

FUNCTIONALITY

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TRADITIONAL AFRICAN DRAMA IS KNOWN TO CREATE CULTURAL RE-AWAKENING.IT RECONNECTS SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY TO ITSELF BY RE-ENERGINIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LIVING THE DEAD AND YET UNBORN.

2- It is often said that African art has never been art for art's sake. Traditional African ritual drama serves several purposes in the communities in which it is performed. Dramas can serve as a ritual experience that recreates and reaffirms the positive qualities of community life, much like Aesop's fables try to impart lessons to children about right versus wrong.

3- Audience participation is encouraged and expected in these ritual dramas which are rich in symbolic meaning and show a collective longing for the past. (Chinyowa)

4- Certain rituals, like the kurova guva, can serve as a way to bring closure following a death. Biwa puts the community in contact with and into dialogue with ancestors who have passed on- people can plead for intervention to solve all manner of woes. This reminds me of the Disney movie, Mulan, where the ancestors are expected to solve the problems of the Fa family (and, of course, they do with help from the dragon!).

5- There are rituals to mark important life events like weddings and the "doctor ceremony", which honors not the M.D. in the tribe but the guy who received a calling to be the indigenous doctor- I am imagining a type of witch doctor but I could be wrong! He does go through training and can't drink or have sex for several months so it is pretty rigorous!

6- There are also oral narratives that serve to instruct and teach the history and beliefs of the community while also entertaining.

7- It is the functioning of society itself which most directly dictates artistic expression in Africa, whose theatre is rooted in myths, rites and folk celebrations, which externalize the beliefs, passions and concepts that preoccupy any given group. The fact is that early Africans never invented a generic term to designate these representations. They did not name their theatre; rather, they lived it. In their scheme of things theatre was taken for granted. Theatrical art in Africa, therefore, is very ancient, its origins lost in prehistory. Yet, it is part of every day in public places and at home. Everywhere theatricality is evident. The slightest pretext often gives rise to complex theatrical events where music, dance and verbal parody figure in equal parts. The African has always lived in close accord with theatre and the theatrical; the performative, to use a contemporary term, is an integral part of his or her identity.

Motsa puts it very nicely when he says that the ritual dramas express the emotions of the community, placates the gods and lulls the natural elements.

In the African ritual dramas, anyone can be an actor, everyone is the audience, costumes are not needed and neat: In this sense, early Africa offers an example of perfect harmony between theatre and society. If one considers the genres and styles of theatre in connection with the *milieu* in which they originated .

8- While it is also true that ritual and theatre are not the same thing, it is evident that theatre, of all the arts, is the one most apt to use the same elements as those found in ritual. It is for this reason that so many African researchers and practitioners put ritual at the centre of both their reflection and their stage practice.

9-Imbued with symbolic meanings and using a concrete language, rituals delineate spaces that are always seen as symbolic or mythic, places to come together, places for an exchange between the human and the divine, or between human and human..

The root here is religion—in this case, animism—which permeates all activities and constitutes the basis for a whole network of customs. African thought is steeped in animism which places humanity at the centre of its concerns. God, in the African universe, needs people in order to be fully realized. It is people, by their sacrifices, their cultural manifestations and their incantations, who give the gods meaning. In this way, each human being—in conjunction with his or her ancestors—participates in divine creativity.

Take into account :

Ritual drama /Ritual performance VS.Koteba/The characteristics of traditional African drama.

Take Wole Sotinka's *The Lion and The Jewel* 1958 to locate the different elements . the functionality and significance of this specific drama

A-The main theme.

B-The subthemes:the traditional ones

C-The Techniques used/Dances and pantomimes

D-Type of drama/Conceptual or visual/The reasons to justify the choice

E-The nature of the characters /The Four characters/Their traditional aspects and behaviours

