

ETHNODRAMATOLOGY 101

**A paper presented by
Dr. Julisa Rowe
Artists in Christian Testimony**

**For GCOMM 2006
Bethel University
St. Paul, MN**

(This paper pulls excerpts from the author's doctoral dissertation, and may not cover exactly the information given in the actual seminar. For a fuller examination of the topic, you may wish to purchase the dissertation, "A Guide to Ethnodramatology. Developing Culturally Appropriate Drama for Cross-Cultural Christian Communication: A Comparative Study of the Drama Styles of Kenya, India and the United States." Contact the author: Julisa@ethnodrama.com. Cost is \$49.95 + shipping, and will be shipped as a two CD set, complete with a PDF of the written dissertation, as well as video and photo appendices. Additional information and useful links can be found on our website: www.ethnodrama.com)

What is ethnodramatology? Simply put, it is the study of the drama forms and expressions of every culture. At its root, it analyzes a cultural worldview and how that worldview shapes the drama of that culture.

Too often in Christian mission efforts, the important role of culture in art expression is overlooked. While recognition of the usefulness and power of drama in giving change-messages has increased, the majority of the dramas presented are based on Western theatrical forms. The argument is often made that these dramas are well received by other cultures, and response to the message is great. Why, then, should missionaries and drama groups change a good thing?

A Theory of Ethnodramatology

Drama is essentially communication and, whether the stated goal is for entertainment, philosophy, propaganda or “art for art’s sake,” every drama communicates something about the world in which the artist lives and the nature of the audience and its struggles, and offers some response or reflection. **To understand why drama differs in each culture one needs to understand why cultures differ and how those differences then affect the form and content of drama.** Many missionaries attempt to present a drama in another culture without understanding the complex layers that make up culture and the effect this has on both the style and content of indigenous drama. If the missionary presents a drama that has impressed them in their home country, but has not checked for cultural differences of expression and content, then a situation could arise whereby the drama offends the host culture or, at the very least, makes no impact on the heart of the people. *A change message will only be fully effective when it touches the core of a culture, bringing about change from the inside out.* The layers of culture are best described by using a “cultural onion” model, described in the following section.

The Cultural Onion Model

Donald K. Smith’s analogy of the “cultural onion” is particularly appropriate in seeking to understand how drama differs from culture to culture.¹ (All quotes in this section are taken from Smith’s book, *Creating Understanding*, unless otherwise noted.)

The onion is like culture in several ways:

1. It is multi-layered, one layer often inseparable from the next;
2. The visible, outer layer is shaped by what is underneath and invisible;
3. The value and substance of the onion is in the underneath layers, not in the visible skin;
4. The core (center) can re-create the whole;
5. Peeling away the outer layer, then cutting into the layers surrounding the core, can be a tearful, even painful, process.²

¹ Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House. 1992.

² Smith, “Model for Christian Culture Change,” paper presented at the Evangelical Missiological Society’s national meeting in San Jose, 1998, 2.

Just as the onion is made of layers, with the traits of the onion contained in its core, so every culture has a different core, or worldview, with layers created by its experience, authority structures and behavioral norms. The model, then, shows the four main levels of culture: Core, Experience, Authority and Behavior. These layers are as varied as people — Kenya has a vastly different history than India or the United States, and based on its experiences, its authority structures are also different. As you begin to look at the layers of a culture, it becomes obvious that the drama that communicates in that culture is going to look and sound different than that of another with a different makeup. The layers of culture (and thereby of drama), from the deepest to the surface levels, can be explained as follows:



Cultural Onion —

The Core: This is the heart of the culture and it determines the shape of the layers and of the culture itself. (See Figure 1 for a visual interpretation.) “Here lie the basic assumptions about the nature of the world, of God, of man and the nature of reality.” A system of values is created from this core, which is itself formed by the accumulation of personal experience about the world. It is the worldview, with all the attending values, informal beliefs and assumptions (things that you just know to be true and are not up for discussion).

The Experience Level: This level is made up of collective and personal experience, and is close to the core of a culture, shaping it at a deep level (see Figure 2). Analyzing this layer from the area closest to the core and extended out from there we find:

1. *Personal experience*, which validates a person’s worldview, view of authority and place in society. It is only on this level that true individual change will take place, as personal experience can lead to re-assessment of long-held beliefs and values. The very act of observing drama can bring the message of the drama in to the personal experience realm,

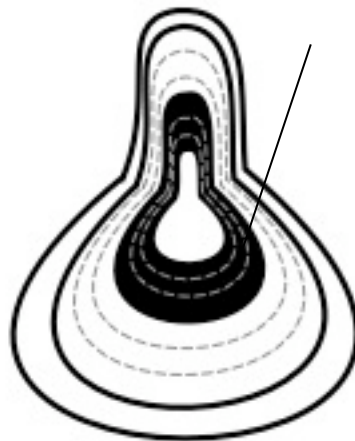


Figure 2: Cultural Onion - Experience Level

opening up the possibility of change.

2. *Environment*, both physical and intellectual, is another strong influence. Weather and geological features vary from place to place, affecting housing styles, clothing, activities (indoor or outdoor), food, and so forth. The emotional, political and philosophical environment also affects cultural values and expression. All these factors are reflected in overall look and construction of a culture's drama, for example where and when it is performed.

3. *History*. The United States counts blacks and whites as its citizens, yet the history of these two races in the U.S. is vastly different, leading to divergent cultural expressions and various antagonisms and viewpoints. A country with a history of oppression of the masses will have a different form of drama, if any, than a democratic culture.

The Authority Level: Various types of authority dictate much of how we behave, forcing conformity to the culture's norm. The different layers of authority, as shown in Figure 3, are:

1. *Economic*: Economic patterning determines other layers of authority, for example, the economics of communism. The way a people makes its living effects things as diverse as relationship patterns and societal priorities. It determines what, if any, drama is presented.

2. *Social*: Patterns and standards enforced by peer, and societal, pressure. The desire to remain a part of one's community makes this a powerful layer and, in drama, affects the nature of the audience and performers.

3. *Ideological*: The formal statement of belief of a people that is referred to in order to control society; for example, the constitution, the Qu'ran, the Bible, the courts. This determines what dramas can be performed acceptably.

The Behavioral Level: This is the visible outer layer of culture (Figure 4) and includes patterns of behavior, objects used, language, food, clothes, and so on. These things are ready indicators of a culture (for example, quick distinction is made between an African dress and a Japanese kimono, and the style of greeting is different in America than India), but they are also the things that can be

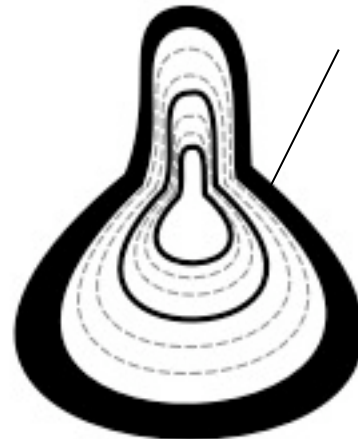


Figure 4: Cultural Onion - Behavior Level



Authority Level

simply and painlessly changed. As Smith points out, “*they do not require fundamental change and they are seldom lasting. Behaviors can be adopted and discarded like clothing—the appropriate set is used as needed and new ones are learned without any significant change in the person [italics mine].*” Dressing like an Indian does not make me one, unless I have experienced more of the deeper layers of Indian culture. This outer layer is the easiest to identify and change in drama when trying to make the performance culturally relevant because it deals with the realm of props, sets, costumes, gestures, speech and so forth. If, however, the changes are limited to this area, long-lasting results will not occur; the other layers of culture must also be taken into account. The behavioral level includes what Smith has called the twelve *signal systems*, which encompass all human communication, and are used differently in each culture, depending on the meaning assigned to the signal. As you read on, you will see the ramification of these signal systems for drama.

The Twelve Signal Systems

In this section we’ll look at the twelve signal systems, a description of each and a discussion of how these apply to drama, and what implications there are for cross-cultural drama.

1. Verbal: This is speech and language. The words we say. A script is spoken, a story is told. Hearing the words of the characters, as well as the variety given by different voices, reinforces everything else observed in the play.

When you go to a different country, the language is different. You can’t understand the people and they can’t understand you. So how can you help them to understand your message? Language is a major obstacle, and so it is easier to bypass the communication problems by presenting your message without words. However, even though speech is a major block in cross-cultural communication it is also a very important part of the heart of a people. There are ways of expressing ideas in another language that can’t be translated effectively. Our first language is called our “mother tongue” probably because of the emotional attachment we have to it - much as a child has to its mother. It encompasses identity, security, expression, cultural pride, understanding and a sense of family. Who I am is tied up with what language I speak.

Obviously you cannot learn a language intimately during a short-term mission let alone present a drama in it! It is indeed easier to try and communicate through other means—which is why mime is such a popular form of drama for cross-cultural missions. But getting rid of the spoken words will not automatically mean clear communication. Speech is only the most obvious form of communicating and most obviously different from people to people. When you realize that this principle applies right down through the signal systems, then you will begin to see the differences between your cultural signal systems and those of your target culture.

2. Written: Language is written down. You are reading my writing right now. What does the written language of another culture tell you? Roman, Greek, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu — these are just a few of the numerous current written

systems in the world.

In drama, we use writing for scripts. It is interesting to note that even here, outside of the actual system of writing used, there is a cultural difference in scripting. The West, and those parts of societies that are focused on education, rely heavily on written scripts. In many other parts of the world, however, oral tradition is very strong and scripts come from known, even inherited, sources and troupes improvise from those sources according to the situation — or improvise from scratch.

Further application— perhaps you could have an outline for a script. Performance is divided between your drama troupe and the audience as a mutual improvisation. This type of drama is used frequently in community development.

3. Numeric: This is the system of numbers, including mathematics. Numbers can be endowed with many meanings, such as the 666 of Revelations, 7 as the perfect number, 13 as unlucky. Numbers can be used to determine the appropriate time for certain actions or events.

You can use numbers in drama if you think about it — the number in the cast, the number of scenes or acts, and so on.

4. Pictorial: “A picture says a thousand words.” What it says sometimes takes some deciphering! In drama, we use this signal system in the form of scenery and backdrops. Much information can be conveyed by the nature of the background—is it a home or a hospital? Is it contemporary or historical, China or America, abstract or realistic? Is it a utilitarian backdrop, used only for hiding characters? Perhaps there is a scene drawn on it that will give the first information as to what the play is about—a claw clutching a bleeding world, a cemetery, a rainbow, a cross. Here again, what is conveyed by the picture is different from culture to culture—Chinese paintings are sparse, showing man as small in comparison with the nature focus; many African paintings show elongated people as the main focus, which shows a different view of man. “American Gothic” is very different in style and content from an Indian painting of “Krishna and Radha.”

5. Artifactual: They are the things that surround you, that you use every day, that you decorate your house with, and that all tell stories about you, your interests, your history. In the theatre they are called properties and costumes. Each of these items consciously and unconsciously communicates a message about a character (e.g., the dress of a prostitute as opposed to the dress of a businesswoman). They can even display some of the character’s values by looking at which objects are given prominence by the characters, or what kind of scenery and pictures are used. How do artifacts differ from your culture to the target culture? Does the prop you are using have a different meaning in another culture than you intend? Check it out.

Costumes fall under this system and they should take their cue from the clothing norms of the target country, though modified for theatrical purposes. In many countries it

is considered indecent for women to show their legs, or shoulders, so shorts and tank tops are off-limits. In India this is evidenced by the dress/pantsuit worn by many women - everything is covered but the feet. Many men going overseas bring their shorts to keep cool in the hot weather - this may seem practical, but only little boys wear shorts! Grown men wouldn't dream of being seen in public wearing them!

How should your costumes look? What is appropriate wear for your characters in the country you are going to? Get information from the web, or from books and magazines. Even TV shows and movies will give you that information. In the theatre forms of the country, too, you will find elements of costume that are always used for a particular type of character, or to communicate a particular theme. Indian therukoothu has a clown character who serves as narrator and interacts with the various other characters. He is easily identified by his loud patchwork or mismatched clothes (but no big red nose!). An elaborate headdress sets apart the noble characters from the lowly characters.

6. Audio: The audio system consists of all sound that is not words. This includes music, intonation, inflexion, pacing, sound effects and even silence. Tone of voice in delivering a line helps reveal mood or underlying meaning. Of course, when words are taken out of a drama, this effect is lost, but other sounds also carry meaning that contributes to the effect of a scene. Music is often used to heighten or interpret a moment (as in the use of violins at the romantic part of a movie), or as the background against which a mime is played out. What music to use is another of those highly-debated questions—American pop music is spreading throughout the globe certainly, but each country also has its own tradition of music and music style that we would do well to pay attention to. There is agreement that, even among the more Westernized youth of other cultures, use of fusion music (taking elements of, for example, Hindi music and Western music and blending them together) will result in greater impact than use of Western music alone. Even though the youth have accepted many Western things, their heart is still Indian and that is reflected in their tastes.

In setting up a mime, we might choose a piece that suits the mime well because of meaning of the original words; however, the original song may not be known to the intended audience. Further, the music style may be unfamiliar to them, or sound strange and quite unlike the music they are used to that is near and dear to their hearts. One drama troupe did a mime about salvation and used as their background music the instrumental version of “Oh Happy Day.” Knowing the words gives great meaning to the mime, but for the audience, there was no connection, just a bouncy, unconnected soundtrack running through the mime. Music is one of those things that can be the most foreign element of a presentation or, if done culturally, be the element that connects most with the audience.

7. Kinesic: Body language, movement and touch are a strong foundation of dramatic communication, and are more observable than some of the above-mentioned systems. In ordinary speech we use body language to express ourselves— adding emphasis, raising a hand in anger, hugging someone in love. Emotions are shown more

in kinesics (movement) than in mere words, and using kinesics to its fullest advantage in a drama communicates emotion even more strongly to the audience.

Mime relies very heavily on kinesics to convey its message. But gestures are not universal. Each culture has different ways of gesturing the same message. Indians shake their heads side-to-side when they mean yes, Americans nod up and down. Africans shake hands coming and going, Indians put their own palms together in a salute. There is a famous anecdote about Richard Nixon who, upon leaving Brazil after a state visit, gave a two-handed “V” for Victory to the gathered crowds. He had just inadvertently made an obscene gesture to the entire country. In many countries, beckoning someone with your finger is extremely rude. It is more polite to call them with the palm facing down. In Kenya it is considered very rude to point with your finger - you should gesture with your chin.

Spend some time observing the body language of your target culture: how do they express things physically that is different than your way? Watch some of their dance - what can you learn from the way they choreograph certain emotions, or in how they interact with other characters on stage? Do they have specific hand gestures that have meaning? Bharatanatyam, the classical dance-drama form of South India, uses many “mudras,” or hand signs, to tell a story, not unlike sign language for the deaf. While the mudras are not understood by most people, the shape of the hands is a part of the cultural consciousness and affects the audience’s perception of beauty, emotion, etc.

8. Optical: Lighting and color are a part of this system. also create moods, interpret scenes and make subtle points; for example, blue light may signal mystery, whereas red light suggests the wilder side of life. Light and color in appropriate places adds to the overall picture and flavor and makes a scene more memorable.

Makeup is an element of drama that incorporates a number of signal systems (such as pictorial) but I will place it here because of the messages given by the colors used. Have you made a study of theatrical makeup in your target country? Is there a history of theatre there? If so, then there is probably also a history of makeup. India has a tremendously rich range of character makeup in its many regional folk theatre styles. Green faces are found on heroes, kings and divinity in Kathakali theatre, whereas gentle, spiritual characters have a yellow tint. Then there are evil characters that also have green faces, but broken up by red marks on the cheek and white knobs on the noses and foreheads to show their evilness.

Color in makeup (and costumes and sets) needs to be given attention so that the wrong message is not given. One missionary recounts an experience with a mime team that came to his area in Mexico. They came to a church to present a mime on the life of Christ. They were dressed in standard mime outfit, all black with white painted faces. The church people looked at them and walked out. They were horrified that this group would bring a representation of the Day of the Dead into their church! In Mexico, the Day of the Dead is celebrated outside the church by painting faces white and portraying the spirits. By not understanding the cultural nuances of makeup and color the well-

intentioned mime team greatly offended the people they were trying to serve.

White is the color of purity, weddings, holiness in the United States and Europe. But the color for this in China is red! Black is a basic theatrical color in the U.S. (and particularly with mime teams), but it is a color traditionally to be avoided in India unless in mourning. The color worn by holy men in India is saffron. In this last case, it is interesting to note that some artists in India have depicted Christ in saffron robes with mixed reactions—some accept it, but others (both Christian and Hindu) find that a historical portrayal of Christ is proper because of the strong tradition of showing Christ this way. An attempt to contextualize Christ's costume is not always viewed favorably. Know the history of your target culture.

9. Tactile: This is similar to kinesics but is limited to the area of touch. What does touch say about the culture? How is the use of touch different? Many times touch between men and women is taboo. To see a man and woman walking down the street hand in hand, or arms around each other, can be quite scandalous. Two men walking hand in hand also triggers different responses—in Africa, it is a sign of friendship, but in America it is a sign that they are gay. What completely opposite messages are conveyed!

The best way to show love and respect in India is to bend over and touch someone's feet, or prostrate yourself (a combination of kinesic and tactile). Among the Maasai of Kenya, younger women offer the tops of their heads to the elders for blessing. To kneel before someone for a hand of blessing is a great sign of respect.

10. Spatial: The use of space creates subtle messages and visualizes undercurrents of feeling. In Western culture a great distance indicates coldness, whereas extreme closeness is interpreted as aggressiveness. Space can also be used to show power. Ever noticed how the CEO of a corporation has a huge office, with lots of floor space, spaciouly arranged furniture, big windows, whereas an entry-level secretary has a small cubicle filled up by her desk? You can tell who's who just by their office space. Paying attention to the use of space helps give further clarification to the message you are trying to portray.

Use of levels, integral to dramatic visualization, is also use of space. Higher levels on stage, or of characters in relation to each other, can indicate many things— heaven, strength, superiority, whereas lower levels by contrast are often used to indicate hell, weakness, inferiority.

11. Temporal: How is time viewed? Westerners going to an African country often complain about how slow everything is and how long things take. If they are invited to dinner at 6 pm, dinner won't be ready until 7:30! This is not a sign of disorganization, rather, it shows a culture that is event-oriented. A church service may get going around 10 am and last until 4 pm, with people coming and going at will. The important thing is being at the event at some time, not planning your day by the second-hand of your watch. Westerners are often viewed as pushy because of this tendency - they are rude to show up right at 6 for a dinner invitation! Don't they know that

important guests don't arrive until later?

Time also comes to play in the length of a drama. Many oral cultures are used to dramas that last all night, or even all night, every night for 7 days! An interesting comment was given by an audience member after watching a 3-minute mime: "Good drama, but it was too short!" A time-oriented person values the brevity as an efficient use of time, getting to the "punchline" quickly, but other audiences will feel cheated of their drama experience!

12. Olfactory: This is the sense of smell and taste - a very powerful evocative signal system, one that we are least aware of and yet which we believe most in. You can't argue with what my nose says! If you tell me that there is no popcorn in the house but I smell that fragrant, hot, buttery smell, I will know that you are not telling the truth!

Smell is used a great deal in Indian folk theatre - usually in the form of incense or offerings to the gods. But the olfactory is also used a great deal in the U.S. in the form of dinner theatre. This is a creative combination of taste and smell with theatre - good food and good smells help create a good feeling towards the drama presentation. The film industry knows this as well, which is why they boost the fragrant popcorn smell at the cinema! Besides selling more popcorn, who doesn't have a warm feeling when thinking of popcorn and movies?

One final element that can't be fully categorized under any one signal system is that of emotions. The current school of Western acting (internal reality, psychological realism) is not always the best way to go. American acting often seems too flat to Indians. Emotions need to be played out where all can see and participate in them, say the Indians! Western internalization is just not satisfying to them. On the other hand, Indian acting often seems overly melodramatic to Western sensibilities. Do what will communicate to your audience.

The Creative Process and Audience Response

Creating a culturally relevant drama piece in a Christian context requires the creator to have an understanding of the culture, an understanding of the audience and an understanding of the Bible. From this base of understanding, script content can be formed. Once content has been determined, the drama can be created and performed. The performance is expressed through a variety of signal systems, each of which communicates a part of the drama's intent. The response of the audience to the drama is a result of this process of analysis and presentation, as well as additional factors that affect response, such as the context of the performance, audience needs, existing beliefs and values (as conditioned by the culture), familiarity with the art form and perception of the players.

In order to discover and understand the indigenous drama of a culture, it is necessary to examine the environment, history, authority structures and behavioral structures of the culture; the drama of the culture can be analyzed along those categories,

since each category (or layer) determines the nature of the drama. For example, if the history of the culture is one of oppression, the drama will likely avoid political statements or people-empowering features, focusing instead on lifting up the state or on entertainment (escapism).

The most obvious means of analyzing drama, which can also be used for contextualizing drama from other cultures, is to analyze how the signal systems are used (e.g., use of costume, gesture, music, etc.). Observing other patterns of behavior, such as greeting rituals, will help further in the analysis process. As the signal systems are learned, patterns begin to emerge that help the observer begin functioning more as an insider. How a given culture behaves, the way people interact, and the way relationship, respect, and conflict are expressed is all a part of how a culture conducts itself and needs to be reflected in the drama. Individual signals, such as dress and language, are codes that assign status and relationship. Signal systems combine into patterns that express interaction between people (a mental and emotional understanding, a way of expressing yourself). It is not enough, in drama, to use only the appropriate individual signal systems; the patterns must be understood and presented, as seen in the whole outlook of the actors—their expectations of other characters (as written in the script), looks, how they express themselves in verbal phrasing of ideas, and how they interact with each other (the whole interplay of characters both physically, verbally and attitudinally). These add up to a pattern and method of acting, whether realistic, absurdist, or expressive, that shapes the form of the drama.

The steps can be summarized by the questions below.

Questions for Ethnodramatology Analysis

1. What is the environment of the culture and how does it affect the performance and staging of drama?
2. What is the history of the culture? What is the history of drama in the culture?
How do they correspond?
3. What is the prevailing economic structure of the culture? How do economics affect life in the culture? How do they affect the drama (what can be performed and why, who can attend, who can perform, etc.)?
4. What is the social structure of the culture? How does society affect drama? (Who can perform, who can attend, what is the role of the audience, etc.?)
5. What is the culture's ideology? How does this affect what drama can be performed?
6. How are the signal systems manifested in this culture? How are they manifested in drama performance?
7. What are the behavior patterns of the culture? How are these reflected in the drama?
8. Are there different categories of drama in the culture? What are their functions and

place in the culture?

What Story Do You Tell?

It seems simple - just present Jesus and the gift of salvation and people will respond. Not so. People respond when you touch on their personal experiences, and those are as varied as the individual. Stories come from a shared history and address common current situations. Americans think that an individual decision for Christ is what's important - but in many community-oriented cultures it's not that simple. What will the family say? What will the society think? What about friends? Maybe they will be killed if they change religions, or ostracized from the family and community. Perhaps the message you are presenting is not the message that they need to hear: "salvation" is an isolated term unless it is applied to felt needs. In Kenya the need is to survive economically and to overcome rampant corruption. In a country that claims to be over 80% Christian, corruption is one of the highest in the world. Perhaps the message needs to be how Christ is lived out in all aspects of life - how He overcomes, and helps us overcome, corruption.

What you intend to say with your drama may not be the same message that is heard by the audience, because their point of reference is different from yours. Their assumptions are different. They may get close in their interpretation but not as close as you'd like! For instance, an Indian group watched an evangelistic mime being performed. They enjoyed the presentation, although some were amused by the "missionary play." The mime presented a young man searching after wealth and happiness. He offers himself to Christ, but the Devil tempts him away by promising everything he wants if he'll take the drugs and alcohol he is offering. Christ rescues the boy each time until, in the end, the boy chooses Christ over the Devil. To Christian audiences, this seems like a clear picture of salvation from sin. The Indian audience, however, did not quite get that message. They instead saw it as a play about substance abuse, social evils, the struggle between good and evil (certainly), with the final message being "stick with God and do good." The message they received was good, and close to the intent, but their point of reference on salvation was different and so the interpretation was not complete.

Understand the context because context informs content. There was a woman, a cleaning lady, who was sexually harrassed by her supervisor. Both were married and their families were friends, yet the supervisor (who, incidentally, is a clergyman and preaches regularly) threatened her job if she did not give in to him. What should she do? She did not want to threaten the relationship between the families or incur the wrath of her husband, who would view the advances as her fault. Cultural values determine different courses of action and view the problem in different ways. For Americans, the cardinal sin has been committed - sexual impropriety - and should be dealt with. For the African woman, however, the greater sin was the threat to the relationship. She chose avoiding the man, ignoring, even rebuking in private, before threatening him with the ultimate relationship problem - she would tell his wife unless he gave up his pursuit, and the relationship between the families would also be broken. It worked.

The point is, if you were to present a drama on this issue, what approach would you take? Sexual immorality is the great sin? Or jeopardising a relationship is the great sin? Same situation, two different interpretations. Both approaches may be understood, but in the African context, the second approach will strike closer to the heart and be more relevant to them. So try looking at the situations for the felt need - not what you think is needed.

Where and when are you performing? Is it an appropriate time and place for religious dialogue? In Indian villages, most religious dramas are done during the time of harvest or during the many festivals. But that may not necessarily be the best time and place to introduce an opposing religion; it could be accepted magnanimously, but it could also cause resentment at the perceived threat to their ingrained beliefs and traditions. On the other hand, that is the time that an agricultural-oriented society has the free time to watch an “entertainment.”

What is the makeup of your audience? Are they young “Generation Xers?” The young people of the world are moving increasingly towards Western ways and are very open to Western styles of music, dance and drama. Eventually, however, it is most likely that they will return, in part at least, to their cultural roots. Even in their Westernization, they still have strong ties to their traditional culture and it would be good to be aware of what that culture looks like and how it can flavor your presentations. Japanese pop bands have a definite Japanese look - and it looks different than an American pop band! This shows not only in outward style and choreography, but in the values and content presented.

Are you performing in a city or a village? The rural cultures are much more strongly tied to their historic roots and culture and will be less likely to truly understand and appreciate a foreign form of theatre - it might cause interest and curiosity, but probably won't truly communicate to the heart.

There are many dynamics that can affect the receptivity of the audience: one of the strongest factors in India is caste. Different castes have different forms of traditional theatre. The higher castes in Tamil Nadu claim Bharatanatyam, a classical dance-drama form, as their art form and appreciate it greatly. The Dalits (Untouchables), however, have received poor treatment, oppression, from those castes and therefore tend to associate Bharatanatyam with them and do not view it as favorably. On the other hand, the art form of the rural areas, therukoothu, is extremely popular outside the city and has a long history. The upper castes of the city, however, view it with contempt as “not real theatre.” Some of these differing viewpoints may be overcome by an art form outside the system - such as a foreign visiting mime team, but it is good to be aware that there is no universal drama form that speaks to hearts.

Differences in Performance Patterns and Systems

As discussed earlier, drama will look and behave differently in different cultures because of the differing worldviews. This discussion continues with a look at some of the differences that exist between the performance systems (or how drama is done) of the United States, Kenya and India.

Moving outside of the Western-style theatre brings us closer to the indigenous drama forms of each country and more clearly shows the differences that exist. The summary table above shows the differences side by side, but many are worth noting again. A look at the role of speech in drama yields interesting results. In the United States, plays are heavily speech-oriented, with the language being highly functional—words should not be wasted but stay to the point. This is in contrast to both Kenya and India where rich imagery, poetry and expression are valued. In Kenya, elocution and expressive delivery is important. In both the latter countries, although English is understood, the vernacular languages are what truly express the heart and culture of the people. In this sense, it is comparable to the difference between performing Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams in the United States. Another major difference is the aspect of compartmentalization in the United States, where drama is considered the spoken word, and music and dance are separate disciplines. In traditional Kenyan and Indian theatres (and even in many modern productions), this compartmentalization does not exist and dance, music and speech intermingle freely.

The nature of script usage, structure and development also differs markedly. The West relies heavily on a written script, usually developed by one person who holds the rights to publication and performance of that script, meaning that it cannot be altered or performed without his permission. The traditional theatre forms of Kenya and India share a basic improvisational approach to the “script”—maintaining a basic story structure, yet having freedom to change and embellish according to the needs of the audience and the mood of the actor. In Kenya, the group creates the script, through improvisation, and there is complete flexibility in its creation and performance. There are no copyright laws and everything is community property. Indian scripts are a bit more established, having been passed down (in basic story structure) through generations of performers (sometimes in written form, sometimes in oral form); however, each performance has the ability to flex according to the audience’s needs, the prevailing political and environmental climate and the actor’s whim.

The script structure also varies. Western theatre follows Aristotle’s Poetics that has conflict as its base, and proceeds in a logical fashion (a-b-c) from start to finish, wrapping up the loose ends after a sufficient climax and resolution to the conflict. Indian theatre is more episodic, with no rigid structure to adhere to. Repetition is used to ensure understanding on the part of the audience, and the overall goal is *rasa*, the induction of a pleasurable state of mind in the viewer. Kenyan theatre is often more didactic, and uses topic association to create a story, rather than logical progression. The story should be examined fully and enjoyed by all, leading to the participatory nature of Kenyan drama.

This ties in with the view of time, leading Kenyan and Indian performances to last for hours, even all night, without intermissions or breaks. Songs and dances that link the episodes together (not necessarily thematic) give variety. By comparison, Western theatre is limited to 2 hours, with an intermission, and each act is broken up into scenes that build on each other.

In technical aspects (pictures/backdrops, costumes, sets, props, lights), U.S. theatre works for complete control of the environment, in order to create a new reality for the play and the audience. Because of this, the theatre is technologically oriented and, combined with the high level of income, much attention is given to the acquisition and use of lighting and sound equipment, costumes (which are an important element for giving information about the play, its settings and characters), sets and props. Care is taken to ensure that a realistic environment is created even to the extent of hiding microphones and making them blend into the background. Kenya, on the other hand, has limited funds for technology, and takes a more practical, minimalistic approach to the technical side of theatre. There is a greater use of symbolism and a sense of mystery and the supernatural in its plays, and the aspect of community comes through in such things as costuming, where uniforms for groups are used. India is similar to Kenya in its use of symbolism imagery, but has more access to technology because of a better economic situation. Nonetheless, in folk theatre, the emphasis is not on technology, but on the performance. Desire for beauty is seen in the elaborate and colorful costumes used, and the makeup proscriptions show the hierarchical nature of society. Theatres that do use technology take a more functional approach, using the same box sets repeatedly, changing the paint to indicate a different scene, or placing microphones downstage and arranging actors around them in order for the dialogue to be heard.

Movement and music are another important area of difference. In both Kenya and India, dance and music are integral parts of the theatre event (unlike the compartmentalization of Western theatre as mentioned above). There is a shared complexity of rhythm in music, even though the actual musical notes differ markedly. Western music relies on a chordal structure and intricate harmonies, whereas Kenyan music has one melody line and relies on choral response and rhythm for its intricacies. Indian music has a complex scale structure and also relies on rhythms, beats and scales for its interest. The use of music also varies. In the United States, music is generally used to enhance the environmental concept; when it is at the forefront, as in musicals, it is for the purpose of furthering the action and character development. Music in Kenyan drama allows the audience to participate in a communal celebration, and is for the purpose of commentary, reflection and celebration. Indian music is integral in the performance for explanation, narration and commentary.

Indian stage movement is highly codified, in contrast to Kenyan and U.S. drama, because of the dictates of the Natyasastra and tradition. Kenyan drama, particularly its dance elements, is also codified in terms of the way different parts of the body move to different rhythms, and how the whole dance is choreographed. In non-dance aspects of the dramas codification is not as noticeable; however, the United States works for naturalism in movement, whereas Kenya and India enjoy much broader, external

gestures. In the use of space, uncluttered stages and small casts (even solo performers) all help to express Western ideals of individualism. Kenyan drama brings the aspect of community to the fore by filling the stage with people, each with their communal task, and India gives attention to aesthetic appeal by careful use of space by even large casts.

Understanding the rules governing things like touch and dress codes is important because of the moral implications given by the culture to such matters. For example, in the United States, touch between men and women is acceptable, provided that one does not have a position of authority over the other, and shorts on women are normal. In India, touch is frequently taboo and used to show respect for authority. In Kenya, women in shorts are scandalous.

Acting style in Kenyan and Indian contemporary theatre shares the common trait of being “overdone” in line delivery and emoting in order to communicate with the audience. By contrast, acting in the United States is understated and internal, with a focus on appearing as natural as possible. Training in the United States and India is available on a formal basis, through schools and apprenticeships. The learning process in Kenya is much more informal, happening through experience and improvisation. In the United States, theatre can be learned in between other activities, and professionalism is not required. Most attention is given to developing the inner life and thought process of a character. This is a contrast to traditional Indian training, which entails gaining strict control over the actor’s body and developing a controlled, outwardly pleasing performance. The Kenyan focus is on the live event, in the company of the group, which experiences the performance together.

Many of the differences come from an underlying cultural difference. These cultural underpinnings become evident after an examination of the layers of each culture’s drama and are responsible for the form that each layer takes. The underpinning of drama in the United States is that of secular humanism, which proclaims independence from God and believes in the ability to shape one’s own future.³ This entails personal examination, independence from group standards, and the right of the individual to be heard and respected. This is seen in drama in the attitude that the environment can be controlled with technology (once spiritual and secular are separated, then the universe can be controlled and subdued by mechanistic means), and the focus on realistic acting (again, separated from any sense of the supernatural). Once man becomes an unattached individual, responsible for his own well being, then everything must be explainable—hence the need to determine the psychological workings of a character and the desire to make him seem like an ordinary person on the street. The emphasis on psychological realism in acting is also an outcome of an individualistic, “me centered” society.

³ This statement applies to the mainstream, Anglo, live theatre. African-American theatre and Hispanic theatre certainly have spiritual, often Christian, influences at their root but they are not in the mainstream. Movies also have a very strong spiritual underpinning—New Age or Buddhist philosophies—but this product is focusing on live theatre, not the movie industry and its impact.

Throughout Kenyan theatre can be seen the aspect of community. The attention given to group activities, group directing and creation of performances, performance in the midst of the people, and surrounding actors with supportive groups, all shows a society that values community and comes together to learn, celebrate and reflect.

Indian theatre, particularly in contrast with Western theatre, has a religious underpinning throughout. The *puja* ritual, done before and after every performance, is an outward indication of the value placed on spirituality through performance, the placement of performances in the vicinity of temples, the reliance on scriptural epic myths for content (both in basic story and to interpret modern life) and the ascribing of the origin of drama to Brahma all shows that the drama is intended as an affirmation of the beliefs of the people and as an expression of their devotion. The numerous rules that govern individual aspects of dramatic expression, such as character makeup and gestures, also show a society that is governed by hierarchy and rules (as could be expected in a society steeped in the caste system).

Recommended Forms of Drama

The important aspect of communicating through drama lies more with appropriate content than form. A blended form could be well received in urban and peri-urban areas, as it would combine elements from their heritage and their present. Knowing those forms, and incorporating them successfully, is the challenge.

In the United States, the standard format for drama used in churches today is based on the TV sitcom—short scenarios emphasizing one point, or showing a slice of life familiar to the audience. Five- to ten-minute scenes work well for this generation raised on TV. By contrast, however, MTV, TV commercials and Hollywood movies, with their emphasis on fast-paced, high-energy scenes, have had a strong influence on today's generation (Generation X, or postmoderns). Various researchers have documented that the average image on the screen lasts no more than three seconds, often less, and storylines and images often progress randomly, with no apparent logical connection. This correlates to the postmodern mentality, which rejects the rationalism of its forebears, and has a decreased attention span for logical lecture or presentation. The type of drama preferred by this generation is not so much sitcom-style as they are sketch comedies that are put together in a more random fashion, rather like commercials. This is a somewhat updated version of Theatre of the Absurd—the disjointed plot lines and action reflecting the sense of confusion and rejection of order (i.e., rationalism) in today's United States.

A listing of types and usages of drama can be found at the end of this article. This list can be used to gain new ideas for drama in communication, particularly in teaching situations. Dramatic Scripture reading, sketches, mime, storytelling, tableau and video are some effective tools to utilize in a worship service.

Western-style theatre is a fairly universal convention now, particularly in urban areas around the world, but response to such plays varies in terms of audience expectation of involvement. Regardless of the degree of expression and style, most

audiences respond to acting that truthfully represents the people. It is universal for actors to want to touch the emotions of their audience, and this is done by truthful representation of behavioral codes. Comedy is enjoyed everywhere, particularly as it exposes inter-personal conflicts and foibles, although the actual expression of humor, language and situation will vary with the culture. All cultures enjoy a good story and, given that drama utilizes so many signal systems, the same dramatic story can be enjoyed in many cultures, to different degrees, because of the ability to interpret some signal systems of other cultures relatively easily and deduce meaning of other signals based on the context. However, what constitutes a good story is also culturally determined.

It is possible to say that there are universals in drama, to the extent that a simple drama can transmit information and enjoyment, but attention to the differences in drama style, content and context brought about by culture is even more important in creating a drama piece that arises from and speaks to the heart of a people. The following section gives brief recommendations for forms of drama that have particular merit for Christian communicators.

Plays written in the *lingua franca* out of the local worldview, whether the United States, Kenya or India, are best able to resonate with contemporary audiences and show them a reflection of themselves while entertaining. It is plays in the vernacular, however, that are best able to address the issues truly relevant to the people in an aesthetic and compelling manner. (By vernacular, I mean individual tribal languages. See my doctoral dissertation for a full description of this category, and others, in Kenya and India.) This theatre category is doing the most exciting work in fusing contemporary realities with traditional, indigenous forms and is the one that merits most attention from Christian artists seeking to blend the two worlds into an artistic heart language for today's urban audiences.

Vernacular Theatre

Vernacular theatre is a lively blend of styles, with the common denominator being the use of the local heart language for performance.

In Kenya, there is a form called “Sigana”—an interactive participatory storytelling form, which has been used in performance, research and research dissemination. It enhances community-learning experiences and forms the basis of the IPCET methodology [Interactive Participatory Community Educational Theatre]. *Sigana* seamlessly weaves together acting, narration, music and other expressive techniques, in the form of traditional call and response, chants, role-play, banter and communal dilemma resolution. Sigana performances take off from the traditional narrative form. But because it is performed in a more “contrived” environment, it also incorporates more entertaining forms like song, dance and music. These are organically woven into the shows.⁴

⁴ Oby Obyerodhyambo, “Sigana: Re-engaging Contemporary Cultural Reality.” <http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls3_oby.htm>, 5-6.

Active participation of the audience is encouraged, as the line between performers and audience is eradicated. This informs the “communal dilemma resolution” that is central to its teaching. Unlike traditional storytelling, Sigana works in a multicultural setting, mixing music and movements from traditional and contemporary sources and challenging contemporary realities (rather than dwelling only on past accepted community norms and values). An example cited by Obyerodhyambo illustrates how Sigana was used with rural peasants to discuss the philosophy and process of budgeting in the Government of Kenya.

In fictional roles, the participants assessed the current process of budgeting and suggested more democratic, equitable and people-centered ways of arriving at a national budget. ...Many of the parliamentarians were shocked that *wananchi* were able to articulate such critiques to the existing budget-making system. And, even worse (for the parliamentarians, that is), rural peasants were able to understand the principles upon which an equitable budget could be built.⁵

This is an exciting form that warrants further research as an instrument for presenting messages in a manner relevant to Kenyan culture, as it combines traditional performance arts, participatory theatre and contemporary stage awareness.

An increasing number of vernacular plays are occurring in Kenya. Performances take place in hotels and bars. According to the reports, the plays are divided between political satire and entertainment (primarily around sexual themes). However, some director/writers claim that their plays are social commentaries, to educate families and middle-aged people who can “interpret the wise sayings and proverbs accompanying them.”⁶ The combination of theatre in the language of the people and performance in the gathering places of the people (hotels, bars and restaurants) is a potent formula for theatre growth. One writer said, “African theatre cannot be divorced from everyday life. This is why we enact it in social places where people are already gathered.”⁷ Vernacular theatre has the potential of capturing the imagination and appreciation of the audience, and argues for similar endeavors in the Christian community (in terms of language).

The African-oriented repertory theatre companies are committed to developing an increased sense of cultural worth in their actors and audience by presenting plays that focus on Kenyan life using Kenyan styles and language. The drama style incorporates dance (traditional and contemporary interpretive), drumming, singing, costume, language

⁵ Obyerodhyambo, 7.

⁶ Ogova Ondego, “Kikuyu Theatre Explosion,” Artmatters <<http://www.artmatters.netfirms.com/kikuyu%20theatre.htm>>, 5.

⁷ Ibid, 3.

(vernacular and Nairobi slang - including Sheng) and setting.⁸ Catalyst Africa Productions has produced a Christmas show two years running, titled *A King Is Born* (Kenyan Nativity I and II). It has been immensely popular with middle-class family audiences. It brings together popular faces and comedy acts, such as TV game show presenters, comedy trios, DJs, radio announcers and leading actors in a loosely-woven retelling of the Christmas story, set in modern-day Dandora (a Kenyan housing estate). A jazz vocal group provided Christmas music between scenes, while a popular radio personality narrated the event and encouraged audience participation. While the acting style was more along the lines of psychological realism, the mix of music, interaction and story showed a more Kenyan structure, and gives a model on which to base a contemporary fusion theatre that speaks to today's urban audience.

In India, Parallel Tamil theatre is the vernacular theatre form that is worth exploring. Although attendance at performances is small, it nonetheless demonstrates the "Third Theatre" of India, a theatre that is developing a fusion of east and West, contemporary and folk, for a truly Indian contemporary expression, and one that Christians can utilize in creating plays with their own voice.

Classical and Folk Forms

In Africa, traditional storytelling is of the kind where the old men and women tell traditional stories to their children and grandchildren around the fire, or at night when work is over. Despite predictions of its demise, this type of drama still continues, particularly in the rural areas and western Kenya. Ezekiel Alembi, of Kenyatta University, puts traditional performances in two sections: Narrative (such as storytelling, serving didactic and entertainment purposes), and Ritual (done during religious ceremonies such as circumcision and burials).

The traditional drama styles are the base of many of the newest vernacular dramas in Kenya, and certainly form a strong part of Kenyan's cultural heritage. They warrant further research and exposure.

Classical and Folk theatre forms in India serve as an affirmation of long-established beliefs, but are considered the best means of reaching the masses (particularly more rural-oriented groups) when a new message needs to be given. A great deal of experimentation has been carried out with these forms, particularly by development and health organizations. In India, several Christian groups have utilized classical dance forms, such as Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi, to tell a gospel story. While the attempts met with animosity from the church, the general populace responded positively, with many turning to Christ, including the dancers themselves.

⁸ It is interesting to note that African theatre was multi-media long before contemporary Western theatre began to explore the use of electronic multi-media in its dramatic performances.

One Christian leader stated that the folk arts have been responsible for spreading and ingraining Hinduism into the populace, but that there is openness to spreading the gospel of Christ the same way. It is because of this that I recommend further experimentation into the use of the forms of Classical and Folk theatre for the propagation of the Christian gospel.

The folk arts are a natural fit for propaganda messages because of the function that they have performed for generations of acting as vehicles of social values and religious faiths. Social welfare programs such as AIDS awareness, family planning, election propaganda, and health work have all utilized folk forms to get their message across to the people with great success.

It is not a stretch to see how the people can use the Christian message in place of development messages in folk forms that are adaptable to many kinds of messages and are accepted. Various Christian leaders have demonstrated that the general populace readily accepts Christian messages given in local folk and classical forms.

Theatre for Development

Theatre for Development is a category that arose in Africa, in the attempt by aid organizations to improve the physical lot of villagers, and introduce new farming, hygiene and other techniques.

In Kenya, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other social activist groups perform Development dramas to change habits in health care, gender sensitization, AIDS awareness, human rights and conflict resolution. The technique of Participatory Educational Theatre (also known as Forum theatre) has been widely used. (See the description above for more details on how this form works.) This technique takes performance traditions and language from the target community and integrates them into a performance meant to address an issue affecting that audience. High audience involvement and talkback is vital to this form of theatre. The audience is involved either as actors, along with the troupe (for example, one performance placed audience members as counselors to HIV victims, played by the troupe, allowing for personal involvement with the stories), or as selectors of scenes they wish to see, or as respondents, when the actors stop a scene and ask for feedback. Different participatory techniques are used with the goal of getting the community to reflect on the scenes and stories, and discuss the issues that touch them.

I would highly recommend drama in this general vein to be explored within the church. True communication takes place when a cycle of transmission and feedback has occurred; unless the person transmitting the information hears feedback from the receivers of the message he will not know whether or not his message is fully understood, and if the message is not fully understood, it cannot be properly acted upon. This is a limitation of the traditional sermon format in church teaching. There are many good preachers who speak to the needs of their listeners, but, since the sermon takes place in a

context of one-way communication, there is no opportunity for the listeners to give feedback to the preacher, or for the preacher to determine how the audience has received his message. The goal of sermons, and all teaching in the church, is (or should be!) to communicate the message of the Bible in such a way that people will understand and move to act upon what they have learned. This is where role-play and participatory theatre can have a powerful effect.

Participatory theatre is created by and for the people, with catalysts helping in the formation of the play, setting up parameters, and performing for an audience. Theatre-for-conscientisation goes further, with the entire group producing and performing the play, with no spectators. The plays are improvised throughout. Much of this type of drama work is based on the educative work of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, who took Freire's ideas and introduced the element of drama.

Boal has developed a method in two parts, both of which are designed to transform spectators into actors. The two stages are known as *simultaneous dramaturgy* and *forum theatre*. In simultaneous dramaturgy, catalysts perform a short scene suggested by a local person, halt the action at a crisis point, and ask the audience to offer solutions. The actors become like puppets, and perform the actions strictly on the spectators orders. The 'best' solution is arrived at by trial, error, discussion, then audience consensus. ...

In forum theatre actors and spectators converge. The participants tell a story with some social problem, then improvise, rehearse, and present it to the rest of the group as a skit. The audience members are asked if they agree with the solution. Any spectator is invited to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems most appropriate to him or her. He or she must not make speeches, but must act to evoke responses from the others on the performance space.⁹

Both forms of theatre have obvious implications for usage in Christian communication. People can no longer be just spectators to a sermon; they have lost their safe seats and are brought into the struggle of working out the teachings of the Bible in their everyday lives. The repercussions for Christian growth are exciting.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a model for ethnodramatology — areas of culture to analyze in order to discover the nature of that culture's drama. In so doing, it becomes possible to more effectively contextualize dramas that are being brought across cultures, and also to develop effective dramas from within the culture. In this latter point, direction was given in the final section as to forms that have particular potential for reaching the heart of the people. It is in these areas that we should focus our efforts to communicate dramatically and artistically the greatest story of all time — the redemptive story that God has acted out in the constrains of mankind's worldview.

⁹ Mda, 66.

TYPES AND USAGES OF DRAMA

List compiled by Dr. Julisa Rowe, ACT

TYPES OF DRAMA:

1. Dramatic Scripture Reading (e.g. Acts 19, bringing the riots to life).
2. Tableau — Living Slides/Pictures
Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" has often been done this way, i.e., as tableau with individual characters coming to life to speak their thoughts. Try creating human tableaux out of Mark 9:31-37.
3. Readers Theatre:
Oral interpretation of literature by readers for an audience. A script or story read in a way that substitutes for acting it out.
Can either:
a) act with script in hand
b) sit and read
c) use simple choreography/movement, including using the folders as script holder or props, as in "The Three Trees"
The narration establishes the scenes, mood, exposition. Placement of focus in readers theatre is also important, as it audience and readers focus on an "other" place.
4. Speech Choir:
Group spoken interpretation of stories, poems or Scripture.
5. Other Readings:
a) Antiphonal
b) Line-around
c) Cumulative/Fugue reading (e.g. Psalm 150)
d) Solo & Chorus (e.g. Ps. 136)
e) Unison (e.g. Ps. 133)
6. Skits/sketches
7. One-act plays
8. Full-length plays
9. Oral narratives/Storytelling
10. Monologues.

11. Puppets:
socks, muppets, marionettes, paper, Bunraku, shadow, cutouts, etc.
12. Creative Movement:
dance, motion, sign language
13. Shadow Plays
14. Video
15. Tape-recorder plays/Radio drama
16. Slide Shows
17. Combination tape/slide shows
18. Scroll painting narrative:
singing, telling or acting out a story that is portrayed on a painted scroll.
19. Street theatre:
high energy, short pieces done in public places
20. Pantomime:
acting without words but using everyday, exaggerated gestures
21. Classic Mime
22. Mime to Music/Human Music Videos
23. Clowning
24. Sounds, Adding Sound Effects (e.g. 1 Kings 1:39-40)
25. Rhythm instruments:
using instruments to create background effects, e.g. blocks of wood rubbing together as the Israelites cross the desert.
26. Masks:
puzzle piece masks, paper plates, paper bags, carnival masks, African masks, full head or body masks
27. Pageants (such as the standard Christmas and Easter pageants)
28. Musical Productions
29. Role Play:

Like community development dramas to communicate a point, getting the audience to act out what they would do, use it as a teaching opportunity.

30. Audience participation:
Where some preplanning is done for costuming, set, environment or setup, but the audience acts on the spot, either chosen by the director, or group, or walking through a scene together (as in a Walk-Through Holy Week).
31. Poetry recitation
32. Chronological Bible Storying
33. Playback Theatre (someone tells a story and the actors play it back for them)
34. Enacted Prayer
35. Participatory Theatre
 - a. Forum Theatre
 - b. Role Play: to communicate a point, getting the audience to act out what they would do and use it as a teaching opportunity. (Sociodrama)
 - c. Image Theatre
 - d. Newspaper

USAGES OF DRAMA:

1. Sermon set-up sketches and illustrations
2. Illustrating different aspects of the worship service:
prayer, baptism, offering, communion, invocation, Advent, Lent
3. As the sermon
5. Special events—Easter, Christmas, Valentine's, concerts, summer stock, for fun
6. Dinner theatre
7. Outside groups as special number
8. Illustrations for fellowship groups, Sunday School, Bible studies, etc.
9. Announcements
10. Outreach to prisons, schools, missions
11. Dramatic worship services:

an integrated service that uses drama and music to lead people in worship.