



The Role of Theatre and Performance in Social Commentary within West African Culture: A Qualitative Study in Gambia, 2010

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Abstract

Theatre and performance have long been integral to West African cultures, serving as platforms for social commentary, education, and cultural preservation. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilising semi-structured interviews with theatre practitioners, audience members, and scholars. Data collection also includes observations of live performances and archival materials. Findings indicate that theatre productions often address themes such as gender equality, environmental conservation, and political governance through allegorical storytelling techniques. The research underscores the significant role of theatre in Gambia for social commentary, highlighting its effectiveness in engaging audiences on complex societal issues. Future studies should consider comparative analyses with other West African cultures to understand broader regional dynamics. Additionally, support for local arts initiatives is recommended to sustain these platforms. Theatre, Performance, Social Commentary, Gambia, West Africa

Keywords: *African theatre, cultural preservation, ethnography, performance studies, qualitative methodology, social commentary, West Africa*

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