

# African american narrative drama



African American Narrative Drama African Americans have always had a richness in their dramas because they usually are based on their own experience. Whether it was slave narratives, novels or movies, the depiction of the African American experience is expressed for the world to see and understand. When looking at African American narrative drama, the researcher must understand that there are several aspects of this type of expression and each provides a unique flavor to the process.

1. 0 Slave Narratives Some of the first African American narrative dramas were the slave narratives. During slavery, it was not surprising that Africans would tell stories about their trials and tribulations when they were sold into slavery. These slave narratives were recorded in the 1930s so that the world would have a first hand account of the experiences of former slaves. Because many ex-slaves could not read or write, these narratives were recorded after the Civil War and they are now housed in the Library of Congress (Library of Congress). The reason slave narratives were important was because many historians said that slaves were content to be slaves and that they lived better than some of the Northerners of the time. The slave narratives give a different account of their experience and many were a part of abolitionist journals (Library of Congress). The slave narratives gave personal accounts of what slaves experienced from their own words. These were some of the first narratives that were important to the African American experience.

2. 0 Oral Poetry Tradition Many opportunities for African American drama came through the ideas of the oral poem. These poems were done by a variety of people in a variety of settings. Oral poetry was about providing a story that other African Americans could understand and that would provide something funny, sad, or dramatic given by the storyteller. JoAnne Banks-Wallace, an <https://assignbuster.com/african-american-narrative-drama/>

author writing on African American literature, states that storytelling helps people make sense of their lives. Some stories provide an understanding of life that everyone can relate to and according to Banks-Wallace, these are touchstones that are part of the story telling. Storytellers go back to the African griot who was the storyteller and healer who kept the stories of the tribe they were living within. Also, the stories were used for healing and for nurturing in the tribe (212).

### 3. 0 Folk Narratives

Folk narratives are another aspect of African American narrative drama because they were tales that people made up to help make a point. Joyce Patton, stated that many folk narratives include animals who were used as tricksters who were able to trick other people into doing work that they were supposed to do (3). As an example, many stories have the character of a rabbit in them who was fast and quick, but who was often confronted by the bear or the fox (Patton 4). Stories could be made from riddles, jokes, songs and tall tales that Africans had available to them.

### 4. 0 Conclusion

African American tales have always been rich with an understanding about the people who made these tales. They were created from real life situations that could be happy or sad. There were many of these narratives that would eventually find their way into movies and novels by authors like Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker. These narratives were brought into dramatic plays like Ntozake Shange's play, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*. This play was created around several narrative choreopoems which were poems with choreography (Nelson 2010). These types of narratives and they continue to be interesting because they tell the story of people's lives.

Works Cited Banks-Wallace, JoAnne. "Talk that Talk: Storytelling and Analysis Rooted in African American Oral Tradition".

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