

Patrick Noakes
1802380
Research in Context ADAD5003
BA Set Design
Tutor Julia Lockheart
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What is the role of the designer/maker in the 21st Century and how might this role change in the next 10 years? Discuss your ideas with reference to two of the practitioners or thinkers discussed in your lecture strand.

Since the late 1800's the way that we watch films and tv has changed drastically. It is still changing now, although watching plays being acted out by actors and actresses and having a designed set behind them to add a sense of watching this story in third person has been around since the early ages of the 6th century discovered by Mediterranean Greeks.

We have come to adapt from live audiences and are able to watch these plays/stories being acted out on the big screens as well as live theatre in the 21st century. I will be talking about my ideas on how the way we view these stories will change for us in the next 10 years with the technology we have today and how it could change the way we see our reality.

My idea of how we will view films and tv programmes is to experience the scenery and atmosphere created by the sets in the films while watching. I think that with the technology we have, we have access to viewing our world in different ways. For example, we have CGI and built sets that focus on colour and lighting which influences scenes to add emotion and make it feel more dramatic. In the film 'Ready Player One' (Penn, Cline and Cline, 2018), the characters monopolise VR in order to immerse themselves in the games. That technology could also be used to experience films in a whole new way.

You could use VR to enter the film and watch it from your own point of view being part of the story, although the technology we have today isn't anywhere as near as advanced as in the film, I feel that it could become a reality with the speed of technological advances. Instead of using set design in a physical form, I think that set design should be used in a virtual way, designed and created on computers but have the same quality as the CGI used in films to allow the scenes to look and feel real in VR.

Although using VR as a new and different way of changing the way a designer shows set design in the 21st century and onwards, I feel that will be the way the roles of a designer will become due to the environmental issues due to wastage and using a virtual way of creating sets is a more eco-friendly way of dealing with the problem of adding to the cause of the planets health. I feel this is the way forward for designers.

I will go into talking about how at the beginning of making sets was fine in its time and how we have changed the ways and showing the designers/makers work onto the big screens today. I will talk

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about how our role as designers/makers is to change the way we view our own reality and be able to change and manipulate it as has been done for many years in the film and tv industry.

Canard Digerateur is the idea I am using as a way of controlling what happens and how experiencing VR works. Norbert Wiener and homeostasis, I will be talking about this in my essay as well, because it is about the link between machines and humans, having the same mechanics.

Topic 1

History of Set Design

Origins of Set Design and the purpose of set design was founded in the 6th century onwards. Previously, if actors performed plays without the use of costumes or sets, it would leave the audience confused and unsure of the context of the performance. The Greeks set plays and wore costumes and carried props to help main characters and extras to perform a story to the audience. (Reed.edu, 2019)

Having more than two people and wearing certain clothing and having props to do with the story it gave audience a sense of what's going on and understand the story. They would have scenery behind them, they would have tables, chairs, walls, and other objects on stage and they would be able to change sets in each scene to show audience a full perspective of where these actors are and conditions/environments that they are in.

The Greeks couldn't use any artificial lights, nor did they use any special soundings instead they used natural lighting and sound. Instead they designed their stages to be combed shaped in order to optimise the way in which sound travelled to the audience. From the 18th century onwards, when lighting became more advanced, they were able to change the amount of lighting they would have on their stages allowing a change of atmosphere onto the stage. (Reed.edu, 2019)

In the 19th century they used the lighting to black out the audience, this made it so when people went to go and watch a play, they wouldn't make it a social event but rather an observational event. This ensured that they would be focused on the stage and watching the actors interact with their surroundings, props and costumes. This created three-dimensional visual experience instead of using painted backgrounds to elevate the stage.

In the present time, we've come a long way since having live theatre shows and instead we have shows being acted out in studios and behind greenscreens and real locations, we have advanced lighting and sound, with the advances we have we are able to use the lighting and sound in order to

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cause people to feel either happy, anxious, sad etc. Compared to having a life performance like hamlet by Shakespeare which has been a story told in many versions, they have the same feel and different adaptations. Watching these performances on big screen with scenes that look realistic rather than being on stage adds more affect to the audience's emotions. (The Vet Timelord, 2013)

A good example I want to use is Chernobyl (Chernobyl HBO, 2019) which used the surroundings and acting to make the audience feel anxious and on the edge with the catastrophe, they made the story feel more deep and meaningful by using the surroundings showing how the characters would have felt in the scene.

Topic 2.

Purpose of set design.

The purpose of set design is to make a scene possible and add an environment to the stage for the actors and actresses to improve their performance creating an atmosphere on stage for performers and audience while they watch. Set design is a very important part of any play or film being shown on screen or stage, if the show is set around the year 1780, it's the set designers job to be able to research into the time period of the 1780's and use that style on set and not use anything after the set time.

The role of the set design is to have a great imagination in order to get good scenery for their sets, they need to be creative and know architecture to know how constructions work and come up with creative patterns and shapes. In set design you need to concentrate on what the script says about the area in which the maker will try to make a set suited for the atmosphere within the play. There are different kind of sets within the film industry that all serve certain purposes, the main purpose of a set designer though is to add a sense of an atmosphere for different scenarios.

For instance, in daytime and night-time normal tv that include comedy, news, reality tv etc. they often use bright colours, a lot of red, blue and greens which makes the audience feel comfortable and calm. On the other hand, there are film sets, these sets usually use darker colours and more dim than normal day reality tv. The reality tv shows, their sets usually are in studios, or concert halls or outside on the streets, their purpose would be allowing the audience to feel more comfortable with what they are watching due to it feeling so familiar and what they are used to having a purpose of information to the audience and to make them feel calm and relaxed.

On the other hand, when film productions make sets for a large budget film, they often have large spaces to use for their sets giving them more freedom into adding depth of their film have more of an impact on the audience. Sets have a way of laying out their scenes by having it as an open cube,

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there's always a foreground and a background in set design and the set designer must design sets allowing the viewers to see the scene from a deep sense of depth within the scene.

Although reality tv sets don't usually have the same due to their sets being more interior rather than exterior they don't have a depth more their purpose is more concentrated on the colour and scenery they use to suit the environment they are in. In films they follow a story line which always leads to different paths to different ends, for this in set design you have to make the scenes special to the protagonist, main challenge and a narrative point of view, often having similar scenarios requiring the same style of scenery. (Soren Petersen, 2015)

Topic 3.

The future of Set Design.

The future on how the role of the designer will change in the next ten years in my view will be to use Virtual Reality, stories that are being told and made in the film industry always concentrate on the audience and always concentrates on their point of view on how they see the story while watching, taking that idea I think that in ten years' time with the technology we have these days the advances would allow us to be able to be part of the story, see it from the actual cameras point of view allowing the audience to have a fourth dimensional view and perspective of the scenes.

Norbert Wiener was a mathematician that focused his study on the links between humans and machines, his theory and philosophy towards the relations between humans and machines was the control theory, automated theory and computer programs, these theories could be used with the VR, using VR could make us go into the world of the machines, with VR being made by a computer simulated version of our reality we could use that to change the way we view films. (Pallardy, 2019)

Combining machines and humans together allows us to alternate our future and experiences with have when watching films, being more part of it and enhancing our emotions when watching a film. It wouldn't be applicable to daytime and night-time tv, I think it should only be used in Cinemas where the audience would be able to sit down and put on the headset and earphones and view the film that way. Just like being able to watch a film in 3-D we put on glasses to allow us to see the picture in more depth of perception, going into the 4th dimension gives the audience an even wider depth when watching a film if you were to use VR(FDM, 2017).

Although using VR to view films in a different way and also using the idea from Ready Player One (Penn, Cline and Cline, 2018). But going back to my previous essay and about my manifesto I feel that using VR(FDM, 2017) as a new way to change the way the designer changes the way they display set design I feel it could be an easier escape from our own tough times and be able to

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actually feel part of the film that we are watching. VR is a great way of helping people with anxiety and depression, by going into the virtual world it allows them to overcome their fears while they know they would be in a safe environment allowing them to see something that is not that in our real world. I think VR will change the way films will be viewed and will be the future of film and tv.

Conclusion

Overall in this essay I have spoken about how set design came to be, it was discovered by the Greeks as early as the 6th Century, since then with technological advances we have come a long way in the different types of ways we have been able to tell stories and plays through live theatre and through big screen films. The Greeks were only able to use their natural environment and their acting skills to display a show. In the 1800's when we got more advanced, we were able to affect the lighting and sound when making the plays.

Instead of using 2-D backgrounds, we started using 3-D objects added into the scenery to find a sense of depth to the story, adding that lighting is a key factor to set design and doing so we were able to change emotion through lighting, making the audience blacked out to heighten the senses for the audience when watching the film to have more interaction with what's happening on stage.

Going through the stages of how the advances of set design has come to our day and age, I think the direction it is pointing towards would be a VR view of the film that you will be watching, allowing viewers to watch in a 4 dimensional way and helping viewers with their mental health, but also to change the way the viewer sees the film.

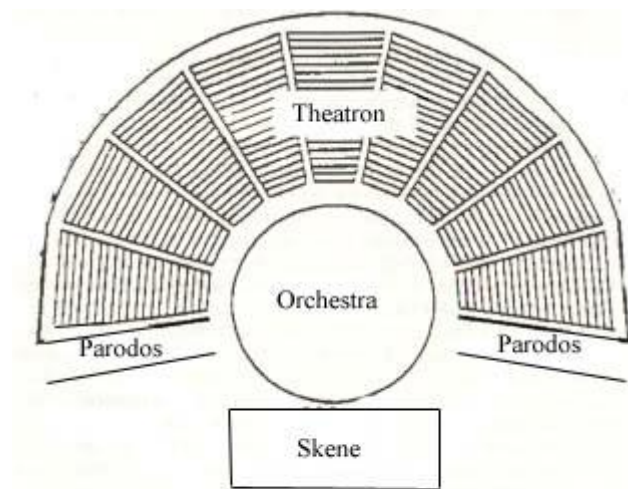
I think with the research I have done and with my own ideas on how I think our role as designers will change in the next ten years will help me because it talks about the uses of VR, concentrating on creating these computerised worlds will be an aim to go for to advance the idea of allowing VR to be part of the cinema world. As my role as a set designer and a maker, in order for the VR to work in the future you'd need to change the way we film films as well, being the one in VR we would have it so we would be viewing it in first person. The idea is that having it in VR the scenery would have to be 3 dimensional. Although making virtual reality a thing for films, it could also be dangerous for humans to enter so many realistic realities it could make us question on our own reality and that could possibly be a scary outcome.

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