The Effect of Colour on Audience Response in Theatre Scenic Design

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The Effect of Colour on Audience Response in Scenic Design

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for Honours in Theatre and Drama

Murdoch University

by

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Abstract

Designing for the stage involves the consideration of many aesthetic elements, one of the most important being colour. Colour can affect the audience physically, psychologically and emotionally. There are also many cultural, social, historical and religious links with colour that can influence audience response. A scenic designer needs to understand how to use colour effectively in order to effectively evoke appropriate audience responses. In order to address my topic, I have compiled my research into effective colour design into sections to facilitate the reader’s understanding of the ‘why’ and the ‘what’ of colour usage in scenic design. The ‘why’ are the choices we make in our designs, why we do what we do, whilst the ‘what’ is the response we induce from the viewer. Designing purely for aesthetic beauty is insufficient in my view: there is a strong need for an understanding as to why the choices we make may actually be powerful.

The case studies in this thesis involve a collection of scenic designs I have worked upon since 2010. As my understanding of this topic has developed, my designs have also evolved.

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