

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS**

**SCENIC DESIGN, IMPROVISATION AND NON-CONVENTIONAL THEATRE SPACES
IN THE PRODUCTION OF ABDALLAH'S *THE SLAVES***

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis project is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been represented elsewhere, with all references appropriately acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Spaces abound to accommodate theatrical performances in Ghana, yet most performances are limited to the conventional theatre spaces (usually underscored by built-up auditoriums, stage, wings etc.). Also some conventional theatre space (such as the proscenium) over the years has bridged a gap between audience, performers and the environment. This is partly due to the introduction of modern trends in pyrotechnic and special effects (projections and sophisticated lighting systems); being embraced in the modern theatre experience. This development to an extent has put the creative role of a scenic designer (in achieving a spectacle) into jeopardy. People have resorted to nature as a place of relaxation and have utilized the space for picnics, prayer grounds, learning arena etc. This notwithstanding, much attention has not been given to the fact that nature can serve as an alternative theatrical site in Ghana. Thus an exploration of natural environment as an alternative theatrical site, employing the use of found objects (natural and recyclable materials) through improvisation in the creation of scenic design, necessitated this study; as Ben Abdallah's *The Slaves* served as a source material for this experiment. The study also sought to examine the influence of modern trends in development of the creative ability of the scenic designer. Furthermore, there was a need to examine the aesthetic experience between the audience and performers in the created environment. The research approached an art-based methodology, with the creation of the setting of *The Slaves* mostly reliant on the imagination and intuition of the scenic designer. Research employs techniques from art movements namely: Abstract Expression, Symbolism and Realism. The concept of Constructivism and Mimesis are theories underpinning the study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty; the author and finisher, who saw me through this project. Mr. and Mrs. Adomako-Mensah; and siblings. To all my colleagues and friends whose constant support has brought me this far.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The focus of this thesis is to explore the creation of scenic design in a non-conventional theatrical space through improvisation; using the play text, *The Slaves*. It examines the various concepts of scenic design, over the years; theatrical spaces (non-conventional), improvisation and the use of found objects (natural materials and recyclable objects) in the creation of scenic design. This chapter talks about the background to the study and a statement of the problem (research interest). It further outlines the objectives of study, research questions underpinning the study and the significance of study. The scope of study: indicating the delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the organization of the study are also discussed.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

Scenic design is in constant state of flux. Since 13th century, it commenced with the use of rear walls during the Greek, Roman, Medieval and Elizabethan periods. Scenes and locations were not so relevant and were usually itemized by characters in their lines especially in the Elizabethan era. Scenic elements consisted of angled wings, backdrops or back shutters and flats to create an illusion of depth. Also prominent was the sloping of the part of the stage closer to the wall to depict perspective in scenery. This notwithstanding, three-dimensional scenic units such as ramps, stairs, columns and platforms were introduced into creation of scenic design; in the 20th century by Adolphe Appia (a scenic and lighting designer). He believed that three-dimensional characters should not play against two dimensional painted canvases and a bare floor, but rather play in a more simplistic and suggestive environment yet functional (Wild,

2002). In other words, scenic design should be three-dimensional to enhance an actor's performance (movement) on stage. Also, scenic design should meet the demands of the director (blocking, stage directions etc.) the actor (interacting with the environment) and have enough room to accommodate complex scenic units and other technical elements (sound and lighting equipment). Wilson affirms that, "a good scene design sets the tone and style of a production, letting the audience know where and when the action takes place and whether the play is a tragedy, a comedy, or some other type of drama" (Wilson, 1994, p. 321). Thus, scenic design should be an extension of the characters on stage, as suggested by Appia, where space is transformed to meet the needs of a performance.

According to Parker et al (2003), "Design is a part of an event that includes and involves the actor and audience as well" (p.13). This statement affirms the fact that, scenic design draws the attention of the audience by giving them a visual interpretation of a spoken text. An audience experience of an event of which design is inclusive should, "reflect that search or the meaning in a way that enhances the experience for the audience" (Parker et al, 2003, p. 3). As mentioned earlier, scenic design has evolved, with the emergence of modern trends in scenic equipment's (Pyrotechnic and special effects). Modern trends have emerged, adding a 'spark' to the theatrical experience and on the other hand putting the creativity of the scenic designer in jeopardy. Parker et al (2003) postulates that, "virtual reality (more- complex images, rapid changes of scenery and lighting and more control of stage movement) is an extreme version of this- but it is not really a form of theatre in which the audience member is directly involved in the story?" (p. 5). The above statement affirms the fact that modern trends in lighting and stage set up has no doubt, enhanced scenery but has created a breach between performers, audience and the environment. They further add that, "it is easy to be dazzled by pyrotechnic and special effects and it is great fun"

(Parker et al, 2003, p.5). In other words, we should not lose touch of the role that scenic design plays in bringing together the audience, performer and the environment; which cannot be equated to the excitement from projected images. It has what will be termed as the 'wow factor' but it takes more than pyrotechnic and special effects to purge the emotions of the audience.

According to Wilson (1994), "the theatre experience does not occur in a visual vacuum." (p.321) Space is required in order for scenic design to be appreciated. Non-conventional theatre spaces and for that matter created and found spaces emerged at the forefront of theatrical performances when the quest to move away from the stage and auditorium developed (after the World War II, when avant-garde theatre artists emerged). Artuad Fugard, a French actor and director, wrote a proposal on the physical theatre which states that, "we abolish the stage and auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind, which will become the theatre of an action" (p.313). This meant bringing together the audience, performer and their environment. He further adds that, "a direct communication will be reestablished between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it" (p.313). Grotowski also enlightens us on the quest to move out of the conventional theatre spaces (performers and spectators were most familiar with) to other spaces whose physical arrangement brought together the audience and performers. Following Artuad and Grotowski's concept closely, they sought to focus more on the actor- audience relationship in a performance and a better means of getting an audience to be part of a performance. Furthermore, they highlighted a mode of solving this problem which is focusing on the physical configuration of space. Wilson (1994) suggests that created and found spaces take several forms and structures. They include the utilization of non-

theatre environment/building, the adaptation of a given space to fit individual productions and mostly the use of outdoor spaces.

Christopher B. Balme cites Gay McAuley in his *Spaces and Places*; he says, “Given the centrality of space in a performance experience, it is perhaps somewhat surprising to find that critics do not have a precise, widely shared vocabulary to enable them to name and talk about the multiple dimensions of the way space functions in a performance.” (Balme, 2008, p.47). There is no clear-cut description of ‘other’ functions of space either than accommodating a performance. Balme (2008) in *Spaces and Places* pointed out various spatial categories as distinguished by McAuley. They include the Theatrical space: encompassing the architectural conditions of a theatre as well as an actor/ performer arrangement. Scenic or stage space: encompassing the space for actor’s performance and set design. Place or Space of performance which includes other environments where the theatre event is situated; lastly, the Dramatic space referring to the organization of space as suggested by the theatrical text.

Place or space of performance is made up of other environments where theatre events are situated. Pointing to this description there are non-conventional theatrical spaces (parks, rooms, landscapes etc.) either than the conventional theatre spaces (proscenium, arena, thrust) that could meet the needs of certain theatre performances. Going on, Balme (2008) identifies five basic spatial structures in the theatre that regulates the relationship between performers and the audience. They are: the divided (cinema), confrontation (proscenium), apron stage, arena stage and the environmental theatre (a place or space for performance.) However, the environmental theatre suggests a suitable space for a better audience/ performer relationship as projected by Grotowski and Fugard.

Environmental theatre, a term coined by Richard Schechner, “refers to a flexible spatial arrangement by which spectators can surround the stage/playing areas or vice versa. (Balme, 2008, p. 50). These flexible spaces are indoor (hall, room etc.) and outdoor (street, landscapes, seascapes etc.) whose “spatial arrangements define acts of theatre because they establish the essential relationship between performer and audience...” (Butterworth, 2009, p. 105) Schechner’s *Environmental Theatre* suggests that, “theatrically, environment can be understood in two ways. First, there is what one can do with and in a space. Secondly, there is acceptance of a given space. In the first case one creates an environment by transforming a space; in the second case, one negotiates with the environment, engaging in a scenic dialog with a space.” (Schechner, 1994, p. xxx)

In mounting a set for a non-conventional theatrical space, improvisation comes to play as a likely approach for the scenic designer to create within the confines of an available space. “Theatre has a long history of experimentation with a variety of spatial configurations and relationships...” (Wilkie, *Out of place; the negotiation of space in site-specific performance*, 2004, p. II). Wilkie’s statement suggests that variety of spaces has been explored (over the years) in theatre practice, where different techniques have been employed by designers in the mounting of scenery.

“Improvisation is defined as a creative act composed without prior thought.” (Gerber, 2007, p. 1) Mitropoulos (1982) says that, “there is something theatrical about found spaces. An interesting sight that tickles you and you begin to ask what play can take place here.” (p. 462). Such is the case of the natural environment (nature); a scenic designer identifies an interesting space and begins to imagine what kind of art could blend with ‘nature’. Also, Mary Jo Kreitzer & Mary Koithan (2014) expatiates that, “Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduce anger, fear and stress and increases pleasant feelings. (p. 132). Exposure to nature not only makes you

feel better emotionally; it contributes to your physical, wellbeing reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and the production of stress hormones.” (p. 132)

This explanation, justifies the role of nature in providing both the physical and psychological (emotional) needs of human existence. With reference to serving emotional needs, the appreciation of art (theatre), comes to the fore as a dependable therapeutic approach to relaxation. In a performance, where the space becomes part of the event, the scenic designer is also challenged with exploring found objects as key constituents of scenic creation.

Reviewing some works by Andy Goldsworthy, a British land artist, he explores found objects within natural environments and engages them in an artistic communication with each other; without any form of modification to these objects. His works exhibit rich utilization of elements guided by the principles of design such as: rhythm, balance, proportion, variety etc. Andy Goldsworthy (1989) in *An Eye of Art*, shares his experience on working in *Nature Walks*. He says, “See what natural materials you find as you wander along the way. Look at the colours and shapes of nature Study patterns and designs. Touch different material Compare their texture, weight and size. Imagine the landscape at another time of day, during another season or during a rainstorm...” (p. 22)

Goldsworthy utilized materials within nature such as flower petals, leaves, pine cones, twigs etc. (found objects) and from these materials conceived a great inspiration for his work of art of which could also be explored in scenic design. He raises a notable point that a good design is not only achieved through detailed conceptualization but also improvisation.

Found object or ‘object trouve’ or readymade is “an ordinary object elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist.” (www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Readymades-of-Marcel-Duchamp.pdf, 2011) Thus, found objects are

used in the creation of art with a little or no modification. They include natural materials and recyclable materials. This representation of art (Dada art movement) which emerged during the early twentieth century was a reaction to contemporary culture and traditional art forms. Objects were exhibited in galleries by artists who signed them and pronounced them as art. An example is the ‘porcelain urinal inscribed R. Mutt 1917’. (Schultz, 2012)

Scenic design interprets the setting of a performance. It gives an idea of the period, locale, status etc. of characters in a play. Spaces abound to accommodate theatrical performances besides conventional theatrical spaces (proscenium, arena thrust etc.) such as the natural environment. However, the natural environment has been explored for other purposes either than theatrical performances. Berleant (1992) explains that, “environments are not physical places but perceptual ones that we collaborate in making and it is perceptually that we determine their identity and extent.” (p. 155). This statement by Berleant suggests that, the natural environment could be transformed and given a new identity for the purpose of art.

Nature to a large extent, serves as a basic source of inspiration for the creative process of this research. The scenic designer draws inspiration from nature through the process of aesthetic appreciation of shapes, colour, structure and imagery the environment provides. Also found objects (natural and recyclable materials) from the environment are explored in the creation of the scenic design thereby highlighting the availability of ‘other’ materials for creation. The idea of walking within nature and solely relying on its elements to create new ideas is an experience this research will adopt during the exploration of scenic design.

This study explores the creation of scenic design in a non-conventional theatrical space through improvisation using the play text; *The Slaves* written by Ben Abdallah and directed by Elijah Twum (a 2015/ 2016-year student in the department of Theatre Arts). The experiment employed

the use of found objects (natural and recyclable materials) for creation. It further experimented on the processes and aesthetic values derived from the creation of scenic environment in nature; utilizing found objects.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Spaces abound to accommodate theatrical performances, yet most performances are limited to the conventional theatre spaces. Also some conventional theatre space (such as the proscenium) over the years has bridged a gap between audience, performers and the environment. This is partly due to the introduction of modern techniques in pyrotechnic and special effects; being embraced in the modern theatre experience. This development to an extent has put the creative role of a scenic designer (in achieving a spectacle) into some limitation. People have resorted to nature as a place of relaxation and have utilized the space for picnics, prayer grounds, learning arena, recreation and leisure. This notwithstanding, much attention has not been given to the fact that nature can serve as an alternative theatrical site. Thus an exploration of nature as an alternative theatrical site, employing the use of found objects (natural and recyclable materials) through improvisation in the creation of scenic design, necessitated this study.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This study seeks to explore the creation of Scenic Design in a Non-Conventional Theatre Space, through Improvisation using the play text, *The Slaves*. Below are the objectives underpinning the research:

- To create a scenic design within nature through improvisation utilizing natural environment.
- To ascertain the possible challenges with transforming natural spaces for the purpose of art (visual and performing).
- To examine the aesthetic value of the performers and audience on the scenic design (Environment).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. How can scenic design be created within nature utilizing found objects, where the environment becomes part of the final design?
- ii. What are the challenges with transforming natural spaces for the purpose of a theatrical space?
- iii. How does a scenic design within a natural environment encourage a synergy between the performer and the audience?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study promotes the engagement of nature as an alternative theatrical site thereby adding up to the available spaces for theatrical performances. Also, the utilization of natural and recyclable materials for scenic design will encourage the use of unconventional materials for construction as well as challenging the scenic designer to be more creative.

This study creates an opportunity to collaborate with environmentally friendly agencies such as Environmental Protection Agency in mounting exhibitions that are geared towards the conservation of natural space, natural resource management and the promotion of tourism.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY

Delimitation

The scope of the study covers the processes and aesthetic values derived from the creation of scenic design in the natural environment. It also encompasses the challenges of transforming the natural environment as well as the utilization of found objects for creation. The study excludes analysis of elements such as light, sound, costume and make-up.

Limitations

This experiment will not represent all found objects present in the natural environment. However, in its execution, there is utilization of tree branches, bamboo, creeping plants, dried leaves, tree barks, plastic water bottles, newspapers, cement paper bags and jute sacks. Furthermore, the weather condition at a particular point in time will (either or not) pose as a great challenge not only during the creative process but the exhibition as well.

1.8 ORANISATION OF STUDY

Chapter one presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions underpinning the study, the significance of the study, the scope of

the study indicating the delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the organization of the study.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature on the study. Chapter Three describes the methodology used for the study indicating the conceptual framework, Research design, Sampling procedure, Source of data, Data Collection Instrument and Procedure data analysis as well as Creative process. Chapter four presents the analysis, discussion and interpretation of result of the study. Lastly, chapter five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW

Scenic design in general is in a constant state of flux; where according to Wilkie (2004) “there has been a long history of experimentation with a variety of spatial configurations and relationships...” (p.II) It is worth noting that several forms of spatial experimentation by theatre practitioners (most especially scenic designers) were geared towards setting the tone of a performance and improving the actor-audience relationship. This chapter of the study reviews literature: both published and unpublished, relating to the research topic. This will serve as a direction for producing relevant material for the research. A conclusion will be drawn on how reviewed literature and artworks influenced the study. Literature will be reviewed under the following topics:

1. Non-Conventional theatre spaces for Scenic design
2. Scenic Improvisation with found objects
3. Aesthetics of Scenic Design in Nature

2.2 NON-CONVENTIONAL THEATRE SPACE FOR SCENIC DESIGN

Scenic design can be explained as an environment for a performance. This environment is created within a space. Every space can accommodate the theatre performance as stated by Peter Brooks (1968) who says, “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an

act of theatre to be engaged.” (p.11) Brook’s explanation suggests that, theatre can happen anywhere (including the natural environment) provided there is an empty space; thus place flexibility on the practice of theatre. He considers space, as a key element for performance where its physical state becomes secondary to the needs of the performance. This notwithstanding, Brook’s view seems to fall in line with the art of the actor in space rather than the environment for play; and it could be deduced that scenic design to him, is secondary for theatre to happen. Agreeably, the practice of theatre (rendering ‘all’ spaces feasible) sinks in, looking at the nature of this research; thus to Brooks, theatre can happen anywhere and can be taken anywhere. Therefore, if a space is identified within the natural environment, it could engage in a ‘scenic dialogue’ to accommodate a performance. Wilson (1994) adds that, “the theatre experience does not occur in a visual vacuum.” (p.321). Scenic design is key, in the realization of a theatre experience; thus Wilson’s suggestion implies that in order to have a performance, space is required for the visual representation that meets the needs of that particular performance. Also, this visual representation can be executed if there is an available space, regardless of its physical state. Looking at the role of scenic design in a performance, it is worth defining the term.

- Parker and Harvey (1974) state that, “Scenic design is the designing, executing and lighting of a stage setting.” (p.14) Parker et al (2003), defines scenic design as, “the creation of an environment in which the action of a play might happen.” (p.10). They further describe scenic design as, the “physical and visual environment.” (p.11) According to Parker and Harvey’s definition of scenic design, it could be explained as a plan of a scenic environment; its construction and illumination. However, the explanation by Parker et al, describes the purpose of Scenic design and its role in the provision of an environment to meet the needs of a performance. These two definitions put together, does not complement the purpose of this research

considering the fact that scenic design, needs to engage in a ‘scenic dialogue’ with the natural environment through a negotiation (scenic design merging with nature) and collaboration (utilization of natural and recyclable materials for construction). Thus a working definition situated within the context of the research is; scenic design is the conscious creation of an environment for a particular performance through a negotiation and collaboration with elements within the natural environment.

Wilson (1994) postulates that, “every set has a design.” (p.321). This statement, points to the fact that a scenic design can vary depending on the requirement of a performance; from an empty space to a multiple set up. A natural environment can be an environment conducive for a particular performance. For instance, in the filming of *Ananse in the Land of Idiots* by Africanus Aveh (2015), Ananse’s workshop, and the shrine for the initiation rites of the maidens, was set in the Legon botanical gardens. Also, with regards to staging a performance within a natural environment, there could be collaboration of scenic design with the natural environment. However, in certain cases, the physical configuration of the environment may not allow for any form of manipulation; thus a performance will have to be improvised in that available space. It should also be noted that, a natural environment could reflect certain experiences that could be transposed into conceptualization and creation of scenic design. This is highlighted by Lee Krasner, an Abstract Expressionist, who draws inspiration from nature and natural forms giving her works titles that reflect her source of inspiration. A perfect example is her painting titled ‘Desert Moon’ (1955). Krasner focuses mostly on the organic cycles and processes that occur within nature (usually invisible and uncontrollable by man) rather than specific objects. (Gaze, 2001). This research explores collaboration with nature in the creation of a scenic environment through a direct interpretation of slavery as perceived by the researcher. The goal is to create an

artistic impression of a slave dungeon within a natural environment full of natural elements such as trees, direct sunlight, and soil etc.; serving as the canvas for projection.

Wilson makes mention of four distinct spaces available for theatre performances. They are the proscenium, the arena, the thrust; created and found stage spaces. Thus his description of the various kinds of space, encompasses both conventional theatre spaces; spaces that are designated to meet all the needs of a performance (based on their technical qualities lighting, complex scenery and sound as well as its social construct; audience/ performer arrangement) and non-conventional theatre spaces (which does not meet the needs of a performance; hence manipulated). A feature most relevant of all these spaces, is offering of 'Intimacy' between the audience, performers and the environment. It should be noted that, for a space to be conventional or non- conventional, its universality may be subjected to factors such as the socio-cultural setting of an area. For instance, a space that may be conventional for the practice of theatre in Ghana might be non-conventional in Europe, Asia etc. The natural environment is space that can be manipulated through improvisation to meet the requirements of specific performances. Within the context of this research, an operational definition of a conventional theatre space is a space underscored by well-built structures (stage, gallery, wings etc.) and facilities (lighting, sound and scenery equipment) for theatre performances. Contrastingly, non-conventional spaces can be explained as spaces that are manipulated to accommodate the requirements of specific performances due to unavailability.

Several descriptions for the non-conventional theatre spaces have been used by various practitioners and they include the flexible space, street theatre, site-specific space, environmental theatre and the created and found space (Wilson, 1994). This research prefers the term, created and found spaces because all the other descriptions mentioned earlier, fall under this bigger

umbrella. As the name suggests, it could be explained as spaces that are found and manipulated to meet the needs of a performance.

Created and found spaces emerged at the forefront of theatrical performances when the quest to move away from the stage and auditorium developed, after the World War II (when avant-garde theatre artists emerged). (Wilson, 1994, p.313)

Artuad, a French actor and director, wrote a proposal on the physical theatre which states that, “we abolish the stage and auditorium and replace them by a single site, without partition or barrier of any kind, which will become the theatre of an action”. (Wilson, 1994, p.313) Wilson further adds that, “a direct communication will be reestablished between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it”. (p.313). Grotowski also enlightens us on the quest to move out of the conventional space performers and spectators were used to and rather considering the physical arrangement of a performance area and its relationship to the audience. (Grotowski, 1986) Following Artuad and Grotowski’s concept closely, they sought to focus more on the actor- audience relationship in a performance and a better means of getting an audience engulfed in a performance. Furthermore, they highlighted a mode of solving this problem which is focusing on the physical arrangement of the space. As highlighted by Butterworth (2009), “spatial arrangements [of the natural environment] define acts of theatre because they establish the essential relationship between performer and audience...” (p.105). Thus a space, irrespective of its physical configuration is capable of accommodating a performance. Wilson (1994) also states that created and found spaces take several forms and structures. They include the utilization of non theatre environment/building, the adaptation of a given space to fit individual productions and mostly the use of outdoor

spaces. Thus, found spaces encompass a variety of spaces including the indoor spaces (churches, lofts, warehouses, garages etc.) and outdoor spaces (natural environment, parks, lorry stations etc.).

Richard Schechner explains that a 'created and found space', which he describes as the environmental theatre, "refers to a flexible spatial arrangement by which spectators can surround the stage/playing areas or vice versa." (Balme, 2008, p. 50). In his *Environmental Theatre* (1994) Schechner purports that, "Theatrically, environment can be understood in two ways. First, there is what one can do with and in a space. Secondly, there is acceptance of a given space. In the first case one creates an environment by transforming a space; in the second case, one negotiates with the environment, engaging in a scenic dialog with a space". (p. xxx)

Mitropoulos (1982) expatiates that, a found space is "space you appropriate for an activity (or the possibility of it not intended for it, or a space with ambiguous, rather than a precise function." (p.462). This clarification affirms that found spaces are multifunctional and can be manipulated to meet the needs of an activity (performance) irrespective of their intended purpose, its flexibility allows for accommodation of any performance; most especially theatrical performances. Also, they could be manipulated to a proscenium, thrust and an arena form, depending on the setting of a performance and the physical configuration of space needed.

"There is something theatrical about found spaces; an interesting sight that tickles you and you begin to ask what play can take place here". (Mitropoulos, 1982, p. 462). Spaces, beyond their physical structure, evoke certain feelings in people. For instance, visiting the Elmina castle, we are constantly reminded of colonization and slavery of Africans. Spaces may either evoke feelings of sadness, anger, bitterness, joy just to mention a few. Berleant (1992) buttresses this point by adding that, "environments are not [only] physical places but perceptual ones that we

collaborate in making and it is [perhaps] perceptually that we determine their identity and extent.” (p. 155). This statement suggests that, the natural environment could be transformed and given a new identity for the purpose of art. Progressively, feelings derived from being in these environments could serve as a muse for creating scenic design. It is also worth noting that the physical configuration of the natural environment can stimulate emotions that may inspire creativity and this brings to mind the concept of Tsoku Art by Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah; a site-specific artist.

In his Concept of Tsoku Art, literally meaning, nothing gets spoilt, Sowah (2015) places significance on burnt wood, cut and broken trees as well as branches; gives a metaphysical interpretation of these natural objects within the natural environment through his ‘artistic viewfinder’. He asserts that, “Nature in its gracefulness and abundances has provided it all (beauty, direction and opportunities) for us through our own means and of course through its means, only we fail to acknowledge it, and even if we did we do not accord much importance to it and as such do not see its relevance. Such is the case of the Tsoku art”.

The Concept of Civilization is embodied in the analysis of the Cantoment Tsoku; likened to our society and the fragments of colonialism even after independence. The tarred road and the vehicle, connotes development and civilization in the country. (See fig.1). However, the tree stump, being entangled by the metallic wires implies limited freedom in the case of citizens of this country (See fig. 1). Though independent from colonialism and slavery for over fifty years, Ghanaians have limited opinions and are always reliant on foreign investors for development of our human and natural resources (See fig.1). Based on Sowah’s concept on Tsoku art, it could be said that, within an environment, every element present evokes a metaphysical interpretation which is solely dependent of an individual (artist/ audience). Thus, within a natural environment:

entangled branches, a cluster of huge kapok trees in a limited space, piercing cones on trunks of trees, scattered recyclable materials (plastic water bottles, cement papers, worn out posters etc.) could give a reflection of the subject matter, slavery.



Figure 1 Cantoment Tsoku (Tsoku Art) Oh! Nii Sowah
Source: Oh! Nii Sowah, Article on Tsoku Art, 2015

Taking the elements of design into major consideration, the scenic designer identifies similarities and differences that are likely to be highlighted in the visual statement. In creating an environment, not by total transformation but negotiation, there is a laid condition of a ‘give and take’ relationship between the design and the space, where the design will identify features within the space that are compatible with the elements of design and how best these features can be inculcated in the final work of art.

2.3 SCENIC IMPROVISATION WITH FOUND OBJECTS

Improvisation as a technique has been historically embedded in drama, dance, painting and music etc. It is worth noting that, in drama, it was popularized by the well-known British director and drama instructor Keith Johnstone. His act sought to elevate the art of the actor by getting them to behave more spontaneously. In doing so, he also thought of certain guidelines that could govern his creative direction on stage. (Johnstone, 1987). This notwithstanding improvisation has been embraced as a reliable tool for teaching in classrooms. Gold (2007) affirms that, Improvisational techniques derived from the experiences of improvisational theatre “can be adapted for use in secondary education and college as well as graduate studies or continuing education programs.” (p. 1). Looking at its contributory nature both as a tool for education and in performances, it is important to define the term improvisation.

“Improvisation has been defined as intuition guiding actions in a spontaneous way.” (Mary Crossan & Mark Sorrenti, 1997, p. 156). More recently, Keefe, (2002) has defined it as, “...making the most of what you have and getting the most out of what you make”. (p.6). These definitions by Crossan, Sorrenti and Keefe, suggest that an activity done instinctively, which brings a good end result could be seen as improvisation. Therefore, scenic design being explored within a natural environment (without a plan of work), where there is collaboration with the environment and its elements (found objects) to achieve a ‘setting’ for a performance can be described as improvisation.

Correspondingly, Gerber (2007) asserts that, “improvisation is defined as a creative act composed without prior thought.” (p. 1). Based on Gerber’s definition, it could be said that improvisation is a devised performance done without any plan of thought. This clarification (not too different from that of Crossan, Sorrenti and Keefe) also suggests that activities are done

spontaneously giving room for extreme creativity. In other words, without necessarily having working drawings, a scenic designer could be guided by intuition, to create an environment for a performance. This environment could even serve as a muse for the creative process as suggested earlier by Mitropolous.

Margeko et al (2009) gives a further detailed definition of improvisation in the artistic field such as improvisational theatre; giving a clearer view of what the technique entails in this area. Improvisation is the “creation of an artifact and/or performance with aesthetic goals in real-time that is not completely prescribed in terms of functional and/or content constraints.” (p. 3). Looking at Magerko et al’s definition of improvisation (in line with the other descriptions) it could be confirmed that the creation of scenic design for performances could be done without any laid down rules (demands of scenic design). Consequently, it is a ‘break-free’ exploration that gives an opportunity to discover other means of being creative not limited by the content and a need of a performance.

According to Gerber (2007), it is worth noting that, “designers simulate experiences...” (p. 1). For that reason, an experience of the natural ambience; observation of form, colour and structure of elements within this nature as well as its processes and cycles, serve as a muse for creation. This is evident in the works of Lee Krasner, whose works are mostly inspired by cycles and process within nature. (Gaze, 2001). Also, Andy Goldsworthy, a British land artist, explores found objects within natural environments and engages them in an artistic communication with each other; without any form of modification to these objects. His works exhibit rich utilization of elements guided by the principles of design such as: rhythm, balance, proportion, variety etc. (See fig. 2). Goldsworthy, shares his experience on working in *Nature Walks*. He says, “See what natural materials you find as you wander along the way. Look at the colours and shapes of

nature. Study patterns and designs. Touch different materials. Compare their texture, weight and size. Imagine the landscape at another time of day, during another season, or during a rainstorm...” (Art, 2013, p. 22)

Goldsworthy utilized materials within nature such as flower petals, leaves, pine cones, twigs etc. and from these materials, conceived a great inspiration for his work of art of which could also be explored in scenic design. He raises a notable point that a good design is not only achieved through detailed conceptualization but also through improvisation using found objects from nature. (See fig. 2). Hence, a scenic design could be created utilizing found objects: natural materials (such as tree barks, bamboo, dried leaves etc.) and recyclable materials (such as water bottles, cement bags, jute sacks, old newsprints etc.). These materials could serve as a source of inspiration and their nature (form, texture, colour,) may influence the final outcome of the created environment. It should be noted that the use of found objects for creation through improvisation, calls for little or no manipulation (taping, gluing, colouring, disfiguring etc.).



Figure 2 Environmental artworks by Andy Goldsworthy

Retrieved from
www.google.com/gh/search?q=Andy+goldsworthy+artworks&source=Inns&tbm=isch&sa=X&bed=0ahUKEwiliqvVqdjQAhXJKsAKHbEFC9oQ_AUICgB&biw=1366&big=659:
CgB&biw=1366&big=659:

“Storytelling is a core feature of improvisation.” (Gerber, 2007, p. 4). Thus, through improvisation different stories are told from different experiences gathered. These experiences may include real life situations, dreams, fantasies not forgetting the experience of walking through nature; whichever form an experience may appear, it could serve as a muse for an artist’s exploration for creation.

Found object or ‘object trouve’ or readymade, according to Duchamp, any ordinary object lifted to the dignity of art, based on an artist’s choice. Thus through improvisations, found objects are used in the creation of art with a little or no modification. Chilvers (2004) writes that found objects “...may be natural object such as pebbles, shells or man-made objects.” (p.506) Standing on this point, found objects includes natural objects (such as branches, dried leaves, seeds etc.) and recyclable objects (such as old newsprints, water bottles, jute sacks etc.) that have been picked at random and elevated to the dignity of art through alterations. Therefore, an operational definition for scenic improvisation with found objects is the creation of an environment (setting) for performance without a carefully laid out plan of work, using found objects.

2.4 AESTHETICS OF SCENIC DESIGN IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Aesthetics can simply be explained as the beauty or one’s appreciation of art. Allen Carlson (2000) says that, “Aesthetics is the area of philosophy that concerns our appreciation of things as they affect our senses and especially as they affect them in a pleasing way.” (p.xii) Based on this clarification, it could be said that, our appreciation of scenic design, as they affect our senses (most especially in a good way) and our response to them can be described as an aesthetic appreciation. In other words, identifying a natural space, collaborating with its elements (such as

trees, creeping plants, bamboos etc.), and the new environment conceived of this ‘scenic dialogue’; its admiration could be described as an aesthetic appreciation of that environment. The aesthetic value of scenic design is made evident in the even distribution of visual elements of art such as line, shape colour, texture etc. guided by the principles of design. Peter Lamarque (2008) supports Carlson’s assertion by saying that aesthetics, stems from “a Greek word meaning ‘things perceptible to the sense’, ‘sensory impressions’.” (p.1) Thus, aesthetics focuses on how our senses reacts towards the things we see and how our emotions are affected positively by these things.

On the issue of appreciation, Bell cited by Shahn (1985) purports that, “The representative elements in a work of art may or may not be harmful, but it is always irrelevant. For to appreciate a work of art, we must bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its affairs and ideas, no familiarity with its emotions.” (p.26)

Bell’s statement points to the fact that in order to appreciate a work of art we need not have prior thoughts or ideas; we appreciate a work better when we are disconnected from the representational content of art. Shahn supports Bell’s view by adding that, “once proffered as an isolated opinion, that view of art has now become a very dominant one” (Shahn, 1985, p.26). For this reason, drums and masks are used allegorically in scenic design to represent abstract ideas; appreciated by the audience, clearly drawing on the subject matter of a performance and the interpretation of every visual element.

Carlson (2000) points out that, in order to appreciate an environment, we need to be a part of it and react to it. Based on this standpoint, we could say that personal interaction is key in order for one to classify an experience as aesthetic. A person, witnessing a performance and interpreting to

another becomes his/her personal experience; but for the other person, it cannot be termed as such since he/she was not part of that experience directly.

Appreciating an environment becomes more complicated as compared to a work of art. This is partly because our environment is in constant motion; going through cycles and processes that humankind is not in control of. Also, in an appreciation of nature, there is a need to move away from the two- dimensional to the three-dimensional space; this is because “the environment is not a scene, not a representation, not static and not two-dimensional.” (Carlson, 2000, p. 34)

An aesthetic experience, “interpret nature as revealing metaphysical insights; insights about the whole experience, about the meaning of life, about human condition, about humankind’s place in the cosmos”. (Carlson, 2000, p. 10) Such is the focus of the metaphysical imagination model of aesthetic appreciation which looks at nature, as a perceptual place rather than a physical one. This form of appreciation is best illustrated by Goethe in his poem on nature; where he expresses nature allegorically. He says:

We are surrounded and embraced by her: powerless to separate ourselves from her and powerless to penetrate beyond her [...] she is ever shaping new forms: what is, has never yet been; what has been, comes not again [...] She is incessantly speaking to us, but betrays not her secret [...] The one thing she seems to aim at is Individuality; yet is always building up and destroying; but her workshop is inaccessible [...] Her life is in her children; but where is mother? She is the only Artist; working- up the most uniform material into utter opposites; Arriving, without a trace of effort, at perfection, at the most exact precision, though always veiled at certain softness. (Goethe, Nature: Aphorisms, 1869)

Goethe's allegorical representation of nature, characterized by many qualities, affirms the undisputed beauty of nature; however, this beauty can only be experienced by reaching out and being a part of it. Also, his work suggests that, nature is too complicated and requires a multi-sensory appreciation of it. It is worth noting that aesthetic appreciation is characterized by personal experience; work is best appreciated when one experiences it for oneself. Therefore, in order for one to experience the aesthetic nature of the environment, he/she would have to walk through it, see it, smell it, touch it and in certain cases, taste it. Unlike a work of art, the natural environment is more complicated to appreciate since man (artist/ audience) is not in control of its processes and cycles.

As stated earlier by Berleant (1992) "environments are not physical places but perceptual ones that we collaborate in making and it is perceptually that we determine their identity and extent." (p. 155). Based on Berleant's clarification, it could be deduced that an environment can be perceived and interpreted from diverse standpoints; in the end, there is an exclusive expression of one's aesthetic experience. Scenic design, being the environment of a performance may evoke a universal subject matter such as slavery; however, there could be themes identified by the audience who share diverse standpoints and different interpretation of visual elements.

An environment serves as a muse that conceives an artist's creative work. (Carlson, 2000) Thus, the identification of an environment, its conceptualization and its end product (which is scenic design) becomes an artist's idea of work and creative ability.

According to Gaston Bachelard (1958), immensity goes beyond what is visible to the eye. He purports that, "immensity originates in a body of impressions which, in reality, have little connection with geographical information". (p.185) Therefore, to appreciate the natural environment, there is little or no role played by its geographical information. The exterior

spectacle helps intimate grandeur unfold. It is in place to suggest that the physical state of the natural environment transposes the scenic designer/ audience into an inner immensity that gives real meaning to certain expressions concerning the visible world. Also, Bachelard (1958) expresses that, immensity is within ourselves and is the movement of a motionless man (p.184). Thus when a man is motionless, he/she zooms into another state of motion which involves the utilization of the mind through meditation, imagination or daydreaming. Pierre Gueguen cited by Bachelard asserts that, “dimensions don’t give a forest (space) its intensity, but its psychological transcendence”. Therefore, meditation, imagination or daydreaming, moves the scenic designer/ audience into a psychological state; where creativity and appreciation of the natural environment is not limited to its visible state but rather, what is seen serves as a vehicle ushering us into a world of imagination and an immensity of that imagination. “The beautiful is in nature, and it is encountered in the most diverse forms of reality. Once it is found, it belongs to art or rather to the artist who discovers it”. (Gustav Courbet)

Therefore, in the collaboration of nature with scenic design, there is discovery of a new identity of the space. This identity is discovered through scenic design using lines, shapes, texture, colour, form; and guided by the principles of design. These elements are described by Bell, as ‘significant form’: they are elements within the natural environment that are likened to elements in a work of art. This brings to mind the notion of formalism, which holds that, formal qualities of objects (significant form) such as lines, shapes, textures etc. are the qualities relevant in classifying a work of art’s aesthetic value. (Carlson, 2000). This notwithstanding, it cannot be totally ignored that these formal qualities which are identified in nature as significant forms could evoke certain feelings as well as awaken emotions. In conclusion, the beauty of appreciating scenic design in nature lies in the improvisational technique adopted in the utilization

of found objects through negotiation to create a scenic environment that meets the needs of the performance of *The Slaves*.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The main purpose of this study is to explore the creation of Scenic Design in a Non-Conventional Theatre Space, using the play text *The Slaves*. This chapter describes the methodology employed for the study indicating the conceptual/theoretical framework, research design, research instruments, data source, data collection and analysis, as well as the creative process.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL/ THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The explored theoretical basis for this work hinged on the concepts, Mimesis and Constructivism. Mimesis focuses on the representation; thus within the study, re- mirroring the slave fort and its effect on the African; drawing inspiration from cycles, processes and objects within the natural environment. Constructivism focuses on how knowledge is drawn from the cycles, processes and objects within the natural environment through surveillance and synergy of these elements and how they work together in a performance (taking into consideration actors and their playing area).

3.2.1 Exploring Mimesis

According Werhane, (1984), Plato classifies art as a mere representation of nature. Plato further renders art useless and also claims that, if art reflected (mirrored) nature just as it is, then there is no knowledge added to society, not to mention an intellectual value. He further adds that art is potentially dangerous to the society in that it is only concerned with sensual pleasure. This claim however, is somewhat true to an extent.

Sensual pleasure is only but one of the many functions of art in our society. According to Roger Fry (1909), “it must be admitted that if imitation is the sole purpose of the graphic arts, it is surprising that the works of such arts are ever looked upon as more than curiosities, or ingenious toys, are taken seriously by grown-up people.” (p. 1)

In agreement with Aristotle and Fry the researcher concludes that art has gone through several phases of evolution where they have transcended beyond mere objects of beauty but also as a representation of socio-cultural issues. *The Old Guitarist* (1903) by Pablo Picasso was an example of a piece, raising awareness on a vital societal hitch, which is how the poor, needy and ill, are cast out in society. Through the stroke of the brush, Picasso depicts an old man, clinging to his guitar which he plays passionately. However, the picture also highlights the feeling of loneliness and a state of rejection of the old fellow by society. He only has his talent to keep him company. (See fig. 3)



Figure 3 The Old Guitarist by Pablo Picasso (1903)
Retrieved from www.pablocicasso.org/old-guitarist.jsp

An artist draws inspiration from cycles, processes and objects within the environment, making sense of these phenomena through the creation of his/her perception of nature without a direct replication of what is before him/her. According to Patricia Werhane, the theory of mimesis highlights the representational quality of art and how works epitomize their themes. She states that “in many works of art, the subject matter represents a world or a universe external to the personal or objective feelings of the artist.” (Werhane, 1984, p. 6). In support of Werhane’s views as an artist, the researcher’s views art as an individualistic representation inspired solely by nature or a muse(s). Lee Krasner, an Abstract Expressionist, draws inspiration from nature and natural forms giving her works titles that reflected her source of inspiration. A perfect example is her painting titled ‘Desert Moon’ (1955). Krasner focuses mostly on the organic cycles and processes that occur within nature (usually invisible and uncontrollable by man)

rather than specific objects. (Gaze, 2001) This research explores collaboration with nature in the creation of a scenic environment through a direct interpretation of slavery as perceived by the researcher.

Moving away from ‘the big white stone house’, its confrontation and dialogue between the pain and angst of Africa at large (as intended by the playwright) , this research sought to reinterpret the Slaves, not focusing on the slave and white man. There is a shift in Abdallah's purpose by revisiting our indigenous traditional spaces and the communal experience of getting actors involved in the design process. Situating the play in the heart of a forest, the researcher intends to focusing on how Africans after colonialism can rebuild the future with our own belief and knowledge systems as well as moving away from the orthodox space into traditional spaces; (firstly to experiment and also find out the challenges that comes with working within the space) moving forward how spaces could be reworked to embrace more theatre performances.

The goal was to create an artistic impression of a slave dungeon within an environment full of natural elements such as trees, direct sunlight, and dirt serving as the canvas for projection. This was further achieved through form, structure, color, other materials and tools for construction. The collaboration between elements of scenic design and the natural environment called for the perceptive construction of a dungeon as “a universe external to the personal or objective feelings of the artist” (Werhane, 1984, p. 6).

The psycho-physical effects of a dungeon to slaves and generations after who learnt of these historical facts formed the basis for the creation of a scenic representation of such magnitude in

this research. Stephanie Debere (2007) gives a succinct description of the activities as well as physical state of dungeons, in *Ghana: Castles and Forts*, she says:

Cold stone ramparts. Surf crashing against rocks. Ancient cannon lying silent, rusted warriors that once witnessed the coming and going of humanity- and inhumanity. The hour is late. The entourage presses forward toward the Male Slave Dungeon where the guardian lifts a stout wooden bar from its ancient iron bracket... The air is thick, heavy with humidity and pungent odors of fungus and mildew [...] (p. 1)

This assertion provided the research a representation of the physical state of the dungeon and an idea of its emotive representation through colour, texture, form and structure.

Also the architectural style of the period, at the time was taken into consideration during conceptualization. Buildings during this period were characterized by thick walls, stone arches, stout wooden bars, ancient iron brackets etc.

3.2.2 Theory of Constructivism

“Constructivism is a style or movement in which assorted mechanical objects are combined into abstract mobile structural forms. Constructivism was a rejection of the idea of autonomous art. The movement was in favor of art as a practice for social purposes.” (Edwards, 2011-2016)

This theory focuses on conceiving knowledge through surveillance and synergy. Constructivism formed a good basis for the researcher to perceive and interpret knowledge acquired from varied objects and ideas to achieve final work. Also, considering Bruner’s view on the fact “that

language serves to mediate between environmental stimuli and the individual's response" (McLeod, 2008, p. 2) the researcher adopted two of his three modes of representation, namely the Iconic representation (image-based) and Symbolic representation (language-based).

Iconic representation "is where information is stored visually in the form of images (a mental picture in the mind's eye." Symbolic representation "is where information is stored in the form of a code or symbol, such as language." (McLeod, 2008, p. 2)

As this research sought to explore the scenic design as a storytelling form, the Iconic representation gave room for the use of conceptual development that evoked the subject matter slavery through imagery. Also, the use of the symbolic representation, which is language-based, gives room for the use of metaphors to represent issues of our culture through artifacts such as drums and masks. The symbolic meanings and representations attached to the modified – which in essence implies the language-based approach are used metaphorically to convey the message of slavery. These symbolic modifications were achieved through the use of recyclable materials and found objects.

Ideas were picked up from three artistic movements: namely Symbolism, Abstract Expressionism and Realism. Masks and drums were used as surrogates for the Ghanaian culture; projecting issues of loss of identity and language. The Nsikpe Dance Crest, Okuyi mask, the Hembra Helmet masks, and Kpanlogo drum were sources of inspiration for creation. (See fig. 7, 8, 9 & 10)

Lines, textures, form and colour, expresses the emotive effect of slavery (frustration, pain, anguish and sadness). They define the dungeon; reflecting an age-old yet solid edifice.

Also, the architectural style of the period, significantly the ‘ancient iron brackets’, was represented in the creation of a window: where this feature is characterized by a small opening with bars (made of small branches of the kapok tree) to evoke a certain form of bondage.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research analyzes the play text, a survey of appropriate tools and materials for building and construction, interviews with experts (in the field of Scenic Design, Site-Specific art and Sustainable living such as: David Amo, Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah and Luke Metelekamp). In addition, it utilizes the study and analysis of different styles in art presentation, reviews environmental artworks for comparative analysis relevant for the effective discussion of hypothesis in this project. The research employed a qualitative research design through the Art-based design in order to communicate data and findings well.

According to Shaun McNiff (2007), “art-based research can be defined as the systematic use of artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of art, as a primary way of understanding and examining experiences by both researchers, and the people that they involve in their study.”(p. 29). The art-based approach provides the freedom to use imagination and intuition as scientifically viable tools in the creation of a scenic design and in describing the tragic moment(s) of the play, slavery. The inspiration, conceptualization and creation of the project was solely borne by the researcher and as such, irrespective of the amount and depth of data gathered, the final work still evolves as a fluid idea, “almost” unaltered by any findings of the data gathering stage of this research work.

3.4 DATA SOURCES

Primary source of data for research were interviews carried out with experts in the field of scenic design, David Amo, Oh Nii Kwei Sowah, a Site- Specific artist and Luke Metelekamp, of the Sustainability Institute of the University of Stellenbosch. Relevant data was acquired on the demands of scenic design, the outcome of working in a non-conventional theatrical space, the role of site-specific space in the realization of a work of art as well as the role of nature in the socio-cultural development of our society.

Amo, an expert in scenic design and former director of the Dance Ensemble at the National Theatre was also consulted for this project. He explored the use of non-orthodox materials (polystyrene) in the building of scenery for the production of *The Slaves* at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio (conventional theatre space). Suitable materials for construction such as sawdust, egg crates, polystyrene, newspapers and bamboo, were suggested as environmentally friendly materials for work. Also the interview covered the creative and design processes of the production, at the drama studio, which includes style of presentation, themes and aesthetic experience between the audience, performers and the environment. Also with reference to pictures of the set, the researcher asked questions based on the choice of materials used in building scenery as well as the color scheme. Amo experimented on the use of non-orthodox materials in the construction of his set. He explored other materials such as the polystyrene, in his creation of scenic design as well as making room for more scenic units as well as props to be created rather than bought, thereby reducing cost and increasing the improvisation prowess of the artist. Below is a picture of the set design. (See fig. 4)



Figure 4 Scenic design of *The Slaves*, by David Amo in 2000 at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio (School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana)
Source: David Among, Set design of *The Slaves* at the E.S Studio, 2000.

The above image displays, set design of *The Slaves* by Amo. His style of presentation was representational and this was evident in use of elements of design as governed by the principles of design, in his composition. The scenic environment, imitates the architectural style of the Elmina Castle during the colonial era. Being questioned on his aim of style used, he purports that, the director of the play was also working within the same style and they both had similar ideas with respect to the themes of the play as highlighted by the playwright. Researcher also enquired on the aesthetic experience of the audience, performers and the environment. Amo replied that, the choice of stage which was the proscenium stage, limited the interaction between the audience and performers as the audience were glued to their seats, witnessing a performance in another world. There was little or no interaction between the performers and audience, since most performances on the proscenium stage created minimal room for interaction.

With respect to materials for construction, he used polystyrene, of which he covered entirely with gauze, soaked in white glue. This was to hold the polystyrene together firmly and also to prevent the penetration of paint. He made mention of the best choice of paint for this material, being acrylic paint, specifically for its matte feel as well as its translucency. Knowledge on Site-Specific Art and its performance was most relevant in the conceptualization of the design process of the research. The study raised relevant questions pertaining to the rationale behind a choice of space for this art performance, the contributory factor of the environment to the realization of an art and also the pros and cons of working in site-specific spaces. These pending questions, directed the researcher towards a face to face interview with Oh! Nii Kwei Sowah, a Site-Specific artist, on the 9th of January, 2016 at 2pm.

In his Concept of Tsoku Art, literally meaning, nothing gets spoilt, Sowah places significance on burnt wood, cut and broken trees as well as branches and gives a new identity to these natural objects by giving them a new self, through his artistic viewfinder. He asserts that, “nature in its gracefulness and abundances has provided it all (beauty, direction and opportunities) for us through our own means and of course through its means, only we fail to acknowledge it, and even if we did, we do not accord much importance to it and as such do not see its relevance. Such is the case of the Tsoku art”. (Sowah, 2015)

The Concept of Civilization is embodied in an analysis of the Cantoment Tsoku, which is likened to our society and the fragments of colonialism even after independence. The tarred road and the vehicle, connotes development and civilization in the country. However, the tree stump, being entangled by the metallic wires implies limited freedom in the case of the people of this country. Though independent for over fifty years, Ghanaians have limited opinions and are always reliant on foreign investors for development of our human and natural resources. (See fig. 5)



Figure 5 Cantoment Tsoku (Tsoku Art) Oh Nii Sowah
Source: Oh! Nii Sowah, Article on Tsoku Art, 2015

The notion of civilization in Tsoku Art: seeing burnt wood and broken branches subjected to metaphysical reasoning, enabled this research to be carried out, delving into the unphysical perception of the environment. It also helped in shaping the requirements and features to look out for in the selected space for the production of *The Slaves*. Furthermore, it helped immensely in the analysis of the play as well as in the individual break down of elements, understanding their relevance to the development of the plot and to the creation of the scenic design.

An interview with Luke Metelekamp, of the Sustainability Institute, Stellenbosch on his perception on nature, as an integral part of humanity and its functional quality in the socio-cultural development of civilization and he states that:

I see myself, intrinsically part of nature. I think as humans, we think of ourselves, as something different. Ultimately, we are just a sub category of it, we are very

much part of nature. Seeing ourselves, as separate or distinct or above nature, in some way, influences the way we interact with it. It makes us more harmful towards all the other organisms we live with and the rest of the natural world. It's an illusion, to think we are separate from nature and the more we can overcome that illusion, the better care, we are likely to take of the world around us (nature). If we can understand our own wellbeing, our own satisfaction, our spiritual connection and see nature, as something which is part of us, then we can better appreciate nature, in making the world a better place. (Metekamp, 2016)

This dialogue authenticated the fact that, humanity is fundamentally part of nature, and a creation in it, through scenic design, allows for a better interaction with nature. There is also an element of collaboration where the natural components of the environment, play a key role in the realization of the aftermath of the scenic design.

Significantly, works of environmental artist, Andy Goldsworthy, served as a relevant source of data for this research. He holds the view that, “seeing, feeling the material, the location and the form are all intrinsically tied up in the development of my work.” (Goldsworthy, 2015)

Goldsworthy, in the execution of his works, was concerned with the transience of his objects rather than a pleasant optical effect. Thus, his works were mostly ephemeral. Goldsworthy's relied solely on the natural state of color of his objects and did not enhance them, by way of artificial color additives. (See fig. 6)

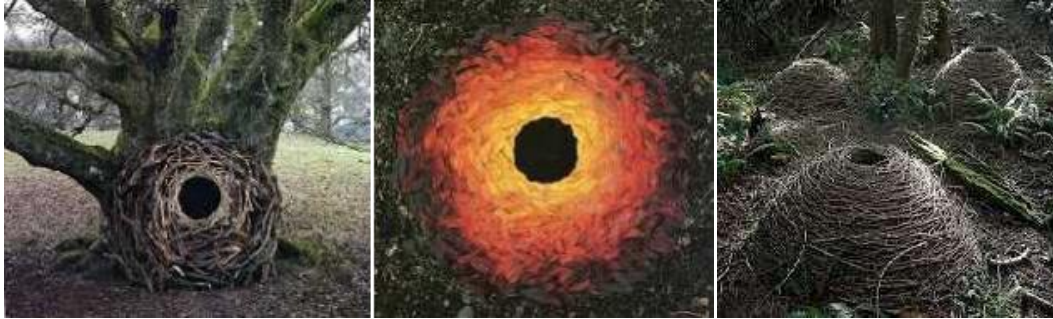


Figure 6 Environmental artworks by Andy Goldsworthy

Retrieved from www.google.com.GH/search?q=Andy+goldsworthy+artworks&source=Inks&tbm=isch&sa=X&bed=0ahUKEwiliqvVqdjQAhXJKsAKHbEFC9oQ_AUICCgB&biw=1366&bih=659:

This research intended to create a scenic environment that will not only last for a longer period of time but a work of art whose outcome was determined by the physical appearance (colour) of materials and solely reliant on the choice of color fit for the mood the environment intends to create.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The study made use of interviews as an instrument for data gathering. Interviews, were carried out with experts in Scenic Design, Site-Specific Art Practice and Sustainable Living, as mentioned earlier, which allowed for probing on questions and answers that required further clarification in areas such as style of art presentation, understanding natural space and its components, as well as availability and appropriateness of tools and materials for construction.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

Face to face interviews were carried out with key respondents being experts in the field of Scenic Design, Site-Specific Art Practice and Sustainable Living. Pre- interviews were held in setting of appointments with the concerned correspondents. These interviews had specific time limits of

approximately 25-30 minutes and were done using already prepared questions as a guide. Field notes from interviews were jotted down by researcher as well as a recorded on audiotapes to serve as an additional back up for data collected. Recordings were transcribed by researcher to retrieve relevant data gathered.

3.7 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The researcher employed the purposive sampling technique in the selection of a sample size for the study. According to Joseph Maxwell (2005), purposive sampling, is a sampling in which “particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices.” (p.88). Thus, the researcher chose a sample of a field of experts in the area of research, which in her view would provide the best source of information acquired over a period of practice. Purposive sampling technique was a preferable choice for the research due its ability to ensure optimization of time and resources.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected from interviews, play text, both published and unpublished articles, journals, as well as review from works of environmental artists, were analyzed based on the most relevant information needed to carry out research. Analyzed data from the play text was processed and represented in the creation of a scenic environment by way of a performance.

3.9 CREATIVE PROCESS

Allen Hurlburt (1981) in *The Design Content* identifies four steps relevant to a creative process. They are Analysis, Incubation or Remission, Inspiration and Verification.

Analysis in this context refers to fragmentation and making sense of both primary and secondary data acquired and how this data serves as a useful source of information for the design process. This process is followed by Incubation, which involves brainstorming and conceptual development for the creation of the scenic environment. Inspiration, within the research, connotes drawings, paintings, artifacts etc., within our cultural setting, that served as a source of inspiration, in embarking on this research. These include mainly drums and masks. Inspiration also involves the unification of acquired data with the imaginative and intuitive skill of the designer. Finally, Verification is the stage where, the created environment, is tested and evaluated by way of a performance, whether it met the goals, set to be achieved; the story of slavery and its cultural solution.

3.9.1 ANALYSIS (fragmentation and Synthesis of data)

“This initial step in the creative process is comparatively simple to understand because the activity is centered in the deductive or rational level of the mind. It begins with conscious absorption of all information given for a project, although the facts provided will rarely be sufficient for final solution.” (Hurlburt, 1981 p. 11). As explained by Hurlburt, the Analysis, is void of any intuitive or imaginative inputs, rather it makes meaning of data gathered. In the context of this study, there is total number of three read-throughs of the play text.

This gives a general idea of the story as well as highlighting of key elements, projected as relevant, by the playwright as well as other facts relevant to the conceptual development of the scenic environment. As this research sought to collaborate with nature, a comparative analysis of other sources such as works of other environmental artists, notably Andy Goldsworthy was

examined. Pictures of past scenic design of the play text, by Amo, was also looked at as well as a trip to the Elmina Castle to have an idea of the architectural style of the dungeon in order to enable researcher create an imitation of the idea of a dungeon.

Analysis of play text, drawings, works of Goldsworthy, scenic design by Mr. Amo and a visit to the Elmina Castle, were carried out deductively. This gave the researcher, a clearer view of materials available and to what extent they could be manipulated artistically to achieve the fullness of the envisioned scenic environment aesthetically.

3.9.2 INCUBATION (Conceptual Development)

“The second phase of the creative process involves a calm, detached period in which the factual material that has been analyzed and absorbed into the conscious level of the can contact and be influenced by the intuitive forces of the preconscious or inductive level of the mind.” (Hurlburt, 1981, p.12)

This stage ushers the researcher into a phase where imagination and intuition, merges with rationally analyzed data, from play text, environmental artworks, drawings, articles and journals. This stage of the creative process encompassed, brainstorming and idea development to reach a suitable design concept that best interprets the intent of the subject matter, slavery. It gave room for an interlocking of intuitive and rational data, in the creation of a scenic environment. However, within the research, intuitive data was most relevant.

Brainstorming commenced with how best to tell the story of slavery considering cultural elements such as the masks and drums. These two were to form the central image around which the story was told. Firstly, through the masks feelings of frustration, pain and sadness were

projected and also as a symbol of identity. Also, the use of drums was thought of, as the best art form to project the language of African culture.

3.9.3 INSPIRATION

“It is sometimes called illumination, and it is a direct out of the period of incubation and remission. This is where insight, imagination and intuition, blend with the preceding rational analysis to create a synthesis and arrive at a design concept.” (Hurlburt, 1981 p.12)

Masks and drums are used metaphorically, to embody issues such as the loss of identity and negligence of our Indigenous African Culture.

Masks play a key role in our cultural setting and are an integral part of the African cultural history. It forms a salient part of our rites of passage, such as birth, puberty, marriage, funeral etc. It is also significantly embodied in other forms of our culture, namely, festivals, enstoolment, durbars, just to mention a few. They are also used to connote religion, status, occupation, socio-cultural backgrounds etc. As an epitome of one's culture, they are a sign of authority and used as a symbol of peace.

Nsikpe Dance Crest, Okuyi and the Hembra Helmet masks, were sources of inspiration for this research.

Nsikpe Dance Crest, a wooden sculpture covered in antelope skin and worn on top of the head, by the people of Nsikpe, Nigeria. These people use this crest during important ceremonies to enforce laws and maintain peace. Ejagham of Calabar, Nigeria elaborates that, “Masks like this one originally were used as symbols to unify the diverse groups of the area. During colonial rule,

the associations controlling the masks were transformed into political organizations that enforced laws and maintained peace. With growing affluence in the oil-producing region the masks came to mark the status and prestige of the wearer”. (Ejagham, 2016)

The significance of the Crest, as a unifier, serves as a source of inspiration, during this stage of the creative process, as it embodied status and prestige as well as how the African’s ability to forgo a social status, when the need arises, most especially in solving socio-cultural issues. The Slaves in Abdallah’s *The Slaves* were from different parts of Africa, with different statuses. However, due to the delicate nature of their predicament, there was a need for unity in focusing on a possible solution to the problem rather than pointing accusing fingers at each other. (See fig. 7)



Figure 7 Nsikpe Dance Crest (Nigeria)

Retrieved from

www.Penn.museum/withart.visitphilly.com/artworks/nsikpe-dance-crest/

Okuyi Mask

Okuyi mask, of the people of Punu, Gabon, is also known as Makeuyi. It signifies an idealized female face. Most often, the masks have between nine to twelve scarification patterns on the forehead, and the temples, usually arranged in diamond shapes. The mask is believed to have a sexual significance and it is sometimes believed to be revered as a female ancestor. The face of the mask is painted with white kaolin, believed to be associated with healing, the afterlife and the spirits of the dead. The colour white, alludes to anti-witchcraft functions. This mask was initially part of funeral ceremonial rites but now, they are mostly used for entertainment purposes. Male dancers wear them, standing on poles and performing acrobatic feats in a dance called Mukudji. (Sathisan, 2011)

Inspiration drawn from this mask, served as a reminder of ancestors, who toiled for the freedom of Africa and the scarifications were employed in the creation of the emotive responses of the slaves. Also, being idealized as a female face, this research revered its form, as an honor and payment of last respect, to mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, who went through several forms of abuse, in the hands of the slave guards. It also highlighted the role of the African woman in our society, and how slavery has managed to belittle her status, significance and role in championing the African identity. (See fig. 8)



Retrieved from www.dorotheum.com/end/auctions/kataloge/list-lots-details/auktion/10483-tribal-art/lotID/83/lot/1665888-punu-gabon-an-old-typical-okuyi-mask.html

Figure 8 Okuyi Mask, Punu (Gabon)

Hemba Helmet Mask

The Suku, Hemba mask of the Democratic Republic of Congo, was born during male initiation ceremonies. They usually represented all departed ancestors. Mourning songs are sang, the vertical lines on the faces of masks, represented tears. The masks usually have a massive collar of raffia and there is usually a figure or animal on top of the mask. They are usually distinguished from other masks, by the use of white paint on the face. The masks are believed to be faces of deceased elders, usually of the maternal lineage. They are usually worn to bring better luck, during hunting, punishing of perpetrators as well as other healing ceremonies. (Met, 2016)

The vertical lines, on the face of this mask, representing tears, stimulated the definition of emotive feelings of frustration, sadness, pain and despair of the slaves and seven voices. They also inspired the remembrance of ancestors, usually males, who played a tremendous role for

Africa's emancipation. The mask was also a source of inspiration for Tunde, who represented the able youth in society, who looked forward to partaking in cultural ceremonies such as the initiation rites, ushering him into adulthood. (See fig. 9)



Retrieved from www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/310416:
Figure 9 Hema Helmet Mask, Suku (Democratic Republic of Congo)

Drums serve as a useful means of communication, in our society. “Drums seek to entertain, discover and enlighten how most of all the Ghanaian musical instruments came to being and played.” (Zor, 2013) In the context of the research, drums served as cultural symbols of communication and were also used in highlighting the lack of effective communication, as a result of foreign influence which has eventually led to the loss of identity (language) of a greater part of the African culture. H. Riruako (2005) cited in *Pan-Africanism/ African Nationalism*,

advances that, “for many years, the people of Africa have been subjected to cruel and unjust treatment by their former colonial masters that has left an indelible impact on their lives.”(p. 15)

He expresses the impact of colonialism on Africans, where they did not have a say in their place of residence; more to that, there was also an imposition of their linguistic and cultural influences, which was to a very large extent, unfavorable to Africans. Riruako believes the history of Africa, has been distorted and this might have led to distorted realities.

Therefore, in support of Riruako's notion of distorted realities, most especially of the African culture, this research sought to create an awareness of the loss of our cultural identity through the use of drums; at the same time using this artifact to create consciousness of the need to redefine what has long been forgotten through colonization. The Kpanlogo drum was used as a surrogate for the voices in highlighting this socio-cultural issue. To the traditional music man, sound is a unique language and whatever is played has a significant connotation.

Kpanlogo Drum

The Kpanlogo drum is a drum associated with the kpanlogo music. It is made of wood and covered with an animal skin and is held tight with pegs. It is common among the Gas and serves as a source of entertainment most especially among the youth. Paul Scribbles (2013) cites from *Ghana Art Centre*, he says "Kpanlogo came in the wake of Ghana's Independence, from the streets of Accra around 1972. It was music played by the youth, shooting from the spirit of freedom that their new found independence had brought them." It was banned by elders in the community, who thought the musical lyrics and dance movements were too profane and indecent. This notwithstanding, it was later accepted and adopted by the main political movement, the CPP. A lot of the Kpanlogo bands were being funded by the late President Dr.

Kwame Nkrumah. Nowadays the drum is enjoyed by all and performed at both unceremonious gatherings for pleasure as well as at Ga funerals and political settings. (Scribbles, 2013)

The Kpanlogo drum, in this context was revered as a tool of unification, due to the rhythm it produces and its ability to bring together, both the young and old in society. The researcher believed it served as a talking drum, conveying the message of unity and oneness, in the approach of matters of political and cultural significance. (See. Fig. 10)



Figure 10 Kpanlogo Drum of the Ga community
Retrieved from www.rovingsounds.org/blog/the-kpanlogo-a-drum-a-dance-rhythm-and-drum/

3.9.3.1 Sketches

With a design concept in mind, thumbnail sketches were developed with the 2B pencil, on an A3 sketch pad. (See fig. 11 &12)



Figure 11 Initial stage of Sketching
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 18/01/2016



Figure 12 Detailed Sketching
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 18/01/2016

3.9.3.2 Rendering and Collage

Rendering was done using the Rhinoceros software and from this a collage was constructed to serve as a reference for building and construction.

3.9.3.3 Construction of Masks

Construction of masks required a model of which the masks were developed. This model was developed from clay, gotten from an anthill. Since the masks to be constructed were of sizes of three feet by six inches, twelve buckets of clay were used.

The clay was poured onto the wooden board, covered with rubber and pounded by students with pieces of Wawa boards. As they turned smoother and finer, water was poured onto it in bits to achieve the required texture. The mixture was kneaded in portions.

Kneaded clay was transferred back into the buckets and was ready to work with. Modeling began, on pieces of one-eighth foot thick plywood, which served as the base for work.

Modeling began taken kneaded clay in bits onto the wooden base. This process was done gradually until the required shape of the masks was achieved. Below are pictures that show the above process. (See fig. 13)



Figure 13 Modeling of Clay
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 13/02/2016

A nail was used to draw the outline of the facial expressions onto the mask and also used in scooping out the excess clay. (See fig. 14)



Figure 14 Smoothing, Marking and Etching of Clay model
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 13/02/2016

Models were left to dry for a period of four days, in a cool dry place to prevent cracks and breakages on the surface. A quantity of Shea butter was applied onto the dried surface to prevent papers from sticking onto the molds as well as to ensure the easy removal of the masks from the models. Old newspapers as well as worn out posters were soaked in water to soften them and these were applied onto the glossy surface of the models. This technique is known as tear and paste. Subsequent layers of paper were also soaked in a solution of water and white glue, to keep these papers firm on the models. Cooked cassava starch was used as an alternative adhesive for this process to save cost. (See fig. 15)



Figure 15 Papier Marche
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 17/02/2016

Twenty layers of paper were applied onto the models. This was to enable an easy removal when dried and also to make them firmer and durable. Brown paper acquired from used cement bags were applied as last layer for the masks to give a uniform finish.

3.9.3.4 Construction of Chains

As part of the scenic design, chains represented oppression and restriction in slavery. Old newsprints were folded into thinner forms and the edges joined together using white glue. They were rolled into rings and interlocked using the masking tape. They were later dipped in clay water to achieve the old and rusty effect on the chains. (See fig. 16)



Figure 16 Constructions and Colouration of Chains
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 19/02/2016

3.9.3.5 Utilizing found objects

Found objects (natural and man-made) were used for creation. Plastic bottles were disfigured and dipped in clay solution for coloration. (See fig. 17)



Figure 17 Disfiguring of plastic water bottles and coloration in clay solution
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 20/02/2016

3.9.3.6 Construction of Entrance

In constructing the entrance, the researcher created a design that forced the audience to bend while entering the dungeon. This was to give the audience the opportunity to feel a concept I term as emotional subjugation. This is where an audience is transposed into an emotional state of forced labor/slavery. Within the Ghanaian cultural context, bending or leaning forward while

greeting a chief/king or while entering a shrine is a sign of submission. Transposing this idea into the slave camp for the slaves meant the lack of independence. Additionally, there was a need to create a walkway that was dark and not easily visible which the scenic designer believed will lunge the audience into a pseudo-psychological state of entering the dungeon and also getting them to sympathize with the slaves. Parts of the selected trees were considered aesthetically viable, in the realization of the main design as these were showcased in the structure of the entrance.

A total of twelve bamboos were used by the construction team at an average height of seventeen feet. Six of these bamboos were used as braises to keep the skeletal structure, strong enough to withstand bad weather conditions such as heavy rainfall. The other six were split into quarters with a cutlass. Creeping plants also taken from the space; Legon Botanical Garden, were used to tie certain portions of the frame and most of it joined using the two and three inch nails. (See fig.18)



Figure 18 Construction of Entrance
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 28/02/2016

Brown cement papers were put together with white glue and were fastened onto the bamboos with another stronger adhesive known as the *shoemaker's glue* to prevent it from peeling off. Their irregular shapes gave the entrance an organic look. There was also no enhancement in the form of colour at the outer area of the entrance. (See fig. 19)



Figure 19 Covering of Entrance with jute and cement papers
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 3/03/ 2016

Jute sacks were used as the inner lining of the entrance. These were cut open and joined together using the shoemaker's glue and fastened onto the bamboo using the one-inch nail. However, in certain areas, these sacks had to be tied, to vary the methods of fastening. Sacks were covered with undiluted black emulsion paint to create the feel of darkness when entering the dungeon. Also, the upper region of the entrance was covered with palm branches. These were arranged diagonally following the skeletal structure of the entrance while excess branches and their leaves were trimmed off, using shears. The lower region of the entrance was covered with dried leaves to soften the edges of the entrance and also to hide unwanted parts of the sacks. (See fig. 20)



Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

Figure 20 Entrance to Dungeon

3.9.3.7 Construction of dungeon

The setting of *The Slaves* is at the coast of the Elmina Castle but due to the experimental nature of this project, the researcher sought to move out of the conventional theatre space which made it easier for this setting to be projected into a found space where negotiation became a key factor in the creative process. There was a collaboration of the found space with the scenic design, where specific trees, formed a part of the conceptual development of the environment.

Construction of skeletal structure

Bamboos were split and fastened with nails (3 and 2 inches) onto the trees horizontally, vertically and diagonally. Since the sizes in between the spaces varied, measurement had to be taken time and again to ensure the right length of bamboo.

In designing within the found space, blueprints could not be anything more than a reference for the idea to be projected and this was because the structure of the trees became the central focus of the scenic designer's creative work, as every creation had to outline the structure of the Kapok trees in order for a successful negotiation and to achieve a purposive design. Seats were also

designed to blend into the structure of the trees and were also constructed with smaller sizes of the bamboo and the strong branches of the Kapok trees.

Two types of cement bags were acquired for this project. These bags were made of both paper and jute. However, those made of paper were gently separated and thorn up to make them flatter and easier to fasten with the glue. A pair of scissors was used in opening up the ones made of jute due to their hardened texture. White glue was used in joining the papers into a large piece to make covering of the framework easier and simpler. The shoemaker's glue was also used to fasten the bags made from jute as their texture required a stronger adhesive for effect. (See fig. 21)



Figure 21 Jute Sacks and Cement Papers used for backdrop
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 2/03/2016

Covering of skeletal structure

Papers joined together by the designing team, were used in covering the framework of the design. Though they were joined together into three large pieces, they were cut to fit the structure of the trees during the covering. Both the shoemaker's glue and one inch nails were used in fastening the layers of paper onto the skeletal structure. This process was time consuming and required a lot of patience. Also, the designer resorted to the use of the grey baft fabric, to vary the material for design, both in texture and form, of the final outcome of design.

The fabric was primed; a solution of white glue was applied twice onto the surface of the fabric with the aid of a brush, after it dried up, white emulsion paint was added to the solution and served as the last process, which made the fabric strong, sealed all pores and prevented paint from penetrating and flooding to other areas of the fabric. (See fig. 22)



Figure 22 Covering of Framework for Dungeon
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 2/03/2016

3.9.3.8 Fixing of Masks onto Trees

After covering, masks were fixed onto some selected trees. Three inch nails were used to fasten the masks onto these trees. Pieces of tree barks were fixed at the edges of the masks with shoemaker's glue to create the notion of protruded faces in a state of frustration, sadness and pain trying to be freed from thralldom. During the process, the glue was applied and allowed a maximum period of seven minutes before being fastened onto the masks, as immediate application was ineffective. (See fig. 23)



Figure 23 Masks positioned on trees
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 3/03/2016

3.9.3.9 Painting process

Four hues, namely beige, smoke grey, black and white were mixed together to achieve the color effect, 'Beach Rock', the scenic designer required. This process was key to achieving the purpose of negotiation with the natural space.

The first step to painting was achieving the base color of the set and this was done using brushes and thick pieces of foam. Tints and shades were made adding either white or black to the paint. Dried clay was also soaked in a little amount of water and smeared onto the set using the fingers, to achieve the effect of dirty walls and also give the illusion of old age. (See fig. 24)



Figure 24 Mixing of Paint
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 3/03/2016

3.9.3.10 Addition of Embellishments

After completion of the design, the scenic designer took a walk through the Legon Botanical Garden, in search of elements within the space that would enhance the final work. Long and thick creeping plants which hanged on trees were pulled and inculcated into the design, firstly to blend the design into nature, giving it a sense of belonging and also to improve upon the look of the final work. (See fig. 25)



Figure 25 Creeping plants for set dressing
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 4/03/2016

Branches of the kapok and mango trees were also used in covering part of the window as well as the upper region of the backdrop to represent the growth of these plants within the structures thereby blending the design into the space. Chains constructed were also fixed onto most of the trees as part of achieving the overall effect of a dungeon.

3.9.3.11 Dressing of Set

This design was intended to utilize little or no props. This notwithstanding, the scenic designer as part of conceptualization used drums to project the idea of culture. A drum is an art form, common to most Africans and serves the purpose of entertainment, communication, information etc. However, within the context of this research, this artifact was used in projecting the loss of the African identity through slave trade and the introduction of western cultures which do not necessarily fit into our socio-cultural context. The different sizes of these drums also represent various statuses of the characters as well as their genders. Chains were hanged around some drums to represent enslavement of culture and indigenous values of the African. (See fig. 26)



Figure 26 Final outcome of Scenic Design

Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

3.9.4 VERIFICATION

Hurlburt (1981) says that, “It is never enough that the outcome the exercise be creative and original. It must also solve the problem in a valid and useful way. The appropriateness of the solution is verified by checking it in terms of original guidelines or information given, research done and the designer’s accumulated knowledge experience...”. (p.13)

This final stage of the creative process allowed for an interpretation and feedback on the outcome of the scenic design.

3.9.4.1 Performance

Performance took place on the Sunday, 6th of March, 2016 at the Legon Botanical Gardens at exactly 4:30pm. This was because the time of day was contributing to setting the mood of the play since the scenic designer was not considering the use of artificial lights. Performance lasted for a period of forty-five minutes which was followed by interaction with the audience on their inputs to the show. (See fig. 27)



Figure 27 Performance of *The Slaves*
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

3.9.4.2 Feedback from Audience

Interactions immediately followed after the performance, when audience asked questions, directed towards the design concept, choice of space, use of mask and drums as well as the absence of other technical elements such as light and sound.

Firstly, the main focus of this research was to move away from the conventional theatre spaces, most especially the Proscenium stage, and exploring other found spaces, thereby unfolding the possibility of engaging these spaces as alternative theatrical site. Moreover, the research focused on using solely elements within our socio-cultural setting, such as the drums and masks as a channel in unearthing serious issues of identity and communication, in so doing, creating awareness. This was executed through a performance.

Masks are used allegorically, to represent the seven voices in the story, in search of the slaves as well as a symbol of our identity. These voices are from different parts of Africa and they enlighten us on the background of the characters in the play. They do not have names and are

recognized as voice one, two, three, four, five, six and seven. These voices express themselves differently through pain, frustration, despair and anger. These the researcher showcased by creating these expressions, and specifically fixing them on the trees.

Moving away from the coast into a forest patch, the playwright makes us aware of the fact that the search party (seven voices) were in search of the slaves, along the coast of the beach and also in the forest, as he highlights, “the Search Party scenes take place on beaches and in forests in various parts of Africa.” This was another motivating factor, for moving into the forest patch and engaging specific Kapok trees as part of the scenic design.

This project sort to minimize or eliminate the use of other theatrical elements such as light and sound. Its purpose was to create an environment void of artificial light and sound. The time of day for the performance, which was set at 4:30 pm, played a key role in setting the mood of the play, prior to the production, different times of the day were considered and this timeframe happened to be the most suitable and this was because, any time earlier, there would be issues of too much sunlight and any time later, there will be too much darkness. Since there was no external power source to our disposal, there was a need to be innovative with regards to the time of performance. Also, the scenic designer wanted to include to the fullest, the natural ambience and for that reason songs were sang live and a boom box was used in the provision of an in-house music, to usher-in the audience.

The scenic designer was able to achieve an effect of a Dungeon with an entrance, where audience and performers had to walk through the dark and short entrance. Also, no levels were created for the stage in order to create better relationship or connection between the audience, performers and the space.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

This chapter analyzes the project work, firstly by giving the synopsis of the play, *The Slaves*. It discusses an inventory and analysis of every element found on the set; how they interact with each other in the scenic design. Finally, the chapter interprets the scenic design and to what extent it contributed in providing a solution to a socio-cultural problem as well as how the artist's background affected the outcome of the work.

4.2 Synopsis of Play

Abdallah's *The Slaves* is a tragedy set in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Africa. The atmosphere of the play projects feelings of frustration, sadness, anguish and pain felt by the slaves who constantly reminisced their lives before capture. In their despair, they also pondered over their impending familiarization with their new environment as well as accepting the futility of ever returning. These notable moods became the basis for projecting my artistic interpretation of the scenic environment.

4.3 The natural environment for scenic design

The spatial configuration of the environment for this study encompassed huge kapok trees, a mango tree and a ground totally covered with both fresh and dried leaves broken branches and dried 'seed capsules' of the kapok trees. The creation of the scenic design made use of the kapok trees which formed part of the framework during construction. "A giant in the rainforests, the

kapok tree, can reach up to 200 feet in height...the trunk can expand to nine or ten feet in diameter...as its seeds are easily blown into areas, kapok trees are some of the first to colonize open areas in the rain forest.” (Jukofsky, 2002)

The power of these trees to take over space, brought to mind the story of slave trade and colonization in Africa. Orwa et al (2009) further explains that, “...Ceiba Pentandra (kapok tree) is a tall, deciduous tree bearing, short prickles all along the trunk and branches; supported by prolonged buttresses at the base...”. The characteristics of the tree, as a giant in the rain forest as well as its ability to support the branches and trunk, due to its buttressed base, appeared as a reliable support in the construction of the skeletal structure of the scenic design (due to its durability). Perceptually, its arrangement being closely together reflected an image of insufficiency in availability of enough space for each of these huge trees to dwell in. This physical configuration inspired the notion of a kind of bondage, hence slavery and this is where Abdallah’s *The Slaves* came in handy as a source material for the experiment. (See fig. 28)

This study sought to move away from the Orthodox space (proscenium) into an indigenous traditional space; this was to cause a dramatic shift in the intent of the playwright. In other words, a reinterpretation of the play, situating the action in the heart of a forest, in the presence of the gods (which are represented using masks); relying on our indigenous belief and knowledge systems and the development of the African culturally, socially, economically, spiritually especially after colonialism. There was a need to move into this space for its experimental nature as well as allow the actors to have a communal experience and partake in the entire design process.



Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 14/12/2015

Figure 28 natural environments for the creation scenic design

4.4 Found objects for scenic design

Found objects have been manipulated one way or the other by painting, taping, assembling and distortion; to be used for scenic design. According to Schultz (2012) found objects refer to “...an object found or picked up at random and presented as a rarity or a work of art...” (p. 328). Found objects were categorized into natural materials and recyclable materials with little or no modification for the purpose of scenic design. Natural materials included branches, bamboo, creeping plants, tree barks and dried leaves; recyclable materials (manmade) encompassed old newsprints, worn-out posters, water bottles, cement paper bags and jute sacks. These objects were modified (either by taping, gluing, painting and assemblage) to increase its volume, improve texture and distort its appearance for effective usage.

4.4.1 Natural materials

Natural materials included branches, bamboos, creeping plants, tree barks and dried leaves; they were used in their original state for the creation of scenic design for *The Slaves*. Some of these

materials were altered to enable their effective use during construction of the scenic design. Bamboos were split into halves and quarters for the construction of framework for the entrance as well as the main dungeon. Due to the stiff nature of the creeping plants, they were nailed onto the 'set', to control its haphazard movement. Branches (palm) were used in covering the top of the entrance; they were arranged, vertically, horizontally and diagonally to reduce the reflection of sunlight. Also, the dried leaves were used in covering the rough edges beneath the walkway. In the end, these natural materials were in an 'organic unity' with the other elements of design. The use of natural materials in this experiment was primarily to collaborate with nature by improvising with natural elements in the creation of the scenic design. Also, it considered the feasibility of designing with these natural materials and encouraging its utilization in the practice of scenic design; thereby adding to the 'conventional' materials available for designing.

4.4.2 Recyclable materials

Cement paper bags, jute sacks, water bottles, old newsprints and worn-out posters were altered for the creation of the scenic design. Alterations made, improved the texture, strength and durability of the materials making them easier to manipulate during construction. For instance, cement paper bags were split opened, making them flatter; they were then assembled together using white glue to increase their size for covering the skeletal structure of the design. Plastic water bottles were disfigured and dipped in thick clay solution for coloration; which were scattered on the floor of the dungeon to indicate damaged rusty chains. Old newsprints were folded into a thin file and rolled into rings with the aid of a masking tape for the creation of chains; afterwards dipped in clay solution to achieve rustiness. Worn-out posters, cement papers and old newsprints were used for papier mache and tear and paste (for construction of masks). The use of recyclable materials for this study was primarily to explore the creation of scenic

design with unconventional materials; elevate these waste products and reclaiming them as works of art. Within the context of use, (in this research) the recyclable materials for creation in a natural environment reflected the invasion of the Ghanaian cultural territory through colonization and imperialism.

4.5 STYLE OF PRESENTATION

Colour, form and texture of dungeon, reflected an age-old yet solid building. Masks and drums embodied the Ghanaian culture; projecting issues of loss of identity and language. The Nsikpe Dance Crest, Okuyi mask, the Hembra Helmet masks, Dondo and Kpanlogo drums were sources of inspiration for creation. (See fig. 7, 8, 9 & 10 of Chapter 3)

Furthermore, ideas were also pulled out from realism, where the ‘ancient iron brackets’, a characteristic of the architectural style of cells, was represented in creation. A window was blocked with bars (made of small branches of the kapok tree) to reflect a form of captivity.

4.6 Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Scenic Design in nature with found objects

The scenic environment sought to depict the psycho-physical effects of a dungeon to slaves and generations after who learnt of these historical facts. Socio-cultural issues encompassed: inter-tribal conflict, racial injustice, ‘colonization’ of the African mind and underdevelopment (mostly socio-economic) after independence. The set was divided in two parts; the entrance and the main dungeon. They are analyzed as follows:

A brown entrance that forced the audience to bend while entering the dungeon was created. This was to give the audience the opportunity to feel a concept I term as emotional subjugation. This is where an audience is transposed into an emotional state of forced labor/slavery. Within the

Ghanaian cultural context, bending or leaning forward while greeting a chief/king or while entering a shrine is a sign of submission. Transposing this idea into the slave camp for the slaves meant the lack of independence. Additionally, the dark walkway lunged the audience into a pseudo-psychological state of entering the dungeon and also getting them to sympathize with the slaves. Parts of the selected kapok trees were considered aesthetically relevant, in the realization of the main design –most especially their buttressed trunks– as these were fused into the creation of the structural form of the entrance and main dungeon. (See fig.29)

The cave-like entrance (which evoked an age-old structure) created an illusion of depth. It reflected the inability of Ghanaians (home and Diaspora) to trace their cultural routes even after independence. The color black is usually associated with fear and the unknown; for that matter, the dark walkway symbolized fear and discomfort of the slaves. It also stimulated hopelessness of ever being liberated from slavery of the mind and body.



Fig.29 Entrance of dungeon
Source: Researcher,
fieldwork, 6/03/2016

The main dungeon encompassed seven masks, drums, chains, broken faces, disfigured water bottles as well as plants. These visual elements put together in the composition, had significant influence on the story, *The Slaves*.

Masks had expressions almost likened to tribal marks –which is a form of body art– common to the people from the Northern part of Ghana as well as other tribes in Africa. This familiar feature of the mask symbolizes the extent to which part of our culture (language and identity) has been marred by slavery and colonization; its end results being the expression of pain, sadness and frustration. Different values of brown, used on the masks signified the different tribes in Ghana as well as the extent of damage slavery had caused. It could be said that the dark brown masks signified a higher level of infiltration of culture and development, whereas the light beige masks represented a moderate to lower level of intrusion of Western paradigms. These infiltrations, arising mostly as a result of imperialism and colonialism. (See fig.30)



Fig. 30 Masks in the dungeon
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

Another common feature of the masks was their widely opened mouths connoting diverse petitions and cries of the black man, for liberation. The sizes of masks shrunk as they were fixed on the large kapok trees. This image gave a reflection of how our indigenous Ghanaian culture is

gradually losing its grounds. The picture also echoed an entire takeover of the continent, by Europeans: the captivity of the African mind, in believing that our indigenous culture is an inhibition to socio-cultural development. Additionally, the expressions of pain, sadness and frustration highlighted the African population who stood firm and believed in the essence of culture (language and identity). Characters in the play such as Segou and the Priest are epitomes of this strong belief, as they exhibited strong-willed spirits most especially in their speech, almost always staying positive and looking forward to the day of freedom.

Masks were constructed without eyes: resembling those of which had been plucked out of their sockets. As Ghanaians, it could be said that, our culture is the 'eye' of our strength. Its absence mirrors our inability to find our cultural roots back to where we truly belong. The use of pieces of tree barks at the edges of masks symbolized our level of strength in an attempt to fight for freedom. Ironically, these pieces' project fragmentation of our cultural heritage and our strive to put back the bits and pieces of what is left of it. (See fig.30)

Four of the masks were fixed on trees and two on walls of the main dungeon; representing the assured presence of our ancestors in the dungeon who lost their freedom through slavery. The final mask positioned at the opposite end of the dungeon (on a tree) was suggestive of the high level of security in the dungeon. Metaphorically, it represents cultural diversity between Europeans and Africans. This feature was also likened to Tomas and other guards who monitored and guarded the dungeon to prevent any escape.

The kpanlogo drum was used as a surrogate in highlighting the strength of our language and communication. To the traditional man, sound is a unique language and whatever is played has a significant connotation. A total number of three drums of different sizes were positioned on set. One served as a seat for Segou, the master drummer, which signified his knowledge about his

cultural heritage through drumming as well as his performance of initiation rites for the youth, into adulthood. The varied sizes of the drums also symbolized gender (male and female). Two of these drums (small in size) represented women and children: defenseless victims of slavery. The bigger drum represented the men; their ability to stand firm in integrity and loyalty to their culture. The smaller drums had little or no patterns and inscriptions engraved on them. It could be said that it reflected the gradual extinction of our culture leaving nothing for posterity. (see fig.31)



Figure 31 Drums for set dressing
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

The use of drums on the whole signified the loss of contact through communication between slaves and their lineages. One of the small drums was positioned in the trunk of the mango tree and bound with chains. The mango tree was a foreign plant in the midst of the kapok tree dominated area: as this suggested the unwanted presence of slave masters, trapping natives of Africa. It also symbolizes immobility of self and thought.

Chains are symbols mostly suggestive of oppression. They were hung on trees; indicating captivity of the Ghanaian mind in the areas of language and identity. Most chains, although very rusty were still used in binding slaves. This reflected the cunning nature of Europeans pretending to be friends of the black people and hiding their real intentions of robbing them. (See fig.32)



Figure 32 Chains and broken faces
Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 6/03/2016

Parts of the broken faces (made of clay) were scattered on the floors of the dungeon, signifying the loss of identity and our inability as Ghanaians, to trace back what we once held dear. Its spread also represented different locations in Europe, serving as hosts for slaves. (See fig.32)

Disfigured brown water bottles were also scattered on the floor to symbolize the level of culture distortion to date. It also signified the disregard of our culture by Europeans, classifying our beliefs and values as barbaric.

Green signifies strength, freshness and continuity. Creeping plants and branches (hang loosely on scenic environment) represented the hope of these slaves for freedom and also signified how close the culprits of slave trade were; some being fellow black men. (See fig.33)



Figure 33 fresh plants (kapok branches and creeping plants) for set dressing
Source: Researcher, fieldwork,6/03/2016

The scenic design encompassed a dungeon, constructed to blend into the structure of the huge kapok trees in nature. The impression was that; this structure was in the middle of the forest which only meant that escape was not a good option for the slaves; thus anyone who tried to escape either lost their way or was killed by wild animals. The thick walls as well as its location in the forest set the mood of hopelessness, in the hearts of the slaves. It also painted a picture of an effortless toil of Ghanaians, in restoring what has been lost through slavery and how to nurture and preserve what is left of our culture.

The huge kapok trees signified a total takeover of the Europeans through slavery and colonialism. It also suggested the weakness of the Ghanaians, to free themselves of the chain of slavery. Thick walls built into these trees reflected the rigid security measures implemented by the slave masters; mechanisms they (colonizers) put in place to make sure we accept their system of culture, with or without our consent.

Walls of the dungeon were covered with dirt and fingerprints from hands and feet of slaves which signified a state of unrest and hard labor. Symbolically, fingerprints could be said to evoke identity and for that matter belief of one's values and culture. Textures on the walls made from dirt and fingerprints served as a word of caution to the Europeans. It suggested that Ghanaians are not as negligent as most colonizers and imperialists perceive them to be. There is a unique mode of communication through our symbols, oral tradition, art forms etc. which the white man has no knowledge of.

Seats created within the scenic environment were to evoke a state of rest, both in the minds and bodies of the Ghanaian. This gave a reflection of the gaining of our independence since 1957 and how far we have come as a nation, in promoting our cultural heritage in and out of the Diaspora (mostly to the youth).

A small window with bars made of branches, was created for ventilation. This was needed in the dungeon as it was imagined that odors from different bodies of men and women, left a strong stench. The window was inaccessible to the slaves as a result of its position. This called to mind how unreachable their freedom was at that particular time. (See fig.6)

As stated earlier, the spatial configuration of the identified environment (for the experiment), highlighted the notion of slavery; a subject matter of interest to aesthetically interpret through imagery. Under this subject matter, themes projected by researcher were familiar views of the

playwright. Abdallah, purports that, “slavery and colonialism continue in new guise to wreak havoc on the bodies, minds and souls of countless millions, even as they seek to perpetuate the devastation of our history, culture and economy.” (Abdallah, 2011, p. iii) Adding to his voice, the researcher perceived mental slavery as a negative stronghold on human existence. Most Ghanaians are slaves of different circumstances; unemployment, disappointment, lack of education, under development etc. In the quest to make ourselves feel better and accepted worldwide, we fall to Western paradigms which do not conform to our way of life. Until our minds are decolonized there will continue to be stagnation in our nation’s socio-cultural development.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo posits that, “language carries culture and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world.” (Thiongo, 1986, p. 17) Adding on, the researcher believes that our art forms and artifacts also make up for the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Through the full expression of an understanding of this cultural menace, the researcher used cultural artifacts such as masks and drums common to most Ghanaians (and Africans) as symbols to highlight issues of loss of identity and language.

Projecting our identity and language through art, using these selected artifacts was a point of raising an awareness of the role of symbols, art forms and artifacts in socio-cultural development. We are brought to the realization that African symbols, art forms and artifacts which forms a major part of our culture, could be used as tools for highlighting socio-cultural issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 SUMMARY

The mandate of this study was to extend the boundaries of creating Scenic design through engaging in non-conventional theatre elements such as forest settings as alternative sites for the exploration of artistic intent and re-interpretation. Through the Art-based research approach and through improvisation, the play by Abdallah, *The Slaves* was subject to an artistic reinterpretation by virtue of motivation derived from nature and its elements.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This research challenges conventions of theatre stages to look beyond the conventional space for Theatre Art practice and explore creation within the natural environment. Art is life and a reflection of nature, hence the need not only to draw inspiration from but also to engage and collaborate with. Like any other space, the forest patch comes with its own demands though it complements an audience- performer relationship as well as gives more room for creativity and exploration. The form of exploration within a found space, promotes an extensive use of imagination and intuition.

Through this research, awareness has been created on the appreciation of nature (as therapeutic approach to relaxation) as well as serving as muse to the creative world of scenic design.

Following up from the project and moving towards the promotion of natural environment for the purpose of Theatre, it will not only be worthwhile challenging the students within this discipline

to explore this space for production of artworks but also promote the practice of environmental art in the field of Theatre.

5.3 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A primary issue this research sought to project was creating a niche between art and nature through the creation of scenic design. It sought to move away from the procedure of creation within conventional proscenium space. Since many artist draw inspiration from nature, the project sought to highlight to what extent and challenge the creative ability of the scenic designer can be stirred to embracing the use of other found spaces. Scenic design has its demands and the availability of space is key. Limited conventional spaces calls for utilization of found spaces for the purpose of artistic projections. Thus, this research recommends an extensive exploration of the natural environment for theatre and art practices. This will allow for students to explore their creative abilities beyond influence from play text and the stage alone.

Also the question of the influence of modern trends on the creative process was projected. This also included the use of other technical elements such as light and sound to create a complete spectacle. The project exempted the use of technical elements such as artificial light and solely relied on the natural light to set the mood for the performance. There was also minimal use of artificial sound but for the background music, played from a boom box. The natural ambience created a soothing atmosphere and also set the tone for characters. This research recommends the minimal use of these mentioned elements in performances to experience what nature has to offer, serving as a complement in the absence of these elements.

Furthermore, the research made use of recyclable materials and found objects in the creation of design. These included old newspapers, cement paper bags, water bottles, tree barks, tree

branches and seeds. Though there was a backup with the use of nails, glue and grey baft, the creation of this environment solely relied on found objects and recyclable materials. This notwithstanding an ‘organic’ environment was its end result. This study will recommend the use of these materials in the creative process, not only to challenge the scenic designer but to explore other alternative materials available for creation.

Furthermore, the intent of the research to engage the environment was also to generate revenue through patronage of performances within the environment thus the research recommends measures to be put in place for box office management within this space for generation of revenue, which could be channeled back into the management of these environments in supporting more performances.

Performance within the natural environment, though relaxing to the mind and body, might have performances interfered by environmental hazards such as heavy rains and storms, as faced by this project. Also, there is a tendency of the natural ambience supporting or interfering with the mood of the performance. This however might be reliant on the emotional tone required for that particular performance.

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APPENDIX:

TOOLS AND MATERIALS FOR PROJECT

TOOLS/MATERIALS	USES
Cement paper	For the final layer of mask and covering the framework of entrance and dungeon.
Jute sacks	For the inner lining of entrance and dungeon
Grey baft	For covering the framework of dungeon
White glue	For treatment (priming) of grey baft, mask (Papier Marche), joining of cement papers for covering of framework.
Shoemaker's glue	For joining jute sacks and fixing tree barks onto the trees.
Pair of scissor	For cutting of jute sacks and papers
Nails (1,2,3)	For fastening of bamboo onto trees
Cutlass	For cutting and splitting of bamboos and palm branches
Hammer	For fastening of nails on tree and bamboos
Claw bar	For taking out unwanted nails from framework of entrance and dungeon
Rip saw	For cutting of strong branches and bamboo
Brushes (sable and bristle)	For application of paint on backdrop and glue onto tree barks, jute sacks, papers
Paint	For coloring of mask, chains and backdrop
Foam	For application of paint
Shea butter	Smearred onto modelled mask
Old news prints	For Papier Marche for mask and construction of chains

Clay	For modelling of clay and coloring of chains, dungeon
Wooden board	Served as a base for modelling masks
Creeping plant	For set dressing
Water bottles	For set dressing
Masking tape	For interlocking of chains
Water	For mixing paint and clay
Trees barks	For covering the edges of masks on trees
Palm branches	For covering of upper region of dungeon
A4 sheets	For thumbnail sketches
Pencils	For sketching
Eraser	For cleaning unwanted pencil marks from sketches

BUDGET FOR SCENIC DESIGN OF *THE SLAVES*

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL AMOUNT
Cement papers	250 pcs.	0.50	125.00
Greybaft	15 yards	6.00	90.00
Masking tape	7 rolls	5.00	35.00
Shoemaker's glue	1 gallon	75.00	75.00
White glue	2 gallons	60.00	60.00
Paint (emulsion)	5 buckets	25.00	125.00
Shea butter		2.00	10.00
foam	1 pc.	1.00	1.00
Jute sacks	50 pcs.	0.50	50.00
nails	10 pnds.	6.50	65.00
transportation			100.00
refreshment			150.00
Video coverage			150.00
		Total Sum	1036.00

THE SLAVES - REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	TIME	VENUE
10/feb/16	Wednesday	4pm	INFO CENTER
11/feb/16	Thursday	4pm	INFO CENTER
12/feb/16	Friday	4pm	INFO CENTER
15/feb/16	Monday	4pm	INFO CENTER
16/feb/16	Tuesday	4pm	INFO CENTER
17/feb/16	Wednesday	4pm	INFO CENTER
18/feb/16	Thursday	4pm	INFO CENTER
19/feb/16	Friday	4pm	INFO CENTER
20/feb/16	Saturday		INFO CENTER
21/feb/16	Sunday		INFO CENTER
22/feb/16	Monday	4pm	INFO CENTER
23/feb/16	Tuesday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
24/feb/16	Wednesday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
25/feb/16	Thursday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
26/feb/16	Friday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
27/feb/16	Saturday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
28/feb/16	Sunday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens

29/feb/16	Monday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
1/mar/16	Tuesday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
2/mar/16	Wednesday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
3/mar/16	Thursday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
4/mar/16	Friday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
5/mar/16	Saturday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens
6/mar/16	Sunday	4pm	Legon Botanical Gardens

DIRECTOR – TWUM ELIJAH OWUSU

SCENIC DESIGNER – AGNES ADOMAKO- MENSAH

COSTUME DESIGNER – WENDY AKUSIKA MAMIYA

STAGE MANAGER – KATE AQUAH

PICTURES OF SCENIC CONSTRUCTION AND REHEARSAL



Source: Researcher, fieldwork, 4/03/2016

PROGRAM OF THE SLAVES

Synopsis

In today's world, are we still enslaved? Do you think we are free? This play exposes the circumstances behind a certain people's history. This history is centered on their captivity and enslavement. How are they going to be free? How are we going to be free? Are we ever going to be free?

CAST

MARGAN	Adams Abdul Aziz
MAN	Joseph Yoyowa
PRIEST	Lionel Larbi
SEGOU	Safo Samuel Okyere
DIKKO	Esther Nyarko
NAA	Pearl Ampofo
AYANDA	Eunice Dede Tetteh
BINTA	Nana Achimba Lawson
TUNDE	Dave Anane Drueh
FIRST VOICE	Aisha Kaleem
SECOND VOICE	Victor Appiah Nuamah
THIRD VOICE	Angela Akuamoah
FOURTH VOICE	Samuel Obere - Danso
SIXTH VOICE	Rhonda Appalo
SEVENTH VOICE	Christiana Akua Sieben Daku

CRISERS/ CHORUS

Sharon Awo Afari Djan	Princess Solace Adotey
Ernestina Awuah Twumasi	Abigail Antwi
Beatrice Appiah	Vera Asante
Nwamaka Inagbura Joy	Josephine Edze

SET DESIGNER

Agnes Adomah

SET CREW

Josephine Edze	Ethel Saakyibea Annah
Ernest Akasi Mireku	Janet Akosua Agana
Dave Anane Drueh	Emmanuel Adinira Ntiemoah
Elizabeth Owusu Bradiwaa	Michael Darko Amey
Joycelyn Panford	Afua Achiamaa Asare
Mercy Yeboa Akorofo	Jackson Danso

Abigail Edoh
Maranatha Anim
Celestine Wenyoo
Emmanuel Nii N. Akrong
Belinda Adubea Adu

COSTUME DESIGNER

Wendy Akai Sika Mamiya

COSTUME CREW

Benedicta Adubea Adu
Kate Adjoo Acquah
Michelle Annon

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Seth Klutse

PUBLICITY/ WELFARE

Sharon Awo Afari Djan
Joseph Yoyowa
Beatrice Appiah
Abigail Antwi

CHOREOGRAPHY

Otu Elvis Kabu
Benedicta Sowah

STAGE MANAGER

Emelia Abiesi

DIRECTOR

Twum Elijah Owusu

SUPERVISORS

Dr. Osei Agyeman
Miss Cecilia Adjei
Dr. Regina Kwakye Oppong

Benedicta Osei - Owusu Sr.
Roseeta Nyarko
Abigail Antwi
George Agyemim Boateng

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Dr. Regina Kwakye - Oppong

Mrs. Cecelia Adjei

Mr. Amo

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

School of Performing Arts
Theatre Arts Department

