatre only; and that those who present children's theatre are not necessarily young in the sense that it is possible that adults play roles suited to children. He acknowledged the important role of T.V. In this very regard, I should make reference to the role of T.V. in producing plays for children such as *Bear and rocks* and *Excellence*, directed by Khalid Alzadjali. Those two plays have been repeated many times on anniversaries and festivals. Abdullatif asked whether it was intended to produce more such plays. In fact, we can say that T.V. theatre has imposed itself upon society and its impact is very influential and apparent in both children and mature people. We should not forget that the child today is different from previous generations who were content with the stories, superstitions and myths that they were used to hear from grandmother. Today's child is a child of the internet and the digital channels of T.V. Consequently, we have to take into consideration children's wider horizons and expectations. At the same time, we should not ignore the Puppet theatre, which is a very significant and beautiful form of theatre. Arab and international theatres have started working in this medium. There is no reason why it should not be revived for both educational and social purposes. Playing with the puppet is one of the first proofs of the child's understanding of the idea of drama and the composition of stories. Sami Ahmed⁸⁵ pointed out that when big companies were asked to finance and patronise the play *Titi and Toti*, they responded warmly. The question that is asked is; why is more use not made of this resource, when the state stands

⁸⁴ Khalid Abdulatif, critic and writer,[13.4.2002].

⁸⁵ Sami Ahmed Alsaied, photographer and production manager,[13.4.2002].

still in front of these obstacles? Moreover, popular comic plays for children could earn revenue as well as making children's theatre vivid.

5.6.3. Interviews⁸⁶

The author and director, Abdulkarim Jawad⁸⁷ Director of Youth Theatre Department, during a special interview with him for this study, agreed with the opinions expressed above concerning non-existence of real theatre in the Sultanate, except for some isolated efforts that are not supervised by people specialised in and aware of children's theatre. He is also of the opinion that the work of the youth theatre works is too broad in scope for it to provide a tailored response to a specific need. One reason is that the youth theatre just a short time ago was considered the basic foundation for building up the Omani theatre. Due to the absence of any other theatres, the youth theatre has set for itself the task of building up the theatrical movement in general, which has led to the introduction of works that have nothing to do with youth. The strategy of the youth theatre is totally different from the child theatre in the sense that the age category targeted is from 14-25 years old and even up to 30 years or more in some exceptional cases. Now, work is needed to determine the age categories more accurately.

Other interviews were conducted to collect the opinions of the public concerning the theatre and the importance of the school theatre. Abdullah Alharthy,⁸⁸ a Diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who lives in the Alsharqiya area, expressed the following view.

“The idea of theatre's existence was not accepted by opinion leaders who are very influential in society in the Alsharqiya Area, such as teachers, imams and teachers of the holy Quran by

⁸⁶ For more details see Appendix K, list of interviewees.

⁸⁷ Abdulkarim Jawad, the manager of youth theatre, writer, director and actor, [1.2.200].

⁸⁸ Abdullah bin Salem Alharthy, a diplomat in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [6.2.2002].

whom this type of work is classified under the category of art as part of their belief, and they were very conservative and forbade music, songs and the participation of woman, simply because they run counter to traditions and customs. As a result, the arts were not introduced to the area until the Government started forming several Governmental institutions and establishments such as schools and clubs and so on. I have also discovered that there was a positive response and desire by the youths and the children to be involved in this type of art. But due to the lack of support from parents and guardians and the absence of specialised people, this art is still restricted. Despite that we have seen some plays staged in the Districts such as Qabil, Bidiya and Ibra that were performed by school theatres or club theatres and once I participated in one of these plays. I am fully satisfied that the theatre is something very important due to its significance in strengthening knowledge, values and perception and sowing the values of doctrine and patriotism, besides teaching students the traditions and the customs that are inseparable parts of the Omani entity or people.”

5.6.4 Suggestions emerging from surveys

Participants were of the view that better care should be taken of children’s theatre even perhaps the adult theatre, because it will be a means of developing Omani theatre in the future. For this reason, certain important suggestions were put forward related to establishing children’s theatre,. The need was suggested to:

- Raise awareness of society and the decision making institutions about importance of the theatre.
- Dramatise the curricula.
- Establish a special Department able to organise children’s theatre.

- Create specialised staff or team working in children's theatre and train authors, directors and teachers for this type of theatre.
- Introduce the subject of "Drama" at school.
- Supply the necessary facilities for producing high-level artistic work that is able to elevate children's taste.
- Pay attention to Art Education as a school subject, because it contributes to elevating the child's artistic taste.
- Find competent persons to establish children's theatre. Besides their awareness of the artistic aspects, such people should be aware also of the educational aspects so that they can put forward visions and strategies for dramatising the curricula writing plays and setting special companies for children; including those in which children perform. Adults should train the children. Such companies could spread every region with the cooperation and support of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development.
- Establish an annual competition for the best dramatic work at school and the best dramatic work in clubs, under the patronage of a specialised Ministry.

Conclusion

Drama in Oman has developed only relatively recently, starting with some individual school and club experiments and the establishment of the Youth Theatre. After a promising start, however, the drama movement seems to have lost its way. Technical and financial problems, and lack of social acceptance, have impeded the development of live theatre, while children's theatre hardly exists at all, and school drama consists of haphazard activities, conducted by teachers who are sincere and interested but lack training in the field. Moreover, it is not available to all children. The main source of exposure to drama for most people is through

television. In the next chapter, therefore, the television output in the Sultanate is discussed and its current role evaluated.

Chapter Six

Cultural and Educational Development T.V Programmes

Introduction

It was seen in the previous chapter that school drama and theatre, both adult and children's, have a low status and weak role in Oman today. On the other hand, television is widespread, and is now the main source of Omani people's exposure to drama, and the main vehicle for writers and directors. In this situation, this influential medium is likely to play a key part in any attempts to develop the educational use of dramatic media for children. At this point, therefore, it would be appropriate to consider what role is currently played by television in this respect. This is the purpose of this chapter. After a general overview, a discussion is presented of the role of television in the context of the nation's efforts to develop culture and education; this is followed by an evaluation of the types of drama programmes transmitted.

6.1. Television and the knowledge Explosion - an overview

Some observers call our era the age of knowledge explosion because nearly three quarters of the available data and information today were non-existent until the Second World War. Moreover, data in our era, especially in some particular fields, is increasing rapidly and even doubles every fifteen years.

Today's child will also find when he grows up and graduates that the amount of data available has increased four fold compared to what exists today".⁸⁹

When he turns 50, the amount will have increased thirty three fold. The data which surrounds us has made us like fish in the ocean; we cannot get out or away from it.

⁸⁹ Alabd, Atef Adil, 1995, Ibid, p.42

The mass media provide the individual, particularly with the advent of live transmission via satellite, with information on events, personalities or situations, the individual to acquire additional information about particular subjects under special circumstances.

We are living in an era characterized by the emergence of the nation state and big political formations. Therefore, we are in need of a creative mind, which can reunite the Omani identity in particular and that of the Arabs in general. Any section in this identity will prevent any intellectual, cultural or artistic renaissance. There must be interaction and a real dialogue among all parties. Intellectuals have the responsibility to adopt critical positions, review postulates and play an active role in the nationalization of the next social movement. This process requires a harmony between the ancestral methodology and the historic one, which will provide a new answer for the question of heritage and crystallize the identity in a way that will allow us to start off for the future.

Television can be used either for destruction or for construction and development. A comparison between TV and books will show that the TV viewer is completely different from the book reader. The latter plays an active role, by choosing the book he wants to read, creates the appropriate conditions for reading and concentration, and makes efforts to understand the contents, by rereading a page two or three times, underlining words he deems important ... etc.

The television viewer, however, has only to switch on the TV set and receive the material, which is transmitted.⁹⁰

This fact puts heavy responsibilities on people in charge of information in the field of development. In my view, a successful programme is one that manages to convey a certain

⁹⁰ Iejali, Mustafa, 1990, Ibid, p260

number of facts to the public. The more a programme is close to the masses it addresses, the more success it will achieve.

We may even ask ourselves: What is more harmful for a made to order programme than the failure to respond adequately to this order?

To answer this question in a scientific way, Atef Alabd says that:

The capacity to understand assimilate the meanings (of words) is the essential factor for the formation of a mental picture which is the final result of decoding and responding to the signs which we face.⁹¹

The mass media will continue to play an essential role in providing children in particular and people in general with information and messages, which make up the rational picture.

6.2. Cultural development and its position in the sultanate of Oman TV

Culture is a process of social upbringing, which ranks high during childhood up to adulthood. During this decisive period takes place the process of social belonging. Moreover, the personal identity takes shape during these years in a process, which is considerably influenced by the social environment. Besides, culture is not limited only to the formation of the identity, but contributes also to the shaping of the personality and defines behaviour. This task is carried out through the codification and orientation of the development process in its entire emotional, social, behaviour and aesthetic aspects.

Therefore, we would not exaggerate if we say that the progress of society depends on the care given to the child.”⁹²

⁹¹ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1993, Ibid, p.48.

⁹² Iejali, Mustafa, 1990, Ibid, p35

Although culture is a social behaviour mode of thought and a way of life, which combines ideology, religion, and technology, it is, in fact, relation between man and his environment, material and aesthetical creations and collective memory. It penetrates deeply in the global structure of the collective consciousness and ego.

During the development of the channels of culture, attention was shifted from the reported story to the manuscript and, then, to the written message.

In our era, however, the prevalence of audio – visual media has nearly eclipsed the written message thanks to their great impact on the audience. Moreover, they use advanced equipments, which change continuously and, therefore, contribute to the conditioning of the citizens consciousness" ⁹³

Consequently, television is regarded as a means, which affects both the mind and feelings, besides being a source of entertainment and education. Therefore, it has an impact on the child's mind and feelings.

Broadcasting of the Sultanate of Oman TV which, in my view, is still limited in scope, does not yet fulfil its potential role in disseminating culture and education. The following statistics testify to this:

Cultural and educational programs were transmitted and filled 102 hours and 22 minutes, which represents 1.63% of the whole programmes broadcast. These programmes include course for preparatory and secondary school certificates which filled 88 hours and 2 minutes, which represents (85.99%) of the educational programmes transmitted." ⁹⁴

⁹³ Hussain, Samir Mohammed, 1988, Ibid, p.76

⁹⁴ The Sultanate of Oman Television, (News Report), **Gulf Vision Magazine**, (Saudi Arabia, year 13, issues No.2& 3, Oct.1994) p.16

I personally think that the actions carried out by television in the field of culture tend mostly to create culture in a slow, gradual and unnoticed process. However, the proper cultural development must comprise all aspects of the cultural life including theoretical and practical sciences, literature, technical, formal, audio and popular arts, crafts, social traditions and customs, means of production and institutions.

It is true that the process of cultural development currently underway in the Sultanate of Oman aims at achieving a qualitative step forward for the development and progress of the Omani society as a whole. However, the study of the development plans, especially those dealing with cultural aspects, shows that this objective can only be achieved through the development of the specialized human resources, which are necessary for the fulfilment of the Sultanate development aspirations.

We must distinguish between the search for heritage, which can be considered during the discussion of the issues of heritage and renaissance, and the study of heritage which is linked to scientific knowledge and to its accuracy, acquisition and perception. Yet, we must ask the following questions before engaging in the discussion of the question of heritage:

- Does heritage represent just one event or is it a set of diversified inheritances?
- How do these inheritances interact?
- Does the heritage received from other people represent one or many cultures?
- Is this heritage unified or discordant?

It seems from these questions that the concept of heritage itself requires thorough examination and scrutiny. There are few but serious attempts currently underway in this regard. They take advantage of the various techniques, which are made available by the human sciences nowadays.

Heritage is the most comprehensive of all inheritances because it comprises all religious, non-religious, changing and unchanging elements. Heritage is the essence and basis for identity, cultural contacts and international rapprochement.

Heritage is the sum of thought and relics left to us by our ancestors. Before taking a position regarding heritage, one should distinguish between its binding and unbinding components. Moreover, the emphasis must be put on the essence of heritage rather than its shape.

Heritage is part of the collective memory, which can be considered as the reservoir of culture.⁹⁵

Cultural heritage and ancient monuments are given due care by the authorities in the Sultanate of Oman for the following reasons:

1. The Sultanate of Oman's heritage and civilization are derived from pure Arab origins, which must be preserved.
2. The need is felt to form the Omani identity in accordance with its Arab belonging while preparing Omani citizens to realize the importance of their heritage and the original Arab values which make up their identity.
3. The Omani nation's heritage and traditions gave birth to a particular taste that required the selection of cultural works which suit the feelings of Arab people and the rejection of

⁹⁵ Iejali, Mustafa, 1990, Ibid, p. 130

cultural schemes which are inappropriate for the Omani society. In order to achieve the previously mentioned objectives, the Sultanate of Oman is working hard for the revival of the cultural heritage and preservation of Omani ancient monuments according to well – conceived scientific plan. Therefore, an archaeology department was set up at the Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat .The Sultanate also holds conferences on archaeology and sends archaeologists and the permanent archaeology committees abroad for the study of the new scientific achievements in this field. There are other signs of the Sultanate's interest in preserving and highlighting its cultural heritage. They include:

- The publication of a series of books on Omani heritage;
- The recovery of some Omani artefacts which had been smuggled out of the Sultanate;
- The Sultanate's co-operation with the Arab Fund for Arab heritage in carrying out its national projects;
- Barring smugglers and vandalizers of ancient monuments from entering the Sultanate whether they are foreigners or Arabs;
- The establishment of various archaeology departments and training of Omani archaeologists;
- Courses on Omani and Arab antiques at the Archaeology Department of the Sultan Qaboos University;
- The building of national museums;
- The involvement of the Department of Archaeology in the planning of cities and preservation of ancient cities.
- The enactment of laws which help in the registration of ancient cities and historical landmarks, the updating of the methods of preserving them and the legislation of laws for the preservation of historical relics.

Since the Omani culture is closely linked to heritage, it is necessary to bring up the popular arts, which derive their characteristics from this deeply rooted human heritage. The word, instrument, dance, song, voice and picture are all elements of this heritage which happen to be the same as those used in the TV broadcasting. Thus, effective efforts can be made to revive thought, art and literary endeavour in the Sultanate of Oman.

Despite its limited resources, the Sultanate of Oman Television tries to contribute to the cultural enlightenment related to the Arab and Islamic heritage in general and particularly the Omani heritage. The total hours of broadcasting of these programmes reached 59 hours and 16 minutes which represents 3.29% of all the cultural programmes transmitted by the Sultanate of Oman TV. These programs provide considerable information on literature and language in addition to cultural information. An example is the "Ray of Civilization" programme, which links the past to the shining present of the Sultanate of Oman through the principal themes contained in the programme's scenarios. The main factors taken into consideration in this regard are: the concept and importance of heritage, the popular arts and their cultural value, the hand-written repertory, the Arab civilization and the world trade routes, and the phases of recording, Ibn Dreed Al-Azady and the German Orientalism and the Arab literature. The various episodes of these programmes were shot in Muscat, Cairo, Damascus and Jordan. The programme's guests included the best scholars, intellectuals and researchers in this field in Arab and Islamic world. This programme achieved great success among viewers, critics and journalists. The Sultanate of Oman TV also produced a 30-episode TV serial on the Omani heritage. The stories were presented in dramatic and musical form using simplified classical Arabic. The serial's ultimate objective was to highlight the role of television in preserving the ancient Omani heritage while offering some entertainment for viewers. Each episode of the programme lasted for 30 minutes.

I would like to raise in this regard the issue of the threat to the Arab national identity. It is true that we are able to assimilate the means of the modern civilization in all aspects of life as we were in the past. However, a look at reality from a scientific perspective will show that the Arab community suffers from alienation resulting from the challenge of civilization and a situation which entails a feeling of either inferiority or superiority.

In my view, the shortcoming of the Arab society lies in its incapacity to grasp the civilization of science and technology and its confinement to the importation of technology instead of producing it.

Therefore, the Arab should use the methods of modern science in presenting the Arab nation's heritage. This is *a sine qua non* condition for a nation engaged in a cultural war against an enemy who wants to destroy the essence of the Arab people's existence.⁹⁶

We are now suffering from many aspects of spoliation vis-à-vis the West, because we take only their results and fruit and reject the principles and foundations. We import from the West consumer goods instead of seeds. The success of any planting process undoubtedly depends on the land. This means that it is necessary to assert the Arab cultural identity in all aspects of the cultural process and strengthen the spiritual values derived from Islam, which has played a major role in the history, heritage and modern life of the Arab nation.

Moreover, all Arab families must communicate the cultural and social inheritances to the child accompanied by social and political directions, cultural and desirable situations which are necessary for the definition of the family's identity and contribute to the formation of the national one.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Mushaikh, Mohammed Haider, **Our Culture Facing Cultural Openness**, (Egypt, the General Book Organization, 1994, p.317

⁹⁷ Awad, Alshaikh and Others 1994, Ibid, p.38

6.3. The Educational Role of T.V. Programmes in the Sultanate of Oman.

Television broadcasting is mostly characterised by its flexibility and freedom from the constraints of time and place. It also increases instant harmony, which attracts more the attention of pupils in the educational process. Moreover, it is characterized by the diversity of information it provides and the ease with which of the picture reaches TV viewers due to the similarity between it and reality, thus actively contributing to the education process.

Educational information is one of the most successful means in sustaining the educational process both at the school and family levels. Therefore, the TV screen has become the best teacher and educator for children and the youth through the educational, cultural, social and development programs it offers. However, it should support, rather than replace or challenge the educational mission the school, by following guidelines on education, psychology and sociology. The role of the school, in fact, is more important thanks to a definite development plan. Television as an information means is not a substitute for the school in the educational process, but an educational TV channel can be set up to broadcast drama, commentary, explanation, scientific seminars, documentary films... etc. provided that the country's financial resources allow the establishment of such a channel.

Omani Television has also elaborated a plan for the production of joint educational programmes for the various levels of education with the collaboration of the GCC Bureau of Education and the Arab Centre for Educational Techniques. Advanced satellite technology will be able to bring about a quantitative and qualitative change in the system of incoming feeds in the Gulf States,⁹⁸ educational value of television.

⁹⁸ Hussain, Samir Mohammed, Ibid, 1988

Educational programmes are broadcast by the Sultanate of Oman TV from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on a daily basis, except on Thursdays and Fridays. A typical programme lasts between 20 and 30 minutes.

An example of an educational programme proposed and directed by the researcher for Oman is *Arms on the road*, which was produced by Omani Television in collaboration with the General Organization for Professional Training in Muscat. The idea of the programme is to encourage citizens to learn, get professional work in the private sector field such as hotels, restaurants, shops, industrial workshops... etc. The programme contains a drama sequence in which some actors play dramatic situations and events and end up practising a craft or doing a job to earn their living. Each episode lasts for 30 minutes. The programme is broadcast once every fortnight. It is still being broadcast thanks to the great success it has achieved and because it contains cultural, technical and educational information on all aspects of life in the Sultanate of Oman.

Education means looking after the development of the individual and finding a harmony between him and the social group to which he belongs. Moreover, education is, as it was said, a social and economic necessity imposed by development, an essential investment for the building of states and a necessary social and economic condition for any development process.

Furthermore, education is a process of preparing the individual for a successful integration into society. It means providing him with all the values, customs, traditions and patterns of behaviour adopted by the society in which he lives, in addition to the knowledge and science which will enable him to play an active role in the life of his society.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Awad, Rita, Alshaikh, Mohamed Abdulrauuf, and others, **The Culture of the Child - Local and National Testimonies-**, (Department of Culture and Information, Government of Sharjah 1994) p.91

Education must spread the scientific culture and consolidate the methods of scientific research theoretically and practically, to help to overcome superstition and charlatanism. The strengthening of the methods of scientific research will also enable individuals to free themselves from myths and face their problems in a scientific way. Then, they can realize the relations between phenomena. This understanding will incite them to control their environment in a conscious way in accordance with the Holy Quran's call for reasoning, in order to draw conclusions based on events.

The educational system must also inoculate the passion of reading in the children since from an early age, so that the book becomes the individual's true friend.

There are many parties, which contribute to this education. We have, first, the family, then the school, and the university, and finally society which comprise people in charge of information programs, directors of publications, secretaries of libraries and cultural centres, exhibition or gainers ... etc Teachers can play a major part in making children love reading because they are the example which the youth follows.¹⁰⁰

Education is, therefore, a social and economic necessity imposed by the requirements of development. It is an investment, which yields social and economic results. It is also a decisive factor in the success of any development process. However, education cannot be isolated from society or plan its future away from the planning of other economic and social activities.

Besides, information experts confirm that the media have also proved to be able to complement and enrich the work done at school. In some cases they have even compensated the shortage in the number of teachers and proved their effectiveness in providing education for adults as well as training in the industrial, service and educational fields.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ A Group of Researchers, **The Culture of Information and Information of Culture**, (The Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, UAE, 1995), P.85

¹⁰¹ Hussein, Samir Mohammed, 1988, Ibid, p.70

Consequently, special programmes may be elaborated to increase the children's interest in a particular course or subject such as the discoveries made in the fields of science and art or those dealing with the scientist or carry out an exciting experiment.

The modern child relies on various means to acquire knowledge, experience and psychological and social training.

In the past, parents and teachers monopolized education. Today, they must, however, admit the existence of external effects. “¹⁰²

Television is, as De Loy put it, a parallel school and a uniting factor for the next generations:

In this parallel school parents are no longer the example for the child position which has been taken over by the TV serials heroes.¹⁰³

A big part of the modern child's desires is satisfied by pictures, especially those of commercials and TV serials. This might be the reason why some parents say that they do not educate their children, but only pay for the education they get.

The dangers, however, of relying solely on official education can be multiple:

First: Parents abjure responsibility for the education of their children because they argue that they suffer in order to pay for their public and private schools.

Second: The retardation of the child is not only an issue which requires a particular attention from a human perspective, but it plays an essential role in the whole development process as

¹⁰² Iejali, Mustafa, 1990, Ibid, p.258

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 258

well. Children are the makers of the future; therefore, parents make a big mistake when they punish their children by not allowing them to watch TV. This trend will not help the children to have good relations with their parents. It will also prevent them from acquiring the capacity to adopt a critical attitude vis- a – vis television.

Therefore, educationalists, psychologists and sociologists as well as researchers in these fields must, in my view, look for the ways and means to tackle the problems we are facing in the field of education. I have noticed for instance, that some actors tend to ridicule in some serials those with physical and mental disabilities. Such people should never be a subject of mockery in TV programmes.

The educational objectives which television must seek to achieve, depending upon each country's needs can, in my view be summarized as follows:

- Coping with the increasing population and, hence, demand for education.
- Remedy to the shortage of qualified teachers
- Optimising the use of educational means.
- Offering the opportunity for students of the same country to acquire knowledge within a unified system, at the same time and of the same quality and perfection.
- The satisfaction of the economic and social development needs.
- Keeping pace with the developments in the field of education throughout the world.

To achieve these aims, requires the following practical measures:

- Setting up an educational TV channel, providing schools, institutes and universities with receiving equipment and allocating a separate budget for educational programmes;

- Attracting highly qualified educationalists to work in the educational programmes by offering them encouraging material incentives, in addition to the setting up of an integrated functional body for educational programmes.
- Training the educational programmers and teachers in the use of advanced educational techniques and communications technology.
- The elaboration of materials and courses to be broadcast via the satellite network.
- Co-ordination between school courses in and TV programmes, especially in the field of timing and the role to be played by both the school teacher and the TV teacher.

6.4. Evaluation of the role of drama serials for adults and serial programmes and cartoons for children

More than half a century has passed now since the launch of the first satellite, in 1957. What makes live transmission more dangerous is that some programmes may include material which is prohibited in the receiving countries for political, moral or religious considerations, especially when they show scenes of violence, terror or sex. Studies have, in this regard, revealed that:

Most children and adolescents tend to pay the scenes they watch on TV, Such tendency can easily drive them to commit crimes and make games become reality.¹⁰⁴

6.4.1 Evaluation of the Role of Drama Serials for Adults in the Sultanate of Oman TV Programmes

Due to the lack of excellent drama writers and producers in the Sultanate of Oman, Omani Television has to buy drama serials from other Arab countries, both from the public and private

¹⁰⁴ Alabd, Atef Adli, **Information and the Culture of Arab Child**, (Almaarif Publishing House, Egypt, No.603, Nov.1995), p.89

sectors, although their contents do not suit the social, psychological and economic problems of the Omani society.

Most Arab and foreign films and drama serials include too much violence (see Appendix K). Therefore, researchers worry that these serials will spread violence, crime and sex in society, particularly when they notice that viewers, and even listeners and readers, are eager for such contents. Brian Joys, director of children's programmes¹⁰⁵ confirmed that there is a close relationship between the aggressive behaviour of individuals and the contents of mass media dealing with violence, crime and sex.

Therefore, the first thing to be done by the Arab TV stations is, in my view, to provide scientific and realistic data about the audience which is continuously and regularly exposed to such contents. Thus, they will be able to produce the appropriate programmes for them. Unfortunately, most of the information studies on the public mass media, especially in the Arab countries, indicate that field research is not taken into consideration in the planning of TV programmes. The people in charge of the production of programmes rely only on the knowledge they have about society and the trends prevailing in it. However, this assumption has been proved to be wrong in more than one case. The bad quality of the Arab TV programmes proves the necessity to take into account the reality of viewers in the elaboration of TV programmes.

The violence show on TV strengthens the patterns of behaviour, which exist in the viewer's personality. The violent individual sees the violent behaviour as a real crime because of the

¹⁰⁵ Brian Joys, Director of Children's Programmes and Audience Services, Annenberg Centre for the Performing Arts, University of Philadelphia, [23.8.2001].

violent tendency he has. Thus, it has been proved that violent programmes have increased the violent behaviour of children who have a relative tendency for violence.¹⁰⁶

Complaints about violence in the mass media have increased since the thirties, which witnessed the emergence of the new Hollywood violence, which was present in all films of that period. With the spread of TV viewing, the attention was shifted to the serials, which show violent scenes because they unconsciously encouraged viewers to commit violent and destructive actions.

We need however, to be on guard about the findings of studies, which establish the role of the mass media in spreading violence and terror. Most of those views concluded that TV violence could be the cause of such things in real life. Yet, other researchers find it ridiculous to make of the mass media, especially television, the scapegoat for our social ailments. They argue that TV is not the main cause of the spread of violence within society. Television, according to them, offers its programmes in a complex social environment whose values and morals are made up of many factors, which must be taken into consideration when carrying out study on the role of the mass media in spreading violence and terror.

There is an urgent necessity to study the contents of the information material parallel to the study of the audience when discussing the issue of the mass media's role in spreading terror, violence and deviation. Moreover, it is not fair to consider television as the sole cause of cause of deviation which is, in fact, an extremely complex behaviour caused by intertwined factors emanating from the family, school and society. This assertion does not, however, exclude the share of responsibility which television and the mass media bear in the spread of violence and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 88

terror. It is argued that the continuous watching of TV programmes leads to the formation of a general view on life and its adjustment in an unwanted way. Thus, the long-term scientific and democratic solution to the problems of life become useless and violence will be the ideal remedy for those problems. Consequently, some observers call television the University of Crime, while some doctors say that if prison is a faculty for adolescents where they can learn to become criminals, television is the preparatory school for deviation.

Violence is a picture of human interaction, which leads to the harm affecting the body, the soul or both of them. It causes damage, which may amount to assassination, which is aimed at human beings, animals or property, intentionally or by mere chance.

The organized crime is the most common in societies, in addition to the spontaneous violence through which the individual expresses frustrations he suffers from and the pathological violence. The latter form of violence is expressed by physically or mentally sick people who, before committing their acts, may have seen some scenes or people, or heard a voice which incites them to violence,¹⁰⁷

Discussions are still underway on the impact of the mass media on the audience. Most of this talk is concentrated, however, on the role of TV. Sociologists, journalists, lawyers, psychologists, politicians ... etc., blame television not only for showing violence but also for inciting youth to delinquency. Studies carried out in this field showed that 70% of parents blame crime stories and violence. The United States of America even prohibited a young man from watching such programmes because of the objection of his parents.

In order to fight the violence spread via the mass media, especially television, a US congressional investigation commission requested

¹⁰⁷ Alabd, Atef Adli, Ibid, p. 64

in 1964 the producers of TV serials to limit violent scenes in their programmes. The Government of Mexico also banned the broadcasting and projection of more than 30 programmes and films because of too much violence in them.¹⁰⁸

There was, at that time, a widespread fear of the effects of watching live scenes in which officials use violence to settle the questions of society.

6.4.2. Evaluation of the Role of Serials, Programmes and Cartoons for Children in the Sultanate of Oman TV

It has been proved scientifically that television represents today an important social and cultural variable in the child's life Kraws and Davis even noted that TV is the main source of information for the child and described it as the child's new parents in the process of social education.¹⁰⁹

It has been claimed that children's lack of awareness as to the important priorities in life, particularly homework, which must be given top priority especially for children below the average intelligence level, as well as the predominance of TV watching over family discussions, leisure time, social visits, games and other entertainment activities, have had an adverse impact on children.

The main media increase the individual's knowledge in general and the child's in particular. The child does not adopt a passive attitude in front of the TV set. On the contrary, he is like a piece of sponge, which absorbs everything it comes across. It is known that the a medium, which addresses more than one sense, can have a deeper and more lasting impact than the one, which addresses only one sense.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Alabd, Atef Adli, Ibid, p.67

¹⁰⁹ Unfflan, Hala Ahmed, Ibid, 1995, p.31

¹¹⁰ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p.32

Since television is the window from which the child looks at the world of imagination, TV programmes must comprise imaginative forms, provided that they not exaggerated in order not to isolate the child from his social reality. Programmes which involve the use of puppets are, in this connection, the most suited for children up to the age of 6. As to those for children between 6 and 9, the stress must be shifted gradually from imagination to reality while trying to make the child aware of his belonging to his country and the Arab Nation. During the late phase of childhood, i.e. from 9 to 12 years, children's programmes should lead the child towards construction and honourable competition, enrich their knowledge on the past and present, encourage literary and artistic hobbies and stimulate mental and sports competitions. When the child reaches adolescence (12 - 16) years, he will receive programmes on how to fight crime, reject violence and avoid sexual deviation in addition to others on the benefits of reading and learning. Omani television however lacks TV programmes for the previously mentioned age groups.

The TV model programmes are to be offered to children according to the "Role Model". They should be based on individuals who achieved a distinction in a particular field of life. Their behaviour can be played as examples to be followed by others. TV model programmes are based on the sociodrama and psychodrama, which involve the playing of the role in a dramatic way to depress a particular situation in life. The actor must behave like the character he is playing. It is the "example" or "model" which expresses a given situation in the social order.¹¹¹

Children can see also be offered programmes, which deal with the childhood of the famous people, great men and leaders and satisfy the child's needs for self-assertion, achievement and success. The child grows up through imitation and may take a play's hero as an example if he likes him. Besides, artistic works may also be offered for children who will understand from

¹¹¹ Ali, Samia Ahmed, **Patterns in TV programs**, (Egypt, The General Book Organization, The Cultural Library, No. 436, 1988), p.17

them the meaning of success and its requirements. Children may also be receptive to examples of a successful person's life and comprehend the bitterness, which a failing individual feels. The family must, meanwhile, support these efforts and explain to the child the ambiguous questions. It must also remind him of the successful people whom we regard as our examples because they managed to overcome the shortage of resources and achieve success by merely using their minds.

The mass media can satisfy the children's needs for participation and self-assertion by offering examples of children who may fail sometimes, but who ultimately succeed after correcting their mistakes. The child, then, adopts this pattern and satisfies his needs.

We can see the impact of these trends on children, particularly our Arab children!

The American child between the age of 5 and 14 watches over 13 thousand crimes, a tendency which is on its way to us via the live transmission.¹¹²

This fact proves that

Television today has an unlimited capacity of influence, orientation and cultivation either via the entertainment, educational or documentary programmes. Moreover, the TV screen and video tape are now the alternative for the child's participation in the vast cultural world.¹¹³

The Arab mass media must include in their plans the necessity to determine the values to be inculcated in the children's mind according to their age category. Values must be in the model programmes the essential objective of social education.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p.80

¹¹³ Iejali, Mustafa, 1990, Ibid, p.61

¹¹⁴ Ali, Samia Ahmed, 1988, Ibid, P.79

Furthermore, we must abstain from giving to the child all we want and, thus, prevent him from digesting the "food". We must also refrain from satisfying all his desires, and withhold those, which may harm him. It is an interaction between the child and parents, which guarantees a good education for future generations.

The child's culture and the mass media exist prior to the nursery and school in the child's life. They enter his home and even his room via the radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Besides, each age group has its own programmes. For example TV programmes, which are intended to be watched by children at nursery school age, should include examples of the parents, domestic animals and dolls.

Cartoons are not good for a first watching experience. It is preferable to look for funny and lively programmes for children at this age. Yet, it must be pointed out that quick motion, noisy and aggressive programmes have to be avoided. Most studies have proved that children are mostly attracted by programmes for adults, particularly crime and violence films.¹¹⁵

Some children and a few adults confuse reality and fiction and tend to imitate the aggressive acts they see on TV and perform them in their real life.¹¹⁶

Regardless of the moral principles and values, children are predisposed to remember violent acts and perform them.¹¹⁷

Therefore, children who watch television and have a tendency for aggression might remember aggressive acts and imitate them when they feel like doing so.

Television is the most preferred means of communication for children in the Arab world. Children spend between the age of 6 and 18 between 15 and 16 hours watching TV while

¹¹⁵ A Group of Researchers, **The Culture of Information and the Information of Culture**, 1995 p.74

¹¹⁶ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p.95

¹¹⁷ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p.96

school only gets 13 hours of their attention.

Doctor Atef Adli Al-Abd, information advisor at the Omani Ministry of Information carried out a field research in six Arab countries on the TV programmes in Arab world. The study revealed that these programmes aim at achieving many objectives among which are:

- The orientation of children towards the socially accepted pattern of behaviour
- The development of the child's mental faculties;
- The activation of his senses;
- The development of his knowledge; and
- Offering him entertainment

The study also revealed that the Arab children understand classical Arabic and are very much interested in programmes dealing with national issues,

6.4.2.1 Children's Serials and Programmes

The humour, which attracts children, deals with psychological problems they suffer from. They, for instance, disarm hidden aggressivity and transform it into a harmless joke, which yields no serious consequences. These serials also make fun of the threat, which their strong and wicked adult heroes pose to their weak and young counterparts. Consequently, the child feels reassured to see that this threat is not an unavoidable and fixed destiny. They also provide a solution for the child's feeling of inferiority vis-a-vis humans and nature through the principle of changing roles. Thus, the little creature represented by the mouse defeats the big and ferocious cat, which threatened to swallow it in many confrontations, which were transformed, thanks to the mouse's intelligence, into a total defeat for the cat. The children's laughter when they read or watch these

serials expresses their imaginary victory over the threatening forces and their elimination. They feel self- confident and reassured and accept their situation as weak human beings.

These serials can even play a much bigger role in enabling children to overcome the struggle between the forces of good and evil in their personality. They reject the forces of evil and the tendency for aggressivity by projecting them on the bad and threatening creatures. Then, they feel like the little, innocent and threatened hero who fights the forces of evil. The threat posed by the forces of evil is essentially a threat to the evil and destructive intentions, which exist in the children's unconscious. Moreover, the fear they feel against the heroes of these external evil forces is, in fact, a projection of their fear of their internal evil intentions. When the little and innocent hero defeats the big and bad villain, children are reassured and confident in their innocence and good intentions.

Therefore, serials' characters and heroes infiltrate children's personalities via this emotional function, and alienating values enter their lives in the same way. Besides, they carry a well-planned and alienating ideology, which is automatically transmitted through the emotional function. Games and drawing play, in this regard, an important role in the absorption of the psychological problems of the child who will actively participate in the adaptation of the games and drawing subjects to these problems.

Dr. Welbor Shram confirms the dangers which children are exposed to when they watch programmes, serials and film which do not suit their age and experience. He said that:

When the child does not feel the emotional warmth, he will not

benefit from watching -TV.¹¹⁸

Consequently, the positive aspects of the TV programmes will be nullified and the child might even appreciate some programmes and films, which will feed unwanted tendencies.

Parents' ignorance of the role which the family plays in the preparation of adequate conditions for the child's success, their resort to making television the companion of their children without orienting them towards the programmes which help them at school, and the use of non-rational means to prevent children from watching a given programme such as scolding, insulting or quarrelling over programmes to be watched when there is only one TV set for the whole family, will all have bad effects on the child's education. The lack of discussion in their the family and the existence of family problems like divorce and separation will also affect children and incite them to watch TV programmes which contribute along with other psychological and social variables to school retardation.

Moreover, the lack of correct planning of programmes and the prevalence of confusion in the watching of TV or doing the homework, can lead to children staying awake late at night and, thus watching programmes which do not suit their age. Watching television is not, as such, a cause of the child's failure at school, except when it is not well organised, deprived of advice and orientation, does not involve the child's participation in some programmes and lacks good references.

In my capacity as a director at the Sultanate of Oman Television, I directed a children's serial which was presented to the public in 1994. The serial was entitled "Days of Glory". It can be

¹¹⁸ Unfflan, Hala Ahmed, 1995, p. 36

regarded as a little encyclopaedia of heritage. It tried to simplify the scientific material and turn it from a dull educational course into a dramatic course dealing with heritage in all its spiritual, scientific and documentary aspects. This programme resembles the "Expressions from Heritage" programme for adults which combined cultural and scientific information. This programme, which meets the people in the street, is simple, clear, spontaneous and humorous because of the funny, quick or unclear answers which the interviewed people sometimes give.

Convinced of the important role which television plays in the increasing of the people's knowledge and experience, the Sultanate of Oman TV presented in 1994 a children's programme on wadis in Oman. The Sultanate of Oman possesses many wadis around the country, whose oases and abundant water make them a tourist attraction. Each episode of the programme dealt with one wadi. Information was first given as to the position of the wadi and its characteristics. Then, the children had to find out the name of the wadi.

With a few such exceptions, however, the study of most of the children's programmes which the Gulf TV satellite channels offer reveals, in my view, a persistent lack of a proper educational planning. They are heterogeneous; the only thing they have in common is that they are all aimed at children. And their objective is only to be present on the international scene and to reach the Arab viewer by using advanced communication technologies.

An official survey¹¹⁹ on the shortcomings of the locally produced programmes for children involving the participation of 30 TV officials in the Gulf as a whole revealed the following:

¹¹⁹ Hussain, Samir M Television Information in the Gulf Region and Comprehensive Development Gulf Vision, (Saudi Arabia, 1988), p. 123- 128.

1. Lack of specialised producers for children's programmes including presenters and directors. As a consequence, the Departments of children's programmes of the Gulf TV stations are staffed only with negligent and failing personnel.

2. Lack of budgets for children's programmes which entails a twofold consequence:

(a): Insufficiency of funds reserved for children's programmes, and

(b): Complaints of the staff on children's programmes their low revenues do not match the efforts made.

3. Lack of the scientific basis in the production of children's programmes, in planning, elaboration, production, realization or marketing.

4. Lack of co-ordination in the production of children's programmes at the national level between the people in charge of the programmes and producers at the TV station. Thus, a successful programme is simply initiated without taking into account each programme's objectives. The only co-ordination that may exist deals with the programme's transmission time and the age group it is aimed at.

5. Lack of training for the children's programme personnel which is, unfortunately not regarded as a main interest of the Gulf TV channels. They concentrate, rather, on the engineering staff. Besides, no attention is given in these channels to the training of the programmes' presenters about how to deal with children of the various age groups including the handicapped and the gifted. The Gulf TV channels also lack the material, technical and human training resources.

6. Lack of evaluation of the children's programmes, which would involve undertaking research work in order to identify their role and impact on children and their analysis to know the

methods they use to reach their objectives. This shortcoming is the result of the lack of interest of the people in charge of children's programmes in the importance of such studies and their role in the rationalization of programmes' objectives on the basis of sound planning.

7. Problems facing the producers of children's programmes at the Gulf TV stations on a daily basis such as the lack of material resources for the production of the programmes (studios, camera crews, editing suites, sound and light equipment texts ... etc)

As a result of these shortcomings, Gulf TV satellite channels neglect the locally produced children's programmes and rely on imported ones, particularly cartoons, which are appreciated by children because they fill the vacuum left by the lack of suitable programmes for children.

Therefore, I think that it is of utmost importance to offer an adequate training for people involved with the production of programmes for children. They must be trained in the use of the best means to attract children and satisfy their age-related needs. Artistic and financial means must also be made available for children's programme personnel in order to motivate producers, presenters and directors to get involved in this artistic process.

The lack of children's programmes and serials in the Sultanate of Oman TV may be attributable to the lack of co-ordination between the programmes' producers and psychologists as well as educationalists.

The planning of such programmes must begin with the definition of the age group, which the programme is aimed at:

1. Early childhood (up to 5 years old)
2. Mid childhood (5 - 9 years old)

3. Late childhood (9 - 12 years old)
4. Adolescence (12 - 15 years old)

Moreover, educational objectives must be divided between programmes according to the psychological and social characteristics of each age group.

I have come to the conclusion that the issue of the Arab child's education via television in all the Gulf countries requires specialists who are able to improve the current situations through their own capabilities. Yet, it seems that this goal is not easy to attain.

Television could potentially do a lot for the Omani children because most children's programmes are based on the following principles:

1. The availability of the motion picture in the sound helps understanding and assimilation
2. Television broadcasts exciting cartoons, which attract children.
3. Television offers various programmes, which eliminate monotony and boredom.
4. Television broadcasts children's programmes in the afternoon, which suits children better than the radio programmes transmitted while children are at school.

The Sultanate of Oman Television also suffers from a lack of children's drama writers. Therefore, it usually has recourse to great writers who write for children, even though their styles do not suit the world of childhood. They refuse, for example, to use the standard vocabulary for Arab children compiled by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO). This work should be a reference for poets, writers and dramatists because it is a source of children's language inspired from their world and own

expressions.

A comprehensive evaluation of the status of children in the Arab world reveals that children occupy a secondary position in the Arab society. Therefore, their impact on the culture written or prepared for them is quite limited. The concept of childhood is still a mystery to Arabs. The issue of the children's rights is even disapproved and underestimated by many people who seem unaware that the preparation of children for the next century requires providing them with a global culture. By this we mean the values, beliefs and views common to mankind because they all live in one earth, face a common destiny and share the responsibility to preserve the Earth from pollution and extinction.

Moreover, the decline in children's reading habits may be the result of the confusion prevailing in the process of elaboration, realization and transmission of programmes aimed at Arab children. Many children noted that they feel very frightened by detective serials and crime and consequently they frequently have disturbing nightmares and suffer from insomnia.

I think that the following factors should be taken into consideration in the elaboration of programmes for Omani children:

1. Elaboration of plans for the improvement of the children's programmes for the best interest of the child in addition to increase these programmes on Thursday and Friday afternoons.
2. Submission of children's programmes especially video programmes to experienced educationalists for evaluation before broadcasting them.
3. Commercial considerations must not be taken into account in operations involving the education and cultivation of children via television in consideration of the destiny of future

generations and the future of the Sultanate.

In order to achieve these aspirations, we must draw on the Sultanate's extensive resources and its time-honoured history full of major events, great personalities and situations. From them, children can be inspired by noble values and messages, and this can perpetuate the emotional tie between the Omani children, their families and society. Thus, they can develop confidence in their countrymen and nation.

Most children's programmes in Oman are aimed at satisfying the children's entertainment needs and do not seek the development of their capabilities to understand society and the world. Also, the phenomenon of staying up late at night is common to all the family members, including children, with all the physical consequences it entails for them. Therefore, teachers often complain of their pupils sleeping during classes.

Many researchers have linked violence and terror in films with the spread of crimes during the last decades. Besides, most studies confirmed that children are mostly attracted by films aimed at adults, particularly those involving crime and violence."¹²⁰ Researchers, nonetheless, confirmed that although television has increased the time children spend at home due to the increase of the entertainment opportunities it offers, it also reduces the interaction between members of the family, visits between children and the positive interaction children used to have via other educational media, such as books for instance.

In its modest plan for children and the youth, the Sultanate of Oman Television offers the following educational programmes, which are incomplete, both at the educational and practical

¹²⁰ See Appendix L, the list of Arab's and American crimes' and violence's' films

levels:

1. Religious Educational Programmes

They include programmes on religion, social problems like marriage and divorce, social assistance, the quest for science and loyalty for the country.

2. Scientific Educational Programmes

They comprise technical applications, scientific achievements and the world of nature with all its creatures, which demonstrate God's ability to organize this world.

3. National Educational Programmes

They aim at making the Sultanate and the Arab world known on the geographical, architectural, archaeological and historical levels.

4. Economic Educational Programmes

They include programmes dealing with the necessity to guarantee a food security for the Sultanate, professional orientation and security and the preservation of public property.

5. Consumer Awareness Programmes

They seek the development and rationalization of the prevailing patterns of consumption both for the food products and the country's limited resources such as water and electricity.

We must, in my view, support the positive trends in the children's programmes and serials and orient them towards faith, society and the homeland. We must also assist them in developing basic capabilities and incite them scientific, creative and critical reasoning. The values given

to children via these programmes and serials must be balanced as well. Particular attention must also be given to children's knowledge and emotional interests, the development of socially accepted behaviour and loyalty to the homeland, the satisfaction of psychological, social and cultural needs, the development of appreciation for arts and love for democracy and respect for the public property. Children's adoption of these values will benefit their society, because they are the makers of the future.

6.4.2.2 Cartoons for Children in the Sultanate of Oman TV

Cartoons play a major role in the formation of the child's personality and provide him with knowledge and ideas in an attractive way involving the use of audio, video. Motion and colours. They offered to him in exciting dramatic forms and contribute to his educational, entertainment and the crystallization of his social and emotional personality.¹²¹

Researchers agree that children's cartoons play a major social role since they draw their attention to some defined values and trends. They also participate actively in the education of the child who interacts with them and even imitate them very often. Cartoons are an important means for the inculcation of educational, moral, cultural and social concepts in the child's mind because they offer them information in a dramatic form. Moreover, children are fond of cartoons as they include expressive motion pictures, live colours, fascinating stories, exceptional tales and exciting adventures. Consequently, cartoons offer a wide scope for the implementation of an educational and cultural plan for Gulf children.

However, the programmes imported by the Gulf States' TV stations, particularly cartoons, contain too much violence, which account for 99.9% of the whole material according to recent

¹²¹ Zaki, Emad, **Role of Cartoons in the Life of Children** (Alarabia Book No. 23, April 1989, P145

statistics. Therefore, people in charge of children's education must limit this violence, offer constructive and entertaining programmes which suit customs and traditions. It is necessary to limit aggressive and imaginative cartoons such as the "Iron Man" and "Space Warrior" in order to prevent children from taking their heroes as examples. The field study done by Markle Foundation in New York,¹²² revealed, in this connection, that 36.84% of the children surveyed were negatively affected by the aggressive and violent scenes they had seen on TV. Moreover, the study shows that children imitate most of aggressive characters from cartoons including the Ninja (42.9%), "Tom and Jerry" (24.3%) and "granddizer" and "Mc Guinness" (16.4%).

Besides, the best children's focus of attention during the transmission of cartoons can reach almost 59.56%. One of the studies carried out in the Sultanate of Oman shows that 93.6% of the children surveyed, regularly watch cartoons." ¹²³

The time filled by cartoons in the children's programmes represents, however, only 50% in normal days. This rate increases to 65.7% during weekends. Cartoons in the Sultanate of Oman TV represent 12.9% of the total programmes.¹²⁴

Commercials aimed at children use also cartoons due to their impact on the child. One of the studies carried out in this field shows that 98.6% of the children surveyed regularly watch TV commercials." ¹²⁵

Another analytical study of two foreign cartoon serials broadcast by the Gulf ' TV satellite

¹²² Interview with Alice Cahn, Managing Director, Interactive Media for Children, Markle Foundation, New York, [15.8.2001].

¹²³ **Serials of Foreign Cartoons in the Sultanate of Oman Television: Evaluative study**, (Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Education and Youth, Muscat, 1991), p.18

¹²⁴ **Gulf Vision Magazine**, "Decisions of the Arab Information Ministers, Session 27, Sultanate of Oman Television" -News Report-, (Saudi Arabia, year 13, Issues No.2 and 3, Oct. 1994), p.53

¹²⁵ Alomr, Nasser, **Cartoons and the Art of Advertising**, (Alnaba News Paper, Kuwait, Aliman Appendix, Friday Dec. 10 1993).

channels, revealed an imbalance or lack of ideas or experiences. The following shortcomings were noted in both serials:

1. Near absence of religious contents (1%)
2. Extremely limited family contents (2.56 - 4.23%)
3. Negative social contents (12.8 - 6.35%)
4. Total lack of contents, which serve capabilities and scientific tendencies.
5. Lack of economic contents related to saving work, production and the rationalization of consumption.
6. Lack of contents related to the preservation of the national identity, development and the interaction with the world to achieve progress and peace.

As to the forms of cartoons transmitted by most of the Gulf states TV stations, including the Sultanate of Oman, they can be grouped in three categories.

1. Cartoon programmes, which often are a complete story in one episode, based on one idea. They can be classified according to their topics, durations and the audience they aim at. In these cartoons, the story is presented in a very concise and simple way. Each story has a defined subject and objective, which can reach children easily. It has also its central characters such as Kaabut, Arnub, Taalub or the Pamperea Nasanua. Each character has its own role in relation to the other diversified characters, who are either human or spatial. They are presented in fascinating ways through the world of animals or birds or the imaginary and fictitious characters, which use excitement as a means to reach the climax of events. After that, the dramatic plot is unravelled.

2. Cartoon serials which are the most common forms in the Gulf TV satellite channels,

including the Sultanate of Oman. They are broadcast in a series of episodes which all tell one story. Each episode ends with a question. The following episode starts with a summary of the previous one. All episodes proceed in an orderly and logical manner with each one ending with a dramatic climax or suspense, which makes the child long for the next episode.

3. Cartoon series, which deal with diverse ideas, meanings and stories that are combined in one subject. Each episode is an independent story. Thus, the child may watch any of the episodes he likes without having to follow the remaining ones.

Some of the cartoon programmes do not, in my view, satisfy children's psychological and cultural needs. The "Popeye" serial, for instance, deals with a lasting conflict between two characters (two strong men), and children gain no benefit from it. I have also noticed that the cartoon programmes convey intellectual and behaviour patterns which do not necessarily suit children, because they confirm what is false and destroy what is original. Moreover, they include unwanted ideas, trend and experiences, which are directly or indirectly communicated to children in the Gulf region. We can mention, for example, the supremacy of physical strength, the shallow and inaccurate information and meagre experience they offer, as well as the limited horizon reflected in some cartoon serials and programmes such as the "Space Invaders", "Friendly Village", "Haidy", "Sandy", "The Adventures of Sinan", "Mrs Spoon," "The Shanaql," "Mazingee", "Little Loulou" and "Dalfy and his Friends".

I think that these serials and programmes may destroy original traditions that go back hundreds of years. They will also turn the Gulf children away from their heritage, and stories, which are inspired by reality. Therefore, we must review the role of the cartoon serials, which will cause contradictions for the Gulf child in relation to his real life and culture. The cartoon's

danger is still present and threatens Arab children's minds, feelings and personalities.

Studies have proved that the Gulf TV satellite broadcast at random too many cartoon programmes, due to their low cost compared to the locally produced programmes. They broadcast them to fill the vacuum in their schedules, and such imports represent a considerable part of their whole programmes.

Due to the changes, which have occurred in our era, the mass media and means of communication play a major role in the children and adult life. People who were brought up in the age of television in Europe spend one third of their life time watching TV programmes. The impact of T.V. on the child is parallel to or even more than that of the school. The mass media also play an important role in children's life due to their diversity and power to attract children through the fascinating programmes they offer. Therefore, the psychologists regard television as the "Third Parent" of the child due to its major impact on the children's education.

6.5. Environment Programmes in Omani drama:

It is of the utmost importance that people in the developing countries are aware of developments, which occur in the fields of social development and environment. The political will and popular demand are not enough, by themselves, to achieve results in this field.

The implementation actions must be combined with the necessary planning, stimulation of efforts, setting up and organization of development bodies on the basis of the objectives set Co-ordination between the communication networks and the allocation of the necessary resources.

Omani Television has opted for this means to tackle environmental issues. It has produced many T.V films in this regard including the "Our Beautiful Environment " which won the first

prize in the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Environment held in Kuwait, in which 15 films were entered. Other films dealing with the environment include one which calls for citizens not to throw away garbage on the streets, public gardens and beaches. Public information films also include calls for the preservation of nature and wild life, and raise awareness regarding the pollution of the soil and the rational use and preservation of water.

In my capacity as a director at the Sultanate of Oman Television, I produced a documentary film on the environment for children, called *A Smile on the Earth's Lips* (1994). The film dealt with the ways to care for the environment and nature in Oman in an attractive way. The film was in the form of a documentary drama and shot in most of the Sultanates' Wilayat, by children. The Ministry of Municipalities and Environment in the Sultanate of Oman collaborated in the production of the film by participating in the specification of contents and supply of financial resources.

Conclusion

In the modern era, television is a powerful medium of communication which can inform as well as entertain. As part of the general effort in the Sultanate of Oman to preserve the local heritage and culture, and to spread education, attempts have been made to use television to serve both these objectives. Some notable successes in the field of informative programmes with cultural and environmental messages have been cited.

At the same time, however, there is concern that a large proportion of the programmes transmitted in the Sultanate, whether locally produced or foreign, do not serve the country's aspirations and may indeed spread harmful influence. Of particular concern in this regard are films, drama series and cartoons that have high violence content. Children's programming, in

particular, is not well planned or suitable tailored to the needs of specific age groups. Despite the stronger presence of television as apposed to other dramatic media (see chapter five) it, too, is still not achieving its potential.

In the next chapter, consideration will be given to the role that television and theatre are expected to play in the Sultanate's development efforts, in order to point the way for programme planners, writers and directors in the future.

Chapter Seven

Omani TV and Theatre in relation to Oman's Modernization

Introduction

This chapter tries to establish a link between the social, political, educational, cultural and economic changes and TV and Theatre creation in Oman. The aim is to explore the current concern in Oman regarding the role of the dramatic media, in order to see what is needed from drama in schools, theatres and T.V in the future. The general development requirements of the state are considered, and the specific role of the media in relation to culture and education is explored. A pioneer work for children, Open Sesame, is presented as an example of how these goals can be achieved.

7.1. Development Requirements

The term development is often used in political and economic language at the international, national and local levels, as a word which means progress, prosperity and stability.

Consequently, development has become the criterion used for the classification of countries in modern civilisation. On this basis, societies are classified as being backward, developing, advanced, poor or rich.¹²⁶

Development as a comprehensive phenomenon encompasses all aspects of life: cultural, scientific, technical, social, spiritual, economic and political.

¹²⁶ A Group of researchers, **Arab Education** (The Arab Institute for Studies and Publications, Beirut, First Edition, 1993), p118-119.

Development must in this regard be pursued as a comprehensive process or not at all.¹²⁷

Developing countries such as the Sultanate of Oman hence consider development as a process of change that takes place in all fields of life. It is a cautious and directed process, which occurs within a given social scope. It is also linked to the increase of participation from the groups affected by this process, and oriented in a particular way, which is expected to bring positive results for them. However, an issue which troubles public opinion in these countries is the orientation of future generations in a correct way in line with each country's social system.

Therefore, all development efforts must be directed towards the preparation of economic and social conditions, which guarantee a high standard of living for the people and the highest level of social and psychological stability for them, satisfies their needs and aspirations and stimulates them towards moral achievements. These goals can only be achieved through people's participation in the development process. Such participation requires the consolidation of educational values at the national level.

Television and theatre can, in fact, play an important role in the process of comprehensive development thanks to their major impact on viewers, regardless of their age, education, culture and profession.

Television and theatre are important precisely because we are human beings. And as human beings we need more than food, security, and love. We need to be self-actualised. That is, we need to create; we were meant to create. And the height of creating is experience. Unlike all

¹²⁷ Palmd, Gue, **Methods of Education**, Translated by Josef Aboud Kabar, (Beirut, Awidat Publications, Third Edition, 1995), p9-10.

other art forms, the theatre, television and cinema are a creation of the experience of human living and its development.

In my view, based on observations, there is no unified concept of development in the Oman television and theatre services. Therefore, specialised institutions cannot set the details for a large-scale development plan, which can define the subject of development in television and theatre in general.

The Omani society is currently undergoing major changes in all fields of life. In some cases this process has taken the form of a mutation. Consequently, the society had to face daily intellectual and social practical issues, which require the existence of creative and reasonable people. Such fundamental changes dictate that the Omani society reviews the methods used to shape people as members of their society in a global way that takes into account the past, present and future. This process implies the necessity of a close link between education and the social environment in all intellectual, political, economic, social and scientific aspects.

Omar al-Toumi al-Shibani in his book, *Education and the Development of the Arab Society* states that

Society can only achieve comprehensive and rapid changes if it uses wisely and effectively scientific methods in solving its problems and planning for its future. Moreover, the glory of nations is a reflection of their educational systems, scientific and information institutions and the number of scientists and artists they have.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Al-Toumi, Omar, **Education and the Development of Nationalism**, (The General Establishment for Publication Distribution and Advertisement, First Edition, 1984), p41

Doctor Samia al-Saati in *Culture and Personality* said:

Television is the most advanced and beneficial means for the transfer of knowledge and experience from one country to another, thanks to satellite communications. It can also contribute to understanding and co-operation between peoples for the sake of education.¹²⁹

Dawood al-Hamadani, a specialist in the Ministry of Education in Oman, believes that television and theatre are the best sources of information for children and young people at school age. They are well above the traditional sources such as parents, teachers and friends. This fact confirms the importance of the mass media for the education of future generations.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the important role, which the means of communication play in bringing peoples of the world together both at the intellectual and cultural levels, thus contributing to their mutual understanding and solidarity. The international community also realises the dangers facing the world, particularly in the fields of disarmament and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries.”¹³⁰

The mass media in the Oman try to take part in the development plan through the transmission of educational programmes. They also contribute to the fight against illiteracy by broadcasting courses for adults, so that the cultural and artistic levels of the masses can be improved. Besides, they are used in the social development of the country, particularly in rural and desert areas.

Today's human environment is no longer confined to the local space in which one's ancestors lived. But, it has surpassed this

¹²⁹ Al- Saati, Sana, **Culture and personality**, (Beirut, The Arab Renaissance Publishing House, Second Edition, 1983),p80

¹³⁰ Al- Obeidy, Jabbar and Katlam, Fallah, **The means of Mass communication**, The Cultural and scientific Affairs (Publishing House, Arab Horizon, Bagdad,1990), p9.

narrow sphere and taken wider proportions which nearly encompasses all the world¹³¹

Our era is witnessing a major revolution in the field of telecommunications technology, which can have extremely dangerous social, cultural, political and economic consequences. Moreover,

The world today is going through a new era characterised by the impact of telecommunications on everybody's life, to the extent that our era has become that of telecommunications.¹³²

Humans are not empty containers, which we must continuously fill up, but are constantly shaped by their environment. The mass media must take into consideration the social surroundings that affect people and respect their views in order to gain their trust.

We are approaching the era of interactivity which allows families to choose their TV programme at home from among many available choices, from a programme library specially designed for this purpose. This can be done either by using the telephone or subscribing to this service.¹³³

These facts confirm the point of view of most researchers in the field of development who assert that the economic, social and cultural aspects of development are, due to the nature of things and dynamics of society, interrelated, intertwined, complementary and interactive.

Hence, development in a given society cannot be independent from the aspects of conflict in the society. On the contrary, its objectives are determined in conformity with the rules which

¹³¹ Al- Fanis, Ahmed, **Principles of Education**, The Arab Book Publishing House, Libya, 1985,p57

¹³² Ibrahim, Mohammad Mauwadh and others, **Role of the Gulf Satellite Channels at the Arab and International level**, The Arab Magazine of Human Sciences, No.52, year 13 Summer of 1995 p.23.

¹³³ Alufflan, Hala Ahmed, **Information and the Family: Choices and Alternatives**, " Bahrain cultural M magazine, Bahrain, Issue No. 3 year 2, Jan. 1995, p12

serve the interest of the social forces that control the sources of economic wealth and political power.¹³⁴

When we study the meaning of the development process in society, we find that it means allowing society to fulfil its changing and increasing needs and its various demands and aspirations at the economic, social and cultural levels.

Contemporary development thinkers view each society as following its own way to achieve development. Its cultural heritage, national resources, economic environment and relations with the external world govern this way. (Development problems have in fact no ready-made solutions.¹³⁵

Doctor Mohamed Sayyid Mohamed rightly says:

The role of information does not only start when development starts. It actually begins before that by making a given developing society feel the warmth of its cultural heritage in comparison with developed societies which possess the means of luxury and welfare.¹³⁶

7.2. Reciprocal Impact of the Omani TV and Theatre, and the Cultural Situation in the

Country:

¹³⁴ A. Rahman, Awatif," **Problematic of Development Information in the Arab World**, (Egypt, the Arab Thought Publishing House, 1985), p3.

¹³⁵ Ibid p.6

¹³⁶ Mohammed, Mohamed Sayyed, **Information and Development**, (Egypt, the Arab Thought Publishing House, Fourth Edition, 1988), p9-10

The word "culture" means the acquisition of knowledge which develops criticism, taste and judgement. Culture may also be confined to a particular field of knowledge such as philosophy, literature, arts or science.¹³⁷

In general, culture means knowledge in the various intellectual fields, which are necessary for every enlightened human being to enable then to deal with all human issues in an open minded-way and understand them fully.

In other words, culture is the sum of the traditions, values, way of behaviour, trends, and relations, roles and techniques which society offers to the individual. It is a way of life for the group. The combination of all these components gives the group its distinguishing features.

Literature and art are essential components of culture. As to culture in the general sense, it represents all intellectual and artistic activity.¹³⁸

In other words, it comprises all the intellectual creation, which is vital for the existence of any nation. As to heritage, it contains the elements of originality and allows a culture to remain in touch with the past, adapt itself to the present and develop itself in the future. It also provides man with a way of life, modes of behaviour, values and traditions.

To say that a given society is witnessing a cultural boom, we have to make sure that it fulfils the following criteria:

- Prevalence of good quality education;
- Advanced scientific research and arts;
- Wide spread of arts and literature among people;

¹³⁷ Iejali, Mustafa, and others, **The culture of the Arab Child between Alienation and Originality**, (Rabat, Morocco, Published by the National Council for the Arab Culture, First Edition, 1990), p18.

¹³⁸ Soflan, Akef Yousif, "The Cultural and Information Challenge", **Conference Cultural Challenges and the Cultural Invasion of the Gulf Arab States**, (organized by the Gulf State Office of Arab Education, Muscat, 21-23/4/1985), p2

- Prevalence of scientific thinking which governs; and people's mind and behaviour in all circumstances
- Freedom of thought.¹³⁹

Despite the cultural development, which the Omani society has achieved since the beginning of the Omani Renaissance, which started 32 years ago and is still under way, it has not reached the stage of intellectual boom yet. This may be due, in my view, to a lack of application of modern education methods, which play an important part in the cultural development of the country. Education actually transmits culture, develops new trends and stimulates the social and economic development. The clear deficiency of technical progress in comparison with international standards affects the advancement of Arab culture in general and Omani culture in particular.

We are facing today a rapidly changing civilisation in contrast with the ancient ones, which were relatively stable. Moreover, the modern civilisation comprises various contradicting tendencies because of the different circumstances prevailing now days. This situation has led to a diversity of trends and attitudes.

Consequently, a cultural crisis has arisen because of the lack of a unified purpose that brings all peoples together. Besides, we are unable to get rid of imitation and reach the stage of originality and creation. Originality, in fact, requires a developed personal and cultural basis and a free and conscious mind.¹⁴⁰

The reason for this inability is the fact that, in our era, the audio-visual means of communication have nearly eliminated the written press. These means indeed offer powerful tools, which can have a real impact on the audience. Moreover, the viewer or listener becomes

¹³⁹ Alshamani, Omar Al toumi, 1985, p40

¹⁴⁰ **Conference on Cultural Challenges and the Cultural Invasion of the Gulf Arab States**, Ibid, p8

passive and consumes the imported cultural models. The American dream is behind the exportation of the western cultural modes, which aim at unifying the tastes, minds, behaviour and trends of people, linking some selected categories of people with the western culture through unconscious emotional bonds.

If we make a technical, scientific and artistic comparison between the countries, which have the capacity to export cultural modes and the Sultanate of Oman, we will find that the Omani TV and theatre are trying to highlight and form an original Omani culture based on Arab characteristics derived from history.

Each group of people has its own culture made up of its customs and traditions, which cannot exist without the social group.¹⁴¹

This does not mean that I am in favour of the Omani society living in seclusion in order to protect its Arabism. In fact, protecting the Arab identity does not preclude the openness of society towards positive aspects in other civilisations in order to enrich the Arab civilisation within a balanced framework. Besides, the protection of one's own culture does not mean inaction and sticking to the ancient heritage. It rather is a process, which allows society to move forward without losing its original identity. It is an interaction between originality and modernity, which permits us to take positive aspects from other cultures and adapt them to our environment and education.

Today, the right to culture has become a synonym of the right to education and complements the citizen's political, social and economic rights. Cultural development can, in fact, be

¹⁴¹ Alshamani, Omar Altoumi, 1985, Ibid, p109.

considered as one of the components of development's policy and is closely linked to the economic, social and information development plan in the country.

In their sixth session, the Arab ministers in charge of cultural affairs concluded that

The Arab cultural policy seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Consolidation of the concept of the Arab culture as a national and human culture, based on the origins and heritage of the Arab nation while accepting modern trends and contributing positively to the advance of world civilisation.

2. Formation of an integrated personality for Arab man while insisting on his heritage and belonging to the Arab nation, his preparation for accepting modern thought facts and world cultures and refining his thoughts and feelings so that he could be an active force in his country's progress.

3. Democratising culture in a way that guarantees its expansion among citizens.¹⁴²

In my view, the following steps have to be taken in order to tackle Arab cultural policy issues:

- Achieving cultural planning
- Taking into account the local environment of every Arab country while keeping in mind the necessity to preserve the unity of the Arab world
- Insisting on Arab reality
- Expanding cultural services among people through the use of existing cultural organisations
- Selecting qualified personnel with the capabilities for work in the cultural field
- Grouping cultural services in a single body which can help in setting priorities for the cultural activity

¹⁴² **Conference of the Arab Ministers in charge of cultural Affairs**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, Sixth session, Damascus, April 21-23, 1987, Tunis, 1987), p8.

- Taking advantage of the available local national and international resources in order to procure the necessary funds for this sector, while respecting economic conditions when implementing cultural projects and programme
- Supplementing the work achieved by schools through other cultural means and improving relations between the school and cultural means of communication
- Rationalisation of the direct cultural activity in the fields of cultural heritage and modern Arab cultural, which comprises arts, literature, cultural legislation and national institutions
- Adopting the Arab copyright agreement presented by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALESCO) to the Arab countries.

Regardless of the role played by information in the cultural process, its part in this process remains extremely sensitive and dangerous. Information cannot be neutral, since it is always selected and filtered before being presented to the public.

Therefore, the mass media in the Arab countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, must control and scrutinise cultural values and behaviours imported from information sources like the media and arts, which are very often consumed raw and may be harmful for a society such as Oman, which is still in the first steps of development of human resource.

However, the failure of the Arab culture to catch up with modern trends is due to the belief that the only way man benefits from culture is by spiritual pleasure and mental exercise. Even if this were the case, it would be legitimate to consider this objective as a fundamental one that deserves particular attention, since spiritual pleasure is a value and mental illumination is a dazzling happiness.

Yet, culture has another impact on practical life: it participates in the formation of human identity and defines its position vis-à-vis itself, people and life in general.¹⁴³

These facts lay huge responsibilities on people in charge of culture and information. They should work hard to select, translate and after the best available scientific, cultural and educational programmes.

What is more irritating is that these policies do not specify the concept of cultural programme and their rate of contribution to the development process. There is also no complementarity between these policies. Consequently, neither television nor the other mass media can be fully used in the field of development.¹⁴⁴

I think that the Gulf information media, including those in the Sultanate of Oman, suffer from the lack of studies on their impact. It is commonly known that TV, for example, addresses audiences, which have different cultural and educational levels, ages, religious, social and economic status, sex, and geographical locations. There are also psychological and social peculiarities, which affect people's response to TV programmes namely, social patterns and values, and viewers' aspirations, inclinations and behaviour. Therefore;

The study of the TV audience is necessary for the success of persuasive TV communication.¹⁴⁵

I do not impute these shortcomings only to the Oman TV. The Omani theatre bears a share of responsibility as well, particularly in the field of national culture.

¹⁴³ M. Naguib, **About Cultural and Education**, Egypt, the Egyptian- Lebanese Publishing House, First Edition, 1990, p162

¹⁴⁴ A Group of Researchers, **The Culture of Information and the Information of Culture**, Ibid p11

¹⁴⁵ Maati, Adil **The role of Education in Combating the Potential Negative Impacts of the Foreign TV Eve Broadcasts**, (Sharjah UAE, Al- Rafed Magazine, No. 7, April 1995), p61

I also think that the clear deficiency in developing the human resources in the Sultanate is due to the fact that the Omani culture has faced various pressures and suffers from cultural and educational underdevelopment, which limits the ability of individuals to adapt themselves to the cultural environment, at both the national and international levels. The cause of this situation may be attributed to the rapid technological changes that occur in our times and which the individual cannot grasp easily.

In cultures that undergo rapid changes, the dividing line between the ideal culture and the realistic culture expands continuously, that is to say, the speed of technological change exceeds that of ideals.¹⁴⁶

7.3 Reciprocal Impact of the Oman TV, Theatre and the Social Situation in the Country:

Societies favour responsible individuals who rely on themselves and do not surrender to problems, but face up to them with appropriate means.

A sociologist considers that social revolutions must rely on women and the youth. They add, however, that these two categories need stimulation, supervision and support.¹⁴⁷

According to the social rule, people armed with knowledge and ideas are the best force for change. In this respect, television and cinema are seen as the most effective means of communication although their spread may, in some cases, be limited. Radio, on the contrary, reaches more people. Moreover:

¹⁴⁶ Alshamani, Omar altoumi, 1985, Ibid, p38

¹⁴⁷ Alza, Mohamed Jala, *The Attainment of the Extreme Dimension in the Struggle for the Child's survival and envelopment*, (April, 1986), p.42

Recorded tapes have proved effective in the dissemination of messages in many political revolutions.¹⁴⁸

The evaluation of the Arab society, including Oman, from a social stand –point reveals that

It is a transitional society which faces a confrontation between various conflicting forces, both at the local and international levels. This situation compels it to change constantly while going through a tough parturition. It is also an under- developed society which struggles within the third world for its independence from colonialism and the development of its resources.¹⁴⁹

Some aspects of its underdevelopment consist of the cultural gap which separate it from the industrialized societies, and the state of poverty in which it lives, not only because of colonial plundering but due to its internal class structure and weak and authorization political systems which consider man as their enemy. As this society is unable to control its resources and destiny, and lives in a state of total internal confusion, it feels itself alienated from its nature .It is also a society dominated by primitive social relations and emotional expressive tendencies .As to the relation between the environment and people in the Arab world, we can say that there is a big diversity in the Arab countries regarding the environment, ways of living of people in rural and urban areas, cultures, and openness to world cultures, a privileged and rich geographical position and a spiritual gift that comprises three world religions: Judaism ,Christianity and Islam.

The Arab society needs a social revolution, which will eject it from the state of immobility in which it is confined.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p43

¹⁴⁹ Iejali, Mustafa and Others, 1990, Ibid, p125.

This goal can only be achieved by tackling the issues of underdevelopment. Prior to this, Arab specialists must evaluate the stagnation of the Islamic world.¹⁵⁰

Countries like China and Japan started from the stage of underdevelopment in which we are now, and managed to achieve major success. They adopted a new dynamism and succeeded in adapting themselves to the modern world. Any society, which lags behind scientific progress, will undoubtedly lose control of its previous achievements.

The Arab Nation, including the Sultanate of Oman, believes that any revolution against our present situation must be preceded by a revolution that transforms the Arab individual into a new human being who combines his culture with openness to modern science and know-how.

This belief is not the result of individual efforts but the fruits of collective thinking and action.

In the past science relied on efforts made by individuals and sought to serve the individual with all the risk such an action comprises. Modern technology, however, is based on collective work and benefits. The better is financed, applied and spread, the better are its chances of continuity and development.¹⁵¹

Nowadays, television, film and theatre have become modern tools for the formation of mankind and the development of their capabilities. For example,

Nearly 70% of pictures formed by man are taken from the mass media.¹⁵²

The mental picture is made up of the knowledge man has about main elements such as: The place the individual lives in, its

¹⁵⁰ Alarwi, Abdullah, **Our Culture in the Light of History**, (Beirut, The Arab Cultural Centre, Third Edition, 1992), p.121.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.139

¹⁵² Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p46.

position vis – a-vis the external world, relations of the individual with the family, neighbours and friends, time and historical social information he acquires.¹⁵³

Consequently the mental picture differs from one individual to another.¹⁵⁴

This is so because no personal experience can match somebody else's. Hence, every individual interprets his own experience according to what he has experienced in life.

Therefore, the artist bears a reciprocal responsibility towards society. That is to say that the real artist who expresses people's feelings can enjoy his artistic freedom within social responsibility,

Because he is guided only by his feelings which contribute to the advance of society as a whole through his beautiful art.¹⁵⁵

The arts were, in fact one of the best tools which humanity used to develop its social concepts and change its moral standards throughout history.¹⁵⁶

Thus, art rendered huge services to humanity by enabling it to change for the better, continuously. It also inoculated it with flexibility and the disposition for development, which is necessary for the continuation of mankind. The arts, however, are not the only element that affects the building and development of societies. Therefore,

Intellectual development cannot be perceived in a comprehensive way without comprehending the general movement of society as far as its relations, systems and institutions are concerned.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Ibid, p45

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p45

¹⁵⁵ Salim, Nadhmi, and Aziz, Mohamed, **Aesthetic Value**, (Egypt, Al- Maarif Publishing House, Region of Alexandria, No Publishing date), p158.

¹⁵⁶ Altuwaim, Mohammed, **The Nature of Art and the Responsibility of the Artist**, (Egypt: Institute of the Arab Higher Studies, Second Edition, 1964, p85

¹⁵⁷ Ibrahim, Saad Elddin, **Egypt In 25 years**, (Beirut, Al- Inma Al-Arabi Publishing House, First Edition, 1986), p33.

The revolution of telecommunications has produced common denominators in modern man's behaviour and thinking, let alone his clothing and food. Consequently, the Arab youth are today attached to the illusion of American Supremacy. They, for instance, adopt up-to-date hair – cuts, wear chains and black leather clothes decorated with steel, drive their cars in a crazy way, imitate film heroes in smoking, gather in a circle around fast food restaurants, and hang on their walls pictures of the stars whom they see in films, or pop stars. As to girls, they follow fashion and are interested in perfumes and cosmetics, dancing and adolescence related issues.

Therefore television, film and theatre have become today sources of controversy and debate. Some people consider them as a means of entertainment, while others see them as devices, which disseminate information and have political and educational capabilities that can affect society to a great extent.

I think T.V, film and theatre offer the family a changing atmosphere, which kills boredom, as they entertainment and highlight new talents and present and them to the public. They can also take part in the educational process by offering productions programmes which can help students and contribute to the struggle against illiteracy, especially in heavily populated areas.

7.3.1 Information from a Social Point of View

Information must be based on facts, which truly express the mentality, inclination and trends of the masses. If literature and art are welcomed by the mass media which use them when addressing readers, viewers and listeners, information requirements do not change at all. This combination rather confirms the close relationship between science and art in the fields of human studies, and their applications.

As a matter of fact, information functions have not changed throughout the ages. Since the age of the tribe living in the cavern until our era, which has witnessed man walking on the moon, what has emerged is a need to widen the scope of these functions.

Therefore, information has, since the beginning of mankind, been an important factor in the building of societies.

Information must take part in the remoulding of individuals and their continuous development. Such a goal can be achieved through the elimination of obsolete concepts, values, ideas and traditions which prevent society from facing up to present and future challenges. It must at the same time consolidate and spread new ideas and concepts which are appropriate for our era. Besides, information must guarantee the formation of individuals in a way that allow them to assume their responsibilities and fulfil their demands and aspirations.¹⁵⁸

As an Omani citizen and an information specialist, I think it necessary for some individuals and institutions to participate in the efforts made in social fields for this purpose.

The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO) held a meeting in May 1980 in Oman to discuss the use of satellite communication techniques in carrying out educational process. The participants warned that such a project must be well conceived, organized and carried out. It was also recommended that particular attention be given to the fight against illiteracy by elaborating a unified programme for the Arab countries and defining these countries information needs regarding educational programmes. Finally, the meeting recommended the support of the Arab information, cultural and educational research centres,

¹⁵⁸ Almawlid, Fawzia, **Radio and Development**, (Egypt, the General Book Organization, the Cultural Library, No.501, 1994), p10-11

which could be asked to carry out studies and surveys related to the use of the satellite network.

159

Therefore, the language of information is that of civilization. It is a great denominator for knowledge, culture, industry, commerce, sciences, social sciences, arts and literature.

7.4 Reciprocal Impact of TV and the Educational Situation in Oman:

Television can, when used as an educational tool, considerably widen the scope of education and reach out to the masses. Moreover,

Many studies carried out in the Arab countries and throughout the world confirmed the effectiveness of television as an educational tool, both when used independently or as an aid. ¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, the educational programmes for students offered by TV are closely linked to school curricula, which cover all levels of education. They are either nearly the same or comprise detailed information which helps students in their daily life. TV actually selects from the curriculum, topics which require further explanation.

Television may become a continuous source of education in all fields of life. The success of TV, or its failure, however, depends on the appropriate use of its various capabilities, on the one hand and the reaction of the targeted audience, on the other.

The educational process via television has shifted from the local broadcast for all to a closed circuit learning technology. Moreover, videotapes are being used in this process, in addition to

¹⁵⁹ Hussein, Samir Mohammed, 1988, Ibid, p.76.

¹⁶⁰ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p25-26

specialized microwave channels. We are also expecting interactive TV to be used in the process, as well as the multi media computer software applications.

In fact, we are nearing the day when the student will receive, instead of books, floppy disks, which he can watch either on computer or on a TV screen. He will be able, then, to listen to these new aids and learn from them in a complex process involving the senses and animation¹⁶¹

Educational TV programmes require considerable planning and co-ordination work between teachers and programme producers. Besides, the selection of the courses to be broadcast and their timing are very important. If these requirements are met, Omani TV will be able to carry out its mission fully and take part in the upward mobility of the people, thereby assuming its responsibility in setting the right path for future generations. We are living in an age which is witnessing a revolution in the means of mass communications. If these means are well used, they will contribute to the spread of love and harmony among people. This goal can be achieved by transmitting programmes which seek the progress of man, address his mind, improve his thinking and behaviour, provide him with new humane qualities and eliminate the ignorance, in which one half of humanity lives.

We really cannot ignore or diminish the role played by television in the educational process.

It serves education by creating harmony among people and yielding quick results. It can also spread valuable educational expertise on a long scale, overstepping barriers of time and place.
¹⁶²

Yet, some observers think that

¹⁶¹ Alunfflan, Hala Ahmed, 1995, Ibid, p14.

¹⁶² Hussein, Samir Mohammed, 1988, Ibid, p72

Television can have negative impacts on the mentality of people. It is also accused in many countries of destroying social values, spreading triviality, spoiling emotions, killing creation, hampering education, and destroying cultural and educational achievements. Moreover, cultural patterns exported by the west to the developing countries via TV programmes are accused of encouraging passivity and isolation and highlighting individualism, which contrasts with the spirit of the group and collective work. These effects are said to be particularly harmful to children.¹⁶³

After presenting these views and analyses and comparing between them psychologically, socially and educationally, I can confirm that

Culture is no more a mental luxury, but rather a way of life and the book is the first real tool of education.¹⁶⁴

Assuring that the educational level of societies matches their cultural and social levels. The functions assumed by the means of communication, including the book, are in fact, dependent upon the needs of each society for such functions.

The more society progresses, the more it feels the need for communication. As the functions of communication are linked to the materials and spiritual needs of individuals, the developing countries are in bad need, nowadays, of information tools in order to develop the people's identities, educate them and satisfy their material needs.¹⁶⁵

Moreover:

¹⁶³ A group of Researchers, **The Culture of Information and the Information of Culture**, p102.

¹⁶⁴ Sharaf, Abdulaziz, **The Mass Media and the Problem of Culture**, (Beirut, Al-Jail Publishing House, First Edition, 1993), p28.

¹⁶⁵ Kattum, Flah, and Alobeidy, Jaber, 1990, Ibid, p51.

Any social phenomenon which departs from the society's values and norms threatens the balance prevailing in the social system as well as the whole social structure.¹⁶⁶

In the light of the requirements of our era, each State has to establish a satellite TV channel or a national channel because education is closely linked to television broadcasts. The less education there is, the more illiteracy will spread among individuals. Consequently, the ability of people to communicate with each other is diminished. Conversely,

The more chances of education are the better mass communications will perform, as education is an important factor in the transfer of technology and knowledge.¹⁶⁷

This goal requires, however, an educational strategy, which seeks to consolidate the relationship between science and technology, and the use of scientific research for the development of society in all fields of life. Therefore, professional and artistic education must be given priority over general education.

It must also aim at developing of the individual's investigative mind by improving his creative capabilities so that he can face up to the requirements of his era¹⁶⁸

If we accept psychologists' definition of learning as a constant change in behaviour resulting from experience", we must recognize that television plays a role in the process of learning as long as there is a change of behaviour due to watching TV programme. Television contributes to the process of education. The cognitive nature of the change in behaviour is one of the reasons why most studies deal with the issue of television and learning.

¹⁶⁶ Alteer, Mustafa Omar, **The Social Problems: Defining the General Framework**, The Arab thought Magazine, Tripoli, Libya, Feb. 1981, No 19, p16.

¹⁶⁷ Kathum, Falah and Alobeidy, Jaber, 1990, Ibid, p.119.

¹⁶⁸ Alfani, Ahmed, 1985, Ibid, p70

Education and instruction are among the most important objectives of information especially in the developing countries, which try to utilize all possible means in order to build and develop society. This goal depends on the consolidation of the educational process by providing cultural, scientific and educational programmes for the family.

Since official education for women has started only recently in the Gulf States, women in these countries seek information regarding their role at home and the upbringing of their children, by listening to women's and family programmes. Therefore, television has become for some of them a kind of continuous social education, in addition to being a means of entertainment. It also serves to encourage rapprochement between distant regions, since.

The Gulf Television Organization has adopted since 1979 the idea of setting up a specialized TV channel, which transmits a joint Gulf educational programme at the same time in all member states.¹⁶⁹

It may be argued that the mass media participate along with other media in freeing individuals from isolation, illiteracy and ignorance.

If the mass media are well used, they will create fundamental changes in social communications and human interaction within any people. This goal can be attained by spreading popular culture, exchanging technical knowledge and experience and making education accessible to all, in and outside schools.¹⁷⁰

The mass media also contribute to the organization of social relations among citizens, consolidate diplomatic relations with other countries and define relations between citizens and

¹⁶⁹ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, Ibid, p 28.

¹⁷⁰ Kathum, Fallah, and Alobeidy, Jaber, 1990, Ibid, p9-10.

the authorities. Besides, they uncover negative actions carried out by people who use their official positions to harm society. Thus,

The mass media can play the role of the prosecutor and call these individuals to account in order to defend people's rights, values and morale.¹⁷¹

The philosophy and objectives of education in the Sultanate of Oman, as stated by the Ministry of Education, are embodied in nine principal goals. One of them deals with national and political education and is regarded as a unionist goal.

Education aims at making the Omani citizen aware of his rights and duties towards his country and his obligations vis-à-vis his nation. Education also seeks to make the Omani citizen aware that the unity of the Arab nation is the source of its power which allows the Nation to recover its rights, besides realizing the position of the Arab world and its material and human importance, which affects the economic and political trends in the world.¹⁷²

When the Director of Planning at the Ministry of Education was interviewed by the researcher about the educational process in Oman, he said that this process seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Simplifying the curricula and presenting them to the students in a new simple way by using illustrative means such as films, drawings, slides.
- Enriching the curricula by updating them and including new achievements which are explained to the students by using modern education techniques:

¹⁷¹ Ibid p56

¹⁷² A group of Researchers, *The Arab Education*, 1993, Ibid, P118-119.

Clarification of the curricula through the elimination of repetition and organization of training and necessary experiments.

-Attraction of the biggest possible number of students to these curricula because they are presented in a correct and simple way which combines audio, video and motion, thus enabling them to understand them easily.

-The various courses presented support the official curricula and give the opportunity for non-students to learn.

-Educational courses have a big impact on encouraging students to understand their courses well and give correct answers in examinations

Unfortunately, however, most of the teaching methods used in Omani schools still follow the traditional techniques, which are based on the following:

1. Analysis and Progress

Learning begins with acquiring the easiest elements, followed by the analysis of the course in a way that splits it into a number of elements, which become easy to understand.

2. Formalism

The above-mentioned analysis leads to links, which seem totally logical. Then, classifications and comparisons multiply.

3. Learning by Heart

Afterwards, the process of learning by heart becomes easy. The child tries to satisfy his teacher whose mission is confined to controlling the child's repetition of what he has been taught.

4. Authority

It is linked to the punishments imposed in the class. The teacher's role sometimes resembles that of the father or the mother.

5. Competition

The principle of competition completes the principle of authority. The basis of competition lies in the child's strong tendency towards imitation.

6. Intuition

Education must rely on direct sensitive intuition and present tangible information which children can see and grasp ¹⁷³

7.4.1 Classical Arabic in the Mass Media

Some observers think that the language used in information media is a violation of the Arabic language Arabs were accustomed to. They even say that the mass media may destroy the efforts made by schools in the teaching of the ancestors' language. We even see that some presenters in Arab countries are not cultivated and speak poor Arabic. Therefore,

The mass media undermine the efforts made during the day by teachers. States spent tens of billions of dollars on TV and Radio in order to destroy achievements, which cost hundreds of billion of dollars. ¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Palam, Gue, **Method of Education**, Translated by, Kabar, Josef Aboud, (Beirut, Awidat Publications, Third Edition, 1995), p9-10.

¹⁷⁴ **Conference of Arab Ministers in charges of Cultural Affairs the Arab League Educational**, (Cultural and Scientific Organisation, Seven Session, Rabat, 10-13/10/1989, Tunis 1989), p159.

I agree with the previous point of view because the Arabic Language is facing nowadays the challenges of the modern era in which information is one of its most salient phenomena. It follows the speed of technological developments and increases its interaction with all actions carried out by the modern man.

However, the problem does not lie solely in the Arab mass media, but appears also among intellectuals and specialists. The recommendations of the 7th session of the officials in charge of cultural affairs included the following remarks:

Arab specialists including, among others, doctors, and technologists, prefer to use foreign language in their work, thus evading the severe rules imposed by Arabic. Yet, they may be compelled to adapt their ideas to these rules¹⁷⁵

Since the colloquial language is unable to assimilate abstract concepts, it may contribute to the listener's intellectual degradation.

Ibn Khaldoun said in this regard hearing is the king of faculties.¹⁷⁶

Therefore, we can say that

Clear and correct Arabic, which must be used by the mass media, can carry samples of knowledge which can crystallize the national culture when combined with school education.¹⁷⁷

This situation will not, however, prevent Arabs from communicating with the rest of the world.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p 156.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p 158

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p 180

The unified technical language in the age of mass communications has proved effective in the translation from one language to another.¹⁷⁸

An example can mentioned here to illustrate the necessity to preserve, assert and spread the national language:

France opposed the flow of American films for fears that people who saw these films would speak American, thus threatening the French language. If the language is an expression of the cultural identity of the nation, Arabic is so for the Arab Nation, since it is the only language spoken by the masses who, because of their living conditions and the spread of illiteracy among them, were not acquainted with foreign cultures¹⁷⁹

7.5 Open Sesame, a pioneer experience in children's TV production:

In this section, the development of an Arab version of the American *Sesame Street*, called Open Sesame, is presented as an example of how modern educational aspiration and the concern for Arab culture and heritage can be reconsidered.

First of all, "Open Sesame" is not a pure Arab creative programme. It is an Arabic version of a ready-made American model, which underwent many amendments to go in line with the Arab culture and the mentality of Arab children.

Taking from other cultures intentionally or non-intentionally and inter-cultural interaction are a natural process that results from communication between nations.

¹⁷⁸ Sharaf, Abdulaziz, 1993, Ibid, p 270.

¹⁷⁹ Conference of Arab Ministers in Charge of Cultural Affairs, Seventh Session 1989, p180.

Open Sesame 1979 was the first production of The Arabian Gulf Joint Programme Production Institution in the field of children's TV production. The programme is in two parts, totalling 260 episodes of 30 minutes each. The first part (130 episodes) is addressed to pre-school children. The second part (130 episodes) is addressed to children aged 3-9 years. It was similar to the American TV programme "Sesame Street", produced in 1969.

The institution sees to it that mostly the imported cartoon movies are broadcast in their mother tongue. Arab children follow up the cartoon motion pictures only without clearly and accurately understanding the situations. Hence, the institution has solved this problem by establishing a special section to select the films suitable to the various stages of childhood, and supply them with simple Arabic subtitles so that they can be understood by Arab children in any country all over the Arab World.

The idea of producing an educational programme for Arab children first appeared in 1976 at the Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development in Kuwait. The Fund invited experts to study the possibility of adopting this programme into Arabic. The justifications for that were as follows:

- The Fund believes that financing of social development projects is not less important than financing of economic development projects.
- The Arab TVs do not have a unified Arab programme to address pre-school children.
- There have been positive effects of the American programme on American children, such that children's kindergarten programmes in the States have been amended in response to that effect.
- The American programme is adaptable to other languages. It has been re-produced in a number of European and Latin American countries. Thus it has become an international programme.

-The Gulf Institution, which is newly established, has considerable physical capabilities and expertise that can cope with this huge production.

In the middle of 1977, 130 episodes of the programme were produced. The Arab Fund financed the first phase of the production. The Institution attracted an elite of information experts, producers, creative personnel and educational academic staff to participate in the planning, training and conducting the preliminary studies. The workshop provided its expertise and materials available for the Arabization process.

The programme, when first introduced, was found to be acceptable and favourable to most children all over the Arab World. It was praised by the Arab TV stations, which presented it. Thus the institution was encouraged to continue with the production of the second part of the programme.

The success of this pioneer experiment has been attributed to the following factors:

- Staff including planning experts, producers and fund suppliers believe in the benefit of work and they were ready and full of enthusiasm to carry it out.
- Availability of funds.
- Availability of expertise.
- Proper Planning.
- Effective cooperation of the information and educational experts based upon confidence.
- Democratic administration of the project and making of collective resolutions after fruitful discussion.

7.5.1. Training of the leading staff:

In its development, the Arab world needs to take a lot from both the Oriental and Western cultures. The study missions sent every year are in fact an acknowledgment of our shortcomings in some fields of science or arts. The first step in the production of the programme was to train the leading staff in New York for three weeks. The selected group included 5 Arab experts in the field of information and education, from five Arab countries. They met with similar groups in the States to discuss and review methods of research and production. They selected 15 hours of films of the children's series suitable for the Arab world. They invented the human characters and dolls, which would play the roles in the scenes at the studio, and set out the specifications. Then, the team returned to Kuwait to start carrying out their mission. It was cooperative and the members knew their duties and relationship with other colleague.

7.5.2 Classical Arabic is the language of the programme:

The main task of the programme is to prepare Arab children for the primary school in which classical Arabic is the language of teaching. Classical Arabic is also the national language and the lingua franca of the Arab world, which unifies the method of expression of all Arab children. By using this classical language, the national goal will be achieved. The hypothesis of the team members was that Arab children would be able to understand classical Arabic, because it is already used in many settings. Broadcasts of the Holy Koran, news bulletins, official talks, plays, stories, poetry and various interviews are conducted in classical Arabic. This hypothesis needs to be proved scientifically based upon field research. The decision on the programme language was the most serious one in the whole process.

7.5.3 Production of research:

The sets were built at Kuwait TV. Everybody gets ready to play his part in this serious work. The two primary series were produced in a period of 3 months. The two series were full of varied episodes which were presented by four methods:

1 - Live play style: this is carried out by the main characters of the series. There are seven human characters as follows:

Fatima: a teacher in a kindergarten, street 20.

Hamad: An engineer, husband of Fatima.

Leila: A student at the Nursing School.

Hesham: Electric Equipment and Tools Repairer.

Abdullah: Street vendor, with a cart to sell items for children.

Khalil: Seller of juice and pies.

Said: Khalil's assistant. There are also two fictioned characters in the form of two puppets. They are:

Noaman: A puppet, which looks like a large bear of six years old only. It represents the generation of children with less intelligence and comprehension. It has good manners and characteristics that make it lovable to children. The shape was designed so as to be used by an actor who can move from one place to another.

Malsoun: It is a puppet, which looks like a parrot. It is knowledgeable due to its many travels to many places. It has initiative, is talkative and has positive relationships with others. It was designed so that an actor can move it with his hands. Together with the actors, the children of the district play and participate in the current events. Other characters may be invented as required by the situation such as the postman and visitors to the district.

2 - **Motion Pictures Method:** This method proves to be useful for the children who are always fond of it. Motion pictures are always attractive for the children. The method was employed here for educational purposes.

3 - **Method of Live Movies:** It describes the reality to enrich the child with knowledge, starting from the immediate surroundings and expanding gradually to contain the Arab and the whole world.

4 - **Puppet Method:** these scenes were selected from the puppets of the original 'Sesame Street', and dubbed into Arabic.

7.5.4. Methodological Objectives:

The methodological objectives covered ten fields:

1 - **The linguistic and knowledge field:** This includes familiarization with symbols such as digits, numbers, words, geometrical shapes, organization of cognition, concepts, relationships and classification.

2 - **Physical and psychological health field:** It encourages children's awareness of their physical being, the functions of the bodily organs, personal hygiene and cleaning of the surrounding environment. It takes care of the child's mental ability and acquisition of skills. It encourages the child to deal with his/her emotions, such as love, fear and anger.

3- **Social and Economic Aspect:** It makes the child aware of some basic social facts such as knowledge about professions, trades and social institutions such as family and other experiences. It illustrates the value of cooperation in carrying out work, respect the others' opinions' and so on.

4- Scientific thinking: It makes the child aware of its natural and artificial environment, how things occur in nature and in society. It attracts the attention of the child to the method of causation and problem solving.

5- Machine and Technology Field: It makes the child aware of machines, their role in the increase of production, decrease of effort and saving of money and time and pushing developing societies towards further progress.

6 - Craft Field: It deals with the enlightenment of the child with the value of the human hand, the importance of the handwork, and the various skills gained from using the hands.

7 - Taste Field: It makes the child aware and draws his/her attention to the beauty in nature and arts, and the effect of art in the development of human behaviour.

8 - National field: It enlightens the child with the fact that he/she is an individual of a great nation with a great history and one language, and that the Arab World is his large world, with great wealth and resources.

9 - Human Field: It incites the awareness of the child that people are alike despite their different colours or languages. Peoples of the world, including Arabs communicate and co-exist with each other.

10- Soul Field: It seeks to draw the attention of the child towards the universe and creatures, which bear evidence of the existence of Allah, and to demonstrate that what is pleasing to God is good for people, such as ethical and moral principles, truth, honesty, faithfulness, and non-exploitation of other people.

Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that in the face of the complex socio-economic changes being pursued in Oman, television and theatre need to be planned to address social and ethical issues,

as well as to transmit information. The strong visual impact of these media, and the emotional engagement they invite, make them ideal vehicles for the transmission of culture and knowledge. This must, however, be achieved within a distinctively Arab framework. This does not mean rejecting out of hand the experience of the West, but adapting that experience to local values. The successful experience with the children's television programme, *Open Sesame*, shows that it is possible to adapt Western models to local needs, in a way that is both entertaining and informative. Such adaptation has been successful in the realm of television; the question now arises whether anything similar is possible in the area of live theatre and drama. In the next chapter, therefore, Western models of children's theatre and drama, that may be usefully imported and adapted in the Omani context, will be presented.

Chapter Eight

Children's Drama and its Various Types: Western Models

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to familiarise ourselves with various types of drama for children that have evolved in Britain and the West, and to situate the Omani case within that framework. The researcher has chosen to focus on the U.K., rather than other Western theatre models such as those of continental Europe, because, studying in the U.K., he had many opportunities to visit theatres and observe at first hand a variety of models of children's theatre and drama. Models up to the 1990s have been examined as these are, in the researcher's opinion appropriate and relevant to Oman's current situation. It is believed that the discussion of various types of drama experience, especially those that have evolved in the west, may enrich the thinking and activities of societies such as Oman, which have a less developed experience in this field, and open new horizons for future creative developments. The marriage between the local experience in drama and the international perspective may embodied the way in which cultures and societies interact with each other. The discussion will be presented in two sections, as follows. The first gives a brief historical overview of the development of children's theatre. The second describes various dimensions of the use of drama by and for children, both in the theatre and in schools.

8.1. A brief history of children's theatre in Britain:

As far as the evolution of the children's theatre in Britain is concerned, the first widely staged children's play was J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* in 1904. It was not aimed only at children, but at the children in all of us, and it so happened that at its first production audiences were largely adults. Drawing on pantomime conventions including audience participation, it was considered a children's theatre.

The first professional theatre company was the Scottish Children's Theatre, founded in 1927 by Bertha Waddell, which was permitted to perform in schools. Since the First World War, children had been encouraged to go to the Old Vic on Sundays, with special matinees at low prices, but the plays were not specially written for them. Peter Slade in the thirties, who first mooted a theoretical basis for participation work, founded two companies, one in East Anglia in 1930-1, and one in the London and home counties in 1935. He was trying at this stage to reconcile the spontaneous with the artistically wrought dramas. Brian Way, in the 1940s, was also highly influential in developing performances.

In 1954, Peter Slade published *Child Drama*, a seminal book, which did much to wrench drama away from theatrical skills and towards child psychology. To Slade, children's drama did not need to express itself through adult conventions but could claim to be an art form on its own. In this, it both fostered and resulted from growing trends towards child-centred education. Slade made a conscious attempt to match material with age group or with the stage of development at which he judged the children to be. For Slade and Way, the school was the natural setting for children's performances, in which the audience of children participated. Both worked mainly in schools.

The years following the Second World War saw the formation of several children's theatre companies. Caryl Jenner's Mobile Theatre subsequently became the Union Theatre; the first full-time professional theatre for children in London, which the arts and it toured schools until 1967. Finance was a major problem for all these companies, whether playing in theatres or schools, and it was not until the sixties that Arts Council funding, albeit limited, became available for children's work.

The 1960s were an era of expansion and innovation. The economy boomed and more money was available to workers in the field of young people's theatre. Child-centred education gathered momentum, which via the boom in drama in education and theatrical provision gave rise to Theatre in Education. Alan England captured the mood:

The terms "lesson" and "stage play" were replaced by the word "programme" as the experience will probably incorporate different and sometimes a greater variety of communication methods than will either the traditional lesson or the traditional play. This accorded with developments in education which stressed the unique value of the child's individual experience and insight rather than the social forms in which traditional theatrical statements had to be made.¹⁸⁰

A most significant step forward, in 1965, was the arrival of Theatre in Education at the Belgrade, Coventry. In 1967 the burgeoning world of educational drama greeted the publication of one of its sacred texts, Brian Way's, *Development through Drama*.

David Wood in the late sixties and early seventies targeted the primary school age child, but amateurs, professional and schools performed his plays. He is one of the most important and prolific writers of "traditional" fantasies. Among his best known works are *The Owl and The Pussycat Went to Sea* (1986), *Plotters of Cabbage Patch Corner* (1970), *Fliberty and Penguin* (1971), *Hijack Over Hygenia* (1973), *The Gingerbread Man* (1976), *There Was an Old Woman* (1979), *The Meg and Mog Show* (1981) and *The Selfish Shellfish* (1983).

The last twenty-five years have seen the blossoming of Theatre in Education and small groups of touring children's theatre. The unique purpose built theatre for children was the Polka

¹⁸⁰ England, Alan, *Theatre for Young*, (London: Macmillan Ltd, 1990), p. 34.

Theatre, in Wimbledon, founded by Richard Gill. The twentieth century saw a growing interest in children's theatre as an art form, and since the sixties, more and more practitioners have dedicated themselves to it. By 1973 well over half the regional repertory theatres were doing some kind of work in schools.

The establishment of national provision for Theatre in Education/Young People Theatre as a free service throughout Great Britain demanded immediate reversal of the Arts Council decision to withdraw funding from M6 and the Harrogate companies, and showcases became a regular phenomenon:

The specialist children's theatres with a home base, Unicorn and Polka fought to fill their auditoriums all the year round. Under Nick Barter, the Arts Theatre at Great Newport Street underwent some radical structural alterations, extending the stage to be nearer to the audience, pulling the circle forward and redesigning the foyer.¹⁸¹

In 1983, the company of seven actors was putting on five main house productions and there were three studio productions as well per annum. A Unicorn Club was flourishing. School parties were encouraged and there was some touring of schools and the obligatory teachers' notes to sell the shows as educationally respectable.

Children's Theatre is crucial to the mental and spiritual development of children. It is not just 'entertainment' any more than Play is 'just playing' or Craft is 'mucking about with glue'. Children's Theatre is a tool of immense power. It must not be used for political propaganda, however oblique.

¹⁸¹ England, Alan, 1990, *Ibid*, p.55.

Polka theatre, which eschewed (overtly) the political, was political by implication, endorsing the status quo and yet the only theatre in Britain exclusively for children. Many of the presentations were puppet shows or a mixture of puppets and live actors.

David Wood subscribes to the philosophy of Richard Gill with regard to the importance of physical context. He, too, wants to produce in his young audiences a 'gasp of wonder'. Whirligig, his company, though, is a touring company *tout simple*.¹⁸²

When he first began his activities in the 1970s, Wood's venture was purely commercial, but he soon admitted the vital need for sponsorship:

David Wood is very much in charge of his operation and even the dramatic material he purveys is largely his own creation. He has it penchant for musicals and he also writes the tones and lyrics in styles varying from rock to soul. He is on record as having said he would consider scripts by other authors but they will have to suit the 'house style'.¹⁸³

He tries to engage reputable actors when possible, which is consistent with his policy of raising the status of children's theatre all round. He invokes educational benefit as one justification of his work. In the 1980s, David Wood was a much and widely produced writer, both at home and abroad. His plays have been taken over by provincial repertory companies and in venues like the Young Vic. *The Gingerbread Man* has acquired almost classic status.

8.2. Different aspects of children's drama

According to the Children's Theatre Association of America, one can look at all dramatic activity as existing on a continuum with drama in its natural state, the kind of dramatic play all children, and indeed all humans, engaged at one extreme, and formal theatre at the other. The

¹⁸² England, Alan, 1990, Ibid, p.61

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.61

distinctions between the various points on the continuum are drawn in part from the classical definitions of drama (a thing done) and theatre (to gaze). Basically, the more the focus of drama work is on the process of doing the work, the closer it is to creative drama, and the more the focus is on the product, the performed work and its impact on an audience, the closer it is to formal theatre. I personally believe that, in general, this continuum also reflects the minimum ages at which students can benefit most from particular activities. In what follows is a discussion of some basic definitions of forms of children's drama that have evolved in Britain.

8.2.1. Theatre in Education/Drama in Education

Theatre in education (TIE) is known as “work done by professional actor’s teachers in a school context”. Its primary purpose is educational, as a skill to promote other things. Theatre in Education was born in 1965. The term was coined to describe the work of an outreach team linked to a newly opened repertory theatre, The Belgrade in Coventry. Its broad aims were: To explore the values of drama in the development of the child's personality, to experiment in teaching methods using drama and theatre techniques, and to stimulate an interest in theatre in adult life. Those aims could readily stand as a valid, if somewhat idealistic, description of the work of contemporary theatre education departments. The use of "personality" dates the statement and an updated version might read ‘the development of the child's cultural identity’ or some such phrase. If they were the overall aims, the initial pilot scheme was to be: A performing company committed to an audience (of young people) for a single session, licensed to stimulate ideas and images by whatever methods connect here, now.

On the other hand, drama in education (DIE) is one of the arts activities for children in school, the same as writing, reading and speaking, and the medium through which children develop, and it is a tool or skill for teaching about other things.

Bernard Beckerman¹⁸⁴ distinguishes between theatre and drama, advocating a view of theatre as an art of presentation and drama as a special form of that art in which “one or more human beings isolated in time and space present themselves in imagined acts to another or others. The distinguishing element in this definition is “imagined acts,” that is, the presentation of illusions of reality.

Drama and theatre are the same; they are about plays, writers, actors, directors, rehearsal, performance, and audience. So drama teaching should centre on the study and appreciation of them. Therefore DIE and TIE share the same principal objective, that of bringing about a change in understanding. An important difference between the two, however, is that whereas the learning area in drama may centre on the theme of the subject-matter, the context becoming but a pretext for opening up the theme, a TIE team must bring a different emphasis to the subject-matter. Their very skills as actors allow them to offer a rich context not normally available to the drama teacher, so that this work must be both contextually and thematically significant.

According to the aspects of the process to be emphasised there are a number of ways in which DIE and TIE can be used in school, but children must take the decisions during this experience and responsibility for introducing content and ensuring personal involvement. The value of drama for the individual child depends on the depth of his involvement,

¹⁸⁴Beckerman, Bernard, *Theatrical Presentation: Performer, Audience and Act*, edited by Brim Gloria, (N.Y. Rutledge, 1990).

But again teachers need to be sensitive to what each individual child does see, and be aware of the variety of ways in which drama can be used. They need to be exposed to these ways of working, teaching and also need adequate time and facilities for developing these ways. A wider place for drama in school might help it to break out of the cycle of constraint, which currently limits its growth.

Learning through drama can be a rewarding and stimulating experience for both students and teacher, and it has wide application. It perhaps can be best defined for our purposes by stating some educational aims. The most important aims of drama in education are that its presentation in schools should educate, widen pupils' horizons and lead them to ask questions about the world around them, as well as entertain them to help them, gain confidence fluency and self-expression and improve their communication skills:

In a school situation it is both a method and a subject. As a subject on the curriculum, it uses various dramatic elements of movement, voice, personal development of the pupil, as method it utilises role-play and acting to teach pupil through experience for example pupils may learn the fact of an historical event by acting. Many secondary schools now have drama department, but in primary schools it is used as a method to teach a number of subjects.¹⁸⁵

As a teaching method it can emphasise achievement and put little stress on the right or wrong way of doing things and of course it increases children's self-esteem and self-presentation. By providing them with direct experiences it enables them to discover and develop their own strengths, and practice increases their self-confidence and their competence. Through drama,

¹⁸⁵ Nixon, John, (ed.) **Drama and the Whole Curriculum**, (Hutchinson and co. Ltd. 1982) p.137

students can improve their social awareness and interaction, by giving and taking and working and relating to other individuals:

They learn to use their initiative and to develop sensitivity by working in pairs, and in improvisation in small or large groups.¹⁸⁶

There are many other benefits that students can gain through drama, for instance, via games and exercises, and using their memory, imagination, and voice exercises they extend their ability to express emotional range, which is important for personal development and range of skills. Through drama, the individual can be brought closer to understanding of topics, issues, themes and concepts, and explore their interpersonal behaviour around social interaction. The long-term aim of drama is simply to help students understand themselves and the world, they live in, and to gain insight into all kinds human behaviour.

Most ESL teachers in Britain use drama techniques in their everyday teaching, especially in the beginning stages of learning, because visual experience helps students to fix new experiences in their mind and gain confidence in a variety of contexts, so from an early stage, the students should participate in doing and acting with teacher, and the teacher should encourage them to use dramatic techniques to approach the topic being taught.

Mime, gesture and acting-out are essential methods of communication with beginners and elementary students and it would be difficult to communicate without them. So drama helps the student to communicate with others and express his own feeling.

¹⁸⁶ Tony Jackson, (ed.) *Learning Through Theatre, Essay and Casebooks on theatre in Education*, (Manchester University Press, 1980), p.52

Gavin Bolton in his book, *Towards a Theory of Drama in Education*,¹⁸⁷ classified dramatic activities into three types. He said that if the teacher emphasises the importance of remembering the facts in sequence as a way of getting the children to practise scurrying round the hall soundly as rats, or if in pairs they design new rat-traps, then the teacher is using exercise activity. If the children use the story line simply as a reference point for their own form of playing, then they are in the more fluid dramatic playing activity. If the children and teacher are concerned with communicating every action and sound to someone else (real or hypothetical) to give a faithful, entertaining enactment of story, then clearly, they are working in theatre activity. DIE is a form of dramatic activity that depends upon a high level of freedom to allow children to express their feelings. Further, children seem to respond to the responsibility and excitement of documentary outcomes. Reason is given to their investigations and they are encouraged to draw conclusions and appreciate consequences. Drama in particular seems to provide the human context which links learning with the child's own experience. Taken together, these factors seem to suggest that drama and the arts in general should be seen not as an unimportant luxury, but as a formidable teaching vehicle.

Drama is currently included in the Natural Curriculum. In the years, drama is structured around the activities which are already part of young children's development; play and role play; whole group mime and movement activities.

Drama is being recognised as a valuable teaching and learning method.

Drama is an ideal subject for young children to experience and, at Key Stage 1, it is invaluable as a means for developing language skills, encourage positive social interaction, increasing physical

¹⁸⁷ Bolton, Gavin, *Toward a Theory of Drama in Education* (Longman, 1979).

control and teaching children how to listen and respond appropriately.¹⁸⁸

The National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching has replaced an English curriculum which used to contain specific drama elements, but also drama can be used within the context of other subjects as a method for exploration or to enhance understanding.

Drama is given a higher profile in the new National Curriculum and is included in AT1 as one of the four strands: speaking, listening, group discussion and interaction and drama activities. Much classroom drama, however, could include all the other strands since it will involve speaking, listening, discussing and interacting in small group.¹⁸⁹

We need to ensure that the arts and creativity are made an integral part of our education service, above all for young people, but throughout the whole of life as well. Our education needs to teach us to reason and to question and to analyse, but it needs to teach us to wonder too. And the arts are central to this.¹⁹⁰

Certainly drama classes can develop communication skills, instil confidence and encourage teamwork. And theatre in education can bring to life all kinds of curriculum topics and, through participation, make learning more palatable and fresh than constant reference to a textbook. Children should be encouraged to go to the theatre where there is a real theatre. The educational theatre should not be the only way to present theatre to children. Children also deserve relaxation. At the same time, entertaining lessons succeed more than purely factual ones.

The main attainment targets in the English curriculum focused on programmes of study to encourage literacy ('reading' and 'writing') and articulacy ('speaking' and 'listening'). It was in that latter area of articulacy that drama activities were recommended and teaching

¹⁸⁸ Drama in Primary School, www.q-ten.co.uk/artom/education/primary/primaryhotmail [7,5,2001]

¹⁸⁹ "Drama in Primary School", www.q-ten.co.uk/artom/education/primary/primaryhotmail [7,5,2001]

¹⁹⁰ England, Alan, 1990, p.6

methodologies from improvisation to role play, which were once the province of the drama teacher, were stipulated as the key approaches for this aspect of English. It was acknowledged:

It is interesting to note the forms of drama, which were acknowledged by the then Department of Education and Science (DES), role-play, improvisation and the scripted play. This did not recognise the range of activities, which were being taught in school's drama, nor did it place any emphasis on the role of theatre within drama work in schools.¹⁹¹

The emphasis throughout was on the role of drama in language teaching and effective communication. Even the inclusion of the 'scripted play' was more concerned with the play as dramatic literature, rather than as a production text. The reality of this challenge to traditional Drama in Education (DIE) in schools was not the wholesale diminution of drama departments as was feared, but the continuing support for a popular school subject unrestrained by the strictures of externally imposed attainment targets. In many respects, drama in schools has survived and developed precisely because it was outside the National Curriculum.

In establishing itself as separate and distinct from those practices, early DIE teachers had over emphasised the distance between theatre (acting out) and the imaginative improvisational work of drama. As drama as a subject matured and gained more widespread recognition, a greater synthesis of learning through and learning about drama developed along with an acceptance of that continuum of drama into theatre mentioned earlier.¹⁹²

Whilst children can benefit greatly from Drama in Education, an important role also exists for the exposure of children to the work of visiting actors, through TIE. A TIE programme often seems able to do what the school curriculum and many teachers can not. TIE appears to

¹⁹¹ Ibid

¹⁹² Willet, John (ed.), **Brecht on Theatre**. (London: Methuen) p.72

motivate pupils to learn at a time when the education system is being criticised for failing to do exactly that. But TIE's aspect of a general movement in the arts and education is based on recognition that the arts have particular social functions, and ways of expressing and communicating values. TIE cannot be classified as theatre or education; it is an attempt to blend the two at the point where their social functions overlap.

TIE is the use of theatre skills to create a rich learning process. It is a form of theatre that has arisen in direct response to the needs of both theatre and schools and which has sought to harness the techniques and imaginative potency of theatre in the service of education. The TIE programme is a co-ordinated and structured programme of work, usually devised and researched around a topic relevant to the school is curriculum and children's own lives, involving the children directly in an experience of situations and problems that the topic throws up.

The difficulty lies in the peculiar interaction between the theatrical art form and educational method, so companies should be able to integrate sensitively into the school environment. Entertainment is not enough; the piece should be quality theatre, well presented. The company members should have strong performance skills and either a background of TIE or teaching experience, so that the company has roots in both theatre and education, and understand the potential of children and school. TIE companies usually devise their own programmes based on the experience and interests of company members.

TIE combines the traditional theatre skills and techniques with modern educational philosophy and practice to create a medium for learning with direct emotional and intellectual impact upon the audience. The TIE programme is not only something to make the adult theatre familiar to

children, but it an experience provided for children to express their needs and thoughts, and to explore their own experience.

TIE is use of theatre skills to create a rich learning: it sets out to examine the real world in which we live and with people have to cope; it raises questions about understanding by so doing. It is the search for issues to be questioned and the subsequent transposition of them into theatrical form that is the job of the TIE company, and therefore of the actor-teacher¹⁹³

The majority of TIE programmes use recognisable forms such as plot, conflict and characterisation, and pupils are introduced to a problem through the programme's characters, which ask the pupils to help them find a solution. In the process, the pupils must understand, and be able to analyse the characters' differing points of view. And this, of course, stimulates their attention and motivates them to learn more about the subject afterwards; it does not require them to perform or to practise something, or remove autonomy from them. TIE can be an extension of the teachers' role, and also can be seen as offering a highly structured living through experience.

One of the most important influences on early TIE and the way in which it developed into the 70s, was that of Brecht¹⁹⁴, whose writings on theatre were becoming essential reading for anyone interested in the theatre from the mid 60s onwards. Brecht's didactic aims and fluid theatricality perfectly suited the style of TIE with its dual sense of purpose and commitment to both educational content and theatrical form. In general Brecht believed that there is to be a very sharp distinction between learning and amusing oneself. The first may be useful, but only the second is pleasant. Theatre remains theatre, even when it is instructive theatre, and in so far as it is good theatre it will amuse.

¹⁹³ Bolton, Gavin, 1979, Ibid, p.36

¹⁹⁴ Hining, Ruth Bell, Ibid, 1981.

A number of Brecht's dramaturgical ideas and theatrical practices readily became absorbed into the emerging forms of TIE.

Whatever shapes the programme took, the aims of TIE would be more concerned with Brecht's ideas of 'Epic theatre' than 'dramatic theatre' and in particular the deliberate attempt to hold the spectator at arm's length, so that he could keep his critical judgement throughout.¹⁹⁵

The development of later TIE, with closer integration of performance and audience participation, led to less of a division between 'dramatic' and 'epic' forms of work and increasing emphasis on the latter. This single fact of interactive and participatory theatre moves TIE as a form of learning theatre beyond the limitations which even Brecht found in his own work.

Most other TIE companies were based on the Coventry model. These companies were set up in same period as the growth of alternative theatre in Britain and now have to be much more efficient and professional in their approach to schools. Not only do they have to provide a service that schools want; they also have to be able to market themselves.

TIE is sort of a hybrid of Theatre and Creative Drama. It is usually a complex program involving some formal performance by professional actor-teachers, some classroom Creative Drama work, and an opportunity for all the participants to interact with the professional performers in role. Usually the outcome is not predetermined, and in well constructed TIE, the

¹⁹⁵ Rogers, Ric, **Audience Development: Collaborations between Education and Marketing**. (London: ACE, 1997).

actor-teachers will go anywhere the children take them-they are not constrained by a limited number of "versions." A classic British TIE project put school children in role as miners and owners on both sides of a labour dispute and had real debates. If the miners decided to strike, they struck. If the owners decided to bring in scabs, the company accommodated them. Although TIE is not always seen as the collective form for this work and it is very complex, but very effective if done well. TIE has many aspects, some of which are as follow:

1. Educational Theatre:

This is work performed by professional companies, either scripted or devised, that has a consciously educational content, but with no follow-up workshops. The work can be either toured to schools or performed in a theatre space. The work is directed at a specific age group of young people within the school age range (5-18). Much of the work currently done under the banner of TIE should more properly be categorised as Educational Theatre.

2. Theatre in Schools:

This work is specifically concerned with dramatic texts, often linked to the demands of the National Curriculum, particularly to the requirement that students by Key Stage 3 should have encountered at least two of Shakespeare's texts. The work is toured with minimal scenic requirements and a small company of actors. Plays are either abridged versions or a selection of key scenes and there may or may not be opportunities for discussion with the actors after the performance. The other form that needs to be considered under this category is The School Play. In some schools this is an annual event organised and directed by either the drama teacher or from within the English department. Practice varies, but this is generally a published dramatic text, although adaptations and devised work still play a part.

3. Theatre for Schools:

Under this category can be listed professional productions by local, regional or national theatre companies which are not designed specifically for schools, but which would attract groups of school students as a major part of their paying audiences. Special offers would be included as an additional inducement and the choice of play would normally reflect a text required for study at GCSE (15+) or 'A' (17+) Level. Other events, such as workshops, discussions, theatre tours, study notes may or may not be included in the package.

8.2.2 Theatre Workshops:

These workshops can take place either within a theatre building space or within the school space. Their intentions are to deepen an understanding of text, develop theatre skills or increase an awareness of theatre as an art form. Increasingly, the boundaries between those separate forms are becoming blurred as differently styled companies undertake a range of broadly educational work as part of their changing remit.

The work done under the name of 'Community Theatre' often has an educational component, whether this is explicit and promoted by a designated Education Officer or implicit in the nature of the work done with, for or by a specific community.

The other facilitating site for this range of activities under the umbrella of Theatre Education is in the work done within education departments of professional theatre companies.

However, it must be noted that some theatre artists were already taking this work seriously, long before the incentive of additional government or sponsorship funding encouraged others companies to regard education policies as more than merely tokenistic. The Royal Shakespeare

Company (RSC), for example, was undertaking this kind of work from as early as 1978 onwards, with workshops, lectures and guided tours.¹⁹⁶

A report for the Arts Council of England¹⁸ published in 1997 noted that 78 percent of arts organisations contacted had an education programme, although only 33 per cent had a designated education officer; there was a strong emphasis on education programmes being integrated with the activities of the main house, but only 23 per cent reported a dual approach in which some educational activities were separate. 85 per cent confirmed that the person with responsibility for education had input at senior management level. The most common activities reported were workshops, performance/displays, exhibitions, productions, residencies, in-service teacher training, lectures/demonstrations/talks, and the production of educational materials.

As is clear from this summary, the provision of educational work by theatre companies is very varied, but does not begin to encompass the possible work under the banner of Theatre Education.

Just as audience development can only fully be realised through a combined strategy of education, marketing and programming, I would also argue that the vision outlined by Chris Smith for 'the arts and creativity' to be 'an integral part of our education service' may only be achieved by a greater integration, funding and support of all those agencies which make up the broad umbrella of theatre education. Among the measures stressed by the NCA report (1997) in its conclusions were the recommendations that:

The arts should be incorporated in the National Curriculum in the

¹⁹⁶ Smith, Chris , 1998, Ibid, p133

same way as the sciences. Artists in schools, including theatre practitioners, should be encouraged and eligible for lottery support. There should be a TIE company in every county and large conurbation so that all schools can access Theatre in Education.¹⁹⁷

I would go further in stating that the range of Theatre for Young People (TYP) provision should be part of that network, working alongside and collaboratively with the education departments of theatre companies and with an awareness of other kinds of theatre practice with an educational intent in a broader sense of arts education and its relationship with community and access for all.

Chris Smith in a speech in 1998 quoted these words from a director of the Gulbenkian Foundation:

The greatest resource possessed by any nation is the imagination of its people. Imagination nourishes invention, economic advantage, scientific discovery, technological advance, better administration, jobs, communities and a more secure society. The arts are the principal trainers of the imagination. They can enrich, not replace, the literacy, numeracy, science and technology we need for prosperity.¹⁹⁸

There is clearly a will that this integration of the arts should happen and theatre in education should play a vital part in this regeneration. Theatre education in particular, is a key factor in the development of the arts, even breaking through the narrow bands of nationalism and ethnic division which still threaten progress and stability.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

8.2.3. Children's Theatre CT:

Children's theatre often used as a synonym for the less familiar but more accurate term. The problem is that the term "Children's theatre" is also often used as a synonym for theatre done by children and also works performed by professional companies where young people form the audience.

Here, it means a formal theatrical experience in which a play is presented for an audience of children. Writing for children's theatre is obviously aimed fair and square at children. The work is usually aimed at a younger 5-12 age range and its primary aim is one of entertainment or to develop an awareness of theatre as an art form. The work is generally scripted rather than devised and may have a more or less educational content. But it is important to remember that different plays may be aimed at different age groups. There is, for instance, a growing interest in catering for pre-school children. Some plays are most appropriate for primary school age children. The most exciting audience for this age group is often uninhibited school parties. Older children, on the brink of joining the adult audience, are perhaps more difficult. Many performances of all kinds of children's plays will be attended by families.

8.2.4. Creative Drama:

Creative drama is an improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centred form of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences.

Creative drama is not primarily concerned with teaching theatre skills, although this may of course occur. The purpose of creative drama is to use the natural dramatic impulse to facilitate learning in an unlimited number of fields and areas. Children naturally act out their perceptions; try out roles, and play "pretend." It is the primary way the very young learn about their world. Creative drama structures this kind of activity so that the student can explore topics

experientially. The well known saying in this regard is worth mentioning:

Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I will remember. Involve
me and I will understand.¹⁹⁹

Creative drama can foster personality growth and self-esteem. It can help children learn to work together and to think creatively. It is often a classic problem-solving exercise. It builds language and communication skills better than just about any other activity in school. It promotes empathy by letting students "step into others' shoes." It can also be used as a tool to teach literally any other subject, if lessons are carefully designed. What's wonderful about this is that since every Creative Drama lesson necessarily involves subject content of one kind or another, it is usually possible to design a lesson around a non-dramatic curricular topic without compromising the dramatic content of the lesson at all. Creative drama is also sometimes called "Creative Dramatics" or "Creative Play."

There are many opinions on what creative drama is and should be and my definition here is that creative drama is dramatic activities, which have the experience of the participants as the goal. Informal drama, creative play-acting, developmental drama, educational drama, and improvisational drama are called creative drama, and it is one of the most effective ways of guiding children to grow and learn. Its goal is not performance, but rather the free expression of the child's creative imagination through the discipline of an art form, and the development of the child's personality through group process, and the appreciation of the theatre.

¹⁹⁹ A Popular saying which may have been taken from Aristotle's words.

It usually reserved for children 4 – 9 years old ages. It can include dramatic play, story enactment, imagination journeys, theatre games, music, and dance.²⁰⁰

Creative drama is a powerful force for the development of the child's life, culture, imagination, communication, concepts, and feelings through enactment, and the improvised action and dialogue appropriate to the experience.

It is one of the finest tools by which a group may be welded together into greater sympathy and understanding, and the child through his individual and group efforts, is bringing the play to life, by his own thought, imagination, feelings and sense of humour.

The emphasis in creative drama is process rather than product; teachers have the freedom to take as much time as needed with their classes. When a student in a creative drama class prefers to watch instead of participate, because of shyness or fear, a teacher can allow it.²⁰¹

This freedom applies also in the opposite situation, when members of the class are extremely willing and skilled at dramatic activity. The teacher can become a participant and let the children lead the activities rather than being guided through them. Creative drama can help children learn about emotions, problem solving, and relating to other people. Through their experiences with drama, students develop their imaginations and their confidence.

The child in this sort of self-drama has equal opportunity, since the goal is not production, but development of the individual.

²⁰⁰Janine Moyer Buesgen, www.creativedrama.com, 1999,[16.2.2002].

²⁰¹Ibid

If it becomes a part of regular classroom activities than it should be practical, meaningful, and enjoyable for everyone. It is hoped this approach will assist teachers in providing exciting learning experiences for both the children and teachers. The educational and philosophical implications of the word “creative” are significant in the realm of drama, because in dramatic experience there is a unique opportunity for creative living.

The purpose of creative drama is to promote the personal growth and educational development of the players, and its activities might be movement exercises and exploration, pantomime, theatre games, improvised story dramatisation, group improvisations, and so forth. An activity might be as simple as a game of Statues, or as sophisticated as improvised group dramatisations on the theme of nuclear energy.

Participation in creative drama has the potential to develop language and communication abilities, problem solving skills, and creativity; to promote a positive self-concept, social awareness, empathy, a clarification of values and attitudes, and an understanding of the art of theatre.²⁰²

So it is a dramatic experience in creative group activity of profound significance to the development of character and personality. In creative drama there is no “wrong” answer – through pretending, animals can talk, children can travel to outer space or the jungle, and the sky can be green while the grass is blue.

Both McIntyre and Stewig have specifically emphasised the language arts in their creative drama texts, focusing on the ways in which drama enhances reading, literature, oral language

²⁰² Janine Moyer Buesgen, www.creativedrama.com, 1999, [16.2.2002].

and vocabulary development, non verbal communication, listening abilities, and creative writing. English educator Betty Jane Wagner asserts that

Drama is nothing less than the basic skill that is the foundation of all language development.²⁰³

So, creative drama is a subject, which has legitimate claim to its own time and place in the school day. Its effect on children's theatre is, moreover, to increase appreciation of the product and the characterisation.

Creative drama may take several different forms, as follows:

1. Improvisational drama:

This term is widespread in the United States and U.K, and is a type of drama familiar in the education system. It is appropriate to any age group, and particularly to the learning styles of children. Improvisational drama in my opinion is related to life and to drama as an art form, and it is developed in spontaneous dialogue, speech and action, by the children, who spontaneously develop themselves by recalling their knowledge and experience, imagine themselves as someone else, interact with others, and expressing ideas and feelings through enactment.

It was based in the process that had developed from leading neighbourhood children in "let's pretend that..." a kind of play in which we made up and developed problems in spontaneous dialogue and action, our only audience the family cats and the town dogs who were sometimes drafted to be part of the drama²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ Mc Caslin, Nellie, **Children and Drama Company**, (INC. / New York, 1975), p.78.

Development of the area of improvisational drama has been impeded by the fact that those of us who are primarily concerned with drama in relation to the child define drama differently. According to one practitioner:

Frankly, I consider improvisational drama to be richest in import for the child when it is defined and practised in such a way that it includes both the process of making metaphors and the metaphor made. In conjunction with my colleagues Frank Harland and Anne Thurman, I have described creative drama as: the improvisational enactment and reflection upon human experiences²⁰⁵

Improvisational drama promotes the development and integration of the child's thinking abilities in his life with active growth, and capacity of creating.

The potential of improvisational drama in the development of the person is best realised when we emphasise the process and the understandings of children in the enactment of their individuated imaginings of the development and outcomes of those significant moments of personal and universal experience which grip our minds and hearts. To that extent we are concerned with personal development and the problems of educational institutions, and we may fairly propose that creative drama be considered central to humanistic study in the education of children.

I suspect that improvisational drama is an effective way of capturing attention and motivating interests, whatever the subject might be, because it allows children to be active while doing something.

2. Dramatic play:

Susanne Langer contends that:

²⁰⁵ Ibid

Symbolisation is not the essential act of thought ... but an act essential to thought, and prior to it.” She views the brain as not simply a great transmitter, but better likened to a great transformer²⁰⁶

The symbolic behaviour of the child takes the form of imitation of experiences and behaviour. He or she acts as a father doing hard work or mother feeding a child. The child’s interest in dramatic play is obvious. This kind of play is called “dramatic play”; it develops slowly into story form between age five to seven.

What is known as dramatic play (an even further stage) is generally at least precariously established by five years of age, and should be firmly established by seven²⁰⁷

But between seven and twelve, extreme spiritual beauties and intense sensitivity are added, and at twelve to fifteen, dramatic play activities becomes surer, vocabulary is increased, and children can start acting with a script.

In the symbolic behaviours of the child, all of his activities have dramatic quality, which are related to the inner self and to the past and the future. It is important to remember that this form of symbolic behaviour gave rise to drama and to avoid the tendency to speak of improvisational drama as if it were antecedent to life.

Behaving “as if” is the bedrock of symbolic behaviour and fundamental to learning in any intellectual discipline. Drama is the field that is most specifically and literally derived from this human capacity. Enactment of our remembered and imagined experiences gives form to subjective feeling and celebrates our individual knowing. In this sense one might regard drama as the earliest or

²⁰⁶ Mc Caslin, Nellie, Ibid, 1975.

²⁰⁷ Ibid

most fundamental manifestation of man's capacity to create
aesthetic forms²⁰⁸

Whether movement experiences, theatre games, sense-awareness exercises, and story dramatisation or creating dramas activities, provide a necessary skills foundation, I think the main emphasis should be on creating dramas rather than on exercises and theatre games. Because leading children in creative drama is always a demanding and fascinating experience, the whole effort is dulled if the teacher's concentration and vitality shape the child's response. It is not easy to assess and deal with the needs and strengths of individual children, but to guide the process sensitively and intelligently, and resist the temptation to take over the drama. Nevertheless, by imaging our selves, acting and interacting, we can enlarge our knowledge of the world, understand ourselves, and communicate with others.

Creating drama has the great advantage in this discovery process, a process which is primary, familiar, and preferred for the child, and it should be viewed and practised as a form of drama in which children play their images of life into being creating and communicating credible representations of human actuality.

3. Recreational Drama:

Recreational drama is the conclusion of a creative drama experience, where the child and his leader are sure about each other's experiences. The emphasis in this kind of children's drama is on both process and product, where the children learn how to project vocally, to dress for the stage, and to interact with other characters. They know that they are facing an audience. Success and failure are possible end results, and loss of self-confidence can exist for both performer and

²⁰⁸ Ibid

audience. However, children may be more interested in this kind of drama activity, more than any other, which motivates further development. And the talented child by seeing a single production may become a serious performer. As is well said:

To be effective, recreational drama requires an enthusiastic, sensitive leader who can reliably judge the capabilities and limits of his performers and inspire them to the creation of an exuberant production. Effective recreational drama is even harder to achieve than is effective children's theatre²⁰⁹

4. Curricular drama:

Curricular drama is a logical beginning; supplemented by classroom study of acting, design, and playwriting from about the fourth grade, and history of the theatre from about seventh. Formal plays should be only one phase of the curricular programme, however, as all students should learn some appreciation of the theatre and its sociological relevance.

Curricular drama will greatly benefit children's theatre, if only to teach children that the theatre is an institution which has had and still has relevance to some portion of the populace. Children's theatre, again, serves as a culmination of curricular study, an example of a finished product, and an impetus to continue one's study of the drama.²¹⁰

5. Puppet theatre:

Theatrical values may be presented to children, by use of glove puppets, rod puppets, shadow puppets, large puppets or small puppets. Puppets are like dolls or toys. Shadow puppets lend themselves to a great variety of two-dimensional movements. Glove and rod puppets provide

²⁰⁹ Mc Caslin, Nellie, Ibid, 1975.

²¹⁰ Ibid

the very essence out of which plays are made. Children like them as extensions of themselves, as friends, and they are funny as well as magical for them. The mixture of puppets and real actors is more useful than puppets alone. The puppets provide opportunities for the most purposeful and imaginative work in craft and work that can be related to close observation of human being, their shapes, clothes, and their way of moving, as well as of animals and many aspects of nature, the wit of the scripts, the clever characterisations, the appealing design and the sheer skill of the puppeteers.

In Polka's production of *The Odyssey*, large monsters were successfully created using huge rod puppets operated by several people. These puppets impressed because of their size and their horrific appearance.²¹¹

David Wood, one of the most important children's theatre writers and directors, used shadow and various other puppet techniques in many of his children's plays for example; *The Meg and Mog Show*, *The Old Man of Lochnagar*, *Rupert and the Green Dragon*, and *The Big Friendly Giant*.

Puppet theatre is an important part of creative drama which provides an admirable opportunity for a subtle combination of sound, music, speech, movement, art, and drama that can be expressed on any level from the simplest to the most sophisticated. And it provides the opportunity for children to broaden their repertoire of verbal and non-verbal interactive behaviours and to evaluate their effectiveness. Children must not only manipulate the puppets, but also speak the lines, preferably having composed the dialogue themselves. Puppet drama may consist of children performing for their own development and expression as in creative

²¹¹ Wood, David, *Theatre for Children: a guide to writing, adapting, directing and acting*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1997) p50

dramatics, or it may be done by children for other children, for the development of both performer and audience- as in "recreational drama"- or finally, it may be done by adults, the primary goal being the appreciation of the audience, corresponding to children's theatre.

Matt Bachanan, the American teacher, who uses creative drama in his classroom, says:

I use puppets a great deal in my drama classes. Puppetry is a great way to bring more reticent or shy children out of their shells, and to help everyone become more expressive. Children who are afraid to speak or act in front of the class will often enthusiastically emote in the character of a puppet.²¹²

When a child operates a puppet, every emotion and every movement of the puppet is mirrored in the puppeteer, and he expresses the puppet's emotions in his own face also. It allows the puppet to interact directly with the puppeteer, although the audience's focus is on the puppet, nothing else, so the child is really acting. Even the shyest students will perform loudly and boldly when using puppets. The puppeteer could be visible along with the puppet. Interestingly, it is not necessary for the shy child to "hide" behind a puppet stage in order to lose his shyness. Moreover, working without a stage means the whole class can work at once, which is often desirable.

Bachanan adds:

I define a puppet as "Any inanimate object that is manipulated so as to appear animate." I make and use puppets of one kind or another with nearly every grade level I teach. My very youngest students make "puppets" out of their hands. Some students make lunch bag puppets. Older students make newspaper puppets in teams. We make paper analogs of Japanese doll theatre puppets when my students are studying Japan. When I have the resources available, I make shadow puppets with older students. Nearly

²¹² www.goecities.com/Broadway/Alley/3765puppets.htm, [4.3.2002].

every grade makes found object puppets at some point. Most of these projects are pretty easy to do.²¹³

8.2.5. Young People's Theatre (YPT):

This term describes theatre workshops, led by professionals, usually leading to a performance by the young people, often devised collaboratively and directed by the workshop leader(s). The performance work generally has a strongly educational content and is often based on specific social issues. The participants are usually in the 12-18-age group, sometimes in two separate age groups. There are many variants of this sort of theatre, as follows:

8.2.6. Theatre for young audiences (TYA):

The performance of a largely predetermined theatrical art work by living actors in the presence of an audience of young people. TYA is formal Theatre. Ideally the performers are skilled actors and skilled and trained directors and technical staffs oversee the production. The story line can be drawn from history, literature for children, folk and fairy tales or real life issues important to young people. When people think of theatre for young audiences they think of fairy tales, presented with lots of bright colours and peppy music, but while such entertainment has a place in the field, contemporary playwrights are becoming ever more aware that children can handle-indeed should handle-sophisticated ideas and serious issues. Children's plays are being written today that challenge young audiences both by their subject matter and by their theatricality.

For me, the most important in theatre for young audiences is that it should be about children.

²¹³ www.goecities.com/Broadway/Alley/3765puppets.htm, [3.3.2002].

Children live in an increasingly complex world, and their real concerns deserve to be addressed. As much as I enjoy the old Disney animated films, for example, the fact is that most familiar fairy tales really are not about children-they're about young adults. In addition to promoting blatantly sexist values, stories like *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty* are about first love. Children who have not reached puberty can not understand and think about sexual love-they know it exists intellectually, and can readily accept it as a plot device-but in a real sense they cannot empathize with it. It does not mean anything on a purely personal level. I think this is why the classic Disney films all have added comic characters-the mice in *Cinderella*, for example-who take much of the focus off the central story. In any case, those films were not necessarily originally intended for child audiences. I like best those children's plays with real child protagonists, although certainly there are important stories we should be telling that do not have them. I also like stories whose protagonists are truly active. *Sleeping Beauty* does nothing to bring about the denouement of her story-it happen to her. An active protagonist makes things happen, and addresses the conflict of the story directly. This is empowering for a child audience. Many of these plays are just as joyful and funny as any traditional fairy-tale play.

A word about selecting plays: Just because children are excited and enthusiastic in the auditorium during a production, it does not necessarily follow that the play is as good as it should be. It is exciting to go to a real theatre. It is exciting to get out of class. We owe it to children to select the very best material we can. But if the children are given something they will love it, no matter what it is.

8.2.7. Participatory theatre

This is a special case of theatre for young audiences or for adults, for that matter. It consists of

The presentation of specially written, adapted or devised drama with an established story line constructed to involve limited and structured opportunities for active involvement by all or part of the audience participation may range from simple verbal responses to an active role in the outcome of the drama.²¹⁴

Usually this kind of theatre is done with very young children, but it is becoming increasingly popular in adult theatre. Participatory theatre is constructed so that audience actually determines the outcome of the play. For example, the play "*Titi Toti*" is structured to involve the young audiences to participate not only by shouting and telling one character where a character is hiding, or what punishment Bozo should have, but also by participating in the first scene on the stage as children of the Kingdom, dancing and singing. Many children watch this play repeatedly because of its the participatory character of this scene.

The classic example of Participation Theatre is the scene in *Peter Pan* in which Tinkerbelle is dying and Peter announces that if enough children clap their hands, she will get well. A Christopher During character tells her psychiatrist of an early childhood trauma viewing *Peter Pan*. She clapped her hands as loud as she could, but the actress playing Peter announced that the children had not clapped hard enough, and Tinkerbelle was dead. Of course we know no real theatre would ever do that, but that's just the point: if the outcome is predetermined-Tinkerbelle will live no matter who claps-then the children are not really affecting the story, and they have been, in a sense, cheated.²¹⁵

This is dishonest and unfair to the audience. But, at the same time, when it participation works, the effect can be great.

8.2.8. Theatre by children and youth:

This term applies to any formal Theatre performed by young people, and particularly to Theatre for Young Audiences performed by young people, (as opposed to the high school musical,

²¹⁴Bachanan, Matt, 1998 www.creativedrama.com. [27.5.2001].

²¹⁵ Ibid

which is performed by young people but largely for adults-their parents.) One of the most successful things that can be done with high school actors is to perform a children's play for the younger children in the community. Children are a wonderful, responsive audience. It is very important, however, to make sure that the young actors are ready to be really professional, in fairness it to audience. Many schools (and indeed many professional companies) see the annual children's play as a sort of training ground for actors not quite ready for "real" theatre.

Formal Theatre is necessarily and by definition primarily concerned with product. The repetition and rote memorization necessary to perform a good play provide an inefficient learning experience and are unnecessarily stressful for young children. It is inefficient because once all of the lines and blocking have been experienced and understood, any further repetition (rehearsal) is devoid of new learning, and it is stressful because it "must" be "perfect" by a (usually) specific, pre-determined time.

When I am faced with the necessity of doing a formal play with very young children, I try to make it as much about process as I can. And I would have the students improvise their performance rather than memorize specific lines, but so far that has never worked.

Conclusion:

Through watching a performance, children can experience other people's feelings and attitudes about aspects of human nature. Most people are exposed to drama every day through the T.V, radio, film, and theatre. However, the same kinds of criteria can be used for judging all drama performances. They are to do with the quality of the meaning expressed, the adequacy of forms of representation and the overall quality of presentation. Effective presentation can often have a

powerful emotional and physical impact on the individual, which can be remembered a long time after the event.

Presenting statements to children can be an effective means of communication; it is the school's responsibility to introduce children to an important form of cultural expression. Children can learn about a variety of topics in a vital and dramatic way.

Creative drama can be related to psychological therapy, in that many of its techniques are similar. The action is generally accompanied by extreme emotion, often presenting an example of mental block. When the block bursts out, certain relief may be obtained. Stammers and bad dreams may be aided by playing out semi-directed scenes, which may have been partial cause of the original illness.

The following passage is a significant pointer to the above:

Show me how to paint and I shall tell you who you are" has found a wide application in psychological practice and experiments ²¹⁶

Dr. C. L. C. Burns, Director of the Child Guidance Clinic, Birmingham said,

The expression of these emotions is of greatest value when it is witnessed as well as performed, i.e. when players and audience alternate. It is possible to suppose that in a community which has not lost its traditional folk-lore, ritual and drama, mental health is more likely than in one where life is mechanised and practically everybody is nothing but audience. Many years ago I realised the importance of mime and movement in treating nervous and maladjusted children, and had groups of them doing Margaret Morris movement ²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Mc Caslin, Nellie, (ed.) **Children and Drama**, (David Mc Kay Company, INC./ New York, 1975) p.117

²¹⁷ Mc Caslin, Nellie, 1975, Ibid, p.117

Dr. William Kraemer, Hon. Deputy Medical Director, The Davidson Clinic, Edinburgh (on playing out and the value of drama), said

I find myself in complete agreement with Peter Slade's ideas on drama. I have heard a good deal of him that will prove of great value in education and therapy of society and the individual. Slade rightly emphasises the role drama should play in the prevention of neurosis. I fully agree. There have been many cases under my observation in which drama has had a curative effect in neurotic illnesses, and sometimes it has been of the greatest importance. There is hardly a patient who does not in one way or other find in his artistic expression the highroad to health. It may be drawing or painting, music or poetry ... it is always a creative activity it is always drama in Slade's definition of it as creative "doing".²¹⁸

Schools and theatres also play an important part in religion; indeed their profession is related to religion. Actually the most important reasons for developing child drama in school is not a therapeutic matter, but the development of moral and social behaviour, which is the most important aim of human beings.

Art is not something, which is to be grudgingly added to a "curriculum", but it is an integral part of man's mental health, of his religion, of his happiness and we have to start them young²¹⁹

While creative drama emphasises the value of individual expression, it also emphasises the value of group involvement. Learning to function in a democratic society is a high educational priority. While we encourage each child to develop individual potential, we also emphasise the importance of sensitive interrelation-ship with others. Whether the goals of creative drama are educational or aesthetic, the psychological well being of the participants can also be enhanced.

²¹⁸ Ibid

²¹⁹ Ibid

Thus the uses of children drama continue to expand, reflecting the growing recognition of the power of the drama experience to enrich learning and enhance living for all persons.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

Introduction:

We are still living in an economic, political, social and cultural system dominated by a limited number of Western countries, which impose their policies on the third World countries. The means of domination are multiform and vary between the military force used in direct aggression or as a threatening tool and economic force, which comprises industry, technology and capital. There is also the western monopoly on the mass media; and means of communications. U.S, French and British wire services control sources of information, TV programmes and commercials contribute the shaping of values, views, patterns of consumption and ways of life in the third world countries.

We are undergoing rapid changes in the field of means of communication which undoubtedly require a specialized staff in this field which affects both children and adults.

In our era which dominated by information new means have interfered with the children's education such as the computer, television and the VCR. The child is exposed to a flow of information provided by these means which accelerated the mental development of the child and, thus, brought about "The Hurried Child"²²⁰

We are badly in need of mobilizing our energies and moving on three fronts to protect children and set to check out a path of proper development. Tentatively, this should constitute:

1- Training (or retraining) of ourselves (mass media - information officials, religious groups,

²²⁰ Alumran, Jehan Abu Rashed, **Bahrain Cultural Magazine**, "Child Education in twenty one century", (Bahrain Vol 2 Oct. 1994) p. 9

popular movements and non governmental organizations) in order to become effective and contribute to the mission of preserving, protecting and developing the child;

2. Production of communication programmes by local artists and producers; and

3. Providing the necessary financial resources to meet new requirements.

9.1 Lack of Personnel

The serials, programmes, songs and dances broadcast by the Sultanate of Oman TV shows a notable lack of the movement of the camera in covering the actors during the play. We even hardly see any effort by directors to create important and beautiful shots, except some minor camera movements, which only impress ordinary viewers.

Therefore, it is of great importance to insist on the availability of trained personnel and advanced artistic and technical equipment in all the Arab TV stations. Besides, the lack of qualified personnel in the field of TV production has become a real obsession for a number of countries in the region. This situation requires, therefore, urgent action to train and form qualified people in the field of information who will be able to assume their responsibilities in the future. Despite the efforts made some TV stations in the field of education and the continuous graduation of students from the radio and TV departments of the Arab countries universities, most radio and TV organizations in the Arab world have not yet been able to form a strong nucleus of artists and creators. This is due, in my view, to the lack of motivation for these categories of personnel which are regarded by the radio and TV organizations in the Arab world as mere government employees. This might be the reason why some youth consider their work in the information bodies as a transitional position which they will use to jump to positions which offer greater rewards and status.

9.2. Technical and programme deficiency and their impact on development

The most amazing paradox of our era is that it has witnessed a boom in the means of communication which allow us to call any distant place on Earth by merely pushing a button, a situation undreamed of before".

In fact, there are two categories of people who live on our planet: the powerful who possess science and technology, and economic and military power, and the weak who possess nothing of that. The latter category is the one who faces many threats because it has no arms to defend itself the against the strong, which it can use to overcome underdevelopment and face up to invasion, particularly in the field of information.

We can even say that the United States of America alone dominates the World. I agree in this regard with Dr. Mustafa Iejali's view which he expressed in his book, "Culture of the Arab Child". He said that

The means of communication, including television, radio and the press, play a leading role in the crystallization of the US slogans by giving a bright and tempting picture of America.²²¹

America is considered to be the pioneering land of modernity, freedom and democracy. It is also a social laboratory from which emerges a new way of life characterized by healthy children, liberated women, affluence and entertainment. Moreover, America is the leader in science and technology, architecture and heroism. Therefore, entertainment plays a major part in this field. There is actually a preaching of entertainment, affluence, liberalization from the handicaps of the past and openness to exciting innovations. The mass media also work hard to

²²¹ Iejali, Mustafa and others, 1990, Ibid, p.87

create a harmony in the world with the American way of life with all its heroes, symbols, examples, behaviour and trends. The objective of this endeavour is to bring a cultural rapprochement with America, leading to the emergence of a generation of youth, who are bathed in the American culture.

Statistics show that:

Five international wire services control 90% of the world news, 85% of the international films and serials are produced in the USA and Western Europe. They also show that 60% of television stations in the World import ABC productions and that CBS exports American programmes to 100 countries in addition to the American National Company which provided 83 countries with TV programmes and other material. The United States Information Agency (USIA) also transmits to thousand news words to the world daily and produces 200 films or documentary films and 200 video films²²²

There is a democracy problem in the Arab world, which affects the mass media, especially the press. Most of the mass media in the Arab countries are owned by the State and report only the official point of view. It is a one way channel of information, which does not offer any space for different views. Readers' mail, for instance, is rarely published in its original version. All material to be published is always scrutinized and censored by editors in chief and people alike.

This situation contradicts with the fact that the press is one of the best means of communication with the masses due to its low cost.²²³

Since the public media rank first among the means used in the process of infiltration to secure one's domination and cultural

²²² A Group of researchers, **The Culture of Information and the Information of Culture**, 1995, p. 12

²²³ Alabd, Atef Adli, **Studies on Information in Oman**, Vol .4 (The Arab Thought Publishing House, First Edition, 1995. P.23

supremacy over other countries²²⁴

The war against Arabic shakes the foundations of the Arab identity because the language is the reservoir of the collective and national mind and the eye through which Arabs look at the world. Yet, the negation of Arabic leads to the disavowal of history and the discredit of the collective mind. This objective implies the modification of the curricula of history, civic education and social values.

Furthermore, heritage is distorted through actions of falsification and misinterpretation of history, thus leading people to the wrong path and filling them with emotions that run against their interests. It is a war between modernity and traditions, which undoubtedly affects cultural aspects that link identity in the history.

The discrediting of heritage and the national culture is compensated with an overflow of the audio-visual culture:

No doubt that the child is the first hit by the offensive of cultural falsification either at school or in his daily life. The dangers facing the Arab child are aggravated by the incapacity of the national culture to satisfy the child's needs.²²⁵

The Arab region is indeed subject to concentrated live satellite transmissions. Commercial and public channels based outside the Arab countries such as the Middle East Broadcasting centre (MBC), the Arab Radio and Television (ART), serge satellite channel, the BBC and ORBIT aim

²²⁴ Shiler, Herbert, **Communication and Cultural domination**, Translated by Abdulmassih, Wajih Samhan (Egypt, General Book Organization, 1993), p. 21

²²⁵ Iejali, Mustafa and others, 1990, Ibid, p.95

their Arabic language programmes at the Arab region²²⁶

9.3. General assessment of Oman TV's role in the cultural development of Oman.

The means of communications besiege children everywhere and at all times, thus increasing their impact on their minds, which store all they see from the age of 30 months on wards..

9.3.1 Childhood

The information which the child acquires at school is meagre compared to the flow of knowledge he receives through the mass media.

Nowadays, children are too much exposed to the mass media, particularly television. They watch all programmes, those which suit them and those which do not. Mothers even rely on TV as the best companion for their children while they are doing their housework. There are, however, many cultural means, which can help in the education of children. They include.

- Written materials such as stories, magazines, dictionaries, atlas, history books and serials.
- Audio-visuals such as stories, magazines, dictionaries, atlas and history books and serials. - -
- Materialized means like children's songs and the plastic arts.
- Educational means and games such as figures, calculation, mathematics, science, history, geography, natural science and life and mental and smartness games. We can add to this category the computer games although they do not play the same role. They concentrate on the entertainment function and lack an educational role.

These means represent the non-official channels through which takes place the cultural

²²⁶ Raguab, Mustafa, **Educational Information in Egypt: Reality and Problems**, (Egypt, The Renaissance Publishing House), p.76

moulding process. They carry values, patterns, reactions and plain or hidden trends which are transmitted to the child who will identify himself with them to a great extent.

Nowadays, the Arab world attaches great importance to the child's culture at all official, semi-official and local levels. This interest has, in many cases taken the shape of a plan. The Arab objective is assigned to the Arab League, and Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) Therefore, many seminars, conferences and specialised workshops were held under the patronage of ALESCO to discuss all aspects of the child's culture. The early sixties witnessed the emergence of the interest in the child's culture, which developed in the seventies. The eighties however witnessed the emergence of apprehensions regarding the increasing Western cultural infiltration in the Arab World. At this stage, people started to talk about the cultural vacuum and security in the light of the limited and scattered cultural production aimed at children in the Arab countries, compared to the great flow of western cultural products, which reach us easily because of this vacuum.

In my view, the following points should be taken into consideration in order to develop the Omani children on all levels:

- The consolidation of the Omani cultural identity and the promotion of the Arabic language.
- The use of culture as a development tool for the child's capabilities.
- The adoption of the principle of national and comprehensive planning for Omani children's culture.
- The elaboration of scientific studies on all aspects of Omani children with the collaboration of all educationalists.
- The formation of experts and technicians in all fields of the child's culture and education.

9.3.2 Children's Cinema

People in general and children in particular tend to believe what they see more than what they hear. Moreover, the picture increases the capacity of assimilating and remembering information because the impact of the picture on the memory is bigger than that of the word. However, there is a danger of adverse impact on the child's culture, since the children's literature and films have mainly been taken from the foreign heritage. Therefore, Arab children lacks a frame of reference, which must be inspired from the Arab reality.

As to the children's cinema in the Arab world, studies have revealed that the cinema is one of the most important means of communication. Its importance in the Arab countries is even increasing because of the disposition of children to react quickly to the language of the moving picture more than anything else. Studies also reveal that the production of films for children faces many obstacles. The first and biggest one is the lack of capital. The second obstacle is related to the film directors, who must put themselves in the position of the child who will watch the film and look at things not as an adult, but as a child. The third obstacle concerns the hero of the film. Children would be happy to see this role assigned to a child, although it is difficult to find children able to play it. There are also other handicaps pertaining to the role of the hero, the laws governing child labour and the duration of the film.

Children's cinema suffers from the same hindrances faced by the Arab cinema as a whole such as the lack of theatres, the domination of the private sector, the limitation of the market and the lack of a unique Arab language, as well as the artistic capabilities and resources. Besides, the children's cinema has its own problems which are related to the confinement of its presentations to schools and clubs when they are reserved for children and to theatres and television when they are offered for the public.

9.3.3 Adults' Cinema

Cinema in the developing countries must deal with reality and be linked to development, in order to shape the personality of the new man, a motivated and daring man who faces challenges and overcomes backwardness. It must also materialize the repugnance of the bad, cheap and negative aspects in the movement of society towards progress. Therefore, its subjects must be inspired by the people's real life and expressed in a sincere and simple way.

Cinema is a real picture of the national identity. Consequently, if it is dominated by foreign interests, it will uproot the national culture and deprive it of its originality.

If the film is produced for the people, it must provide them with knowledge, improve their artistic taste, and make them aware of the hope that exists in the world, as well as injustice. It must educate, cultivate and entertain.

However, cinema may also spoil the minds and souls of youth by creating a world filled with adventure, love, splendour and success. It creates for viewers an atmosphere of relaxation which can be regarded as a drug which helps them to flee reality, turns them away from the development plan and destroys their capabilities.

The exploitation of the sexual interests in films the spread of day dreaming sick imagination, stroke of luck, and despised fanaticism not only destroy the youth's minds and souls, but kills society as a whole.²²⁷

A good film can combine reality and imagination and thus opens

²²⁷ Mohamed, Sayyed Mohamed, **Information and Development**, (Egypt the Arab Thought Publishing, Fourth Edition, 1988), p.76

new horizon for viewers. Cinema is indeed, one of the powerful means for acquiring knowledge, achieving success and fulfilling aspirations. Hasn't the cinema "gone" to the moon a long time before man?²²⁸

The commercial films seen throughout the world stimulate sexual appetite in most of its subjects. They teach adolescents the bad habits, flirtation, kissing, sexual excitement, smoking and alcoholism.

The communists of the dissolved Soviet Union realized the impact of Cinema on people well before the twenties. It was also used by the Nazis in Germany in the Thirties on a large scale. Moreover, there have always been officials who think that cinema must be used as a political tool to convey the views of the people also to be banned for political reasons as well as it happened recently in the US. Three documentary films produced in Canada were altogether retrieved from circulation because they deal with the nuclear war and nuclear waste which are regarded as foreign political propaganda.²²⁹

The films which the youth like to watch most are those on Karate, violence and terror, adventure, sex, detective stories and other films. 38.5% of them read about crimes in the press which are followed by sports.²³⁰

The Arab and American films, which contain much crime, sex and violence, are many.²³¹

Yet, we must warn against the epidemic of melodrama, which has spread in the Arab cinema to the extent that it has become an established school for many generations of cinematographers. It is a unique school that use a peculiar editing which consists of sticking shots together, its main function being to impress and surprise. Their objective is like that of the neon advertisements which aim at exploiting the viewer and violating his mind. Music and songs are included that

²²⁸ Ibid, p.77

²²⁹ **The Comprehensive Plan of the Arab Culture**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, Vol. 3 Part 2, Kuwait, 1986), p.496

²³⁰ Alabd, Atef Adli, 1995, p.70

²³¹ See Appendix C

have no relevance to the film, but are only used to increase its emotional impact. Moreover, they are distributed out in the film according to statistical considerations rather than to a qualitative logic, to the extent that the success of some films is calculated on the number of songs they compose and the singer. As to the acting method, it is based on the model principle and is characterized by rhetoric, superficial emotions and salon expressions. Such a method kills any artistic expression in cinema, which will be limited in the end to a simple technism.

We hope that the TV film will soon be the tool for the development of the cine film at both the artistic and contents levels instead of being confined to the little screen.²³²

Nonetheless, television offers for the film a wider scope due to its spread everywhere. Yet, I am worried about the impact of the TV film on viewers.

9.4. Increase of the Arab and Foreign Satellite Channels

The live television transmission and the increase of the Arab and foreign and private satellite channels still dominate the thinking of the TV officials in the Arab countries, particularly in the Gulf region. Many proposals have been made in this field and measures have been taken to improve programmes, organize transmission and co-ordinate actions among TV stations in the Gulf Arab countries. Laws have also been enacted and criteria set to preserve Arab viewers and protect the Arab identity and values against the flow of foreign broadcasts. Thus, the Council of the Arab Information Ministers decided to set up a Higher Co-ordination Council among the TV satellite Channels in the Gulf Arab countries.

Some governments of these countries banned the use of the satellite dishes due to their fear of

²³² Mahmood, Zaki Naguib, 1990, Ibid, p.138

the economic social and cultural impacts of the satellite channels on their societies. Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait prohibited the use of the dishes for direct reception and set up a network of cables to control the incoming feeds.

The setting up of the Arab TV satellite channels was carried out through an enthusiastic, quick and obscure process. Therefore opposition emerged regarding this new medium in order to avoid its negative effects on the inherited traditions, customs and way of life. But the researcher as a supporter of the satellite channels believes that it is not possible to live in isolation while the world has become smaller than at any time before.

The Arab, and particularly the Gulf countries, continued, nonetheless, their efforts aimed at the use of satellites to consolidate the educational role played by television.

The Arab Education and Planning Ministers recommended in their conference held in Abu Dhabi in 1977, the elaboration of a comprehensive study by ALECSO and ASBU in co-operation with the UNESCO on the subject in light of the decisions taken by the Ministers of Education, Communication and Information on the matter. They also called for the concerned parties to take the necessary measures and elaborate adequate programs for the best of the Arab Satellite in order to eliminate illiteracy and spread education in the Arab region.²³³

The Gulf Arab States are trying to find quick solutions for this issue by producing joint TV programs which will help to advance the educational process in the countries. The satellite TV facilities can in fact offer high level educational programs besides reducing the production cost of the local programmes.

²³³ Hussein, Samir Mohammed, 1988, Ibid, p. 166

9.4.1 Positions Regarding Foreign TV Programmes

The positions of the Arab public opinion vis-à-vis foreign TV programmes can be grouped in four categories:

1. The first group favours TV openness due to confidence in the awareness of Arab citizens and the capacities of Arab TV stations to face up to this situation. They even argue that it is useless to try to ban the incoming material. Moreover, they say that prohibiting children from watching TV programmes will create a gap between reality and example, and prevent children from adapting to real life.

2. The second category fears the cultural invasion for various reasons. These people say that the foreign broadcasts comprise values which differ from those of the Arab society, may spread false propaganda, threaten national security and use commercials to promote patterns of consumer behaviour which will lead to the destruction of the national economy.

Foreign broadcasts appeal to Arab viewers due to their disengagement from any political constraint. Besides, children are easily impressed by what they see, because they do not have the capacity to criticize or evaluate the programmes they watch.

3. The third group favours a selective approach. They call, for instance, for the reception of TV broadcasts from friendly and advanced countries but not from those that are hostile to Arab Islamic civilization and or that do not advance science and technology.

4. The fourth group cannot take a clear position due to their belief in the freedom of communication, on the one hand and their desire to preserve their cultural identity, on the other.

This hidden invasion will increase with the development of the communication and satellite technology and it will be difficult for the laws, charters and criteria which are being considered by countries to control this tide. The only weapon we can use to defend our culture against the electronic invasion is to produce well-elaborated and produced TV material. Arab viewers can, after being vaccinated by the locally made product, watch foreign TV broadcasts without risking their identity.

The information revolution in the Gulf region will certainly soon be giving television the prime role in this process. However, a clear vision is needed as to its objectives and priorities.

Therefore the situation prevailing now in the region requires the following steps:

1. The respect of the citizen's right to knowledge by the information openness and the diversification of means and views.
2. Compliance with technological development in a realistic and responsible way.
3. Compliance with the Arab peoples' needs and requirements by respecting our identity and traditions.
4. The necessity to address the world confidently, rationally and in the language of our era."²³⁴

Some countries have realized the negative effects of foreign broadcasts on their peoples and policies.

The Greek culture Minister Merlina Mercouri expressed her indignation vis-à-vis the American infiltration in all aspects of life in Greece. She complained about the spread of Blue Jeans, films, music, theatre and even the names of hotels and bars. In France the culture Minister Jacques LANG led a crusade against the importation of American films and TV programmes when he realized that among the 5 foreign films showed on French TV channels, in 1980, 195 of them were American. A Canadian researcher found that his countrymen sometimes can not distinguish between the Federal Police, the Canadian Royal Gendarme, the FBI and the CIA after watching thousands of

²³⁴ Alufflan, Hala Ahmed, 1995, Ibid, p.166

American detective stories. He added that the Canadian judiciary faces the same problem.²³⁵

This proves that information has become in our era an important tool of political, social and cultural invasion and manoeuvres.

The lesson deduced from this study is that without a clear state ideology which can serve as the basis for a lasting and integrated information policy, implementation plans based on the nature of society and the requirements of social development, and the definition of the information programmes which must comprise values, trends and patterns of behaviour, information can in no way play an active role in the development of society and may even hinder it. In the next chapter, specific recommendations are made for the implementation of such an ideology, and enhance the role of children's drama and theatre; both live and televised in achieving the nation's heritage and achieving its educational aspiration

²³⁵ **The Comprehensive Plan of the Arab Culture**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, Vol. 3 Part 2, Kuwait, 1986), p.484

Chapter Ten

Recommendations

We have seen how the theatre, theatrical playing, drama in school and the school theatre are all different from children's theatre. In fact, there are certain differences between children's theatre and school theatre or school drama and instructional theatre. As such we differentiate among different types so as to reach our goal, that is, children's theatre, which is educational, instructional, and intellectual that shapes children's spirit and develops their taste, beauty, sense and transparency and enables them to examine their childhood, society, and spiritual environment eagerly and perceptively.

In this connection, it is possible to make some recommendations. One of these to the theatrical interest at school and the extent to which the Ministry of Education adopts it to upgrade the theatre at school and the activities of theatrical education and the perfection of educational, cultural, creative and artistic activities and takes into consideration the idea of providing drama for theatre in the educational field.

As far as children's theatre is concerned, the researcher calls for the significant role of the Arab Education, Science and Culture Organisation in the field of children's theatre in as part of its social role. The researcher recommends that an Arabian conference on childhood and theatre be held to adopt a plan for Arab children's theatre that will encounter the future. In addition, the organisation may establish an Arab fund for child's theatre. On the local level, it is suggested that a centre for children's theatre be established within the strategy of the Higher Family

Council in which the intellectual, artistic, educational, and instructional aspects must be guaranteed.

Theatre activity can help children to face and adjust to reality, if the teacher understands that fantasy is the way to stimulate the child, because it requires knowledge and deliberate capers of the imagination.

Fantastic tricks of imagination, magic and props to stimulate result in theatrical pretence must be worthy of either adult or child. Growth and learning are made possible by a serious approach to the study of acting as it relates to living.

Techniques for acting are similar to those for living, but the child first needs to be an authority on him and must trust himself. Whether or not he is aware of it, when he acts a role, he reveals himself and must accept himself to offer an opportunity for emotional release.

The actor must achieve group contact, not only person to person, and he must learn to assume responsibility for both initiating and responding alternately. He must learn active listening, and recognise the difference between recited dialogue and spontaneous dialogue, and how to speak out and not be afraid of the sound of his public voice.

Acting is an art form. It is the art most closely related to life. The study of acting should mean natural transference of its values to the art of living.

Children like to work seriously and to be challenged by an activity for which they have the equipment. The presentation of life problems is a natural means of expression and of learning for the child.

Acting is all about knowing who you are, what you are doing and why. Another view said, "You cannot do anything very well if your heart isn't in it" I think acting is all about heart and feelings.

Activity concerned with any form of communication requires a receiving station; the audience itself must be prepared and educated to play its part. Performance can be a bridge between the classroom and the world. A successful performance enjoyed both by children and audience can make the activity more meaningful and delightful. But this success needs work and study and development skills. Moreover children should see performance as a matter of co-operation and sharing, rather than showing.

The teacher or the director who teaches acting to children must have an understanding of the creative possibilities in conducting the play to determine the quality of result, and he should be able to teach any child. The director of adult drama/theatre is not necessarily a good director for children. He should know how to apply his knowledge to serve children's needs and he must like children and know how they learn and grow.

Acting must be concerned with truth, and good acting is the result of a creative process. The process may be initiated by the director or the teacher, but children need self-confidence in public as well as in private. This inner activity results in overt action. This is self-direction. The real approach produces a creative thinking, feeling, and acting the individual.

In working with children in an acting class, the teacher's concern is less with the outer means than with the inner. He feels responsibility for developing and building these inner resources. He does it by cultivating the avenues of the senses, opening them wide. He helps the child to recognise and become aware of sights, sounds, textures, temperatures, smells and tastes in the world around him. He provides opportunities to put these sensations to use so that they will remain forever in the storehouse of memory. And in widening these avenues in and out, there is the possibility of developing an ability to see that which is invisible

There is an idea that acting is good for the layman because it is a kind of defence or disguise that permits him freedom to do what he could not do in his own. So the first lesson the child should learn is self-trust. If the teacher is a good actor, the members of the group are challenged constantly. Each can have a chance as soon as he is reached.

School theatre is the set of theatrical activities in the schools where theatre team present shows for an audience including peers, teachers and parents. Essentially, it depends on satisfying student's hobbies such as acting, painting, music...etc under the supervision of the theatre education instructor.

The main aim of this type of theatre is to develop the culture of the student in very important matters related to his character, improving his expressive ability, enhancing his talent of art enjoyment and teaching him acting.

The only distinction I would make between theatre for children and theatre for adults is that the former must be better, because not all adult theatre will engage the attention of children, but theatre good enough to attract the attention of children will also entertain an adult.

It is a fact that after the family, school is the main influence on child and it is responsible for offering children the opportunity to exercise their imaginations and create their own games which are the bases of a natural happy life where they enjoy their experience and artistic sensitivity.

School Theatre does not mean acting only, but in addition to acting it should include collaboration of many skills in other aspects of art, such as music, painting, decoration, dancing, traditional dancing and diction. It is important to discover all the student's talents and creative capacities. Theatre needs many efforts integrated together in order to create theatrical activity with all the required factors, by giving opportunities to all of the students who have creative capacities which could be utilised in such activity.

10.1. Conditions that must be available for children's plays

Generally speaking, we find that the plays that are presented to children must have certain features:

- They should take into consideration the child's linguistic level and their understanding abilities this requires the performance of short dialogue that does not focus unduly on abstract things far from children's perceptions.

- They should take into consideration what suits children in relation to the elements of struggle and movement. Generally, the events of the play must not be over-complicated, nor should there be too many characters.
- Consideration should be given to the child's ability for comprehension when choosing the subject and dialogue, because children's comprehension of the play requires them to have the ability to understand, remember and with the events and interpret them.
- Consideration should be given to children's ability to focus their attention and remain seated during the presentation of the play. This requires that the presentation of the play must not be too long.

In fact, the one- act play is most suitable for children. The waiting intervals among acts must not be too long, so that the children's attention will not be distracted so they lose interest in the whole play.

- Good handling of the theatre's abilities and the characteristics of children's growth in order to provide perpetual elements of suspense or to create legendary atmosphere that fits the content of the play in which they finish at the best of time.
- The writer of children's dramas should be careful because it is a very specialized and important matter. Many writers write their dramas in accordance with their background without taking into consideration children's interests. So, they use a language different from children's language. When the drama is presented, children feel bored and confused.
- The writer should understand the world of children and choose content which suits this world.
- The writer should know the currency of choosing a drama presented to children and true feelings will assure that drama will avoid false feelings and will be very close to the children by concentrating on beauty and enjoyment available in the children's world".

- A children's play must be tight. It should never feel too long. The ideal length for a children's play should not exceed two hours, including the interval. It may well be that a shorter length is preferable. This has something to do with the attention span of the child, but it has more to do with a determination to keep the interest and involvement of the audience.
- The most important things to be available in a drama are clearness, strength, and beauty. Simplicity, clear vocabulary and clear concepts represent clearness. Any obscurity will deform the material. Dialogue should serve the plot, and not be used to deliver sermons. The aim should be clear and all events should be connected to the main event. In this way, drama will avoid complexity and falsity.
- The text should be suited to children's capacity of concentrating and attention, because children are impatient. For this reason drama should include exciting events, expectation, sadness and happiness to manipulate children's feelings and to attract them till the end of the drama.

Also, the content of the drama should take the following points into consideration:

- Many historical stories and folk tales are the outcome of the slavery age. They were not written for children, so not all of them are suitable to be represented to them.
- It is very important to guide children's minds to reality in order to enable them to face the difficulties of life later.
- We should avoid pushing the child's world to fantasy.
- Regarding the end of the drama, some writers have said that the child's world is full of purity, so it should have happiness and enjoyment. Other writers have said that a drama may have a tragic end to make it realistic, because children have strong feelings about justice, but I believe that every drama should be a drive to develop the initiative of children.
- Children's drama should:

First, emphasise the ideal and ethical ideas, because it is the most important educational method to develop the spiritual dimension..

Second, have an educational moral. The “theatre” curriculum should strengthen the students ability to understand the curriculum and conclude lessons from social books.

10.2. Television and children

Arab TV stations should elaborate a common strategy that suits the genuine Arab culture and the citizen’s environment, so that Arabs can understand the new cultural elements. The Arab child, for instance, requires new cultural influences to add to those acquired from his family, school and society.

It is of the utmost importance for Arab countries to formulate a unified plan in order to face up to the adverse impacts of cultural invasion. Pan-Arab information organisations such as the Gulf Television should be invigorated too. Arab communicators need also to be trained to be highly qualified for their work and take advantage of western technology. The information challenge facing Arab societies is both cultural and military. Therefore, actions should be undertaken to preserve and secure the Arab cultural heritage. Still, there are two types of challenge: local and external. The local challenge requires huge actions at the national level to safeguard the Arab civilisation and heritage as well as the social traditions, and remove to all handicaps. The external challenge requires Arabs to face up to the information campaigns against our culture, heritage and identity, which must be promoted in an objective way. We must take into account the technological development of the media and free them from political pressures.

10.3. What is to be done?

First of all, one hopes that there will be an Arab consensus on the rejection by the mass media

of cheap culture which is characterised by excitement, serials and consumer products which are the new opium of the masses. This cheap mass culture prevents people from developing their taste and intelligence, prepares them to accept a society without values, keeps them away from reality and paralyses their will. The mass media will then be reduced to consumer products, which the individual buys to escape reality and fill his spare time between work and sleep.

The "New Information order" must be based first and foremost on national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. Moreover, measures should be taken to eliminate all forms of colonisation and privileges, which still exist in the field of information.

As to the selection of programmes to be broadcast on TV the following measures should, in my view, be taken in order to guarantee this best use of those programs:

1. The subscription to a magazine which publishes the weekly programmes in detail to enable the family to select their favoured programmes and rationalise the process of TV watching.
2. Restoration to one TV set per family, in order not to allow its members to isolate themselves in their rooms.
3. The limitation of the watching time to 14 hours per week in addition to orienting the children towards the best programmes and taking their views into account.
4. The preservation of the family's traditions such as eating together, preparing meals at home, limiting fast food and maintaining contacts among its members through dialogue, discussion, and the exchange of visits.
5. The use of other entertainment alternatives such as amusement games, discussions with friends or practice of a hobby.
6. The watching of TV programmes by and the family together and engaging discussions

afterwards.

7. The training of children to choose their own programmes with care and discrimination.
8. The encouragement of youngsters to watch artistic, scientific and sports programmes
9. The interdiction for children to watch TV until they have finished their homework.

As to children's literature and the use of heritage in this regard, I would suggest the following:

1. The writer for children must have mental, literary and psychological capabilities, which suit those of the child.
2. The collective memory is rich in stories, which are sometimes told in an exciting manner and convey educational lessons, which contribute to the formation of a normal personality. Others, however, are simple and lack any educational role, as their only role is to amuse.
3. Parents must check what their children read to be aware of the ideas and values they absorb.

In relation to the field of the research subject, I would recommend the following steps:

1. The necessity to submit the TV commercial to an objectivity and art control to make sure it corresponds to the values prevailing in society. Moreover, commercials should be banned from children's TV programmes.
2. The use of the following means of illustration: live shots from the field, maps, charts, stills, written boards and archive material.
3. The setting up of a theatre museum which includes texts of the plays performed in the Sultanate, pictures of its costumes, accessories and furniture, in addition to copies of the scenery and critical studies pertaining to the plays.
4. The formation of excellent theatre critics by organising workshops dealing with literary criticism.

5. The stimulation of the Omani society to get rid of illiteracy which hinders the implementation of the national development plans
6. The enlargement and modernisation of studios to keep pace with the technological developments of the mass media.
7. The stimulation of society to encourage the youth to join professional and artistic training which must be regarded as an important foundation for social development
8. The activation of the Arab scientific research particularly in universities, the development of the research centres and the organisation of translation into Arabic of works on scientific, cultural, literary and artistic topics.
9. The setting up of a heritage association in every Arab country, which groups all parties, interested in the matter.
10. The elaboration of studies, writing of books and production of film and TV programmes in the international languages on the contributions of Arab and Islamic thought to the world civilisation. Highlighting the literary, scientific, architectural and technical benefits, which the west took from our heritage, can attain this objective.
11. The rationalisation of the cultural expenditure and the respect of economies in line with prevailing constraints.
12. The definition of priorities for cultural projects, the adequate distribution of funds and the encouragement of cultural associations' initiatives and voluntary action.
13. The co-ordination of Arab efforts aiming at the spread of mass culture and the exchange of experiences in this field
14. The collection and study of the Arab popular heritage from a national and civilizational standpoint based on the common factors of this heritage which must be used in the economic and social development of Arab countries.
15. The promotion of Arab music due to its artistic impact on Arab societies

16. The consolidation of the Omani citizen's awareness as to the importance of ancient monuments through the mass media

17. The increase of children's programmes transmitted on Thursdays and Fridays, particularly in the afternoon.

18. The training of personnel to occupy defined positions and the stimulation of their capabilities in order to achieve progress.

19. The use by television of commercials as a means for explaining the development plans to citizens at all levels and the elaboration of a TV programme which offers prizes to citizens for their answers on questions related to the positive and negative aspects of the plans. Prizes may include T-shirts with slogans about development.

20. The promotion of circus and puppetry as well as the training of the personnel involved in these fields. (Some developed countries have higher schools for this art.)

21. The setting up of a cinema fund which assists film producers by allocating a financial help to them depending on their projects. The fund resources may be derived from cinema tickets and the use of video films.

22. In my capacity as a film and theatre graduate as well as TV director at the Sultanate of Oman television, I advise the following steps to be taken in order to achieve the renaissance of cinema in the Sultanate:

- Production of films which comprise knowledge and information to be transmitted to the Omani public.
- Production of educational programmes for all levels of education.
- Elaboration of awareness programmes in the fields of agriculture, health, industry religion, politics and society.
- The building of cinema theatres or other alternative in the countryside and for the poor categories of the population.

- The teaching of cinema arts at school and in Universities in Oman.
- The training of cinema specialists in the Sultanate of Oman for the production of children's films.
- The use of children's films in school activities.
- The elaboration of a plan for the selection of foreign films to suit the Omani children, both mentally and psychologically.
- Giving much concern to the Muscat Film Festival and spreading many festivals in the main cities.

23. The taxation of raw videotapes and even videotapes.

24. In my view a co-ordination plan must be elaborated between the Sultanate of Oman TV and the Omani Women's association in order to:

25. Organise artistic sports and cultural competitions between children at all levels, offer prizes to the winners and broadcast the events on TV to stimulate children for competition and participation.

26. Promote children's theatre for its direct impact on the child's emotional development provided that the plays are inspired by the national environment, heritage and history.

27. Establish a data bank for children, which includes the entire child's needs in the gulf countries and Arab world in general.

In the end, it is necessary for us to review our educational programmes and co-ordinate our actions with the Arab bodies in charge of culture in order to combine the best methodology of the modern civilisation with our Arab and Islamic originality, values, morale and ways of behaviour. Thus, our Arab Islamic nation will be in a position to surpass underdevelopment and partition, face up to the dangerous challenges of our era and fulfil our aspirations for progress and prosperity.

Bibliography

- A Group of Researchers, **The Arab Education**, (The Arab Institution for studies and Publications Beirut, First Edition, 1993).
- A Group of Researchers, **Unity of the Arab Culture**, (published by the General Union of Arab writers, Jordan, First Edition, 1995).
- A Group of Researchers, **The Culture of Information and the Information of Culture**, (The Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, UAE, 1995).
- Abdurrahman, Awatef, **Problematic of Development Information in the Arab World**, (Egypt, the Arab Thought Publishing House, 1985).
- Aidati, Yousef, **Towards Children's Theatre**, Qasim Mohamed, Cultural and Information, (Department, Alsharjah 2001).
- Al- Qardhawi, Mohamed, **Permissible and forbidden**, (Cairo: Wahba Library 1980).
- Alabd, Atef Adil, **Information and the Culture of the Arab Child** (Al-Maarif Publishing House, Egypt, No. 603, Nov. 1995).
- Alabd, Atef Adli, **Studies on Information in Oman**, (Volume 1, Egypt, The Arab Thought Publishing House, First Edition, 1995).
- Alabd, Atef Adli, **Studies on Information in Oman**, (Volume 2, The Arab Thought Publishing House, First Edition, 1995).
- Alabd, Atef Adli, **Studies on Information in Oman**, (Volume 4, Egypt, The Arab thought Publishing House, First Edition, 1995).
- Alabd, Atef Adli, **information in Oman and Issues of Environment**, (Egypt, The Arab thought Publishing House, First Edition, 1993).

- Alarwi, Abdullah, **Our Culture in the Light of History**, (Beirut, The Arab Culture Centre, Vol. 3, 1992).
- Aldeek, Alexander, **UNESCO and the International conflict on Information and Culture**, (The University Institution for Studies, Publications and Distribution, Beirut, First Edition, 1993).
- Alfani, Ahmed, **Principles of Education**, (The Arab Book Publishing House, Libya, 1985).
- Alfazani, Juma, **Man and the Revolution**, (Libya, The Sector of Book, Distribution and Advertisement, 1981).
- Ali, Samia Ahmed Ahmed, **patterns in TV programs**, (Egypt, The General Book Organization, The Cultural Library, No. 436, 1988).
- Aliza, Jalal Mahmood, **The Attainment of the Extreme Dimension in the Struggle for the Child's survival and development**, (Unicef, April, 1986).
- Almaati, Adel, **The Role of Education in Combating the Potential Negative Impacts of the Foreign TV Eve Broadcasts**, (Sharjah, UAE, Al- Rafed Magazine, No. 7, April 1995).
- Almawlid, Fawzia, **Radio and Development**, (Egypt, the General Book Organization, the Cultural Library, No. 501, 1994).
- Almuel, F.A, **Child's theatre in Kuwait as artistic and educational approach**, (Ministry of Information, Kuwait, 2001).
- Al-Obeidy, Jabbar and Kathum, Fallah, **The means of Mass communication**, (The Cultural and scientific Affairs Publishing House -Arab Horizons- 1990,)
- Alomr, Nasser Bin Stanan, **Cartoons and the Art of Advertising**, (Al-Anba Newspaper , Kuwait, Al-Iman Appendix, Friday DEC 10, 1993).
- Alrai, Ali, **Alarabi Magazine**, "The Arab Theatre's Problems", (Kuwait: vol. 228, November 1977).

- Alrai, Ali, **Alarabi Magazine**, "The Theatre with The Arab in past", (Kuwait: Vol 225 August 1977).
- Alsaati, Sanaa, **Culture and Personality**, (Beirut, The Arab Renaissance Publishing House, Second Edition, 1983).
- Alshaibani, Omar Alqoumi, **Education and the Development of Nationalism**, (The General Establishment for Publication Distribution and Advertisement, First Edition, 1984).
- Alshamani, Omar Al-Toumi, **Education and the Development of the Arab Society**, (The Arab Book Publishing House, Libya, 1985).
- Alshanu, Hassan, **Means of Communication and Modern Technology**, (Egypt, the General Book Organization).
- Altuwaim, Mohamed, **The Nature of Art and the Responsibility of the Artist**, (Egypt, Institute of the Arab higher Studies, Second Edition, 1964).
- Alunfflan, Hala Ahmed, **Information and the Family: Choices and Alternatives**, (Bahrain cultural Magazine, Bahrain, issue No. 3, Yew 2, Jan. 1995).
- Alungun, Jihan Abu Rashed, **The Education of the Child in the 21st century between Cultures Enrichment and Psychological Alienation**, (Bahrain Cultural Magazine, No. 2, Oct. 1994).
- Alzaholtri, Baha Eddin Abd, **The Child Culture in the Arab World** (Al Baheth Magazine, Beirut, issues No. 2 & 3, year 12, 1994).
- Ateer, Mustafa Omar, **The Social Problems: Defining the General Framework**, (The Arab thought Magazine, Tripoli, Libya, Jan Feb. 198 1, No 19, Years).
- Awad, Rita, Alshakh, Mohamed Adberrauuf, and others, **The culture of the Child local and national testimonies**, (Department of culture and Information Government of Sharjah, 1994).
- Awatef Ibrahim and Huda Qannawi, **The Arabian child and theatre**, (Anglo almassriya 1984).

- Aydabi, Yousef (ed.), **To Theatre for child, Cultural and Information** (Department, Alsharjah, 2001).
- Barnfield, Gabriel, **Creative drama in school**, (f.s.c 1968).
- Barwise, Patrick and Ehrenberg, Andrew, **Television and Audience**, ed. Jermy Tunstall, (Sage Publications, 1988).
- BBC yearbook 1947, (London: BBC, 1947).
- Beckerman, Bernard, **Theatrical Presentation: Performer, Audience and Act**, edited by Gloria, Brim (N.Y. Rutledge, 1990).
- Billy, L.K, "Summary of PhD Thesis", (Kiev 1994).
- Bolton, Gavin, **Toward a Theory of Drama in Education** (Longman, 1979).
- Brandt, George W, (ed.) **Modern Theories of Drama: A selection of Writings on Drama and Theatre 1850-1990**, (Clarendon Press. Oxford, 1998)
- Brook, Peter, **The Empty Space**, (Penguin Group, Pelican, 1972).
- **Conference of Arab Ministers in charge of Cultural Affairs**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, (Sixth session, Damascus, 21 - 23/4/1987, Tunis, 1987).
- **Conference of Arab Ministers in charge of Cultural Affairs**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, Seventh Session, Rabat, 10 - 13/10/1989, Tunis 1989).
- England, Alan, **Theatre for young**, (Macmillan Ltd 1990).
- Goldberg, Moses, **Children Theatre; A philosophy and a method**, (Printed Hall, 1974).
- **Gulf Vision Magazine**, "Decisions of the Arab Information Ministers, Session 27, Sultanate of Oman Television" (News Report), (Saudi Arabia, year 13, Issues No. 2 & 3, Oct. 1994).
- **Gulf Vision Magazine**, "Sultanate of Oman Television", (News Report), (Saudi Arabia, year 13, issues No. 2 & 3, Oct. 1994).

- Hindi, Mohammed, **Information and Date**, "Research and Studies on TV, No. 17, Gulf Vision", (Saudi Arabia, 1995).
- How Kims R, Young, and Others **The Ups and Downs of Attention to Television Communication Research**," (Vol 18, No. 1, 1991).
- Hussain, Samir Mohamed, **Television Information in the Gulf Region and Comprehensive Development'** Gulf Vision, (Saudi Arabia, 1988).
- Hussan, Marie, **The school Theatre**, (Beirout: Alhilal House and Library 2000).
- Huxley, Michael, and Witts, Noel, (ed.) **The Twentieth Century Performance Reader**, (Rutledge 1996.).
- Ibrahim, Awatef, **Stories of nurseries**, (Anglo Almasriya 1983).
- Ibrahim, Mohamed Mauwadh and others, **Role of the Gulf Satellite Channels at the Arab and International levels**, (The Arab Magazine of Human Sciences, No. 52, year 13, Summer of 1995).
- Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, **Egypt in 25 years**, (Beirut, AL-Inma AL-ARABI Publishing House, First Edition, 1986).
- Iejali, Mustafa and others, **The culture of the Arab Child between Alienation and Originality**, (Rabat, Morocco, published by the National Council for the Arab Culture, First Edition, 1990).
- Ilyes, Sahab, **Arabs on the verge of the 21st century**, (Al-Rafed Magazine, No. 5, Oct. 1994).
- Jaber, Jaber Abdelhamid, **Psychology of Learning and Theories of Education**, (Kuwait, The modern Book Publishing House, 1989).
- Jackson, Tony, (ed.) **Learning Through Theatre, Essay and Casebooks on theatre in Education**, (Manchester University Press, 1980).

- Jawad, Abdulkarim, **Theatre experience in Oman** (Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman 1987).
- Joseph, Rand, Joseph, **The World Politics**, (USA 1995)
- Likhatshev, B, **The educational side of studying**, (Moscow, Enlightenment, 1982).
- Mahfoodh, Naguib, **About Culture and Education**, (Egypt: The Egyptian - Lebanese Publishing House, First Edition, 1990).
- Mahmood, Zaki Naguib, **Our Culture Facing the Era**, (Alshurooq House, Fourth Edition, 1989).
- Mahmood, Zaki Naguib, **Our Cultural Facing Modemity**, (Al- Shuruq Publishing House, Fourth Edition, 1989).
- Mc Caslin, Nellie, (ed.), **Children and Drama**, (David Mc Kay Company, INC./ New York, 1975).
- Medessi, Angela, **Modem Education**, Transiated by Shabeen, Ali, (Beirut, Awaidat Publications, Fourth Edition, 1986).
- Mohamed, Awatef, **The Arab child and Theatre**, (University of Tanta Cairo, 1984).
- Mohamed, Mohamed Sayyid, **Information and Development**, (Egypt, the Arab Thought Publishing House, Fourth Edition, 1988).
- Mohammed, Awatef Ibrahim and Qannawi, Huda Mohammed, **The Arab Child and the Theatre**, (University of Tanta, Cairo, 1984).
- Moltatoli, F. M, **Directing for amateurs' plays, The classic art on amateur stage**, (Moscow 1990).
- Mushaikh, Mohamed Haidar, **The Industry of Television in the 20th century**, (Egypt, the General Book Institution, 1994).

- Mushaikh, Mohamed Haidar, **Our Culture Facing Cultural Openness**, (Egypt, the General Book Organization, 1994).
- Nixon, John, (ed.) **Drama and the Whole Curriculum**, (Hutchinson and co. Ltd. 1982).
- Palmad, Gue, **Methods of Education**, Translated by Kabar, Josef Aboud, (Beirut, AWIDAT Publications, Third Edition, 1995).
- Raguab, Mustafa, **Educational Information in Egypt: Reality and Problems**, (Egypt, The Renaissance Publishing House).
- Reed, Herbert, **Education through Art**, Translated by Jaweed, Abdelaziz Tawfik, (Egypt. One Thousand - Book Collection, Ministry of Higher Education, 1969).
- Rodjifinski, F.M, The directing art work for theatrical matures, (Leningrad, 1981).
- Rogers, Ric, Audience Development: Collaborations between Education and Marketing, (London: ACE, 1997).
- Said, Qaboos **The Royal Speeches of H.M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said 1970-1990**, (Printed by Oman Newspaper House, 1995).
- Salem, Mohamed Aziz Nadhmi **Esthetic Values**, (Egypt, Al-Maarif Publishing House (Region of Alexandria, No Publishing date).
- Self, David, **Television Drama: An Introduction**, (Macmillan Education Ltd., 1988).
- Serials of Foreign Cartoons in the Sultanate of Oman Television, Evaluative study, (Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Education and Youth, Muscat, 1991).
- Sharaf, Abdelaziz , **The Mass Media and the Problem of Culture**, (Beirut, Dar Al-Jeel Publishing House, First Edition, 1993).
- Shiler, Herbert, **Communication and the Cultural Domination**, Translated by Abdulmasih, Wajeeh Samaan (Egypt, the General Book Organization, 1993).
- Shubik, Irene **Play for today: the evolution of television drama**, (Davis-Poynter Ltd., 1975).

- Slad, Peter and Nixon, John, translated by Kamal Zakher Latif, **Child's Drama theoretically and practically**, (Arabic knowledge's' office, 1997).
- Slade, Peter, **Child Drama**, (London: University of London Press Ltd. 1954).
- Soflan, Akef Yusuf, **The Cultural and Information Challenge**, Conference Cultural Challenges and the Cultural Invasion of the Gulf Arab States, (organized by the Gulf States Office of Arab Education, Muscat, 21 - 23/4/1985).
- Stanislavski, K S, "Actor preparing", Moscow, (Art House, 1990)
- Styan, J.L ,**The Dramatic Experience**, (University of Cambridge, 1988)
- Sutton, Shauan,**The Largest Theatre in the World**, (London: BBC 1981)
- **The Comprehensive Plan of the Arab Culture**, (The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, Volume 3, part 2, Kuwait, 1986).
- **The History of Education in Oman**, (issued by Ministry of Education, 1985).
- **The theatre in Al Ahli club**, (issued by Alahli club 1970).
- Tirki, Tirki Mohammed, **The ideology and the Development in Gulf** (The First Thought Meeting for GCC Country, Abu- Dhabi: 1990).
- Torrance, E.P. **Guiding Creative Talent** (N.J, Prentice Hall 1962).
- Willet, John (ed.), Brecht on Theatre. (London: Methuen).
- Wood, David, Theatre for Children: a guide to writing, adapting, directing and acting, (London: Faber and Faber, 1997)
- Zaki, Emad, **Role of Cartoons in the life of Children**, (Al-Arabi Book No. 23, April 1989).

The internet references

- "Drama in Primary School", www.q-ten.co.uk/artom/education/primary/primaryhotmail
[7,5,2001]

- Bachanan, Matt, 1998 www.creativedrama.com. [27.5.2001].
- <http://1cew2.1oc.gov/cgi-bin/query/cstdy:@field> (DOCID+OMOO91) Oman a country study. [4.2.2002].
- <http://cweb2.1gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frdcstdy:@field> (DOCID+OM0091). [4.2.2002].
- <http://rsb.1oc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field> (DOCID+OMOO53). [6.2.2002].
- <http://www.inforamp.net/emous/oman/history.htm> [7.2.2002].
- <http://www.omanet.com/oman2000/2.htm>. [10.2.2002].
- <http://www.omanet.com/sultanQaboos.htm> ministry of Information. [9.2.2002].
- Moyer, Janine Buesgen, 1999 www.creativedrama.com, [8.2.2002].
- www.goecities.com/Broadway/Alley/3765puppets.htm, [3.2.2002].

Appendix A: Polka and Tricycle Theatres

In my research period in U.K, I have visited many children theatres notably the Tricycle Theatre and Polka Theatre, where I met the people in charge for short interviews about the work of these two theatres. The results of these interviews were as follows:

1- Polka Theatre

The Polka Theatre is an internationally recognized centre for excellence in the development, creation and production of children's theatre. In addition there are many other activities, such as drama work shop, crafts in The Making Zone, exhibitions and theatre tour, as well as being the purpose-built for children in Britain.

2- Tricycle Theatre

The Tricycle runs a year-round programme of activities for children with dedicated theatre productions, films and workshops. The Tricycle presents different theatre shows every week. The tricycle Cinema presents children's and family films every week.

The Tricycle runs ten week programmes of hugely popular dance and drama workshops for children and young people. The Youth Theatre usually takes place at the Tricycle week. Members learn a variety of dramatic skills and techniques while working towards presenting a performance.

Appendix B

Children's International Theatre Festival Productions

For 3 to 14 years olds

Edinburgh: Monday 27th May to Wednesday 5th June 2002

This festival is one of most important children's theatre festivals in U.K. As observer of this festival the researcher saw some plays, which could be good examples for children's theatre in Oman, as follows:

1- Double Cross-Grained. (Dan theatre Dee - Netherlands)

In this play everything is double. It is set in the kitchen two parlour maids, where everything is double clean, double tidy and double neat. The two maids have everything organized and under control, until Cross-Grained the butler comes in. She is the complete opposite of the doubles, crossing their paths, being contrary and causing a tangle of hilarious arguments. This is an extremely engaging dance theatre production, full of fun and dance, without any words.

2- The Song from the Sea (Visible Fictions Theatre Company - Scotland)

Josh lives with his family in a very noisy house. One day he hears a faint yet beautiful sound struggling to be heard through the household din. Intrigued, he sets out on an incredible journey to discover its source. The play is a wonderful and moving story that shows us how to listen to the magic of everyday life. It is a charming tale, beautifully and imaginatively performed by puppet.

3- Walking the Tightrope (Travelling Light Theatre Company - England)

Esme is six and spends her holidays by the sea with her grandparents. When she arrives this year, Nana is not there, but she has left her umbrella behind - and her spectacles. And Granddad cannot find the right words to explain where she has gone.

This piece featured high energy performances and live music. It was extraordinarily poignant and beautifully handled.

4- Buster (Cahoots N.I - Northern Ireland)

Wonderful things happen to Buster. His house is a place where dreams become reality, puppets become people and inanimate objects answer back.

Combining magic and illusion with music, circus, drama and dance, Buster is a visually dazzling piece of theatre.

5- Our Wonderful World. (Meridian Theatre - Denmark)

Life is looking up for Paul. He's been working in the often-unglamorous world of TV voice-overs and has just got his big break working on the documentary series, "Our Wonderful World". Just when Paul needs all his time to focus on his career, his mother begins to slip away into her own world, as senile dementia takes its hold over her.

Our Wonderful World is a profoundly moving yet affirming and humorous story about the pain and the joy of life's changes, how we all continue to grow and develop throughout our lifetimes and how childhood dreams may be lost, but are never forgotten.

Appendix C



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**INTERNATIONAL
VISITOR
PROGRAM**

Dr Khalid Bin Abdulrahim
AL-ZADJALI

Oman

August 12 - August 26, 2001

Arranged by
Meridian International Centre

Dr. Khalid Bin Abdulrahim AL-ZADJALI Oman

UNITED STATES PROGRAM.

On Behalf of **UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Office of International Visitors

301 Fourth Street, SW

Washington, DC 20547

Toll Free: (800) 827-2987; State Department Operations (202) 647-1512

Ms. **Kathy Brion**

Acting Director.

Ms. **Deborah Underhill**

Chief, Voluntary Visitors Division.

Mr. **Robert Keith**

Senior Program Officer

Telephone: (202) 619-5597

Arranged by **MERIDIAN INTERNATIONAL CENTER**

Programming Division.

1624 Crescent Place, NW

Washington, DC 20009

Telephone: (202) 667-6670

Toll Free: (800) 424-2974

Ambassador Kenton W. Keith

Senior Vice President

Kowall

Program Officer.

Pat Telephone: (202) 363-0154

Ms. **Elizabeth Richards**

Program Assistant

Telephone: (301) 445-5215

Accompanied by Mr. **Zbigniew Ostrega**

United States English Language Officer

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

12:40 p.m. Depart Manchester, England aboard *British Midland Airlines* flight 701

3:45 p.m. Arrive WASHINGTON, DC (Dulles Airport)

Directions: You will be met upon arrival by your escort, Mr. Zbigniew Ostrega.

Accommodations have been reserved for you at:

The Churchill Hotel

1914 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Washington, District of Columbia 20009

Telephone: (202) 797-2000

Rate: (202) 328-1984

Rate: \$89.00/single + 14.5% = \$101.91/night

Confirmation numbers: CB021 1DD (Al-Zadjali), CB021 1DC (Ostrega)

Note: The closest metro to your hotel is Dupont Circle. From your hotel, take a right onto Connecticut Avenue. Walk 3 blocks to the Q Street entrance of the metro station, which is Dupont Circle on the Red Line.

If you should wish to contact your embassy during your stay, it is located at:

EMBASSY OF OMAN

2535 Belmont Road, NW

Washington, DC 20008

Telephone: (202) 387-1980

Fax: (202) 745-4933

MONDAY, AUGUST 13

9:30 am WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Please take a taxi to this appointment. Allow 15 minutes travel time. ,

Meridian International Centre

1624 Crescent Place, NW

Washington, DC 20009

Telephone: (202) 667-6670

Fax: (202) 667- 8980

United States Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Office of International Visitors

Mr. Robert Keith

Program Officer

Meridian International Centre

Programming Division

Pat Kowall

Program Officer

Ms. Elizabeth Richards

Program-Assist

The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs operates the United States Government's overseas information and cultural programs, including the Fulbright Scholarship Program. U.S. embassies are responsible for the conduct of United States overseas informational, educational, and cultural affairs programs, including the exchange of persons, all of which are designed to build bridges of mutual understanding between the American people and other peoples of the world. To accomplish its goals of strengthening foreign understanding of American society, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs supports a wide variety of programs which range from academic and cultural exchanges to press, speakers, library, and cultural centre programs abroad.'

Meridian International Centre is a private, non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting international understanding through the exchange of people, ideas, and the arts. The Programming Division operates under a grant from the Department of State to arrange professional programs and travel in the United States for visitors who participate in the International Visitor Program by Department of State.'

MONDAY, AUGUST 13

10:45 am FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

Directions: Please take a taxi to the Portals II building. Please bring a photo ID to this appointment and please arrive at 10:45 am. Upon arrival, please contact Mr. Somers, as he will escort you to your meeting.

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

Telephone: (202) 418-2135

Fax: (202) 418-2824

Contact: Robert Somers, International Visitors Program

Mr. **Brad Lerner**

Attorney Advisor, Video Services

Mass Media Bureau

11:00 am Topic: Requirements of the Children's Television Act

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an independent United States government agency, directly responsible to Congress. The FCC was established by the Communications Act of 1934 and is charged with regulating interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable. The FCC's jurisdiction covers the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. possessions.

Congress enacted the **Children's TelevisioOn Act** in 1990 to enhance television's

potential to teach the nations children valuable information and skills. The Act requires each television station in the U.S. to serve the educational and informational needs of children through its overall programming, including programming specifically designed to serve these needs (or "core" educational programming). In August 1996, the FCC adopted new rules to strengthen the enforcement of this statutory mandate. These new rules adopt several public information initiatives designed to give parents greater information about the core educational programs being aired by TV stations.

MONDAY, AUGUST 13

Following this meeting or during a free time in your schedule you may wish to go to the bank and purchase traveller's cheques at:

BANK OF AMERICA

3 Dupont Circle, NW (between P Street and New Hampshire Avenue; near the Dupont. Circle metro station South/Dupont Circle exit)

(202) 624-4370

Hours of Operation: 9:00 am - 3:00 p.m. (Monday - Thursday)

Under an agreement with Meridian International Centre, there is only a 1 % service fee on the purchase of traveller's cheques. Please be sure to take the Bank of America letter of introduction that accompanies your check. Please call ahead of time to announce your estimated time of arrival.

2:00 p.m. KIDSNET

Directions: The nearest metro station to this appointment is Takoma Station on the Red Line, in the direction of Glenmont. Upon arrival at this station, please take a taxi to the building. The approximate travel time to this appointment is 45 minutes.

6856 Eastern Avenue, NW suite 208

Washington, D.C., 20012

Telephone: (202) 291-1400

Fax: (202) 882-7315

Ms. Karen Jaffe

Executive Director

Topic: How to assist both parents and professionals in using television as an educational tool.

KIDSNET helps children; families and educators intelligently access the educational opportunities available from television, radio and multimedia sources. **KIDSNET** does this by encouraging media literacy in children and a commitment to educational excellence in broadcasters. Since 1985, **KIDSNET** has worked with health and social service professionals, community organizations and educators, as well as media professionals and parents to create

And disseminate educational materials for children ages pre-school through high school.

KIDSNET is the only national non-profit computerized clearinghouse and information centre devoted to children's television, radio, audio, video and multimedia.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14

9:45 am - THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

1:00 P.m. **Directions:** Please take a taxi to this appointment. Please arrive 9:45 in the HalhoJ States, as you will be met by Ms. Nancy Mason, who will escort you to your appointments.

2700 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20566 Telephone: (202) 416-8012 Fax: (202)
416-8018 Contact: Ms. Nancy Mason

10:00 am Mr. Derek Gordon

Vice President of Education

10:30 am Ms. Michelle Koziak

National Touring Co-ordinate/Youth and Family Programs

11:00 am **Ms. Alicia Adams**

Director of Special Programs

11:30 am **Ms. Claudette Donion**

Senior Vice President - Administration

12:00 noon Backstage tour with Production Department Representative

Topic: Overview of the Kennedy Centre and its programs

The Kennedy Centre located on the banks of the Potomac River near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, opened to the public in September 1971. But its roots date back to 1958, when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed bipartisan legislation creating a National Cultural Centre. In honour of

Eisenhower's vision for such a facility, one of the Kennedy Centre's theatres was named for him.

From its very beginnings, the Kennedy Centre has represented a unique public/private partnership. Because the Centre is the nation's living memorial to President Kennedy, it receives federal funding each year to pay for maintenance and operation of the building, a federal facility. However, the Centre's artistic programs and education and outreach initiatives are paid for almost entirely through ticket sales and gifts from individuals, corporations, and private foundations.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14

2:30 GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Tentative Directions: Please takes a taxi front your previous appointment.

Upon entering the campus, the building is located to your left.

White Gravener Building

3700 O Street, NW

Washington, DC 20057

Telephone: (202) 687-3.968

Fax: (202) 687-6050

Professor Sandra Calvert

Director, Children and Media Project

Department of Psychology

Topic: **Children and media project**

Note: Professor Calvert is attempting to change an appointment she has scheduled this afternoon in order to meet with you. You will be advised when the meeting is confirmed.

Georgetown University was founded in 1789; the saure year President George Washington took office. The oldest Catholic and Jesuit University in the United States, it was established by John Carroll, the first American Catholic Bishop. Its Walsh School of Foreign Service, founded in 1919, is the oldest in the United States and the largest school of international relations in the world; the School of Medicine, founded in 1851, receives applications from one of every rive people applying to medical school in the US; the

Georgetown University Law Centre, founded in 1970, is the largest in the States.

The **Children and Media Project** at Georgetown University is examining children's learning from the television programs that broadcasters have labelled as educational and informational.

WASHINGTON, DC

City Population: 607,000 Metropolitan Area: 3, 924, 000.

Washington, DC is the capital of the United States. The presence of the federal government accounts for much of Washington's character. Washington, DC has a world-wide reputation as a cosmopolitan city with international flair and a rich cultural life.

Rockefeller Centre, Radio City Music Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Times Square, Greenwich Village, Harlem, and the New York Stock Exchange.

History

Henry Hudson discovered New York early in the 17th century and in 1626, Dutch West India Company bought the entire island from the American Indians for the equivalent of about \$24 in trinkets and beads. The English seized it in 1664, and the name was changed from New Amsterdam to New York in honour of the Duke of York, brother of Charles II of England. The island changed hands twice more before finally becoming part of the United States. The city was briefly the capital of the country from 1789 to 1790.

Washington's major business is politics, both national and international. Government is by far Washington's biggest industry, and the federal government dominates both the economic and social life of the city. Washington is also home to many business and professional organizations and non-profit agencies that work for the government or try to influence its decisions. Tourism is the second largest industry.

The Constitution called for a "federal district," separate from the states, to serve as the capital. For many years, residents were largely disenfranchised. Only since 1964 have Washingtonians been able to vote in Presidential elections. Washington won the right to limited self-government in 1975. Now Washington is led by a mayor and 13 city council members. District voters also elect a nonvoting representative to the U.S. Congress.

The city has several newspapers, among them The Washington Post and The Washington Times. Major educational institutions include Georgetown University, George Washington University, Howard University, The ~ American University and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Major attractions include the Smithsonian and its associated museums, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Georgetown (the original Washington), the Capitol Building, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Supreme Court and the National Cathedral.

History

The cornerstone of the Capitol building was laid in 1793, after seven years of argument on the part of Congress as to where the "Federal Town" should be located. Pierre L'Enfant, French soldier and engineer, had Paris, France in mind when he laid out Washington in a series of broad avenues and spacious circles. The city was occupied by the British during the War of 1812. The White House, Capitol Building, and other Federal buildings were destroyed. Washington had become a bustling city of 75,000 by the time of the Civil War. Major development began in the late 1800's and still continues today.

UNITED STATES PROGRAM

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14

6:00 P.m. Depart Washington DC (Reagan Airport) aboard *US Airways flight 6872*

7:15 pin Arrive New York, New York (LaGuardia Airport)

Accommodations have been reserved for you at:

Mansfield Hotel

12 West 44`" Street

New York, New York 10036

Telephone: (212) 944-6050

Fax: (212) 840-0939

Rate: \$130.00/single + 13.25% tax + \$2.00 occupancy tax = \$149.23/night

Confirmation numbers: 5269 (Al-Zadjali), 5270 (Ostrega)

Your program in New York is being co-ordinated by:

Department of State New York Program Branch

Donna Shirreffs, Director

Mary McCree, Staff Assistant/Arrivals Co-ordinator

Mr. Aman Momin, Program Officer

666 Fifth Avenue, 6th Floor

New York, NY 10103

Telephone: (212) 399-5750

Fax: (212) 399-5783

Emergency number: (212) 399-5780

Mr. Amin's direct telephone: (212) 399-5770

A three-day program is being planned for you in New York City. Per your request, meetings are being pursued at the Children's Television Workshop, a non-profit organization created in 1967 for the purpose of producing children's educational programs such as *Sesame Street*, *The Electric Company*, and *Square One TV*; and at the Nickelodeon Studio administrative offices. Nickelodeon produces the hit shows *Blue's Clues*, which is created in Nickelodeon's animation studios located in Brooklyn. Also being requested is an appointment at the City Kids Foundation Repertory Company (Rep). It enables young people to transform feelings and experiences into the original music, dance and dramatic material. Rep members receive Leadership Development training focusing on self-esteem, diversity and conflict management. Through performances in schools, community centres, prisons, on stages, in videos, on television or wherever a youth audience is gathered, City Kids Rep is out there delivering 100% authentic, youth- driven educational entertainment. You may also meet with staff from Young Audiences/New York. This program is a recipient of the National Medal of the Arts. Its live performance programs reach more than 200,000 young people per in year in the New York City public schools. In addition, professional children's theatre companies are being contacted such as the City Lights Youth Theatre and the New York Youth Theatre.

NEW York, New York

City Population: 7,322,564

Metropolitan Area: 8,054,000

New York City is America's largest and most diversified melting pot. As evidenced by the Statue of Liberty, New York has for many years been the welcoming beacon to thousands of immigrants to this country. The demographic diversity created by this flood of humanity is seen in the social, economic, commercial and artistic make-up of New York, which even today continues to attract large numbers of individuals hoping to make their mark in this dynamic and complex city.

New York is considered the centre of many disciplines, including finance, with the Stock Exchange, Wall Street, and a vast number of brokerage firms and financial institutions; commerce, with the largest and most active port in the U.S.; notably "New York" industries such as the garment industry; arts and culture, with a renowned assortment of theatres, museums, galleries, bookstores, restaurants and ethnic communities; **and finally**, communications, with the corporate decision-making offices of the major television, radio and print media organizations. With the presence of the United Nations and the influence of so many ethnic cultures, New York is also considered a centre of international importance.

New York is comprised of five boroughs - Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Richmond (Staten Island). The city is governed by a mayor, elected to a four-year term, and 37 City Council members. The major newspapers serving the city are The New York Times, The Daily News, and The Wall Street Journal. Major educational institutions include Columbia University, New York University, City University, the Union

Theological Seminary, and the Juilliard School of Music. Attractions include Central Park, the Bronx Zoo, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Empire State Building, the World Trade Centre, **SUNDAY, AUGUST 19**

2:00 p.m. Depart New York (LaGuardia Airport) US *Airways* flight 6816

3:18 p.m. Arrive BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS (Logan International Airport)

Directions: Please take a taxi to your hotel.

Accommodations have been reserved for you at:

Boston Park Plaza Hotel

64 Arlington Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Telephone: (617) 426-2000

Fax: (617) 426-5545

Rate: \$139.00/single + 12.45% tax = \$156.31/night

Confirmation numbers: 1259147 (Al-Zadjali), 1259145 (Ostrega)

Your program in Massachusetts is being co-ordinated by:

World Boston

Ms. Trish Callahan, Executive Director

Ms. **Brandie Conforti**, Director of Visitor Programs

One Milk Street,

3rd Floor

Boston, MA 02109

Telephone: (617) 542-8995

Fax: (213) 423-7918

Emergency contacts:

Ms. Conforti's cell phone number: (617) 359-9450

Boston is home to WGBH, ~a leading producer of PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) television and public radio, and a pioneer in educational and access technologies. WGBH produces the original children's television programs *Zoom*, *Arthur*, and *Between the Lions*. *Zoom* stars children and is in its third season of 40 new shows and challenges young people to "turn off the TV and do it!" *Arthur* is animated and follows the adventures and misadventures of eight-year-old Arthur read, his four-year-old sister D.W., their friends and family. *Between the Lions* is an animated show which helps children learn-to read in a fulfilled, variety-show format. Boston is also home to outstanding children's theatre presented by companies such as the Boston Baked Theatre, the Boston Children's Theatre, and the Lyric Stage Company. You may also visit one of Boston's universities to discuss the latest research on children's television.

BOSTON/CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

City Population: 574,283 Metropolitan Area: 4,093,000.

Boston, the capital of Massachusetts, is among the most historic cities in the U.S. It was near here that the Pilgrims came in the early 17th century, and it was here where the American Revolution began. From its earliest history, it has been a centre of trade, industry and education. Home to many of the major high technology companies in the U.S., Boston is considered to be the "Silicon Valley" of the East. Business and industry have ample intellectual resources to draw upon in Boston/Cambridge, with 52 colleges and universities in the area. Boston is also a cultural centre with some of the finest museums in the world, a world-class symphony, good opera and a ballet company. Over the years. Boston has furnished the city with a number of colourful and controversial politicians, including Mayor James Michael Curley and Mayor "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, grandfather of President John F. Kennedy.

Boston is governed by a mayor, elected to a four-year term, and a city council. The major newspapers serving Boston are the *Boston Globe*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Major universities include Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Radcliff, Boston University, Boston College, and Tufts University. The area's attractions include Paul Revere's House, the Museum of Fine Arts, the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides), Beacon Hill, the Museum of Science and the Charles Hayden Planetarium, and the town of Salem, site of the notorious witch trials. Also of interest are The Freedom Trail, which tracks the important sites from the Revolutionary War; Boston Common, the nations oldest park, established in 1634; Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market, site of many Revolutionary War protest meetings; and

Harvard Square, just across the Charles River in the town of Cambridge.

History

Boston was settled by a group of Puritan colonists led by Governor John Winthrop and in 1632 was made the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Among the more noteworthy events leading up to the Revolutionary War in Boston were the "Boston Massacre" of 1770, when British troops fired on Boston citizens, and a tax revolt known as the "Boston Tea Party" which caused the British Parliament to close the port in 1773. The 19th century saw the continued rise of commerce in Boston. The flowering of "arts and letters" (represented by such figures as Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow and Thoreau) led to its reputation as the "Athens of America."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22

12:20 p.m. Depart Boston (Logan International Airport) aboard *American Airlines* flight 4988

2:10 p.m. Arrive **PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA** (Philadelphia International Airport)

Directions: Please take a taxi to the hotel.

Accommodations have been reserved for you at:

The Latham Hotel

17th and Walnut Streets Philadelphia, PA 19103 Telephone: (215) 563-7474 Fax: (215) 563-4034 Rate: \$95.00/single and double + 14% tax = \$108.30/night Confirmation numbers:

Your program in Philadelphia is being co-ordinated by:

International Visitors Council of Philadelphia

Ms. Nancy J. Gilboy, Executive Director

Mr. **Ronald D' Alonzo**, International Programs Officer

One Parkway

1515 Arch Street, 12th Floor

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102-1594

Telephone: (215) 683-0995

Fax: (215) 683-0998

Emergency contacts:

Mr. D'Alonzo's home phone: (215) 923-8953

At the core of your program in Philadelphia will be a visit to the Annenberg Public Policy Centre at the University of Pennsylvania. The changing face of media and

technology in the home and its effect on children has been an on-going area of research for the Centre. Over the years, the Centre has examined the educational content of children's television programming and the impact of federal policy on family's' television viewing habits - including the role of television ratings and the new v-chip. In addition, in an effort to understand how parents mediate their children's media use, the Centre conducts a regular survey of parents and children on media in the home. You may also visit television station WHYY, which is a Ready to Learn station. Ready To Learn combines television designed to teach with community outreach and innovative educational materials. This blend of television services builds on the PBS children's programs that families know and trust-such as *Sesame Street*, *Mister Rogers' Neighbourhood*, and *Reading Rainbow*. You may also meet with staff from one of the local children's theatre companies such as the Arden Children's Theatre or the Theatre Caravan.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

City Population: 1,585,577 Metropolitan Area: 4,857,000.

Philadelphia is the birthplace of the U.S. democratic system of government. The city, still following the design plans of founder William Penn, is laid out around four spacious parks, one in each quadrant of the city. Today's Philadelphia's live in 18th century townhouses and some of them pray in the same churches as did George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams.

Between 1986 and 1988, the city undertook an ambitious \$14 million project to restore its famed, centuries old Market Street. The massive effort to restore both the commercial and residential neighbourhoods of downtown Philadelphia has encouraged residents to return to the city from the suburbs.

The city is governed by a mayor. The major newspaper serving the city is the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Major educational institutions include the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Drexel University, La Salle College, Swarthmore College, Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College and Villanova University. Of particular interest in Philadelphia is Independence National Historic Park, called the "most historic square mile in America," holding the most historic of the Colonial and Revolutionary buildings, including Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed and where the Constitution was written, Congress Hall, where the first Congress met between 1790 and 1800, Old City Hall, from which the first Supreme Court issued judgements and Independence Mall, where the Liberty Bell can be found. There is also Fairmount Park, which spans the city with its 4000 acres of

meadows, gardens, creeks, trails and paths for joggers, bicyclists, fishermen and picnickers. In this part of Philadelphia there is also the Philadelphia Zoo, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Franklin Institute Science Museum, and the Rodin Museum, the largest collection of Auguste Rodin's work outside of France. Other points of interest include Valley Forge National Park, City Hall, Rittenhouse Square, the Edgar Allen Poe House and the Betsy Ross House.

History

Founded in 1682 by a Quaker, William Penn, Philadelphia was created to provide a haven for Europeans seeking freedom from religious persecution. By 1750, Philadelphia was the leading city in the American colonies. Penn wrote the Charter of Human Rights, a precursor of other such documents to come from this city. From 1790 to 1800, the first Congress of the U.S. met in Philadelphia. The city only relinquished its role as the nation's capital when the District of Columbia became the permanent headquarters of the federal government.

INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE

Please reconfirm your international reservation three days ahead of scheduled departure by calling British Midland Airlines at (800) 788-0555. Due to airport security measures, please plan to arrive at the airport, at least two hours in advance of flight time.

Prior to your departure from the United States, we would welcome the opportunity to speak informally with you about your experiences and reactions to your overall visit. At your convenience, kindly telephone us at (800) 424-2974. Please feel at liberty to comment freely on all aspects of the program.

The United States Department of State is also interested in hearing your comments and reactions to your United States visit. Mr. Robert Keith would appreciate a telephone call from you prior to your departure from the United States. The telephone number is (800) 827-2987.

Upon your return home, please be in contact with the United States Embassy.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

Please take a taxi to Philadelphia International Airport

12:45 PM Depart Philadelphia, Pennsylvania aboard *United Airlines* flight 7653

1:49 p.m. Arrive Washington, DC (Dulles Airport). Change planes.

5:50 p.m. Depart Washington, DC aboard *British Midland Airlines* flight 702

MONDAY, AUGUST 27

5:55 am Arrive **MANCHESTER, ENGLAND**

Dr. Khalid Bin Abdulrahim AL-ZADJALI Oman

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Present position: Head of Drama Department at Oman Television, Ministry of Information,

1999-Present

Dr. Al-Zadjali worked with the Joint Production Institute of the Arabian Gulf States (JPPI) in the creation of 120 episodes of the Arabic-version of *Sesame Street*, "*Sesame, Open Your Doors!*" previous positions Film and Television Director, Oman Television, 1990- 2001

Education: PhD, Film and Theatre, Bucharest University of Film and Theatre, Romania, 1999.

B.A. Film Directing and Producing, Higher Institute of Cinema, Egypt, 1989

Professional objectives:

Dr. Al-Zadjali is currently conducting a three-year research project on the use of drama in education. As a television and film director and producer, he is interested in exploring how children's TV and theatre programs are made and used in the U.S. as educational tools. Dr. AlZadjali's research will be used to upgrade the television and theatre production of children's programs in Oman. While he is in the United States, Dr. Al-Zadjali would like to:

- Visit television stations and companies involved in the production of children's programming
- on-site visits to production sets, meetings with producers, directors and educational consultants for children's television
- discuss the production and educational uses of community theatre for children

Dr. Khalid Bin Abdulrahim AL-ZADJALI Oman

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- Meet with academic specialists to familiarize him with professional literature in this field

Specific topics of discussion include:

- Educational philosophy behind children's TV and theatre shows
- Production requirements for children's theatre and TV series
- Costs, requirements, and design of these programs
- Latest American research on the use of drama and TV in education

Appendix D

The Omani History

3rd century CE: Kingdom founded by an Arab chief from Hijrah in Mesopotamia.

7th century: The OmaniS convert to Islam.

751: The first Omani imam was elected.

10th century: the Qarmatians conquered Oman.

1507: The arrival of the Portuguese. Muscat is captured.

1650: The Portuguese were removed from Muscat.

1741: Imam Ahmad Ibn Said removed the Iranian community.

1798: Treaty of friendship with Britain.

1861: The ruler, not the imam, takes the title "sultan".

1913: Fights between the group of the *Imam* and the sultan. The imam received support from inland tribes.

1920: Peace is restored.

1932: Said ibn Taimur became sultan.

1954: *Imam* Al-Khaleeli started a new rebellion, and gets help from Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

1959: The sultan puts the rebellion down, with British aid.

1964: Oil was discovered.

1965: Revolt in Dhofar, because of the repressive politics of the sultan.

1967: Oil production started.

1970: Sultan Said is overthrown by his son, Qaboos ibn Said, in a palace coup. Qaboos introduces liberalizations of the political system, and starts many development projects.

The name of the country was changed from Muscat and Oman to Sultanate of Oman.

1970s: Oman was b plagued in civil war where. Marxist groups supported by South-Yemen, fight against the government forces. The sultan comes out as the victor of these fights.

1980: Military agreement with the USA was signed, as Oman was scared by Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, both happened the year before.

1981: Together with 6 other countries, Oman forms the Gulf Co-operation Council.

1981: Oman established *Mujlis Ash-Shura*) consultative Council but the members in that time were appointed by the government.

1991: Sultan Qaboos expanded the role of the Council. Oman's Citizen started to elect the members of the Council

1996: the establishment of Oman council, which includes State council and legislative council. These had known in other part of the world as Parliament.

Appendix E

The poster of Omani children play has been produced in may 2001 on the Muscat Municipality's amphitheatre as practical work of research. The play as it has been mentioned was directed and produced by the researcher him self.



Appendix F

Output of Omani Youth Theatre, 1980-2002:

Merchant of Venice	1980
Sons of the captain	1981
The country	1882
The flag	1983
The well	1994
The bride price	1985
Yes we are stronger	1986
The foreign	1986
I want to understand	1986
The ship is still broken	1987
The mouse	1987
The faith bakery	1987
The spider net	1988
Doctor carrying fish	1988
Spreading over hot oven	1989
Imaginary millionaire	1989
The nice sex	1998
The problems solver	1990
The bottom and the mask	1990
The knight	1990
The ball out of goal	1991
Unmeant goal	1992
Alfalaj	1992
The listener and speaker	1993
During one day and night	1994
In our house a problem	1994
O night o night	1994

Our grand mother welcome	1994
Hook	1995
The silver jubilee opera	1995
Thank you try again	1996
Mouathef	1996
The fear	1996
The chair	1997
Othello	1997
The will	1988
Almashoorah	1998
The condolence of monster	1988
The last wall	1999
Man without immunisation	2000
The celebration	2001
The row	2001
The conditions	2001
The eye didn't see	2002
Under the ash	2002

Appendix G

The most prominent Omani Dramatic work since 1980 up to the present

First: T.V. Series	Production year and number of episodes	
Shangob & the Jaws	1980	30
Sahmsa & Abboud	1981	30
One Thousand Nights & Night	1983	15
The Sorrows of the boy Hamdan	1983	15
Routine of Happiness Block	1984	30
Khalil Bin ahmed Al Farahidi	1984	15
Sinbad (Ahmed Bin Majed)	1984	15
Hearts at Vortex	1985	7
Life incidents	1986	11
Life will go on	1988	13
Poetry is the collection of Arab (part1)	1989	29
Important Subject	1989	7
Hot Summer	1989	13
Life windows	1991	15
Diary of Said & Saida	1991	15
Parents & Sons	1991	16
Poetry is the collection of Arab, (part2)	1992	30
This is life	1992	15
Juma'a at the blowing winds	1992	20
Talks	1993	15
Annas Ahwal	1993	29
Living his time	1994	30
Poetry is the collection of Arab (part 3)	1995	30
Mandoos Journey	1996	11
Oman in History	1996	25
Budoor & The Happy boy	1995	30

Abu Manazel going up & down	1996	18
Past comes tomorrow	1997	30
The Prize	1997	7
The quiet nest	1997	5
Goodness life	1997	5
Reading forgotten Book	1997	14
The Radiance	1997	14
Spring is coming	1998	15
The cross road	1988	14
Watch the people	1988	14
Dreams of Raba'a	1998	15
The incident of the beach	1988	7
Tale of Proverbs, part 1	1988	15
Featureless Faces	1999	20
Al- Wahaj	1999	15
Springs of Hope	1999	15
At the middle of the way	1999	14
Tale of proverbs, part 2	1999	16
The best sellers	2000	14
Small dreams	2000	16
The tales of my small family	2000	24
It was in one day	2000	12
Hot winter	2000	15
Ayam al nadam	2000	13
Second: T.V films		
Death song	1976	1
Broken glasses	1977	1
The Hope	1978	1
The planets	1988	1

The time	1988	1
Group of life evenings, flowers & thrones, scream, burning hearts, the issue of Dr. Selama, Man at pains, The Return of the absent, Sabria's wedding.	1988-1989	1
The House of Abu Marhon,		1
The wedding	1991	1
Only Employee,	1992	1
The Eucharist & The victim,	1993	1
AL Munataha,	1993	1
The Big Drawing,	1993	1
The Bed	1996	1
The fence	1996	1
The treasure	1996	1
The tale of every door	1997	1
Return of the treasure	2002	1

Appendix H: The Survey Questionnaire

Name of school:

Name of teacher:

1. Do you know what drama is?

Yes

No

2. If yes what is the most favourite media of drama do you like to watch?

T.V

Radio

Theatre

School

Cinema

Other (please specify)

3. Is drama taught as a separate subject?

Yes

No

4. Is drama taught as part of other subject/areas of experience?

Arabic language

Arts education

Other (please specify)

5. If drama is taught separately, which of these activities are included?

Production of scripted play

Play-reading

Role-play on issues

Other (please specify)

6. If drama is part of another subject/ area of experience, which of the above numbers (1, 2, 3, or 4) apply?

7. 1-

2-

3-

4-

8. Where do drama lessons take place?

Classroom

Other (please specify)

9. Is drama offered as an extra- curricular activity?

Yes
No

10. Activities within lessons. Do you use ;

Tape recordings

Radio broadcasts

Video recordings

Improvisation

Movement without speech

Mime

Speech

Discussion

Other (please specify)

11. Were you appointed to be responsible for drama or have you become involved out of interest?

Appointed

Involved by interest

Have you had any training to teach drama?

Yes

No

Yes, please say what

No, what length and type of training would you like?

12. Is drama taught to everyone in the school

Yes

No

13. Is your normal approach

Group work

Whole class

Individual

All three above

Other (please specify)

14. Would you be willing to follow this questionnaire up with a brief interview at a time and date convenient to you?

Yes

No

Appendix I Questionnaire Data			%
1) Do you know, what is drama?	Yes	25	89
	No	3	11
2) If yes, What is your favourite media?	TV	15	54
	Radio	1	4
	Theatre	7	25
	School	3	11
	Cinema	2	7
3) Is drama taught as separate subject?	Yes	7	25
	No	21	75
4) Is drama taught as part of other subject?	Arabic Language	19	68
	Arts Education	2	7
	Others	6	21
5) Which of these activities are included?	Production of scripted play	6	21
	play-reading	4	14
	role-play on issues	6	21
	Others	2	7
6) Where do drama lessons take place?	class room	23	82
	Other	4	14
7) Activities within lessons. Do you use;			
Tape Recording	Yes	16	57
Radio broadcasts	Yes	3	11
Video recordings	Yes	14	50
Improvisation	Yes	6	21
Movement without speech	Yes	5	18
Mime	Yes	5	18
Speech	Yes	10	36
Discussion	Yes	19	68
Other	Yes	1	4
8) Were you appointed to be responsible for drama or have you become involved out of interest?			
	Appointed	1	4
	Involved by interest	10	36
9) Have you had any training to teach drama?	YES	1	4
	NO	26	93
10) Is drama taught to every one in school?	Yes	5	18
	No	19	68
11) Is your normal approach?	Group work	14	50
	Whole class	3	11
	Individual	2	7
	all three above	6	21

Appendix J: Seminar Questions

Part 2 the Seminar questions:

The attendance:

School theatre specialist

School teachers, T.V. Drama's directors and writers

T.V. children's programs directors and writers

Theatre directors and directors

Actors and actress

1. What are the specific responsibilities of the theatre specialist?
 2. What are the most usual aspects of drama you use?
 3. What is the relationship of drama to curriculum?
 4. What are the roles of drama in performance in the general cultural life of the school?
 5. What kind of facilities should be available for the teaching of drama?
 6. What are the essential differences between the values, both for your self and the children, of the created play and the formulated play?
 7. What is the distinctive nature of drama? What are its distinctive contributions to the development of children?
 8. What kind of learning can be achieved through drama? What are the practical implications of placing different emphases on the drama process?
 9. Can drama be assessed? If so, how?
 10. How can drama best be blended into different kinds of timetables?
 11. What facilities are necessary for good drama work? What resources are available outside school?
 12. What recommendations could be made for the future of drama in education and children drama?
 13. What are the private companies' roles for the theatre development?
 14. Does children theatre exist in private companies' works?
 15. Do youth theatre, private companies and Oman T.V. are doing their job quite enough toward the children?
 16. What is the most remarkable children's drama works in Oman?
- Many other questions will be discussed as the situation.

Interviewees

Sultanate of Oman

1. Abdulkarim Jawad, playwright, Director of Youth Theatre in Oman, [1,2.2002]
2. Abdullah bin Salim Alharthi, Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sultanate of Oman [6,2,2002]
3. Dawood bin Alhamdani, Specialist in the Ministry of Education, [14.4.2001].
4. Khalid bin Abdullatif Assati, critic, Alwatan News paper, [13.3.2001].
5. Malalah bin Darwish Alblushi, Film and TV. Director, [13.3.2001].
6. Mohsen bin Suleiman Alblushi, Actor and producer, [13.3.2001].
7. Nada bint Abdulrahim Alzadjali, designer,[15.3.2001].
8. Nasser bin Hamdan Alakhzami, Actor, [13.3.20001].
9. Saif bin Nasser Almawali, Actor, director and vice president of Majan theatre group, [13.3.2001].
10. Sami Ahmed Assaid, Photographer, [13.3.2001].
11. Yusra bint Ahmed Alriyami, Teacher,[13.3.2001].

United Kingdom.

1. Claire Hind, Theatre studies department, University of Hull, Scarborough campus.
2. Gillian Christie, education director, Tricycle Theatre.
3. Rod, Rhule, film marketing officer, Tricycle Theatre.

The United States of America

1. Alice Cahn, Managing Director, Interactive Media for Children, Markle Foundation. New York. [15.8.2001].
1. Alicia Adams, Director of Special Programs, The John F. Kennedy Centre of Performing Arts, Washington,[14.8.2001].

2. Aman Momin, Program Officer, Department of State New York Program Branch, New York, [15.8.2001].
3. Bradley Lerner, Attorney Advisor, Video Services, Mass Media Bureau, Federal Communication Commission, Washington, [13.8.2001].
4. Brandie Confroti, Director of Visitor Programs, World Boston, Boston, [20.8.2001].
5. Brian Joyce, Director of Children's Programming, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, [23.8.2001].
6. Brian Joyce, Director of Children's Programs and Audience Services, Annenberg Centre for the Performing Arts, University of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, [23.8.2001].
7. Claudette Donion, Senior Vice President-Administration, J.F.K.C.P.A, Washington, [14.8.2001].
8. David A. Hale, Director, Theatre Circ, Philadelphia, [24.8.2001].
9. David A. Smith, Producer/Director/Camera, David Smith Production, Philadelphia, [24.8.2002].
10. David F. Hutchman, Director, The Children's Museum of Philadelphia, [24.8.2001].
11. Derek Gordon, Vice President of Education, The John F. Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts, Washington, [14.8.2001]
12. Dodie Domino and Michael Domino, Domino Production, Boston, [20.8.2001].
13. Elizabeth Richards, Program Assistant, Meridian International Centre, Washington, [13.8.2001].
14. Jovonna Van Pelt, Executive Director, Puppet Showplace Theatre, Brooklin, Massachusetts, [20.8.2001].
15. Karen Larsen, Artistic Director, Puppet Showplace Theatre, Brookline, Massachusetts, [20.8.2001].
16. Karen W. Jaffe, Executive Director, Washington, KIDSNET, [13.8.2001]
17. Keth Brettmann, Director Programming, MTV Networks International, Broadway-New York, [16.8.2001].
18. Lintao Wang, President, TAO Music, Inc., Massachusetts, [21.8.2001].

19. Mark Levine, Communications Manager, MTV Network International. New York, [16.8.2001]
20. Kate Cleveland, Children's Service Manager, WHYY. Massachusetts, [21.8.2001].
21. Michell Koziak, National Touring Coordinator/Youth and Family Programs. J.F.K.C.P.A, Washington, [14.8.2001].
22. Mickey Berra, Director of Production, J.F.K.C.P.A, Washington, [16.8.2001].
23. Nancy J. Gilboy, President, International Visitors Council, Philadelphia, [23.8.2001].
24. Pat Kowall, Program Officer, Meridian International Centre, Washington, [13.8.2001].
25. Robert Keith, Senior Program Officer of International Visitor Program. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, United States of America Department of State, Washington, [13.8.2001].
26. Rolando G. Slab, Senior Scientist, Lecturer on education and paediatrics, Education Development Centre, Inc. University of Harvard, Massachusetts,[21.8.2001].
27. Ronald D' Alonzo, International Programs Officer, International Visitor Council of Philadelphia, [23.8.2001]
28. Sandra Calvert, Director, Children and Media Project, Georgetown University, Washington, [14.8.2001].
29. Terrence J. Nolen, Producing Artistic Director, Philadelphia, [21.8.2001].
30. Toni Nash, Director Office of Community Affairs, Fairmount Park Commission, Philadelphia, [20.8.2001].
31. Zbigniew Ostrega, United States English Language Officer, Washington, [12.8.2001].

Appendix L: T.V Violence.

The Arab film which comprise too much violence and crime are: "Love and Execution", "Abu Dhahab," "Fight in the Mile," "Fight in the Mountains," "The Bandit," "Abul LH"," Why should I five", " The Troublemaker", " Shall I kill my Husband", " Tears in the **Might**", " The Innocent Criminal", " Ibn Hamidou", " The Troublemakers ", "Berth No. 5", "Thieves, but Honest ", " Lost Days", " Fleeing the days", " The Most dangerous Man in the World", " The Fox and the Chameleon", " The three Brave Men," " A Criminal Probation", She and the Devil", " End of the Devil', " The Devil of the Bosphorus ", "The Killer "A Dangerous Life", The Beautiful woman at the Airport", " A summer Trip", " They Made Me a Criminal ", The Prince of Cunning", " The State mate ", " The Kings of Evil", " Abu Hadid", " The Frightening Hour', and " A rendezvous with the Unknown".

Similar foreign films include: "Steps in the Night", " The Gallows", " The Black Horseman", " A Crime in the Theatre", " The Battle of the South", " Fleeing the Tribunal", " The Armed Battalion ", " Under the Wings of Darkness ", " The Big Robbery, The Pirates of Dawn ", " The Secret Base ", " The Mirage", " The Silent Pistol", " A Terrible Weekend", " A shot myth A Name', " The Road to the West ", " Prison Evasion", Cc The Distant country", " The Frightened City", c' The Mysterious Valley", " The Intelligent Robber", " The Enigmatic River', " Ground of War", " Eternal Days", " The Green Man" and "The Other Man".

Similar serials comprise: "The Dangerous Man"," Northern Invaders", " The Broken Arrow", "The Struggle"," Rescue No. S", " Paris Police", "Sherlock Holmes", " Tarzan", " Blow of a whip", " The Slim Man", " The Fugitive", " Interlope", " Retch cook", " I Am the Law", " The Giants", " The Baron", " The Blue Train", " A trip to the Depth', " The Heroes", " The] Battalion of Sacrifice", " The Obscure Destiny", " The Tunnel of Time", " The Balance of Justice", " Samaran", " Save Your Life", " Game of Destiny", " The Charming Robber ", " Cheyenne ", " The Frontline",

" Hellos a Battle", " Fission Impossible", " The special Unit", " The Bat", " The Secret Informix", " The Brave Group", " Room No. 222", " The Flying objects", "Hawaii 50", " At the Circus', " The Police Cats", " The Chase". " Crimes of Passion", "Kojak. The Robot", " The Magician", etc. The Arab countries TV stations import many of the above mentioned films and serials.