

Guiding the 'Post- Spectator' in Sri Lankan Theatre

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“Spectator is an authentic community. It expresses a modernistic ideology on spectator, using its special paradigm”.

The above quote applies very much to the contemporary stage dramas in a context where encroaching technologies have created a paradigm shift within the theatre and perception of the relationship between performance, space and lighting. Attempts are made, using an electric bell, or in terms of direct instructions to maintain silence or to switch off the mobile phones to guide or control the spectator before the commencement of a play.

In this paper, I examine the shift in the concept of spectatorship from a pre-modern to a postmodern age with respect to ‘guiding the post spectator’ with special significance to the Sri Lankan theatre. Further, the paper will also examine the dramaturgy of the spectator. In particular, I will examine the question whether it is necessary to “prepare” the spectator for a play as done in the contemporary plays using technology.

The resource materials of the methodology will consist of readings of research on contemporary audience, articles and commentaries, as well as observations of the live performances of contemporary theatre. Accordingly, I shall rely on theory as well as performances in tracing the visual picture of leading the audience in the contemporary times in the context of 'guiding the post-spectator.'

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