

## The impact of the development of theatrical architecture on the scenography of theatrical performance

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### Introduction:

The origin of theater in all civilizations goes back to celebrations related to religious rituals, and the evidence is a manuscript of an Egyptian religious play written before 2000 BC. Greek drama arose - which is the original in Western theatrical composition - people put masks on their faces, danced and sang in celebration of his memory.

The birth of the theater was when Aeschylus added a second actor, and the Greek theater reached the height of its glory in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Roman theater did not reach the level of Greek drama, even as they had writers like Seneca in the tragedy, and Plautus and Terence in the comedy, and they had a great influence on the drama after the sixteenth century.

Then theater deteriorated under the rule of the Roman Empire, and almost disappeared in front of the opposition of the Church. Another type of theater appeared in the Middle Ages in Europe, which arose from religious rituals. Theatrical miracles and theatrical secrets spread, which gradually changed until they moved away from religious themes. In the Renaissance, a movement began to revive sciences and arts. Thus, theater architecture went through many stages of development, which added in each of those stages a new dimension in the form of the stage and ways of dealing with the elements of scenography, and the multiplicity of stages of stage development is due to the fact that the theater is one of the oldest arts known to man throughout the ages.

**Search questions** - What is the impact of the development of theatrical architecture on the scenography of the theatrical performance? - Is the difference in architectural design impact on the scenography of the show? Is it possible to consider the architectural design as an element of the scenography?

### Research goal:

- Presenting the most important stages of architectural development in the form of the theater and its construction method since the ancient Egyptian civilization, passing through the Roman and Greek theaters and the Renaissance theater until the modern era.
- Knowing the extent of the impact of the architectural form on the plastic approach to the theatrical performance.
- The application on a theatrical performance presented on different theaters in the architectural design and a comparison of the approach to monitor the impact of the architectural design on the scenography of the show.

### The search limits

The application is made through different presentations of the text of Hamlet by Shakespeare.

**Research Methodology:**

Descriptive, analytical method.

**Key words:**

Scenography - theater - architecture - decoration.

**Introduction:**

Architecturally, theaters went through several stages: the Pharaonic era, the Greek theater, the Roman theater, the medieval theatre, the Renaissance theatre, (the Elizabethan Theatre) - the theater from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century- Prosenium Theatre.

Architectural development of theaters:

**١. Pharaonic era:**

Many differed about the fact that there was a theater in the Pharaonic era or not... There are those who deny the existence of a theater in the Pharaonic era and others support that the beginning of human knowledge of the theater was in the Pharaonic era foreground place.

**2. Greek theater:**

- It was built on a naturally sloping land beside its simplicity in implementation.
- With the development, viewers are sitting in the theatron, which is rows of decks or banks that are tiered in the form of a semi-circle.
- The semicircular vestibule connects the upper part of the Theatron with the lower part of it.
- In the middle of the front row, from the lower part of the Theatron, there was a throne on which the priest of Dionysius sat, which was the place of the fore.
- In the center of the semicircle is the orchestra or the percussion circuit.

**3. Roman theatre**

It was built on a flat ground almost in a semi-circle on the basis of a self-standing building, with its distinctive external walls, and this theater lacks simplicity compared to the Greek theater.

The Romans were interested in preparing the booths for the attic, and the orchestra's place was at ground level and contained a large void that could be filled with additional places for spectators to sit when needed.

**٤ .The Middle Ages:** One of the most important features of theatrical art in the Middle Ages is the emergence of religious plays. After the clergy used to forbid acting and chase actors, we now see a new art embraced by the church, in which the churchmen themselves play roles, because they saw in the art of acting as a form of evangelization in the era of evangelism. Ignorance abounded in it and religious sorcery spread beside the many wars between feudal lords and the resulting famines and diseases, and the clergy at that time were the educated group in the country, and they had the greatest burden towards a society full of evil.

**5. The theater of the Middle Ages** was divided into the church theater and the theater outside the church Theater in the Renaissance.

**6. The renovation of theaters and their development in the fields of art, especially the plastic arts, in the early sixteenth century,** which is the most prosperous century of the European Renaissance centuries. The new theatrical decoration art is based on perspective as a basis for various drawings.

The theatrical renaissance appeared in the new drama, which differs from the ecclesiastical drama.

**7. (The Elizabethan Theatre):** The status of theater flourished in that era very greatly, due to the interest of "Queen Elizabeth I, Queen of England in the period from (1558-1603) about the art of theater and her establishment of many theaters, hence the name Elizabethan Theater in relation to "Queen Elizabeth", the patron of theater arts in that era. During that period, the great English world author "William Shakespeare" appeared.

The theater at the beginning of the Renaissance took from the medieval theater two important parts: the curtain and the fixed rear building forms, and the decoration became the only thing that changed. Then there appeared competent photographers who were entrusted by the Italian princes to paint external scenes from the perspective point of view.

-Medieval Theatre and vertical, using carts to move the ground and ceiling doors, and with the help of cranes to prepare decorative items and change scenery shapes (CINTRES).

### **8. Proscenium theater**

In the modern theater, the term "Proscenium" forms the so-called "Fourth Wall", which is the invisible barrier that separates the theater from the audience, through which the audience watches the event. Teatro farnese for the stage in a theater called "proscenium stage" and its first architectural form with a frame appeared. It was established in 1618 in Italy and continued to develop until it took a special architectural formation that is still used today in contemporary theaters.

### **The concept of scenography:**

It is the ornament of scenes, since graphia means scenery, and to sken, it is divided into skenographia.

The Roman and Greek era, where the theater was a tent or a hut made of wood, which then developed as a building surrounding the arena of representation in the Greek theater, and it is known that scenography for the Greeks and Romans meant the art of decorating the stage and its decoration. To take care in the modern era of furnishing the wood and later transforming it into a theater of pictures.

Scenography is defined as the art of formation within the theatrical space, and it is a comprehensive art that includes all the visual components, i.e. scenography is a science and art of the elements that are presented on stage such as decor, accessories, lighting, formation, music and sound, meaning that the scenography is all and the rest is parts.

**Elements of scenography:1. Theatrical text:** it is the element that defines all the other elements of the show and how to deal with them in order to bring out the show in its integrated form.

**2. Decoration:** The function of decoration is (helping the viewer visualize the physical environment from which the dramatic event stems).

One of the most important elements of scenography and its importance is due to determining the time of the text and the place in which the events take place at any era. It also gives indications on the social level of the heroes of the novel and the cultural and material level, where.

**3. Fashion:** It is (one of the most important visual means that clarify and crystallize the relationships between characters as well as the developments they are going through) as it reveals the identity of the character and carries political, religious, social or psychological symbols, as well as determines the position, climate and culture.

**4. Color:** It has a close relationship with lighting. Color in the theater appears with lighting (color is the music of modern arts). It fulfills an important function to determine the general atmosphere of the text. Warm colors suggest joy or happiness, unlike dark colors that may suggest tension, fear and anxiety.

**5. Light:** Although its beginning was for illumination only, it soon became important to express the general atmosphere of the text. The lit scene is dimly lit indicating mystery, fear or anxiety and dread, and on the contrary, bright lighting in bright colors conveys a sense of joy and optimism.

**6. Theatrical space:** It means the space available to the scenographer to express the text as a whole and its relationship to the décor blocks, the surrounding spaces, and the relationships that arise from filling the spaces between the décor pieces, accessories and furniture. It also includes the movement corridors and the openings required for the movement of the actors to express the text and the vision of the director and the scenographer.

**7. Time:** It is expressed in the element of opposite and color to express the time of the events within the text, black in the morning and evening, or any era in which the events take place in a contemporary time or a time in the past.

**8. Surrounding environment:** we mean here the environment in which the events take place, is it an industrial or agricultural environment? is the place mountainous or coastal? where the events of the novel take place?

All the previous elements have an impact on the scenography of the theatrical performance. So does the scenography of the show differ according to the architectural design of the theater in the above, we presented the architectural development of theaters at different ages and the elements affecting the scenography of the show, such as decoration, text, lighting, place, time and space.

It was shown on a Greek or Roman theater, then the show was moved to be shown on one of the Prosium theaters. Will the method of design or decoration be dealt with in the same way, and will the plastic vision of the design be identical, or will the final image of the design differ?

### **A comparison between the methods of dealing with the decoration of the same novel when presented to different theaters of architecture**

Hamlet's novel was selected and models were presented for ways to deal with decoration according to the nature of the architectural theater.

Hamlet is a tragic play written by William Shakespeare between 1599 and 1602, set in Denmark, and revolves around the story of Prince Hamlet's revenge on his uncle Claudius. Claudius had killed his brother and seized the throne, and had also married his brother's widow. Hamlet is Shakespeare's longest play, and is considered among the world's most powerful and influential literary works. It was one of Shakespeare's most famous works during his lifetime, and it still occupies the first place among his books

١. **The first model** of Hamlet show was directed by Li Liu (le o) Show on stage) (Roly Roli from 12:15 March 2020 in Beijing for a circular theater that resembles the Roman theater architecturally, Figure No. 13, the director chose the spherical shape with the interweaving of threads to symbolically express the dramatic situation Hamlet also used the stage floor to complement the circular shape and employed the lighting to reflect the shadow of the ball on the ground, drawing a circle intertwined with threads around the actor as if it surrounded Hamlet from all directions, and also the space of space around the actor gave the plastic vision a depth and a different concept, and Hamlet was isolated in this void from the world around him.

Hence, we can note that each element of the scenography is affected by the nature of the architectural design of the theater:

The decoration based on the stereoscopic spherical shape allowed the audience to see it from all directions in the same way, and this may not be available on the Prosim stage.

- The director was also given the opportunity to move the actor more freely without taking into account that he is facing the audience, as the movement on the audience stage must take into account the audience's viewing angles as well as the visual representation areas unlike the circular theater, where the audience sees the actor from all angles.

The use of lighting in terms of its intensity and direction, and allowing the use of decoration with lighting to create a shadow area for the circle that surrounds Hamlet on the ground, so that the stage floor becomes part of the scenography of the show.

- Creating a void surrounding the actors from all directions, as if it were a cover of darkness surrounding them. The void resulting from filling the theatrical void on the Prosim stage is different from that of the circular stage.

We find here that the plastic vision of the theatrical performance in the way of dealing with decoration, lighting and all the elements of the scenography differed in the way of approaching, as did the final image of the plastic vision of the show. The spherical will differ because the stage of the stage opening will change the plastic vision by defining the shape, and the lighting also surrounds the actor from the audience's viewing places, as well as the actor's movement



2) **The second model** showing Hamlet's design by Harry Feiner at the Pearl Theater - Broadway The Pearl Theater Company: Off-Broadway September 2007 directed by Shep Sobel Figure No. 14, 15 and we see the stage of a circular shape, meaning that the audience surrounds the stage from all directions and resembles the Roman theater architecturally. The design was based on building a composition of the stairs appear directly without any reference to a style or era.

The fusion of the stairs with the ropes in a composition may give a sense of strangeness or a dilapidated short and may refer to the dramatic conflict in the novel.



### 3) The 3) third Hamlet model in 1969 designed by Sam Kirkpatrick

Directed by John Hirsch and starring Kenneth Wels on the stage of the International Arts Center in Ottawa - Canada, Figure No. 16. We note that the designer chose almost the same design in Figure No. 14, 15, which is the use of forms of stairs, but the approach differed, in the circular theater the designer built the stairs without resorting to making a theatrical background and used the space surrounding the shape to form the background, and the composition was surrounded from all directions, and the composition was seen from all sides and is characterized by having its details appear from all sides because it is a composition of lines that can be considered a basis without walls or building, as we mentioned earlier, to allow vision from all directions in contrast to Figure 16, where he first used the hexagonal levels to express the closed circle that surrounds Hamlet, followed by the stairs, which are almost the same as the previous design in Figure 15, but here the designer came to make a background for the stairs and make entrances and exits, due to the need of the Prosim theater to hide the scenes and make the audience see the atmosphere of the novel through the fourth wall and to confirm the illusion of the atmosphere of Hamlet's novel, and if we compare here one of the elements of scenography (the space), for example, we find that the space surrounding the composition differs and produces a different plastic vision and therefore the movement of the actor must differ and so on for each element of the scenography, we conclude that there is an impact of the development of architecture of the play on the scenography of the theatrical performance.

### The most important results:

The architecturally different forms of theaters are due to the different purposes of their use.

- The different forms of theaters architecturally affected the methods of dealing with those in charge of theatrical performances.
- The architectural design of the theater affects the dramatic space of the stage, which in turn affects the plastic vision of the theatrical performance.

### The most important recommendations:

- The researcher recommends that art colleges must pay attention for teaching their students the sciences of theater, the arts student should be familiar with the history of theater and the types of theaters architecturally, and support the study with field visits to learn about the forms of theaters.

- It is also recommended that the curricula in the practical part contain training on different forms of the stage due to the different form of space available for the scenography designer as well as the viewer's vision and the direction of lighting.
- The researcher recommends that the concerned bodies and institutions adopt a cooperation contract between engineering colleges or companies working in the fields of contracting to cooperate with the sectors of artistic production, whether they are plastic, cinematic or theatrical, to develop the architectural form of theaters and support them with technological progress and the latest findings of science to support theaters with the technology that contribute to the movement of creativity.

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