***Chapter 2***

**THEATER, A WORLD OF MAGIC BY**

**IMPROVING CHILDREN’S CREATIVITY**

**ANALYSIS OF A PLAY: “THE MAGIC FLUTE”**

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# Introduction

Salvador Dali says: “Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings”. This quote refers that imagery and creativity are unlimited. The world of theater is a world of magic. The elements, scenery, lighting, costume, effect, music and players are the main components of a play by stage adaptation for creating the magic of the theater. Equally the components contain empty spaces, which can be filled with the own experiences and according to the point of view by the director. These empty spaces can be formulated different, according to the director, who conveys his/ her messages to the audience through the channel. Creativity is an ability, which is defined as, to imagine something that is not existing, to do something with a different way, to create new ideas; and creativity begins if there is no limit. As George S. Patton said: ‘Don’t say people how they have to make something. Say just what they have to do and see how they amaze you with their creativity. The childhood is the most important period of improving the creativity as it is by the formation of the character of the children. Slovhover defends that, creativity is an imagery journey and it can be arise anytime. The power of imagery is very important by creating a work of art and is “sine qua non” for creativity. Creative drama has an important role and contribution to activate the imagery of the children, as a child’s play. The child’s play “The Magic Flute” is chosen for this study as a focal point. In this study, the text of the play, the impact of the concepts and the findings will be analyzed and it will be observed how and with which purpose the director formulates the music, effect, lighting, costume and scenery, to improve the creativity of the children. The famous opera “The Magic Flute” of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is adapted to a child’s play by Seden Edgü. Through the child’s play “The Magic Flute” directed by Can Doğan, we will conceive that, how the creativity, which is defined as “No limit for imagery”, is created.

The theater is a magical world. It sometimes makes the audience laugh or think, engulfs them and enriches the world of the audience with this magic. That is how you start questioning topics you have never thought of before, look at things with a new perspective and enrich our imagination. The images brought on by this magical world enriches our outlook on life and our thoughts and feelings.

As Esen Çamurdan said, “Things said by people in the theater are not important alone; to whom they have said to in what circumstances and how they have said it have become more important. The grand epilogue of a fallen king in tattered clothes to the poor will not be the same thing if a mighty king is speaking to masses who are afraid of him.” (Çamurdan, 1996, s. 43) So in this regard, the audience is our exit point. Our audience are kids who are at the peak of their creativity and it is obvious that the theater carries this creativity one step further. But how? Which elements in the theater support creativity?

According to modern thought, creativity is an ability that exists in all humans and is a behavior type which can be observed in a wide range of areas, from daily life to scientific works. (San İ., 1979, s. 1) The elements that trigger this characteristic are elements such as music, costume, decor, effects and lighting in the theater which creates images in the minds of the audience.

For kids who enrich their lives with games, the theater is the most real one. Creativity can also be described as dreaming, creating images in children’s minds and letting them run free. The things perceived in the minds of the audience and the imagery they create are the starting points of creativity.

Wit, which is an essential element in creativity (for years this has been presented as two opposing notions), has been thought of as a whole different concept but now it is being realized that these two notions actually complete each other. (Landau E., 1974, s. 7-8) W. Amadeus Mozart’s famous libretto “The Magic Flute”, has been chosen as the focal point of this paper where we explore creativity, because of three creative elements: The fact that the piece was composed by Mozart, the genius child of music, the fact that it is a children’s play, the fact that it was adapted by Seden Edgü, who set out to introduce Mozart to kids and adapted the piece according to the culture and perceptions of Turkish kids and the interpretation of Can Doğan, who combined the cinema and the theater by pushing the boundaries of directing and stimulated the creative imaginations of kids with the many elements he introduced.

In the words of Özdemir Nutku “The unlike art, sculpture, architecture, ceramics or photography, is not the product of a frozen beauty, but is an art that can be reevaluated without losing its freshness or factualism. That is why it needs creative people with the ability to capture current events, people who have the habit of reading and researching an art form. In other words, it exists and lives through creative people (Nutku, 2001, s. 9). In this paper, we will examine this play put forth by creative people and try to reaffirm Özdemir Nutku’s argument.

# Empirical Framework Methodology

Goethe says “Mozart’s personality is an inexplicable miracle.” In this paper, this miraculous identity’s The Magical Flute will be our focal point. This famous libretto, which debuted in 1791, was adapted by Seden Edgü while Can Doğan directed it with his own unique style by filling in the gaps with answers to questions such as what, how and why. The children’s play, which was staged in 1999 at İstanbul City Theaters, gave kids ‘the Mozart Shot’ in the words of Seden Edgü. The play, which attracted attention from kids with its style, costumes, decor and adapted play, led to the the first spark of their imagination by creating various images in their minds.

The Magic Flute, which stands out with its unique production, lyrics, lingual and non-lingual elements, decor, costumes and songs that children can’t stop singing about, will be examined with the content analysis method.

“Content analysis method is a scientific research method which is used to conclude meaningful and valid points by using scripts and the contexts they were used in (Krippendorf, 2004, s. 18). “The Magic Flute” will be analyzed based on the imagery it creates on children and the text of the play. Besides the richness of the text, we will also examine the method in which the play was adapted to the stage, the decor, costume and music and we will question how the imagery created in the conceptual signs enriched the children’s imaginations and developed their creativity.

# Type of the Play

The Magic Flute is a children’s play that consists of Foreplay, 2 acts and 14 scenes. Albert Einstein says “A game is the highest form of research”. And if we think of children’s plays, we need to take into account how carefully they are scripted. Children’s plays include didactic elements and have educational characteristics.

In other words, “Children’s plays, albeit having an entertaining style, are mostly written for educational purposes and the message is relayed through a style that is clear to a child’s imagination” (Çalışlar, 1993, s. 40). It is clear that the music, adaptation and the imagery in this play contribute greatly to children.

As known, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was not only a musician but a thinker in the true sense of the word. As seen in all his work, he aimed to create a bridge between man and divine through love. (Yavuz S., 2005, s. 45) In this regard, the originality in his compositions is an interpretation of his feelings for love. Not just his music but the way they makes us feel complement each other in this works. Children are not judgmental when it comes to perceiving the world. If we think about the reflection of the music in the Magic Flute on the children, we can also point to the infinitude of the imagery created in their minds. As adults, if we think about the feelings brought upon us when we listen to a song we like, maybe we can perceive this limit much better.

# The Originality of the Play and Adaptation

“The Magic Flute”, or as originally known as “Die Zauberflöte” is W. Amadeus Mozart’s most important and popular libretto. The originality and uniqueness of the piece has made children love the opera. No doubt the popularity of the play comes from the harmony between the music and the content.

Mozart’s immortal pieces which he embroidered with divine sounds, embody concepts such as love, joy and excitement and bring forth sentiments like friendship and brotherhood. As the master himself has said: “Love is created through friendship and music. And that requires being knowledge and emotion. This is the only way for a higher form of life.” (Yavuz S., 2010, s. 1) In performing arts, you need to point to the uniqueness of music.

As Pavis said, “Music, within a performance, has a unique place. As Wagner said, “While other art forms say this means this or that, music says this means exactly this.” (Pavis, 2000, s. 168-169) While theater plays stand out with their originality and uniqueness, they can only serve their purpose when they are correctly relayed to the public or when they are correctly understood by the public. In this regard, we have to stress the importance of adaptation. In fact, adaptation is the reorganization of the piece according to the message, culture or imagery that needs to be relayed to the audience.

At the same time, adaptation is reorganizing the piece to create a bridge between cultures and their relations by making foreign images simpler and more understanding. (Pavis P. 1999, s. 218) The adaptation of The Magic Flute was done by using elements that could be understood by Turkish children such as using phrases unique to the Turkish culture. Space pirates were renamed “kanikulalar”, a word that cannot be translated into any other language. In the text, which includes Turkish proverbs such as “Being single is king”, words such as “tavuk –chicken”, “para-money” were written in Turkish and English, feeding the play’s didactic characteristics. By doing so, the play introduced Mozart to Turkish children while filling their minds with elements that could create images in their minds.

# Estimation Results The Analysis of “The Magic Flute“

“Don’t tell people how something is done. Tell them what you need them to do and watch them impress you with their creativity.” says George S. Patton. That is exactly what the theater does. It shows, it speaks, it makes you speak, it relays its message and leaves the reaction to the audience. In this children’s play we are focusing on the involvement of the children brings interactivity. A child who sees an actor he usually sees on the big screen on stage is on the one had surprised and maybe realizes that his dreams are coming true. The originality of the play is evident in this characteristic. In this regard, we will examine the lingual and non-lingual elements in the play and question their contribution and effect on the audience. Elements we have classified as lingual are dialogues and messages given with words. For example, phrases and proverbs vary from culture to culture and there are some phrases that are meaningless even though they are translated. If we were to give an example from the proverbs used in this play the proverb “Being single is king” are meaningful to Turkish children but in the original play, culture specific proverb was used.

If we were to list the lingual elements in the play, we will see that most of them consist of dialogues.

## **Table 1:** The Analysis of the Lingual Elements in the Play

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reflection On The Featured Lingual ElementsAudience | The Effect It Creates |
|  Papağano: (Song) Didactic element“... If I had a wife, i’d be a happy man , and if we had a kid, i would be so happy kids...”  | Happiness |
|  Papağano:” So all noblemen are like this. Didactic elementWhat does a nobleman mean?” | Listening to the explanation carefully |
|  Papağano: “Since you are a prince i can sell you a bird: Sparrow, eagle hawk, falcon, sparrow hawk...” | Didactic element | Learning species of birds by listing bird names |
|  Papağano: “Kanikulas? Where?”  | Fear, space pirate | Attention  |
|  Pamina: “I’m finally free!” | Excitement | Reality |
|  Sarastro: “Revenge is not a good thing.” | Didactic element | The notions of good and bad |
| Papağano: “Being single is king.” | Didactic element | Perception of the message |
| Tamino answers the question: “What are you looking for here?“Friendship, peace and justice”  | Didactic element | Perception of the message |
| Papağano: “Tavuk – Chicken , Muhallebi – Pudding, Para - Money, Armut - Pear” | Didactic element | Matching English words with Turkish words |
| Sarastro:“Revenge is not a good thing.” | Didactic element | Perception of the message -repetition |
| Tamino: “Friendship, peace and justice...” | Didactic element | Perception of the message |
| Papağano: “You play your flute, music is the food of the soul.” | Repetition | Perception of the message |
| Pamina: “If it’s for the happiness of the children, go Tamino!” | Interactivity | Establishing empathy |
| Soldier: “Because wars and disasters are won with love.” | Didactic element | Perception of the message |

Out of 16 lingual elements, 10 of them include didactic elements. 3 incite excitement, 1 incites fear, 1 establishes interactivity and 1 is repeated. Didactic elements are common in children’s plays. There are non-lingual elements, which added value to the staging of the play. Non-lingual elements are composed of the components of the theater. Be it the decor or costumes or the music, represent a part of the whole. Staging is all about how a director chooses to fill in the blank spaces. The fact that his play starts with a foreplay, is an added value by the director. In addition, the fact that the director uses a big screen on stage and the audience seeing these actors suddenly on stage after the big screen, takes them on a journey from fantasy to reality. And this helps them focus on the play. As the director has pointed out, it is important to always keep the children engaged. In his own words; “when you lose their interest, children will think about soda or chocolate” and when you have lost their attention, it is pretty hard to get it back. Another interesting fact about the play is that the director, while directing a children’s play, had his own children watch it in advance and made changes according to their reactions. While testing once more how to capture the attention of children, this also proves how careful this play was designed. Foreplay, music, decor, costumes, elements used on stage and different methods such as charades and the usage of a big screen are non-lingual elements that add value to the production and these are more likely to create images in children’s minds. Here are the non-lingual elements used in the play:

## **Table 2:** The Analysis of the Non-Lingual Elements in the Play

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Featured Non-Lingual Elements | Reflection On The Audience | The Effect It Creates |
| Foreplay  | Attracting attention | Attention, focusing  |
| Music  | Nice emotional function  | Listening with attention |
| Usage of cinema screen | Intertwining  | Magic, surprise |
| Charades  | Game | Playing along |
| Lyrics on screen | Eligibility | Singing along |
| Decor: Space  | Excitement | Imagination, surprise |
| Decor: Elevator and Revolving door  | Game | Liking, attention  |
| Costume: Roller skates | Game | Speed, excitement |
| Costume: Papağano | Like a magic machine  | Amazement |
| Lighting: Thunder | Excitement | Expectation |
| Object: Magic Flute  | Amazement | Dream |
| Object Music Box | Amazement | Dream |
| Staging: Body language  | Non verbal communication | Perception |

The characteristic of non-lingual elements to create different associations is based on the fact that the images created refer to different meanings for each audience member. Foreplay used in this stage production, the usage of the cinema screen, merging dream with reality, using body language through charades and making the audience sing along to the songs by displaying the lyrics on the screen are the most striking features of this play. Costumes used in the play and decor, are important factors in creating a warm current between the play and the audience. The more realistic the scenery, the more it becomes easier to engage the audience. The other elements that set the scene are items from a child’s play world such as ladder, elevator and swinging door and the uniqueness of the space atmosphere. The most important success indicator of the play is that it captures the attention of the children. Besides using crafty lighting, using thunder to create a more believable environment and the excitement it creates keep the children engaged. In addition, unique characteristics stand out in the costumes of the actors. The colorful costume worn by bird gatherer Papağano and the function of the costume resembles a magic machine and excites the children. Pamina’s usage of the skates both invigorates the play and gathers the attention of the children. In the play where Mozart’s music reaches the peak, we can safely say that the music deeply affects the children. The fact that the lyrics appear on the screen during the song and that children actively take part in the play, are the most striking success points of the production. Objects such as the flute and music box used in the production activate the imaginations of children all the while strengthening their bond with the play. The most important rule of creativity is knowing no bounds. The characteristic of doing something different than everyone else and developing different ideas only happen after planting images in their minds. This paper proves that the lingual and non-lingual elements used in The Magic Flute has important effects in activating children’s creativity.

# Conclusion

For ages, different movements have been established in the art of theater parallel to the developments and changes in society. The relationship between the stage and audience, the effect of theater on the audience and its duty against society has always been a topic of discussion between the artists and thinkers of various movements. Today, there are various opinions that stress the usage methods of theater such as entertaining, relaxing, educating, empowering, transitioning or directing. These opinions are based on two primal realities; the fact that the theater should be in a live engagement with its audience and that it can affect the audience in a number of ways. (Şener, 2003:84) Because only with this effect a bond with the audience can be created and images that can trigger its creative side could be implanted in the mind. Creativity is the ability to dream about something that doesn’t exist, the ability to do something in different ways than others and give fruition to new ideas and it begins with setting no boundaries and the theater is a platform where these creative characteristics can be nurtured. Especially for kids, stage play are games, just like their games.

A game, which is an irrevocable element for a child, is the starting point of drama. The variety and versatility of games has led to the diversity of definitions and approaches to this field. For example, according to Scheuerel (1981) a game has six main activities:

Freedom, inner eternity, pretending, dual value, closed integrity, the present (Tuluk N., 2004, s. 1)

Freedom is the element that most serves creativity among these 6 activities. Because creativity starts with freedom. In this regard, if we were to list the benefits of Creative Drama; creating awareness, establishing free thought, creation of social and psychological sensitivity, developing four basic language skills, establishing non-verbal communication and most importantly establishing creativity and aesthetic development. (Tuluk N., 2004, s. 1) As you can see, theater plays serve creativity with all their aspects.

Roland Barthes says, “Fiction is the embodiment of the creator.” So the preparation of a play that is presented to the audience is an example of creativity. The reason ‘The Magic Flute’ was selected for this paper is its staging style that activates the elements that trigger creativity in children and in the words of Roland Barthes, its fiction. While the unique style of the director keeps the children’s attention and focus alive, it also triggers their creative side. One of the most important reasons for the selection of this play is its music.

Mozart is a classic, in the true sense of the word. “The concept of classic includes a universal perfection in music pieces, the unison of historical movements, the identicalness of style and form, proportion, the absolute, cleanliness and openness.” (Yavuz S., 2005, s. 43) The music of this play has become more meaningful with Turkish lyrics. Children have thoroughly enjoyed the music by reading the lyrics and singing along to the songs.

Mozart’s music is fun; it is exciting and simple just like a child. Under all this excitement and simplicity lies a world view. The love of music is the base of this philosophy. Mozart has always highlighted beauty and love in all his works. Mozart’s entire repertoire can be seen as one composition with various forms laid on top of each other over and over. (Yavuz S., 2005, s. 44) It has been proven that children’s perceptions are wide open, they don’t forget what they learn at this age and that they will never forget this play they have seen. This music that they absorbed and loved now exists in their universe and will never be forgotten.

The fact that ‘The Magic Flute’ was staged in Turkey is the extension of Mozart’s great success. The representatives of the art of theater in Turkey have decoded the codes of Mozart and presented them to the Turkish audience and this is admirable. It is a great success to have reached the audience with adaptations in the text, costumes, decor, the variations in staging and lyrics. The excitement and imagery created by non-lingual elements are different and more effective than lingual elements. While only ‘one’ is meant by a word, meanings that can be derived from non-lingual elements make a difference in children’s minds through associations. Diversity presents itself with the children’s lifestyles, cultural backgrounds and the way they were raised. And this in turn brings an enrichment in dreaming.

Pierce asks the question ‘what is the practical effect you are trying to get through a notion? and answers: “The meaning of the created effect is the meaning of the notion you project” (Öçalan M., 2006, s. 5). Because the director asked the question ‘How?’ many times during production and based his fiction on these questions, the play has served to trigger the creative side of children through imagery. Our presentation triggers the notional references in the minds of children and the images that are created trigger their creativity. This imagery shows that this play, which aimed to give children a Mozart shot, reached its goal. If children are leaving the theater while hummi:ng the songs and if a child remembers the music and lyrics, it is evident that this play triggers the creative side of children by using its power. The director’s own words summarize the success of the play: “It’s a success to fill a in a society that doesn’t listen to Mozart. It’s not important what we give them, it’s how we present it.”

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