



# Theorising Theatre and Performance as Social Commentary in West Africa: An Ethiopian Focus

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## Abstract

Theatre and performance in West Africa have long been recognised as powerful tools for social commentary, addressing issues such as cultural identity, political power dynamics, and societal norms. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilising in-depth interviews with contemporary Ethiopian artists, scholars, and community members to understand their perspectives on the use of theatre for social commentary. A significant theme identified was the direction taken by performers in addressing controversial topics such as gender inequality and political corruption through subtle yet impactful narratives and symbolism. This study contributes new insights into understanding how Ethiopian artists navigate complex socio-political landscapes through their performances, offering a nuanced view of cultural expression and activism. Further research could explore the impact of digital media on contemporary theatre practices and their ability to reach wider audiences for social commentary in Ethiopia. Theatre, Performance, Social Commentary, West Africa, Ethiopian Arts

**Keywords:** *African, Ethnography, Performative, Postcolonialism, Theatre, Cultural Studies, Anthropology*

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