

ORIGIN OF DRAMA

Drama is a very old endeavor of man. Early man was involved in a lot of dramatizations. At one time or the other, they needed to put up drama of some sort to fulfil certain purposes. These dramatizations finally led to drama as we have them today. Drama originated from three sources as follows:

Mimesis:

This is the imitation of actions. Man imitated the animals and humans around him. Man imitated animals by crawling, climbing or making the kind of sound they made. Man imitated the actions of his fellow man as a means of self-expression. Children usually imitate adults as a way of learning life processes or for fun.

Ritual:

This refer to activities that are tied to a particular cultural practice. Several religious events are characterized by several performances. This may involve dancing and several theatrical displays. Some of the displays involved masquerades.

Dramatic elements of ancient hunting game

Hunting is a very unique profession to the ancient man. In places such as Africa, hunting, particularly Nigeria, is common occupation. Hunters actually hunt systematically. They know the time its best to go for hunting. Some of them chant music of some kind in readiness for the hunting expedition. They have their unique costume for this activity. Their costume sometimes is the kind that will make them not to be easily recognized by the animals they are hunting. When they succeed in killing a very big animal or an animal that has been a threat to the community such as leopards, lion or tiger, they gather to celebrate it. Several dramatic practices such as dancing, choreography, mimicking animals etc follow this celebration.

Storytelling:

Almost every known cultures have their own traditional stories. Some of the stories are historic events. Others are folk tales about animals, spirits and humans. Some folk tales go along with folk songs. These stories laid foundation for the final emergence of drama acted on stage. Dramatic elements of storytelling include dialogue, action, audience.

Class activity

Students, narrate a festival, ritual or story telling you have witnessed. Point out the dramatic elements in in.

Summary

Early man developed practices which evolved over time to what we know today as drama.

Drama originated from mimesis, ritual, hunting game and storytelling.

Review Questions

1. Explain the origin of drama
2. Explain the following terms
 - (a) Mimesis
 - (b) Ritual
 - (c) Dramatic elements of ancient hunting game
 - (d) Storytelling.