

Kullark by jack davis essay



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Aboriginal beliefs and cultural influences have existed for thousands of years.

With the movement of European settlement to Australia, many Aboriginals ways of life and attitudes were changed to fit those of aliens, the British. The staged drama, ' Kullark', written by Jack Davis, represents a time of injustice of a group that were considered to have poorer standards to those, of which the white settlers possessed. Davis's print version of his play projects the image of a confused society that is bought inequality because of there coloured skin and the ignorance of white settlers, not willing to understand a race unlike there own. Jack Davis has produced his play to account for the differences in races, by the images of the serpent and the Western Australian map behind the actors, through the use of traditional and untraditional music, languages of both the Aboriginals and the whites, diaries, journals and the historical background of the beginning of Aboriginal and white interaction to influence a response of understanding by the reader and viewer of Australia. Davis's use of showing three outlooks of two groups within the Australian society, dramatises the contrast between the past and present.

From the early 1800's to the depression and the end of the war to the more present time of 1979 in the Yorlahs household. This concept allows the viewer to take part within a series of events that lead up to what the Yorlahs see as victory for the black man, a time of celebration. This use of staging permits the spectator to become involved in the idea of how the Yorlahs attitude is evolved. Davis has used song and dance from a bygone era to portray the Aboriginals beliefs in their cultural manner, unlike that of the

whites, whom express themselves via the use of diaries and journals for the use of added communication to the audience. The three years that were chosen reveal times of hardship for Aboriginals, fighting new battles with the white man. The 1800's were the introduction of white man, the 1930's and 1940's were a time when money was hard, but seen harder for the already castigated group of Aboriginals and 1979 as a time to celebrate what is satisfactory and for the future of the Yorlahs and their successful son.

The background image of the (exterior) painting in a new-conventional style of the Warrgul (the rainbow serpent) in the shape of the Swan River map represents the land and the Aboriginals beliefs to their homeland. The setting of Act one, Scene three is the first sight of the revolving door being used. This first door is opened near the ending of the serpents tail. This cutting of, or opening of the door represents the heartlessness of the whites to tread on new ground (Swan River) and not respecting the values, attitudes and beliefs of their culture. This staging technique portrays to the audience, in a cryptic manner that the Aboriginals have become invaded.

The Yorlah's kitchen is simple, with only required goods on stage to portray that they are seen in their kitchen. These being a blaring radio, newspaper and kitchen table, stereotypical of a kitchen and with such phrases as "What's for breakfast?"-spoken by Alec, and "Well it ain't ' am and eggs."-spoken by Rosie, represent language that is most often spoken within the kitchen environment. Within the story, ' Kullark', a number of techniques are used to compel the viewer/reader to persist on with understanding and comprehending the plot. They occur throughout the play as a source of both entertainment and for a way that the audience would absorb both facts and

story into a play that would express the beginnings of white and black man. One of these methods was the use of Yagan.

His dance and song incorporate tradition and cultural influences. Act one, scene two, shows how the Aboriginals (Yagan in particular) saw their world around them and how they dealt with their superstitions. By the use of this song and dance at the beginning in ceremonial paint, Davis creates a dramatic but subtle way of influencing the viewer's desire to continue on with an open-mind into what is seen as a serious matter of black v's white. Another technique that is used is Alice and the reading of her diary.

Act one, scene seven shows Alice reading from her diary, revealing the month and year to the audience, along with personal information that would not be necessarily brought up in the conversation with other characters. This form of writing allows the reader/viewer to become a part of the character, by being allowed to see into the head of the individual, by the use of thoughts and there creativity of what may come. This method allows for an audience to not be highly educated, by the characters on stage giving the evidence instead of the audience visualising what would or could happen. Jack Davis's play ' Kullark' is a story of inspiration, of many determined characters with a willingness to reach goals set before them. Music, props and characters help build images of times and places that were found to be of great hardship for the Aboriginals and the introduction of white man into unknown territory. The influence of this play on the viewer allows the spectator to become a more critical analysis of the events that were portrayed in the play from the early 1800's to the more present day of the 1970's.