

Investigating Fashion and Clothing Design in the Theater Effectiveness

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Research Article

Abstract

Theater as a performance art plays a very important role in the culture and art of society. Fashion and costume design in the theater is also very important as one of the important factors in the performance of a show, to attract the attention of the audience and increase the quality of the performance. According to the concept of the scene, the characters and the story, theater costumes should be designed in a suitable way so that they can convey the artistic message of the show well. In this research, the role and importance of clothes in theater has been examined. First, the concept of theater and its role in the society is examined, and then the role and importance of clothes in conveying the concept of the stage to the audience is explained. In the following, the design of intentional, romantic and murderous theater costumes with the concept of the scene and its story has been analyzed and conclusions have been presented about their effect on the audience and actors. For this purpose, the study method included the study of library sources and the analysis of data collected through field studies. The conclusion showed that costume design in the theater plays a very important role in attracting the attention of the audience and increasing the performance quality.

Keywords: Costume Design; Theater; Stage Costumes; Stage Concept

1. Introduction

Theater is a collection of symbolic systems. Therefore, these are the signs that transform the show from a normal performance form into a work of thought and desired by the audience. Today's

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show has found a special place in people's life and culture. Although in the past it was mostly performed in celebrations or ceremonies for the mass of people, today it has become one of the forms of communication and thought arts that affects the behavior of today's people in society. If in the past, theater was considered to be the same as the word drama, and it was based on the root of this word in the Greek language, which means action, and they looked for the contradiction caused by the word, this is also a meaning for theater. But today there is no longer a complete meaning for this noble art because the main core and driving engine of a theater is the hidden thought or its discovery. Although this thinking or thought is derived from the playwright's mentality, which becomes an active and living work with the coordination of the symbolic system by the workers, and the audience can agree or disagree with it. Therefore, theater in its essence is a work taken from the narration of different thoughts of conscious people (Azadanish and Pouyan, 2021). Semiotics in dramatic texts and performances has a special place in terms of analysis. In other words, it is a tool for analyzing the show before knowing the subject of the story. Roland Barthes is one of the most important literary critics who points out the role of language in the clothing system and the confrontation of pieces and components of clothes whose changes cause changes in the visual meaning; It also considers the rules that they create on the continuity of clothing components among themselves to be important. In the elements of semiotics, Barthes clearly demonstrates his constructivist method in language studies by emphasizing non-verbal discourse types related to clothing, food, cars and furniture (Gasmian Dastjardi and Mohammadi Ardakani, 2018). Due to its wide dimensions, this art attracts the attention of different sections of the society. To create a play and actually perform a play, many factors and groups are involved, and other arts such as literature (story writing, dramatic literature), scene and decor design, costume design, lighting, music, etc., come with the help of this art. Even in many cases, this art has attracted the attention of psychologists, sociologists and even politicians (Nasiripour and Turkman, 2015). Clothing is a very important part of the show. Clothes are part of the actor and theater without actors is meaningless. The audience also moves away from the actor and gets closer to the represented character with the help of the features in the costumes. Clothing is the external manifestation and reflection of role-playing, emotions and inner mood of the actor and can express the meaning of the play through external signs. Clothing is a strong factor in expressing the emotions of the drama character and helps both the actor and the audience to better understand the play and the overall atmosphere of the work. It should be noted that the capabilities and functions of the clothes should be in the mind of the audience in order to show the character of the show as much as possible and help to advance the dramatic action. The character is formed during the action and emerges from the heart of the dramatic action. The clothes designed should also be according to the specific language of the performance; The clothes should be in harmony with the actions and promote their progress. Performance clothes create the necessary logic for every movement and action of the character (Khairollahi and Fanai, 2021). The type of clothing, its volume, lines, color and texture can have an important effect on theater mise-en-scenes. For example, it emphasizes acting with a special dress, or distinguishes the main and secondary characters from each other in the illustration. "Combining in its simplest form means assigning strong clothes - clothes that are impressive and prominent in terms of color, volume, line and texture - to the dominant characters" (Andalibi, Fanaian, and Kopal, 2021).

In a comparative study of fashion design and theater costume design, Dr. Heron and his colleagues have examined the similarities, differences and potential interdisciplinary exchanges between these two creative disciplines. Through an in-depth analysis of the presented literature and sources, valuable insights into the creative processes, influences, goals, and execution of fashion

design and theater costume design have been obtained. This study has shown that fashion design and theater costume design have common elements such as creative process, effects and use of textiles to convey character or concept. However, they also differ in function and context, time constraints, joint nature, and durability and wear considerations. These differences highlight the specific requirements and unique challenges that designers face in each field (Haroon, Sajib, and Nizam, 2023).

According to the features mentioned about show clothes, it seems that most of the clothes include several features at the same time. This means that clothes, while presenting realistic data - iconography - also have symbolic meaning at the same time. For example, choosing a color or a special artistic style for clothes can determine the mood and meaning of that show. This is while clothes have the same function as index indicators; That is, by using special clothes, you can emphasize important characters and direct the attention of the audience to them. In this way, show clothes can have iconic, symbolic and profile signs at the same time. In general, what was said about the capabilities and functions of the clothes, should be in the audience's mind in order to show the character in the show as well as possible and ultimately help to advance the dramatic action. Francis Hutch, in the book *Directing the Play*, has provided one of the best interpretations about the theater costume: "Theatrical costume should be seen as a part of a live stage set, which appears as the actor's clothing in a specific role and in a specific play" (Golshan, 2014).

Narguni says that the role and performance of the costume designer is an important factor in a theater scene. Theater is a group work and all the actors work hand in hand to achieve a successful work that is liked by their viewers. Also, a theater costume designer is responsible for many tasks and its main task is to be in harmony with the text of the play. The work of the costume designer begins with studies to design the clothes of the actors of the show under the supervision of the director, and the costume designer must be present in the group until the end of the show. Clothing may refer to the specific dressing style of a nation, a class or a period. In many cases, it may help complete the artistic and visual world that is unique to a particular theatrical or film production. The most basic designs are produced to indicate status, offer protection or modesty, or provide visual interest to a character. Costumes may be for, but not limited to, a theater, cinema or musical performance. Costume design should not be confused with costume coordination, which simply involves altering an existing outfit, although both outfits set the scene. Four types of costumes are used in theater design: historical, imaginative, dance and modern (Nargouni, 2023). In a research, Montazeri and Munsiri Sorkheh came to the conclusion that from the point of view of theorists such as Durkheim, Bourdieu and Giddens, social changes have many effects on the individual and collective lives of people. Covering style is among the things that are affected by these changes. Of course, this statement often remains as a hypothesis and has been less studied in practice. In this research, it was found that clothing can be affected by a major change in life. War is one of the changes that can sometimes cause cultural transfer or affect clothing in other ways. Some researchers believe that, in the Second World War, sadness and sadness can be recognized on the faces of people, and the cheerfulness and vitality of the people are involved. Therefore, the use of cheerful clothes along with extensive decorations and the use of looser clothing in the stage of the show to keep the minds of the people and citizens away from the effects of war is one of the changes that can be seen in the clothing of the artists of this period. And its purpose has been to strengthen the weakened morale of the people. The findings of our research showed that this influence ranges from the smallest dimensions of artists' clothing, such as its material, to its most important and prominent features, such as the color and design of their clothes. In fact, although these features cover a wide range, most of them are done with only one specific purpose; and that is

to create changes in the spirit of the people. This issue, in addition to the high importance of clothing, can also be caused by the "quick yield" of the change in clothing style. That is, in addition to clothing and covering and making changes in it, in terms of its appearance, it is visible before any other feature. But more than any other component, it can be effective in influencing the citizens of a society (Montzari and Munsiri Sorkheh, 2019).

2. Results and Discussions

2.1. Analyzing and Comparing Intentional, Romantic, Murderous Theater Costumes with the Concept of the Stage

The show "Deliberately, Romantically, Murderously" was in three episodes with the theme of four murders in recent years, and the cases of three of these murders have been more important and sensitive for the society for various reasons.

The show "Deliberate, Romantic, Murderous" may appear at first glance to be a form of documentary theater, while on closer inspection, despite its many similarities, it constantly and consciously distances itself from the definitions of documentary theater. In the play "Deliberately, Romantically, Murderously", although a large part of the materials and materials of the play are extracted from the contents of the murder cases and the news and reports related to them, these documents are not presented in the show. In other words, the audience of the show should only trust the words of the playwright/director in accepting that what they see in the show is definitely what existed in reality, and apart from this trust, no document or evidence is presented to the audience during the show. Another point is that Sanaz Bayan, as a playwright and a little later as a director, throughout the show fully consciously blocks the audience's unprejudiced judgment of what they see on stage and guides them in their desired direction. Even in the first episode (which seems to be a deliberate word chosen for this episode in the name of the three-part show), despite the fact that all the evidence of the case and Nasreen's explicit confessions of several murders proved her crime, But the collection of what is presented to the audience in this episode of Nasreen's life and circumstances will make the audience feel sympathy and companionship with Nasreen more than her victims. Leaving aside this episode, in the next two episodes (romantic and murderous), all the ambiguities in the Shirin and Jaleh cases come to the audience with the help of strengthening this feeling, and in general, it puts the audience to judge the path designed by the director.

By considering long gray coats for these three killer characters, the costume designer provides the audience with a free judgment about the guilt or innocence of the characters. But the color of each scarf is different.

The first episode is dedicated to the representation of the case of a woman (Nasrin), whom some call Iran's first female serial killer (a woman driving a Renault who killed old women in her car and stole their property). Nasreen is a woman from the lower class of society who commits murder due to financial need and to pay her debts, and finally, after confessing to the crime, she is executed by the court's decision. This is when Nasreen says in her interviews that she is not willing to take a piece of forbidden food home and that all her thefts are only for her debt and the expenses of her disabled child.

The dress designer has designed a long coat and long gray vest with a black scarf for Nasreen. Nasreen's black scarf represents her guilt and guilt.



Fig 1 An example of a theater episode



Fig 2 An example of a theater episode

The second episode represents the story of one of the most noisy murders in recent years. Shahla Jahed (in the show, Jaleh) is a famous footballer's concubine who was accused of murdering the footballer's wife. After the murder, the police arrested Jhaleh, and during the long trial, he confessed to the murder several times and retracted his confession, and finally, after several years of trial, he was executed by the court's decision. In the end, it was not clear if Jaleh is really guilty or if he accepted the crime because he was heartbroken by his love. Because in the course of the story, it becomes clear that his wife did not support him in the events after the murder and also blames him for the murder of his first wife. But in the course of the story, according to the evidence of the police, Jhaleh cannot be the murderer alone, and a man may have been his accomplice. Also, in a part of his memoirs, he says that at the time of his arrest, Amir (his wife) told him that if you don't confess, He is the next suspect, and in this case, his position will be in danger.

Jaleh's outfit includes a long gray coat, a vest and a brown scarf. The use of brown color in this character's look makes this person feel supportive and protective of his love. Also, this color can reduce the guilt of this character.



Fig 3 An example of a theater episode

The third episode is devoted to the retelling of the case of a woman (in the show, Sudabah) who killed her husband's friend who was trying to assault her in Qeshm due to defending her honor, stayed in prison for several years and was finally released from prison after paying a ransom. Here Sudaba is a mother who has completely adapted herself to her family and is loyal to her husband even in difficult situations, that's why she killed to defend herself.

Sudabah's clothes include a gray coat and shawl, which is entirely up to the viewer to judge whether this character is guilty or innocent. Also, Sudaba is the only character in this show who wears shoes and the others are barefoot, which means that only Sudaba is alive and the rest are dead.



Fig 4 An example of a theater episode

But the fourth murder that is shown in the show is the story of the accidental killing of a female reporter who fell down while struggling with a motorcyclist who was trying to steal her bag and was killed due to her head hitting a table on the side of the street. Unintentional murder, which has happened many times and naturally has not aroused sensitivity and attention in the society as much as the previous three cases.

The reporter, who is a key character in this play, is wearing a black dress and has disappeared behind all the stories and these three murders, as all cases happen in his mind. And in the end, it becomes clear that he is the only victim of this story and his black look expresses the hidden layers of his story.

3. Conclusion

Theater and performing arts are one of the most important cultural and artistic factors of human societies, which have always had a special place in culture and art since the past. This art has always been of interest due to the charm and joy it conveys to the audience. One of the important factors in theater and performing arts is costume design. Clothing design, as an important element in this industry, must be done with great care and sensitivity so that it can play its role well.

Costume design in theater and performing arts is one of the important factors in creating attractiveness and different characters in the show. The costume designer must design clothes that are in harmony with the character and the environment of the show according to the story and role of the actors. Important elements of theater costume design include color, form, texture, details and materials. The color and texture of the clothes should be in harmony with the story and the environment of the show. For example, dark and bright colors are used in historical and fantasy shows. While in contemporary shows, bright and natural colors are used. Clothes with soft and flowing textures are suitable for romantic shows and clothes with tight and firm textures are suitable for action shows. The form of the clothes should also be in harmony with the character of the actors and their roles. For example, clothes with curved and curved forms are suitable for oblique and strange characters, while clothes with simple and straight forms are suitable for serious and sensible characters. The details of the clothes are also very important. The clothing designer should pay attention to small details such as decorations, ornaments, etc., in order to design clothes that are more attractive and beautiful. The materials used in clothes are also very important. The designer must use high quality materials so that the clothes are more durable. Also, the use of high-quality materials allows the designer to reuse the clothes.

The process of designing clothes on stage and theater includes several stages. At first, the costume designer meets with the writer and director of the show to get to know the story and characters of the show. Then, by examining the scenes and environments of the show, the costume designer must design clothes that are in harmony with the environment and characters of the show. Also, by writing a birth certificate for each character, you can design a suitable dress. After designing, the clothes must be made. At this stage, the clothing designer collaborates with manufacturers and tailors so that the clothes are made with high quality and precision. Also, if certain clothes need a special structure, like the clothes in historical times, more specialized tailors and clothing manufacturers are used. Finally, the costumes should cover the actors well. At this stage, the costume designer works with the director and the actors so that the clothes are properly placed on the actors' bodies and are in harmony with their roles and personalities. This includes adjusting and changing clothes during the show.

In general, costume design in stage and theater is a complex process that requires cooperation and coordination between the costume designer, writer, director, producers and actors. The purpose

of this process is to create clothes that are in harmony with the story and characters of the show and help to perform the show better.

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