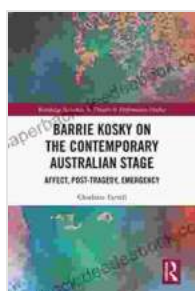


# Affect Post Tragedy Emergency: Routledge Advances in Theatre Performance Studies

## Abstract

This article explores the role of affect in post-tragedy theatre performance. It argues that affect is a key element in understanding how theatre can help us to process and come to terms with traumatic events. The article draws on a range of theoretical perspectives on affect, as well as on case studies of post-tragedy theatre performances. It concludes that affect is a powerful force in theatre, and that it can be used to create powerful and transformative experiences for audiences.

Tragedy has been a staple of theatre since its inception. From the ancient Greeks to the present day, playwrights have used tragedy to explore the darkest aspects of the human condition. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the role of affect in post-tragedy theatre performance. Affect is a term used to describe the range of emotions and bodily sensations that we experience. It is distinct from cognition, which is the process of thinking and reasoning. Affect is often thought of as being irrational and uncontrollable, but it can also be a powerful force for change.



## Barrie Kosky on the Contemporary Australian Stage: Affect, Post-Tragedy, Emergency (Routledge Advances in Theatre & Performance Studies) by Charlotte Farrell

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## **Affect and Post-Traumatic Stress**

Trauma is a major public health problem. It is estimated that over 60% of people will experience a traumatic event in their lifetime. Trauma can have a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities. It can lead to a range of mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is characterized by a range of symptoms, including flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance, and hypervigilance. These symptoms can make it difficult for people with PTSD to function in their daily lives.

Theatre has been shown to be an effective way to help people to recover from trauma. Theatre can provide a safe space for people to express their emotions and to explore the impact of trauma on their lives. It can also help people to develop coping mechanisms and to rebuild their sense of safety and security.

## **Affect and Theatre Performance**

Affect is a key element in theatre performance. It is what allows actors to connect with their audience and to create a sense of emotional resonance. Affect can be expressed through a variety of means, including facial expressions, body language, and vocal intonation. Actors use affect to create characters that are believable and relatable. They also use affect to convey the emotions of the play to the audience.

In post-tragedy theatre performance, affect is particularly important. It can help audiences to connect with the characters and to understand the impact of the tragedy on their lives. It can also help audiences to process their own emotions and to come to terms with the tragedy.

### **Case Studies**

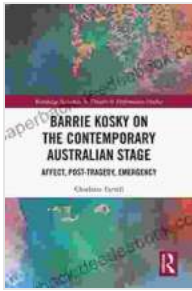
There are a number of examples of post-tragedy theatre performances that have used affect to powerful effect. One example is the play "The Laramie Project," which was written in response to the murder of Matthew Shepard. The play uses a documentary style to tell the story of Shepard's murder and its impact on the community of Laramie, Wyoming. The play is deeply moving and it has helped to raise awareness of the issue of hate crimes.

Another example of a post-tragedy theatre performance that used affect to powerful effect is the play "The Children's Hour." The play was written in 1934 in response to the Scottsboro Boys case, in which nine African American teenagers were falsely accused of raping two white women. The play tells the story of two teachers who are falsely accused of having a lesbian relationship. The play is a powerful indictment of homophobia and it has helped to raise awareness of the issue of homophobia.

Affect is a powerful force in theatre, and it can be used to create powerful and transformative experiences for audiences. Post-tragedy theatre performance can be a particularly effective way to use affect to help audiences to process and come to terms with traumatic events. Theatre can provide a safe space for people to express their emotions and to explore the impact of trauma on their lives. It can also help people to develop coping mechanisms and to rebuild their sense of safety and security.

## References

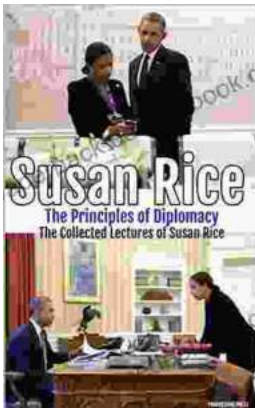
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