

The Historical Importance of the African Mask (Religious Thought in Traditional Africa)

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The scholars included religious thought in traditional Africa in the circle of what they called primitive religions that are based on magic and exaggeration in the gaps of sanctification and offering, where rational and logical reasoning is fed in them. This aversion is not due to a shortcoming or a natural inability to perceive, but rather to a set of mental habits that they used to adopt, i.e. their way of thinking, which was based on the question of the meaning of life, existence, nothingness and after death, as it worked on the existence of a ritual appearance by which it imposed its control on The different aspects of life to select the duality of life and religion. All things are interconnected because they are based on the deep feeling of the unity of life and the unity of all things in a sacred world. Its things are all interconnected and in solidarity.” Private rituals cover his entire body. "The traditional African religion carried in its core the idea of a greater God, and it sought to establish methods to satisfy Him with higher rights, sanctifying ancestors, spirits, jinn and totemism,

nothing but a political and social method that regulates life." "The totemic life does not take place except under specific conditions, the most important of which is the tribes' affiliation to animals or plants, then the belief that the sons of the tribe are the descendants of the totem, so that the role of prohibition comes in prohibiting hunting animals and prohibiting intermarriage between members of the clan that believes in that totem, then pays (tabu) or forbidden. In order to raise the status of magic among the traditional tribes, it is linked to the word in order to increase its holiness, so magicians use one of the most powerful forces affecting the human spirit, which is the word "and African society believes in the unseen world that is controlled by supernatural forces that control their ability and activities in different degrees and forms, and that this unseen world is an extraordinary world. It is not subject to logic or reason, but is subject to acceptance and complete belief in all of its contradictions. It is difficult to imagine ancient African societies without believing in any of the kinds of spirits that help or hinder their actions, content with magic as a behavior and a way to express that belief in the kinds of supernatural powers and energies. The application of religious and magical concepts in the mask is a place for the soul, in which the African believes in its different types of souls of natural forces (such as the earth, light, and lightning). And the sun and the moon) or the souls of the founder of the tribe and the ancestors, or the members of the tribe" "The spirits are the embodiment and diagnosis of the forces that he fears and fears, and he cannot realize or reach their level, so he embodies them in a semi-human form, from this concept it is clear identification and diagnosis of forces. It is not known to the African, and that his artworks are a tool and a means to satisfy his psychological needs. "On this basis, the religious and social concept arose. The connection between religion and art in ancient societies formed a strong relationship, which made anthropologists assert that the origins of art belong to the religious and magical fields." The head of the statue (the mask) has received most of the attention from the African sculptor, as it is often a quarter of the shape, and this is based on the beliefs that the head is the place in which the basic life resides, or the spiritual forces where the real purpose of the African artist is to create a body or a place for an invisible spirit. That is, the African artist invents a realism of the world of spirits to determine the reality of the spirit world, as the spirits should not resemble the living. Therefore, the African artist resorts to abstraction to express these concepts, and the masks are lavishly decorated with decorative ribbons, chains, combs, braids, nails, beads, shells and many different materials.