



Theatre and Performance as Social Commentators in West Africa: An Ethiopian Perspective

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Published: 23 March 2002 | **Received:** 13 January 2002 | **Accepted:** 26 February 2002

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18753804](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18753804)

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Abstract

Theatre and performance in West Africa, including Ethiopia, have long served as platforms for social commentary on various issues such as politics, culture, and societal norms. An interpretative approach was employed, analysing existing literature and selected case studies from Ethiopia's theatrical scenes over several decades. A notable theme identified across various theatre productions is the critique of corruption within government institutions. This thematic consistency suggests a recurring audience engagement with these performances as social commentaries. The findings indicate that Ethiopian theatre and performance serve as effective tools for addressing contemporary societal issues through artistic expression. Policy makers should consider integrating arts education into broader socio-economic development strategies to enhance public awareness of governance challenges. Ethiopia, Theatre, Performance, Social Commentary, Governance

Keywords: *African Theatre, Ethnography, Performance Studies, Social Criticism, Cultural Anthropology, Postcolonial Theory, Ritual Performance*

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