

## Storytelling, A Source of Inspiration for Awareness-Raising Theatres in Burkina Faso

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### Abstract

*This article aims to build a bridge between storytelling and drama. More specifically, it analyzes the way in which the creators of awareness-raising theatres go about scripting certain contents of the oral tradition, in this case storytelling. Through this study, the aim is to explain how traditional storytelling is used as an inspiring material in theatrical creation. From the analysis of specific cases of shows entitled "Oyo: Force and Resistance" and "The King's Elephant", subjected to an intertextual analysis, we arrive at the conclusion that storytelling and awareness-raising theatre are two arts that have in common their intention to change society, on the one hand, and that the transition from traditional to scripted performance is the result of a process of creative transformation and artistic innovation, moreover.*

**Keywords :** Tradition Orale, Conte, Théâtre, Spectacle de Sensibilisation, Transformation Créative

## Introduction

Theatre, as a powerful vehicle for storytelling and emotion, draws certain materials from oral traditions. Indeed, playwrights quite often use traditional tales to reinterpret them on stage. In this way, theatre becomes a bridge between oral culture and art. In this world of storytelling and artistic creation, the central question arises as to how directors transform a tale into a theatrical discourse and a captivating performance, which plunges us into the heart of the relationship between theatre and oral traditions. The aim is to reveal the complex intricacies of this fusion between the art of theatre and the wisdom of storytellers and to show how this creative alchemy translates into an immersive experience for the audience. We start from the hypothesis that theatre, by drawing on oral traditions, can serve as a powerful means to preserve cultural heritage while creating engaging theatrical experiences. The exploration of this postulate aims mainly to analyze the process of transformation of oral traditions into captivating theatrical performances, based on two specific cases of awareness-raising performances inspired by traditional Burkinabe narratives. To do so, we will examine the scenic and scenographic discourse of the two illustrative shows in the study, in order to determine the occurrences of the distinctive features of the traditional narrative. The study will be structured in three points : first, we will talk about the tale, with the theatre in front of it, to highlight their similarity; Then, it will be a question of creative transformation, as it can be structured within the framework of a scripting of the traditional oral narrative; Finally, we will study the implications of a storytelling adaptation undertaking, in terms of social and cultural impact and artistic innovation.

## Relationship Between Theatre and African Oral Traditions

### African Theatre, a Mirror of Oral Traditions

African theatre is intrinsically linked to African oral traditions. It has its roots in the tales, myths, legends, songs and dances that have existed for centuries on the African continent. Indeed, as Yaméogo (2021, p. 99) points out,

*Francophone Africa, although there were some traces of writing, was a continent of orality. The transmission of knowledge was essentially based on rituals. The elders gathered around the palaver tree to organize the life of the community. These arbitrations took the form of theatrical demonstrations. These forms of representation were akin to dramatic expression.*

Thus, traditional practices take on a spectacular character. In addition, the staging, dramatization, strong symbolization and use of pictorial forms in oral genres such as tales, proverbs, fables, riddles, and epics would assimilate them to theatrical performances.

In addition to these elements, we distinguish the fundamentals of theatre in traditional practices. We note the mimetic dimension of these shows. Since mimesis is understood as the imitation of reality, or rather its representation, traditional practices maintain a relationship of similarity between the customs transmitted and the uses reflected by the actors' play during the enunciation of these oral genres. They express the foundation of the cultural identity handed down by the ancestors.

In addition, tales, myths and legends contain life lessons, moral codes and guiding principles that shape African society. They play a crucial role in transmitting knowledge and values from past generations to future generations. They also reflect diversity and cultural richness. Indeed, they are tools of social

expression that address sensitive subjects: oppression, inequality, poverty, etc. Used to raise awareness and bring about social change, they are also a means of entertainment.

As for the specific case of the tale, it reflects social arrangements that make it possible to grasp the community dynamic. We also note a spectacular exchange between interlocutors assisted by an audience of spectators. Traditional storytelling practices are poietic in the sense that they substitute for nature in terms of creation, hence the simulacrum at the heart of the actions reproduced. Facts are shown during the shows of transmission of social values under the palaver tree, during circumcision, etc. This game proceeds from man's need and natural impulse to identify himself with divine beings, with ordinary beings, either to praise them, or to mock them, or to highlight their defects. This is a playful moment of social catharsis. From then on, there are elements of theatricality in these traditional practices.

### **Storytelling and Theatre, Two Communicating Arts**

Storytelling is one of the emblematic genres of the African oral tradition. Whatever the geo-cultural area in which it is anchored, the African tale is defined above all by its popularity and its playful status aimed at educating. It is therefore both an act of social communication and an art of speech. In other words, it is a narrative genre that poeticizes the dramas of everyday life, in order to draw useful lessons for individual and collective conduct. This is why M. Sidibé (1959) defines its narrative structure as a fictional scaffolding made up of comical, even tragicomic episodes with a real underpinning. This conception of storytelling brings him closer to dramatic art, which is also a spectacular, oral artistic practice. Like storytelling, theatre also tells a story, by having characters play. In addition, the two are united in their desire to get the audience/viewer to change their behaviour and act in accordance with a social ideal. This is particularly the case with the awareness-raising show, a form of theatrical performance that aims to raise public awareness of issues of all kinds. It is a theatrical genre with an educational content, which aims above all to influence the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of the public.

The connection between storytelling and theatre is not a coincidence. Indeed, in several respects, the two arts can be intertwined in their realization, or borrow enunciative codes from each other. In this way, a storytelling performance can be scripted, just as a narrative can serve as a textual basis for the playwright. In the African context in general, and in Burkina Faso in a singular way, awareness-raising theatre can be illustrated as an art of substitution for storytelling evenings, which have become increasingly rare, because they are more scripted, in direct contact with social and societal issues and real characters who interact with the public. Beyond this obviousness, when we compare the local conceptions that underpin the two artistic practices, there is a possible coupling between storytelling and theatre. Thus between P. N'Da (1984), who equates the former with a popular didactic framework, and W. T. Ngugi (1986), who defines the latter as a framework for instruction and social criticism, the African perception of storytelling and theatre seems the same from a functionalist point of view.

The relationship between the elements of oral tradition and dramatic art has given rise to many reflections, which have mainly taken the storytelling genre as their basic corpus. For example, R. H. S. Barbe (2018) examines the interest of dramatic creators in storytelling. The author considers the latter to be an inexhaustible source of inspiration for the performing and screen arts, which "is full of very effective tools for the support of modern theatre, in its perpetual quest to stimulate collective and individual awareness" (p. 53). Admittedly, his study aptly echoes the present reflection, which nevertheless limits the scope of the

analysis to the specific case of awareness-raising theatre and storytelling. The congruent characteristics of the two arts are analysed by B. Ferrier (2011) on the basis of the adaptation of the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and Perrault to the theatre of youth. We can already conclude that "storytelling and theatre have common principles of enunciation through orality and address to the audience" (p. 24). In addition, both have a relationship to reality through their allegorical language and their power of suggestion. Above all, the author draws a binary parallel between storytelling and theatre: plays that tackle serious subjects with humour correspond to dramatic parodies of fairy tales; Those that transpose the tale through the poeticization of reality are dramatic tales. In her attempt to explain the beginnings of Ivorian theatre, F. Kouassi Akissi (2018) likens a storytelling evening, which B. Kotchy (1983) has also described as an "act of life", to a dramatic act, because for her, "storytelling sessions in Africa are real spectacles offered to the public" (p. 110). While any act of life, in the African context, can potentially be theatricalized, the enunciative codes or canonical elements that characterize theatre in its modern understanding are not always legible. Theatre is the result of a creation, a transformation of various materials, even oral sources.

### **Storytelling as a Huge Potential for the Creation of Awareness-Raising Theatre**

Storytelling, an inexhaustible source of inspiration, offers theatre immense potential for the creation of awareness-raising shows. By relying on the narrative force, the symbolic scope, the archetypal characters, the universal plots and the moral scope of the tale, the awareness-raising shows make it fertile material for the exploration of subjects such as justice, equality, solidarity, respect for the environment or the fight against discrimination and make it possible to reach a wide audience. From then on, storytelling offered a multitude of possibilities for theatrical creation.

Specifically, the story, by its accessible and entertaining nature, captivates the audience's attention. With its fascinating characters, twists and turns, and magical dimension, it grabs the audience's attention and transports them to an imaginary universe. Storytelling also promotes awareness of complex issues in a fun and educational way. The messages conveyed by the tale, often conveyed in the form of morals or life lessons, are easily assimilated by the public, including children. Finally, it arouses emulation. Storytelling allows you to identify with the characters and experience their adventures, which can spark emulation in the audience and encourage them to take action for change. To achieve this, the resulting theatre is the result of a creation, a transformation of these various materials.

### **Creative Transformation**

Storytelling and theatre have different narrative structures. The tale is usually linear, with a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end. Theatre, on the other hand, is more complex, with a structure of acts and scenes that allows for tension and twists and turns. A transposition is therefore necessary for an effective scripting. The following theatrical techniques are then used:

- Narrative adaptation: The tale has a three-stage structure, namely an initial situation, a denouement and a final situation. For his staging, he experiences a dynamism through stage additions, flashbacks, etc. In addition, the directors focus on a narrative point of view. The narrator is usually omniscient and the dialogue is adapted accordingly. To maintain the attention of the moment, the rhythm of the narration varies.

- Accurate and expressive acting : the actors embody the characters of the tale with accuracy and expressiveness. The narrator under the joker intervenes to introduce, comment on the actions and promote interaction between the actors and the audience to create an immersive experience.

- An immersive staging: the simple but symbolic setting evokes the world of the fairy tale while the costumes strongly characterize the characters. The light, on the other hand, creates a luminous atmosphere that emphasizes the important moments of the story. All punctuated by an original music that reinforces the atmosphere of the tale.

All in all, transposing the tale to the stage requires a narrative adaptation and a in a neat stage to captivate the audience and give them a unique experience. Using a variety of theatrical techniques, effective awareness-raising shows are created that reach the audience and raise awareness of important themes.

### **The Process of Creative Transformation**

Playwrights turn a tale into a captivating spectacle through a complex creative process. It all starts with selecting the appropriate tale followed by a rewrite and adaptation for the stage. The staging, sets, costumes and choreography play an essential role in creating visual immersion. The authors bring the characters to life through their acting. Music, dance and artistic innovation enhance the atmosphere and emotion. The emotional engagement of the audience is cultivated, sometimes using interactions and role-playing. Throughout this process, playwrights respect cultural traditions while bringing their personal creativity to create a show that transports the audience into the world of storytelling. This transformation of storytelling into spectacle is a fusion of art and visual storytelling that captivates and amazes audiences.

This creative process aims to elicit emotional engagement from the audience by creating a deep connection with the characters and plot. Some shows even encourage interaction with the audience to reinforce this engagement. The ultimate goal is to captivate the audience and transport them into the world of storytelling, while conveying the messages and values present in the story.

In addition to this theoretical process of creation, playwrights, in a practical way, determine the target audience. This is because the definition of the recipient influences the style of narration, the complexity of the story, and the choice of themes. Also, the choice of the format of the screenplay for the adaptation is very decisive. In view of the characteristics of the spectators, who were essentially young schoolchildren, the literary scenario was adopted.

It was a textual format that described the story in detail including dialogue, descriptions of characters, locations, and directional directions. This allowed for the next development of the story. The structure consisted of three parts. An introduction that introduces the characters and context of the story. A development that describes the key events of the story and the obstacles that the characters must overcome. And finally, the resolution that offers a conclusion to the story.

In addition, the creation of the characters follows a common thread. They must be engaging and credible, with clear motivations and measurable goals. All of this is crowned with consistent actions and reactions. From then on, the natural dialogues reveal their personality which uses simple and direct language for a young audience. All tinged with humor and emotions that captivate and maintain attention.

## **From the Choice of the Tale to its Rewriting and Adaptation for the Stage**

Like most elements of oral culture, storytelling comes in several types, the points of variation of which are generally at the level of the status of the characters or contexts. For example, Aarne-Thompson-Uther (2004) suggests a classification structured around four main categories grouping together more than two thousand type tales. Even though the ATU classification is mainly based on the oral tradition of Europe, it is realized that African tales can be classified according to the same definitional criteria. Thus there are animal tales, ordinary tales, facetious tales and those with formulas. Certainly, in all cases, the narrative structure of the tale is distinctly recognizable, but the tales do not have the same structures in morphological, thematic and didactic terms. Therefore, their reuse in the other arts takes into account the relevance of one or the other criterion.

Stage creators select a narrative that has narrative elements and themes that can be adapted to the theatre and that resonate with the intended audience. Excessively, they often rewrite the original tale to make it more suitable for the theatrical stage. To do this, they add or multiply dialogue, develop the characters, and structure the plot in such a way as to keep the audience's attention. They also introduce non-linear narrative elements, returns, or parallel narratives to reinforce the story. Often, playwrights change their narrative perspective. In other words, they tell the tale from the point of view of a different character, or change the chronological order of events. This staging is crucial to make the show captivating.

### **Built-In Staging**

Playwrights use staging, sets, costumes, and choreography to bring the world of storytelling to life and create visual immersion. Also to convincingly bring the characters in the tale to life, they rely on their acting skills to embody the roles in a believable and engaging way. They make the characters more complex and multidimensional while adding motivations, internal conflicts, and story arcs to elicit audience identification. This makes the performance unique and memorable. In addition, they play with language, accents or even create a fictional language to immerse the audience in the world of the tale. They also add elements of surprise, unexpected plot twists, or interactive sequences to keep the audience's attention. To enhance engagement, theatre performances encourage interaction with the audience through questions, active participation, or role-playing. Added to this is the use of visual elements such as gestures, facial expressions and staging to tell the story in a visual and immersive way.

In some cases, music and dance are often integrated to enhance the atmosphere and emotion of the show. They add an important sensory dimension. In this way, the directors seek to create an emotional connection between the characters and the audience. This involves playing on emotions, creating moments of tension and revelation, or evoking empathy.

By combining these elements creatively and showcasing their skills, playwrights manage to turn a narrative into a captivating spectacle. This creativity preserves the substance of the tale while adapting it for the stage, providing the audience with a unique and memorable experience.



## Examples of Burkinabe Theatre Shows Inspired by Storytelling

### *From "The Girl of Oyo" to "Oyo : Strength and Resilience" Or The Scripting of the Traditional Narrative*

This Bwaba story was staged by the troupe "Bienvenue Théâtre du Bazéga" (BTB) in 2012, as part of a cultural day to raise awareness among schoolchildren in the south-central region of Burkina Faso. The show begins with a rewriting of the tale into a theatrical script that bears the title: "*Oyo: Strength and Resilience.*" The plot is thus adapted for a dynamic performance on stage. The authors used a mix of dialogue, music and dance to convey the narrative in an immersive way. This is at odds with the way in which the story is performed in the context of storytelling evenings, where the storyteller monopolizes discursive time and where there is no room for music and dance. In our case, the stage was decorated to represent the village of young Oyo with authentic visual elements of Bwaba culture. Thus, the stage set presented rural motifs characteristic of the domestic universe of this peasant society in Burkina Faso, even if most of the motifs were artificially constituted. For example, there were millet granaries, cattle pens, canaries, mortars and pestles, among others. Although these elements of the Bwaba's daily life are not evident in the initial narrative, their presence in the theatrical performance gives the scene a realistic look that helps to situate the audience in a believable setting.

Creative lighting is used to evoke the different emotions and moments of the story. The actors emphasized the character development and transformations that Oyo undergoes throughout the story. Bwaba music was incorporated to enhance the atmosphere and emotion of the show. Traditional dances were also used to illustrate important moments in history.

Some sequences involved audience participation, inviting them to interact with the characters and become more immersed in the story. This show highlights the themes of resilience, perseverance and strength, values deeply rooted in Burkinabe culture, especially at this difficult security stage in its history. The performance entertains but also transmits important lessons from Burkinabe culture.

This artistic approach is an effective way to convey important messages thanks to its accessibility and ability to reach a wide audience, including the illiterate. In addition, the theatre, by adapting this narrative for the stage, presents the history and culture of Burkina Faso to the audience in a lively and engaging way. This is part of the means of preserving these historical values for future generations

All in all, theatre and oral traditions are two forms of cultural expression that feed into each other. Oral traditions inspire theatre, which offers a new perspective on these narratives while preserving and celebrating the cultural and narrative richness of oral traditions.

Theatre is often used to address social, cultural and environmental issues in awareness-raising performances. Artists draw on these narratives to create characters, scenarios, and dialogue that resonate with the audience while preserving the authenticity of oral traditions. This exploration of storytelling as a source of inspiration creates a deep connection between theatre and Burkina Faso's cultural roots. It helps raise awareness of critical issues in an engaging way. Indeed, the artists use values, life lessons and mythological narratives to raise awareness, inform and educate viewers on issues of health, education, the environment and human rights, among others.

### *The King's Elephant, The Oral Narrative At The Base Of The Show Of The Same Name*

The theatrical performance inspired by this tale bears the same name: *The King's Elephant*. It was directed by Ildevert MEDA, who is also an actor, comedian, playwright and writer. The performance was provided by the Carrefour International du Théâtre de Ouagadougou (CITO) in 2016, as part of a regional tour to raise awareness on the virtues of democracy. It was aimed mainly at all segments of the population, but was particularly aimed at young people of voting age.

In literary format, the screenplay, broken down into three axes, gave this structure :

As an introduction, the king received an elephant as a gift. The latter wreaks havoc in the kingdom. This is the development part. The resolution deals with the complaint of the subjects of the kingdom. Contrary to the classical schema which implies a solution, here there was no denouement since the subjects did not complete their project; As a result, the story ended on a note of internal betrayal and a burst of survival. The dialogues were very simple and fun for the audience. They were humorous words.

The stage of the show was divided into two parts. On one side is the village with its fields and houses. And on the other, the king's palace where the elephant resides. Realistic visual elements such as plantations, huts, and a representation of the elephant are set up. The costumes of the villagers and the king reflect the Moaga culture, while that of the elephant is designed to be imposing and majestic. It is a skin disguise in animal form with elephant features.

In addition to the villagers, the elephant, the chief, a sage, a messenger and a few extras, the actors who played these roles expressed initial fear, resignation, revolt and finally the will to resolve the conflict.

The staging begins by showing the elephant ravaging the fields, with the villagers watching helplessly. The elephant is played in a commanding manner to accentuate the threat. The villagers tried to hunt the pachyderm but to no avail. It is one of them who proposes a solution: meet with the king to explain the problem and consider a peaceful way to coexist with the animal.

Traditional music to the rhythm of the *bendré* (moaga talking drum) and flute accompanies the show, adding a sonic dimension to the story. Traditional dances are incorporated. To represent the communication between the elephant and the villagers, a symbolic dance sequence is used. Plays of light evoke the elephant's emotions and change in attitude. The *mise-en-scène* highlights the evolution of the characters, showing how fear and inaction give way to revolt and the attempt to resolve the conflict for peaceful coexistence.

The show denounces the evils that undermine development and that sum up dictatorship, monarchy, abuses of authority, human torture, murders and assassinations of opponents, and the restriction of freedom of expression and opinion. The performance is performed in a very comic register. It is a political satire, a denunciation of the tyrannical excesses of Africa's powers.



## **The Challenges of Adapting the Tale into a Theatrical Show**

Taken together, storytelling and drama perform a variety of autonomous functions that explain, in part, their popularity and success among the population. Better still, storytelling and awareness-raising theatre have the same main purpose, that of influencing the behaviour and perception of the public, in order to lead them to act or design their action in accordance with the collective interest and common sense. But when the former serves as a source of inspiration for the latter, the scriptwriting process as well as the final show highlight other, more importantes issues.

### **The Communicative Power of the Local Mode of Performance in the Context of Oral Tradition**

Storytelling occupies an important place in Burkinabe culture. It is passed down from generation to generation and is a veritable reservoir of wisdom and knowledge. Theatre, on the other hand, is a living art form that allows you to reach a wide audience and convey strong messages. It is only natural that awareness-raising theatres in Burkina Faso have turned to storytelling as a source of inspiration. Indeed, storytelling allows you to address sensitive subjects in an accessible and entertaining way. It also makes it possible to reach rural populations, who are often the furthest from cultural centres.

Generally speaking, theatre practice in Burkina Faso, whether it is theatre for development, participatory educational theatre or awareness-raising theatre, uses local modes of performance for their effectiveness and practical use. Indeed, the stage representation of the tale has a clear impact on the reception of the work.

On the one hand, in the Burkinabe context, theatrical performances intended to involve spectators in an educational and awareness-raising process are performed in a local culture imprinted by a strong oral tradition. As a result, the spectacularization of the popular narrative gives viewers reference points and facilities for the reception of the scripted text. In reality, theatre performances are generally performed in rural areas where the populations are mostly unilliterate and where scripted issues are the hardest experienced. Thus, the oral performance, in direct relationship, reaches a greater number of spectators, and makes it possible to achieve the pedagogical objectives of the work. Because of its visual structure, the traditional tale offers the actors who script it the possibilities of modification and adaptation. The mode of oral performance gives each actor the freedom to create and improvise in order to make the narrative evolve into echoes of what he or she perceives in the audience (De la Salle and Darwiche, 2010; Sauvage, 2011).

On the other hand, popular narratives have long been a means of educating and socializing the individual in speech societies. Even if storytelling evenings are no longer commonly held as they were in the past, the majority of the audience to whom the theatrical discourse of awareness is usually addressed has grown up in a social universe where the stories of oral traditions have contributed to their education. By using fairy tales, which they script, playwrights bring up to date the educational virtues of these stories that speak to more than one viewer. Better still, the adaptation of the tale to the stage, with the spectacularization of the different acts and the participant observation of the spectators, breaks with the traditional performance of the tale, which hooks the audience more and makes it more sensitive and permeable to the messages diffused in the theatrical discourse. In reality, the scripting of popular tales allows viewers to temporarily evacuate the nostalgia of the fairy tale evenings they no longer experience, and interests them more and more. Burkinabe playwrights have understood this and are multiplying theatrical shows inspired by storytelling outside the theatres in the form of awareness-raising theatre.

## **The Socio-Cultural Impact of Scripting the Traditional Narrative**

The creation of theatre performances inspired by storytelling and oral traditions in Burkina Faso has a significant socio-cultural impact.

### *A Means of Preserving Cultural Heritage*

Theatre performances contribute to the preservation of Burkina Faso's cultural heritage, highlighting traditional stories, beliefs, customs and values that are essential to the country's cultural identity. Indeed, traditional narratives, whether narrative, poetic or lapidary, constitute a crucible or a support for many cultural references and values on which societies are founded. For societies with an oral tradition, they are media for the dissemination and transmission of all their knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills, which make it possible to shape and perpetuate the desired social archetype. Whatever the channel or mode of expression of these narratives, the worldview that underlies them is taught with varying degrees of resonance. By adapting oral traditions for the stage, these performances spark a new interest in traditional narratives, especially among the younger generations, thus contributing to their transmission. In fact, the traditional frameworks for using these narratives tend to shrink due to changes in lifestyles and tastes. Thus, the spectacularization of traditional "acts of life" constitutes both a captivating means of renewing the public's interest, and of actualizing all the value systems they carry. Therefore, the renewal of the public's interest in oral traditions reinforces people's sense of cultural identity, helping them to reconnect with their cultural roots and reminding them of the importance of their history. It is also an opportunity to promote languages and associated cultures.

### *An Education and Awareness Tool*

Performances based on oral traditions serve as educational tools. This is all the more real because all acts that fall within the framework of popular traditions are not carried out in vain. All these acts, plural and complementary, whether ritualized or not, are part of the very essence of social life, which must be fully invested in a permanent regeneration of its values. They perform various functions that can be, cumulatively or independently, pedagogical, initiatory, political, social, etc. For example, by scripting stories from the oral tradition, drama addresses social, cultural and environmental issues, raising awareness of important issues among audiences. Awareness-raising shows in Burkina Faso address a variety of themes including health, education, the environment, human rights and social issues. To do this, artists adapt tales that are oral narratives rich in stories, metaphors, and teachings to the needs of awareness, often modifying characters, plots, or morals to better match the issues addressed. In this way, they revitalize and adapt oral traditions to the contemporary context and to the issues of the day. In summary, these performances play an essential role in the preservation and promotion of Burkina Faso culture, while providing opportunities for reflection and engagement on current social and cultural issues. They contribute to strengthening Burkina's cultural identity and highlighting the country's rich heritage.

## **The Theatrical Adaptation of the Story, and Opportunity for Artistic Innovation**

Artistic innovation in theatre performances inspired by storytelling and oral traditions in Burkina Faso can take many forms. It relies on the creativity of artists to push the traditional boundaries of theatre.

Indeed, on the one hand, the scripting of the traditional narrative is a moment of visual reinterpretation. The artists use imaginative sets to recreate the environment of the tale, using unexpected materials and concepts

to give a new perspective to the story. For example, everyday objects can be repurposed to become decorative elements. The actors' costumes are innovatively designed to reflect both tradition and originality. Unique fabrics, patterns, and colors are used to represent characters and eras. Artists also use visual or sound special effects to create spectacular moments. This includes the use of lights, smoke, projections, sound effects, and even digital technologies to enrich the experience. They sometimes combine different art forms, such as contemporary dance, traditional music, shadow theatre, and painting, to create a multidimensional artistic experience.

On the other hand, the transformation of the tale into a theatrical spectacle offers an opportunity to experiment with perspectives. Alternative forms of theatre, such as street theatre, immersive theatre or experimental theatre are used to push the boundaries of the traditional form. Some shows incorporate elements of contemporary culture such as modern technology, social media, or global issues. The artists create immersive scenes to offer the audience unusual angles of view. Interaction with the audience goes beyond simple verbal exchanges. The shows involve the audience in crucial choices for the unfolding of the plot, inviting them to become an integral part of the story. Sometimes moments of silence or emptiness are incorporated to create a dramatic contrast and allow the audience to reflect on the themes of the story. Artistic innovation enriches the audience's experience by bringing surprising and unexpected elements to the show. It allows artists to transcend theatre conventions, explore new avenues of creativity, create memorable narratives, and captivate audiences in a way that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the relationship between theatre and oral traditions in Burkina Faso is a rich and complex cultural interaction. Theatre artists, drawing on oral tales and narratives, are able to create captivating performances that transcend time and space. This relationship between theatre and oral traditions represents a fusion of art and culture, where artistic creativity is combined with heritage preservation. In the course of our exploration, we took an in-depth look at the creative process by which artists transform traditional narratives into captivating performances. We've found that rewriting, directing, embodiment of characters, use of music, dance, and artistic innovation help create an immersive experience for the audience. The ultimate goal is to elicit emotional engagement by creating a deep connection between the audience and the narratives. Moreover, this interaction between theatre and oral traditions has a significant socio-cultural significance. It contributes to the preservation of Burkinabe cultural heritage, to raising awareness of social and cultural issues, to educating the public, and to strengthening cultural identity. The shows transcend cultural borders and serve as a testimony to the richness of Burkinabe culture. In addition, artistic innovation plays a central role in the creation of captivating shows. The artists push the boundaries of traditional theatrical form by using innovative visual, sound and narrative elements. They experiment with chronology, perspectives, and audience interaction to create unique artistic experiences. In sum, the relationship between theatre and oral traditions in Burkina Faso represents a celebration of culture, identity and visual storytelling. It demonstrates the power of artistic creativity and its role in transmitting culture and history, while engaging the audience on a captivating journey through traditional narratives. This topic is an eloquent illustration of how theatre can serve as a link between past and present, between tradition and innovation, and thus contribute to the cultural enrichment and unity of a society. We can therefore conclude that theatre serves as a mediator between ancestral oral traditions and modern audiences.

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## Annexes

### Story Summaries

#### Story 1

"*La Fille d'Oyo*" is a tale from the oral tradition of the Bwaba, an ethnic group in northwestern Burkina Faso. It tells the story of a young girl named Oyo who, despite hardships and hardships, ends up becoming an iconic figure of strength and resilience. The story goes that Oyo was known for her beauty and grace, but what set her apart most was her strong and independent spirit. Oyo had grown up in a loving family, but she had always been curious about the world around her.

One day, while walking in the forest, Oyo made an astonishing discovery. She found a spring of clear water that, according to legends, possessed magical powers. It was a sacred place, but Oyo, driven by her thirst for knowledge, decided to drink water from the spring. The next morning, Oyo awoke with a new strength and wisdom that was beyond his years. She was now capable of performing incredible feats. She could lift rocks, communicate with animals, and guide her people with her newly acquired wisdom. Thanks to these privileges, Oyo now had great responsibilities. She became a guide for her village, helping people resolve conflicts, heal the sick, and protect nature. His strength and wisdom were then put at the service of the community. Over the years, Oyo became a respected and beloved figure. His story was passed down from generation to generation, reminding us of the importance of curiosity, wisdom, and commitment to one's community.

#### Story 2

"*The King's Elephant*" is a tale of Moaga, an ethnic group from central Burkina Faso. This is the story of a king who owned a large elephant. He raised him with a lot of love and left him free to move. The pachyderm went everywhere, crossing fields and gardens. He was destroying the kingdom's crops. This saddened the peasants who complained about it but did not dare to let the king know for fear of upsetting him. However, one day, one of the peasants who had just witnessed the sacking of his field, his only possession, took it upon himself to be the spokesman of his comrades to the king on condition that a delegation be formed to go to the palace. The understanding was that the spokesman introduced the subject: "Your Majesty, your elephant... and that the rest of the delegation concludes: "He is destroying our crops. "Thus the king's eventual wrath will not fall upon a single one. With that, a good line of subjects went to the king. He listened to the peasants' grievances. As agreed, the spokesman introduced: "Your Majesty, your elephant, ... But against all odds, there was a great silence in the ranks of the rest of the delegation. Kneeling before the king, the spokesman turned as if to remind the others of their duty, but no one said a word. Then, he continues, after clearing his throat, "Your elephant is doing us the world of good. We love him and wish to have others to keep him company, a dozen of them, Your Majesty. They will brighten our lives. Your subjects, Your Majesty, are willing to participate in their purchase. »

## **Practical Applications of Storytelling**

### *Practical application of the screenwriting of the tale "Oyo's Daughter"*

Format: Children's play

Target audience: Children aged 6 to 15

Objectives:

- Promote curiosity, wisdom, and commitment to the community
- Valuing the place of women in society
- Introducing Bwaba culture

Sequence of the play:

Scene 1: Oyo, a young Bwaba girl, walks in the forest and discovers a spring of clear water. She is attracted by her beauty and decides to drink.

Scene 2: The next morning, Oyo wakes up with extraordinary powers. She can lift rocks, talk to animals, and understand the language of plants.

Scene 3: Oyo uses his powers to help the villagers. It heals the sick, resolves conflicts, and protects nature.

Scene 4: One day, an evil sorcerer arrives in the village. He wants to use Oyo's powers to do evil.

Scene 5: Oyo uses his wisdom and strength to defeat the sorcerer and save the village.

Scene 6: Oyo becomes a respected and beloved figure. Its history is passed down from generation to generation.

Staging tracks:

- Use colorful costumes and sets to create an African vibe.
- Incorporate traditional Bwaba songs and dances.
- Engage the audience by asking them to sing, dance, or answer questions.

Conclusion:

The scripting of the tale "The Oyo Girl" makes it possible to share this inspiring story with a wide audience. By adapting the story to the format of a children's play, one can make the youngest aware of important values such as curiosity, wisdom and commitment to the community.



*Practical Application Of The Screenwriting Of The Tale "The King's Elephant"*

Format: Literary script for an outreach play

Choice of theme:

The tale "The King's Elephant" touches on several important themes such as power, fear, courage, cunning and justice. For the awareness-raising play under study here, these themes were developed:

- The Danger of Abuse of Power: How the king, through his blind love for his elephant, endangers the well-being of his people.
- The Importance of Courage and Truth: How the Brave Peasant Dares to Defy the King to Defend the Rights of the People.
- The Power of Cunning in the Face of Oppression: How the Peasant Uses Cunning to Avoid the King's Wrath and Obtain Justice.

Target Audience: Children, Youth and Adults

Objectives:

- To introduce the tale "The King's Elephant" to a wide audience
- Promoting the values of courage, truth and justice
- Raising awareness of the dangers of oppression

Event:

Scene 1: The king receives an elephant as a gift. He loves him very much and lets him move freely.

Scene 2: The elephant roams the kingdom and destroys the peasants' crops.

Scene 3: The peasants are afraid of the king's anger and don't dare tell him the truth.

Scene 4: A brave peasant decides to talk to the king. He uses a ruse to avoid his anger.

Scene 5: The others are frightened and do not support him in his approach

Scene 6: The latter, feeling betrayed, changes the plan and suggests to the king that he acquire several other pachyderms.

Screenwriting tracks:

- Use bright colors and endearing characters to captivate the audience's attention.
- Incorporate traditional musical elements and songs.

- Add narration to explain the story and messages of the tale.

Conclusion:

The scripting of the tale "The King's Elephant" makes it possible to share this story rich in lessons with a wide audience. By adapting storytelling to the format of an awareness-raising theatre, one can reach a diverse audience and raise awareness of the universal values of courage, truth and justice.