

Multimodal Analysis of British Theatre Websites: Polyphony of Modes

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Abstract

This paper draws on a long-term research project analysing the websites of British theatre institutions, focusing on their multimodal character and the ways in which they constitute a new genre. The corpus analysed for the study consists of websites from three institutions: a traditional great house – the Royal Opera House, an acclaimed dance group – the Akram Khan Dance Company, and a representative of the field of physical theatre – the DV8 company (only the results from the first two companies are reported in this article). As each of the dance companies falls into a different sphere of dance art, their websites naturally provide diverse forms of layout, graphic arrangements and photograph placements. Exploring the mutual harmony and cooperation of the individual modes on the sites, this paper discusses primarily the modes of text and image (including layout, which determines the interplay between these modes) and their function within the meaning-making process and the overall image of the sites. The analysis is grounded in a number of methodological contexts: Bateman's framework (2008) for the layout analysis, Martin and White's system of evaluation in language (2005) for the textual elements, and Monika Bednarek's typology of evaluative expressions (2009) for the description of inter-modal relations.

Keywords: multimodality, theatre websites, dance, polyphony of appraisal, layout, evaluation

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