

Viewing African Cinema

The films in the Library of African Cinema are often beautiful, sometimes humorous and always engaging. But to get the most out of them, you must look at them in a new way. The following six viewing tips can help you appreciate what is distinctly African in their point of view.

1. Many African films deliberately explore a different style from European and Hollywood films. Scenes unfold at a measured pace, with the deliberation of storytelling or folktales.

2. Imagine what these stories would look like if they had been directed by Spike Lee or David Lynch starring Eddie Murphy, Denzel Washington and Whoopi Goldberg. How would they be different? What would you be missing?

3. A recurrent theme in many of these films is the tension between self-assertion and group cohesion. Traditional agrarian societies need to preserve social harmony and continuity sometimes at the expense of the individual initiative and innovation so prized in industrialized economies. Notice how many of the characters in these films are torn between "tradition" and "modernity."

4. African films focus on social problems, personal concerns and cultural issues you would never see in a Hollywood film or a nightly newscast. How are Africans portrayed differently in Africa? How have these films changed your mental image of Africa and Africans?

5. Americans and Europeans often have only a small role to play in African produced films. Do you have trouble identifying with the problems and aspirations of African characters? What is local and indigenous to these cultures and what has resonance with our own?

6. Look in these films for linkages between African American and African cultures, for example storytelling, family structure and music. What also strikes you as notable differences between the two?

More discussion on these points are located on the California Newsreel web site at

<http://www.newsreel.org/>



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Library of African Cinema

Africa Dreaming.....Video 5860
 Afrique, Je Te Plumerai
 (Africa, I Will Fleece You) ...Video 5143
 Aime Cesaire: Une Voix Pour L'Histoire
Video 5561
 L'ile Veilleuse (The Vigilant Island)
pt. 1
 Au Rendez-Vous de la Conquete
 (Where the Edges of Conquest Meet)
pt. 2
 La Force de Regarder Demain
 (The Strength to Face Tomorrow)
pt. 3



Bouillon D'Awara, Le (Awara Soup)
 Video 5567
 Ca Twiste A Poponguine Video 5141
 Clando = Clandestine Video 5859
 Divine Carcasse Video 7376
 Femmes Aux Yeux Ouverts (Women
 with Open Eyes).....Video 4876



Finzan (Dance for the Heroes Flame
Video 4558
 FlameVideo 5858
 Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask
Video 5566
 Guimba the TryantVideo 5564
 Hyenas.....Video 4875
 Keita (The Heritage of the Griot)
Video 5144
 La Vie Est Belle.....Video 4561
 Le Grand Blanc de Lambarene (The Great
 White Man of LambareneVideo 5563
 Lumumba: la Mort du Prophete
Video 7372
 AmapantsulaVideo 4879
 Quartier MozartVideo 4559
 Rostov-LuandaVideo 7371
 Rouch in ReverseVideo 5565
 Sango Malo (The Village Teacher)
Video 4877

Ta Dona..... Video 4560
 Taafe Fanga (Skirt Power)... Video 5862
 Tableau Ferraille..... Video 5861
 These Hands..... Video 5139
 Three Tales From Senegal ... Video 5140
 Touki Bouki..... Video 4886
 Udju Azul Di Yonta (The Blue Eyes of
 Yonta)..... Video 5142
 Wend Kuuni..... Video 4878
 Yeelen..... Video 4562
 Zan Boko..... Video 4563

