

Aesthetic Preference and Consciousness in African Theatre: A Performance Appraisal of Tyrone Terrence's a Husband's Wife

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Abstract : The destructive influence of Europe on Africa has also taken a tow on the aesthetic essence of the African Art, which centres on morality and value for human life. In a parallel vein, the adverse turn of this influence on the dramaturgy of some contemporary African plays, poses impedance to audience consciousness in performance engagements. Through the spectrum of African Aesthetics, this study attempts a performance appraisal of A Husband's wife; an unpublished play written by Tyrone Terrence for the African audience. The researcher proffers two variant textual interpretations of the play to evaluate performance engagement in its default realistic mode, which holds an unresolved 'Medean-impulse', and another wherein the resolution is treated to a paradigm shift for aesthetic preference. The investigation employs the mixed method, which combines the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Keen observation on the reactions and responses of audience members that were engaged in both performances, and on-the-spot interview with selected audience members, were the primary sources for the qualitative data. However, quantitative data was captured in an on-the-spot survey with the instrument of the questionnaire served to a sample population of the audience. The study observes that the preference for African aesthetics as exemplified in the second performance which deployed a paradigm shift did enhance audience consciousness. Hinging on performance aesthetic theory, the paper recommends that all such African plays bestowed with the shortcoming of African aesthetics, should be appropriately treated to paradigm shifts for performance engagement, in the interest of enhancing audience consciousness in the Nigerian Theatre.

Keywords : African aesthetics, audience consciousness, paradigm shift, median-impulse

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