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PROMOTING ASANTE CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE THROUGH THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT

BY

ERNEST BOGYA

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE.

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DECLARATION

I, Ernest Bogya, do hereby declare that this thesis is the presentation of my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree in any other university. Works of others used in this dissertation have been appropriately referenced.

…… ……

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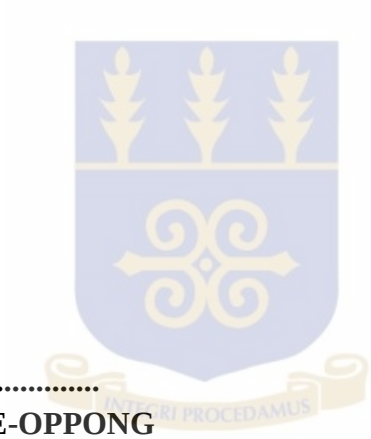
CANDIDATE



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely wife Akosua Oforiwaa and to the memory of my late father, Ernest Kwaku Bogya. *E. K.*, you believed in education and made sure all your children benefited from it. Your encouragement and advice were much useful. Papa, thank you for everything.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABUTC	Amadu Bello University Theatre Collective
CNC	Centre for National Culture
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University o f Science and Technology
SPA	School of Performing Arts
TfD	Theatre for Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

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ABSTRACT

This study is centered on "*aware pa*", a customary marriage rite of the Asante in Ghana. "*Aware pa*", until recently, was a complete marriage ceremony after which a man and woman were recognized as husband and wife. Observations have however, revealed that there is wrong perception of this customary marriage rite and the adoption of foreign culture has changed the name and outlook of the "*aware pa*" ceremony.

Based on these observations, four main processes were employed for the study to find out why majority of the Asante people have negative perception of the customary marriage rite, why the change of the name to "engagement" and how to promote the customary marriage rite. The processes used were; library research,field work and story creation, performance and follow-up. From these processes, it was revealed that most people within the study area perceive culture to mean something primitive hence the adoption of "engagement", a more refined name in place of "*aware pa"*. The study also showed that the Asante is losing touch with their custom and traditions as it was discovered that most people did not really understand "*aware pa*". It was also revealed that religious doctrines do not oppose the '*aware pa*" since family endorsement of a marriage is required before the church ceremony. The family endorsement is the "*aware pa*" ceremony. The lack of knowledge and wrong perception of "*aware pa"* and the blind adoption of foreign culture became a fertile ground to use Theatre for Development (TfD) approach in promoting Asante customary marriage rite in Kumasi. To ensure the perpertuation of tradition, this study recommends the Asanteman Traditional Council to embark on educational campaign of the "*aware pa*" ceremony to erase the misconconception and also inform those who are ignorant of it. The council needs to further look at the extravagant nature with which marriage ceremonies are celebrated forcing otherwise prospective husbands to remain bachelors. Also course and subject contents of cultural studies in both lower and higher institutions should be reviewed to include issues of traditional values like the "*aware pa*".

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Historically, the celebration of customary marriage rites in Ghana and among the Asante in particular dates back to pre-colonial through colonial time to the present. Payments of bride price in various traditions across the country in shillings and other items[1] without references to other forms of ceremony in the contraction of marriage attest that customary marriage was the only way a man and woman were recognized as husband and wife. This form of marriage contraction lasted till the Asante like other Africans were introduced to Christianity and formal education. The exposure to foreign culture and formal education has had its impact on several traditional practices including customary marriage rites. The research gives an overview of the misconception of the customary marriage rite of the Asante referred to as "*aware pa*". Explanations are provided that it is possible to use Theatre for Development (TfD) approach to communicate, inform and educate the Asante to erase the misconception. The research adopts a qualitative approach to investigate Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

1.2 Background to the Study

The contraction of marriage among the Asante used to be a very simple and less expensive ceremony between the families of the man and woman. Unfortunately exposure to foreign cultures, education, and "modernization" has had serious impact on this simple ceremony with its consequences. Young men lack the courage to get married because they cannot afford the hitherto less expensive ceremony. The pressure from

[1] R.S. Rattray. *Ashanti Law and Constitution*. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1926. ,J, Goody. "Bridewealth and Dowry in Africa" in J. Goody and S.J. Tambiah (Eds), *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 1973

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bride to be and would-be in-laws to perform a more expensive ceremony than a previously organized ceremony by a neighbour, friend or family member to show how "civilized" or well educated the bride is, is pushing prospective men away from marriage. When young women become apprehensive as their biological age ticks, they compromise, which has resulted into a new phenomenon; co-habitation. Rather than performing a simple customary marriage, couples get into co-habitation, hoping to make more money for a "show off" marriage ceremony.[2] Traditionally co-habitation is frowned upon and children who are born are seen as illegitimate children.

To address the misconceptions associated with the customary marriage, the study explores Theatre for Development technique to create a platform for communication to place customary marriage rite among the Asante in its right context.

1.3 Ethnographic Study

The Asantes are part of the Akan speaking people in Ghana and they live mainly in the central part of the country known as the Ashanti region. They have a vast territory of rich agricultural soil and natural minerals, especially gold. The Ashanti region consists of 27 districts and covers an area of 24, 681 square kilometers with a population of about 3,612,950[3]. The regional capital is Kumasi, the biggest of all the districts in the Ashanti region and the largest in the Akan land. It has several names attached to it like, *Oseikrom*, named after one of the prominent kings of the Asante Kingdom, Nana Osei Tutu I and sometimes referred to as the *Garden City* because it used to have beautiful flowers and plants. Kumasi can never be left out in the history of the Asante people because it is assumed to be the spine of the Asante region and where it is believed that

[2] Interview with Bishop Akwasi Sarpong, Archbishop of Kumasi.
[3]:Nkansa-Kyeremanteng. *The Akans of Ghana: Their Heritage and CulturalHeritage* (Accra: Sebewie Publishers, 1996).p.3.

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"Okomfo Anokye conjured and a Golden stool descended from the skies and rested on the laps of Nana Osei Tutu I".[4]

The inhabitants of the Kumasi metropolis are a mixture of people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Kumasi has a population of 173, 0249 out of this, 826,479 are males and 903,770 are females. [5]About 70% of the people living in Kumasi are Akan people and others are from different ethnic groups who come from different parts of Ghana, and even beyond its borders. From the beginning of the 20th century, the Kumasi metropolis has been a home to many migrant settlers of different ethnic origins. Some of these ethnic groups have established themselves in common locality, which is often named after them. Such settlements are usually associated with a predominant language or dialect. Some of the suburbs in the Kumasi Metropolis are classified as follows:

Suburb	**Origin**	**Ethnic Group**	**Common Dialect**
Fante New Town	Central Region	Akan-Fante	Fante
Daakodwom	Central Region	Akan-Fante	Fante
Ahodwo	Central Region	Akan-Fante	Fante
Anloga	Volta Region	Ewes/Akans	Ewes/Akans
Anlo-Fante New Town	Volta Region	Ewes/Akans	Ga/Ewe/Fante
Alla-Bar	Northern Region	Dagomba/Wala	Hausa Dagbani
Aboabo No. 1& 2	Northern Region	Dagomba/Wala	Hausa/Dagbani
Moshie Zongo	Burkina Faso/Mali etc	Moshie /Gao	Mori/Hausa
Saboo Zongo	Northern Ghana/Chad	Across West Africa	Hausa

Table 1: Ethnographic Distribution of Kumasi Residents

[4]Osei Kwadwo. *A Hand book on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002).p.139.
[5]Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census, 2010.

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1.3.1 Kingship

The Asante Kingdom was founded at the end of the seventeenth century by Nana Osei Tutu I, the first Asantehene (the king of the Asante). This was done with the help of his trusted constitutional advisor and priestly friend Komfo Anokye. The Asante kingdom was founded out of the alliance of small states which came together to overthrow their Denkyira overlords at the battle of Feyiase in 1700. It is said that over a period of 50 years, the Asante went on to conquer a number of territories till their empire occupied an area larger than present day Ghana[6]. From its inception, it was seen as a politico-military alliance with its binding principles being: "*Sika Dwa Kofi*" literally meaning the golden stool. This was believed to have been conjured from heaven on a Friday by Komfo Anokye. It is again truly accepted as the soul of the Asante nation.

Kumasi is the capital of the Ashanti region and their king is the Asantehene and commander-in-chief. Governance does not rest entirely with the Asantehene. There is the Asanteman Council, made up of all the Asante paramouncy, who governs their territories with relative autonomy.

1.3.2 Language

Apart from Asante Twi which is spoken by the indigenes, mostly Fante and Akuapem Twi are also very popular with the settlers in the metropolis. Even among the non-Akans and other nationals, it appears there is no language barrier as far as their daily activities in the metropolis are concerned. Apart from using their language of origin with their members of their ethnic groups, some of the settlers either speak fluent Twi or make attempt with a corrupt form of Asante Twi in their interactions.

[6]Labi, Asantewaa. *The Ashanti Kingdom and the Ancient Ghana*, Accra, Afram Publication. 2000:34-37

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1.3.3 Education

Before the introduction of formal education, the people of Kumasi like every Ghanaian had their own way of educating their younger generation. This was done informally without the person knowing he or she is being taught. One simply learns from the setting he or she lives in especially through storytelling sessions and rites of passage like naming ceremony, puberty rites, marriage rite and funeral rite. With the introduction of formal education, successive governments have provided schools ranging from nursery to the tertiary level in the District. There are five hundred and seventy-one (571) basic schools out of which two hundred and thirteen (213) are public. There are also twenty-five (25) secondary and tertiary schools in the district.[7]

1.3.4 Health

The health services in Kumasi have been organized in five sub-metros carved out of the ten political districts. The five sub-metros are Asokwa, Bantama, Manhyia South, Manhyia North and Subin. There are five government hospitals and one hundred and eighty private hospitals providing efficient and effective health service in the city[8]. Kumasi also houses the second largest teaching hospital in the country, the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. It is the largest in the Ashanti region and produces quite a number of doctors and nurses each year. The facility also has an accident and emergency unit which serves not only people from Kumasi but the whole of the Ashanti region and beyond. Apart from the government hospital, there are other private hospitals and clinics which are located mostly in the assemblies. There are also the traditional healthcare providers who are available for people who believe and seek their service.

[7] Kumasi Metropolitan Education Directorate Survey. 2013-2014.
[8] Kumasi Metro Health Directorate Profile, 2014.

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1.3.5 Agriculture and Economic Activities

With regards to agriculture, the city is rich in vegetation. Cocoa and timber are commonly found in the district. The *Sokoban* wood village is the popular and largest market place of wood in the Ashanti region. Retail businesses are commonly found in Kumasi. Shops are very common irrespective of the location. There are also professional workers like Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, Engineers and many more. Comparatively, farming is not on the increase these days in the district because most people engage in trading.

1.3.6 Transportation

Transportation in Kumasi is provided by the government and individual entrepreneurs. There are varieties of transport facilities and among them are "*trotro*[9]". There are also taxis that runs on all routes, very comfortable but quite expensive compared to the "*trotro*". In addition are intercity buses called the Metro Bus which operates from the city of Kumasi to other cities like Sunyani, Konongo and Bekwai. There used to be train service but has been suspended for quite some time now. Kumasi has an airport but does not operate internationally; the service is for domestic flights only.

1.3.7 Tourism

Some of the tourist sites in Kumasi include the Manhyia Palace built in 1925[10]. It has the Asante museum, office of the traditional house of Chiefs and also serves as the residence of the Asante King, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. The Kumasi Centre for National Culture is a place for the exhibition of arts and crafts and performance of cultural activities in the metropolis. Built in 1963, it has a seating capacity of 4,000 in the *Dwaberem* Open Air

[9] A means of transport that is mostly used by people mostly because it is affordable
[10] Manhyia Palace Museum. Otumfuo Opoku Ware Jubilee Foundation, Kumasi. 2003.

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Theatre where performances are held. [11]Others include the Zoological Garden, the Kumasi Central Market, the Kejetia Transport Station and the Baba Yara Sports Stadium formally known as the Kumasi sports stadium.

1.4 Problem Statement

Marriage is considered a basic institution in every human society. It is recognized as a social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the family, but also for creating and sustaining the ties of kinship. Without the institution of marriage there would be no family, nuclear or extended and therefore no kinship ties. According to the culture of the Asantes of Ghana, marriage is one of the most important aspects of life and it is observed as one of the many transitional rites of the Asante people. Although the Asante customary marriage is complete in itself, it seems a new paradigm of the ceremony has surfaced; where the customary marriage has to be backed by a church marriage (wedding) before it becomes authenticated or "recognized". This trend coupled with the fact that weddings involve ostentatious display of wealth has deprived some Asante men of marital age to engage in it.

It is recorded that payment of bride price for a princess among the Asante was eight pounds, a commoner, ten shillings and six pence and for a slave, seven shillings and two pence[12]. This colonial account by Rattray may seem outdated, but its relevance is in the fact that the most important part of the contraction of marriage was the payment of the bride price so a man and woman could live together legitimately. It also shows that a man made a choice based on the strength of his pocket. From the difference in royal marriage, commoner and slave, a man in those days would therefore cut his coat according to his cloth.

[11] National Commission on Culture. Jmieson's Cambridge Faxbooks Limited, Accra. 1997.
[12] R.S. Rattray. *Ashanti Law and Constitution*. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1926.

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Presently however, when one attends a marriage ceremony, it cannot easily be determined from which class the bride belongs. If not for this 'modification' of marriage in Kumasi, contraction of marriage would have been very simple and less costly making it affordable to everybody. This situation has made most youth who have the intentions of getting married shy away due to the cost or engage in co-habitation. Unfortunately off springs from co-habitation are seen as illegitimate children. Such children grow through emotional and psychological abuse becoming bitter and mostly social deviants.

The study seeks to explore Theatre for Development approach to create a platform to educate, inform and communicate with the people of Kumasi to understand that customary marriage rite is not an "engagement" and is no less of a marriage therefore as valid as any form of marriage.

1.5 Objectives

1. To explore the factors that accounts for the seemingly "negative" attitude of Asante people generally towards traditional marriage practice and its effects on people and the society as a whole.
2. To ascertain why customary marriage practice has lost its identity or has to be backed by another event or celebration before it is regarded as a complete marriage.
3. To use Theatre for Development (TfD) as a tool for creating awareness on the fact that Asante customary marriage (*aware pa*) can be regarded as a complete form of a marriage contract that does not need any other form of validation.
4. To examine ways of making the practice more acceptable.

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1.6 Delimitation

The study will focus on issues in relation to the "*aware pa*" customary marriage of the Asante people of Suame, Bantama, Santase and Manhyia suburbs of Kumasi Metropolitan Area in the Ashanti region of Ghana. It explores TfD as an alternative approach by which issues of the *"aware pa*" customary marriage of the Asante's can be rooted in the minds of people of that ethnic group as a complete form of marriage. The study also captures issues related to the challenges faced by people living in such a rapidly changing community that has a lot of people accepting the notion of hybridity as their lot.

1.7 Summary of methodology

This is an action research which is qualitatively based so it was categorized into four main parts. The first part is the library research; where the researcher got indepth knowledge of the Asante custom and the "*aware pa*" customary marriage. The second part is labeled as the validation and investigative aspect of the research; this was where the researcher conducted research and sampled case studies that formed the basis of the field work. The third aspect is the field work; where the researcher interviewed a cross-section of people who have had any of the experiences in the selected case studies and also drew information from other relevant authorities who supervise and ensure that the "*aware pa*" customary marriage is validated with another ceremony in their religion before it is considered a complete marriage. And the fourth is the process of story creation, performance and follow-up, thus, appyling the TfD technique.

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1.8 Significance of Study

A study of the perception of people on the *"aware pa"* customary marriage of the Asantes is very significant. This is because a detailed research shows that there has not been any research that seeks to project the *"aware pa"* customary marriage as a complete form of marriage that does not need any other form of validation using TfD. This research will therefore serve as a way of promoting and educating the Ashanti people on their customary marriage rite.

Secondly, the study unearths the challenges that an Asante who adopts other forms of religion has to confront with in terms of marriage and family institutions. It is expected that the study will encourage the researcher and other people to try and set the pace by making institutions of different faith recognize the "*aware pa*" customary marriage rite as a complete form of marriage that does not need another ceremony for it to be validated.

Furthermore the research will be a document for reference for both the Asante and anyone who requires information on the customary marriage rites. Again, it will be of great value to the Asante traditional Council and other Akan traditional councils in helping to expose some of the problems which disrupts their cultural heritage.

Most importantly is the different paradigm of advocacy on the issues of customary marriage that the research will unearth by employing TfD as the means of transporting and raising the consciousness of the people of Asante to the fact that the "*aware pa*" customary marriage is a complete form of marriage that does not need any validation again for it to be recognized.

Finally, the study will expose Theatre as an effective tool for behavioral change and a participatory approach of educating, entertaining, communicating and informing people on a said issue not only for rural folks but for all and sundry.

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1.9 Definition of Terms

Asante or Ashanti – The term describes the land, kingdom and people who live in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and are a subject of this research work. The context will indicate whether the people or the land is being described.

Aware Pa – A type of marriage of the Asante's where a young man meets a young woman and they agree to marry one another, only after performing the necessary marriage rites.

Akan – A larger group who share common linguistic and cultural heritage and who constitute about sixty percent of modern day Ghana.

Abusua – Family; It is used to refer either to the nuclear, the extended family and the clan, which is considered as a bigger family.

Twi – The language spoken by most Akans and is the second largest spoken language of the Akans.

Akos – River goddess

Adosoo – An Akan traditional dance with a special costume

Agya – Traditional way of addressing an elderly person, ideally between the ages of 65 and 90 years

Aware – Marriage

Asaase Yaa– Mother Earth personified.

Adae Kesse – 42nd day (lunar month)

Agya Ayeyedee – Cloth or money given to a prospective father-in-law.

Akontagye Sekan – Present given to prospective brothers-in-law. Historically, this was money used to buy cutlass, clear the road for their sister to move into the husband's house for the first time. Sometimes, the money is also used to

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secure something for their offspring to enjoy. Again, it is a payment given to the brothers-in-law to protect their sister.

Babe - Darling

Danta – Traditional pants (boxer shorts)

Ena Ayeyedee (Tammoba) – Presents given to prospective mother-in-law. This may be money, cloth, and scarf

Etire Nsa – Head drink and money presented to a would-be-wife during the marriage ceremony.

Kasasie – Secret or private communication between two adults of the marriageable age

Kra– Soul

Kolo – Old ways of doing things

Konkonsah - Gossip

Mogya – Blood

Nsa – Drink

Nananoom – Elders/ Chiefs

Nyame – God

'nton' – Spirit

Nhunuanimu – Knocking ceremony

Obaa Ayeyedee – Items presented to the would–be– wife. Example, cloth, suit case, scarf, beads, dresses among others.

Offin– River god

Onyankopon – Omnipotent

Odomankoma – Creator

Pantu – Two bottles of Schnapps

Papa - Father

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Sirade– One bottle of Schnapp

Subrantwei– god

Togas– A traditional shorts

Tire adee– Money paid to the woman's family to pay off any debt the woman's family owes. (This is to avoid the wife from being used as collateral as in debt substitution marriage.

Toma – Beads worn around female's waist

Tire Aseda – These are additions presented to the prospective wife such as clothing, beads and her father and mother's cloth and so on.

VC. 10 – Locally brewed alcoholic beverage like Whisky, normally called Akpeteshi in Akan and sometimes called Apio.

Vex – Get angry

1.10 Organization of Study

The study is in five chapters, this and four others. Chapter two establishes a conceptual framework and theories on which the study is based. Literature on the study area; marriage, "*aware pa*" customary marriage; theatre and development; and theatre for development. It again explores the relevance of TfD. Chapter three is basically the methodology. It spells out in details the various processes the researcher undertook to achieve the aim of the project. It gives an account of the step by step activity and how it is executed. Chapter four deals with the analysis of the project work as well as its relevance. It critically evaluates the project work from the start of the field work to the follow-up exercise. It also summarises some issues in relation to participation and conscientization, discusses the impact of the project on the community and also talks

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about the level of audience participation in the project. The final chapter discusses the researcher's observations, limitations, findings recommendations and conclusion.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter develops a conceptual framework to explore the feasibility of promoting customary marriage rite through Theatre for Development (TfD). The conception is that change, a product of development is realised through education, organization and discipline[13]. This is because an individual can only change after he has been educated on the need and relevance for change. After the education it then becomes necessary to organise to either do away with the old ways and make room for new ways or make adjustment for the new ways. It takes discipline for anything to succeed. No matter how organised one is, if there is no discipline, nothing will succeed. It is from this context that literature available is reviewed to examine Asante's customary marriage rite, the phases of change it has gone through and how TfD techniques could be adopted to promote it.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

A discussion of change usually comes out of development. Schumacher, an economist, argues that:

> Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped potential. Education does not jump; it is a gradual process of subtlety. Organization does not jump; it must gradually evolve to fit changing circumstances. And much the same goes for discipline[14].

What he tries to tell us is simple; there is no magic when it comes to the issues of development and by extension, change. Development or change too does not happen in a vacuum; it is mostly people related. If you want people to change, the best way to do it is to empower them. This empowerment can be achieved through education, organization

[13]Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).p.168.
[14]ibid.

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and discipline. You educate the people for them to be informed; get them organized so they can tackle their problems in a collective manner and instil discipline so that they commit to change their situation without waiting for anyone.

When an advocate observes that a community needs to change their situation, the first thing he needs to do is to get them educated, after which they must be taught to organize and then ensure that they are resolved to achieve their goal. An advocate of change therefore needs to use a technique that will best help in the education and eventual change of the community. Inherent in the modus operandi of theatre are the qualities espoused above. Theatre can be used to organize, educate and cause a people to be disciplined and eventually change. This is because theatre is collaborative and creative in nature. One must be prepared and ready to work with people but before then, he or she must get educated in whatever form to be able to understand the rudiments of the vehicle he wants to use. Above all he or she needs discipline to adhere to the process of creativity.

Deducing from the key points raised in the conditions for development, one can say that the theatrical process in a lot of ways hinges on the same philosophy. It is also worth mentioning that the process above is geared towards issues of sustainable development.

Today, sustainable development is the concern of most communities' globally. Elliot[15] defines sustainable development as elucidated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Fuglesang[16]on the other hand highlights the environmental aspect which has been accepted and agreed upon by the World Commission on Environmental and

[15]Elliot, J. *An Introduction to Sustainable Development, (London*: Routledge, 1994).p....
[16]Fuglesang, Andreas, *Applied Communication in Developing Countries* (Upsala: The Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 1973.

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Development (WCED) that "One may think sometimes that development can come about by people's own creative action in an effort to increase their control over the environment." It is important to observe that, this declaration accentuate the relationship between the environment, creativity and development. The role of the creative arts that is imbedded in the definition above, projects the relevance of the creative arts and particularly what it can achieve in relation to development. This however cannot happen without communication. De Fleur et al. writing about the significance of human communication posit that:

> Communication is not only the basis of human thought, it is also the means by which each of us develops an individual personality – a unique pattern of beliefs, attitudes, and habits of behaviour. In that sense, communication is the foundation of virtually everything that is human and that we do not share with other biological organisms.[17]

This implies that communication is one of the unique attributes of human beings and also a critical aspect of any development process. This is not just any kind of communication but rather effective communication. The kind of communication here should be effective, it should be that which is understood and worked on by the people involved. This is confirmed by Verderber[18] when he writes that, "…communication effectiveness is vital to success in nearly every walk of life." When we talk of development which has organization, education and discipline as its bench mark; and also in talking about issues of sustainable development, we will understand that there is the need for an effective communication. The effectiveness of any medium of communication employed in any development project is as vital as the process of communication itself.

[17]De Fleur, Melvin L. et al., *Fundamentals of Human Communication* 2nd ed. (California, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998). p.2.
[18]Verderber, Rudolf F., *Communicate!* 7th ed (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, 1993). p. 3

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In Ghana, mainstream means of information dissemination such as the electronic and the print media may reach out to the entire nation but the desired impact might not be felt. This is because most people might not have access to the electronic gadgets that they can use to access such information. In looking for an alternative way, development practitioners have employed theatre as their viable option, may be, a better alternative due to its interactive nature. The fact that theatre undoubtedly promotes interaction between performers and audiences and could enhance participation by the rural people in development projects cannot be understated.

From the above assertions, one gets to understand that when there are challenges with communication, there is the need to find an approach that will best help in achieving a set target. With regards to this study the approach is the participatory performance practice. This method is used as a means of reaching communities that have issues of pertinence confronting them. The thrust of this method is the use of participatory theatre in addressing issues in the community. The method has intrinsic characteristics with regard to community members as both performers and researchers. One of the proponents of this method is Alex Mavrocordatos, a community theatre practitioner who worked with theatre in Namibia and Mali. It is crucial to note that, with this methodology, the work is done without performers from outside the community and it is also on a long term basis. This approach frowns upon and does not give room for outsiders to impose their views on the community member; at best they work together by sharing ideas. The methods they employ in sharing ideas tend to put this practice in tandem with community or popular theatre. This is because it employs the language of the people and delves into the problems the people are confronted with in their daily existence. Maavrocordatos writes that:

> Participatory Performance Practice draws together a range of Theatre for Development and Participatory Research methods. It is process and

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> product. Community artists tell their own story, highlight their own customs and develop their own strategies amongst themselves, with their neighbours or with those policy makers in the wider world who have power over their lives.[19]

What he tries to tell us is the fact that, almost all the initiatives comes from within. This is because the people are the best people to interpret their situation better than an outsider. So it is important to ensure that the community artists are those who champion the process with little or no external guidance. This approach also gives the community artist opportunity to showcase the problem of the community through performances. It is also worth mentioning that performers are not created for the community but rather, by the community members themselves with the help of the facilitator.

Below are some of the steps a TfD project should consist of for proper implementation:

- TfD practitioners live within the community or consistently visit a community for a long period of time. The purpose is to build trust, adjust to the cultural norms of the people and observe the daily lifestyle of the people.
- The community members create performances that are based on the challenges and problems confronting their community.
- The issues that are teased out as urgent are linked to appropriated agencies which might have a relation to the cause or solution of the issues.
- The participatory theatre approach is used to create solutions and then the community act out the interventions.
- Mapping of actions is done to ensure appropriate execution by agencies involved, example the community, government, and international organizations concerned.

One thing that comes out of all this process is the fact that the interactive and participatory dynamic of theatre fosters a network of human relationships that have a peculiar system of communication. TfD is one unique approach that differs from the top-

[19] Participatory Performance Practice - http//portals.wi.wur.nl/PRA

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down approach and has imbedded in its approach the tools that are centred on the dynamics of human relationships and experience. The thrust of this is that while other approaches are strictly based on the aid, loans and economic benchmark approach, Participatory Performance Practice delves into the problems of the community, delve into the causes, and find an appropriate solution with the community involvement as one of its strengths. Participatory Performance Practice has as one of its principles the need to understand the community that is the lab-site it serves. Since its core aim is empowerment, it always strives to be democratic in nature. It is important to note that different practitioners have different approaches but participatory pedagogy can be said to be the rudiments of most of the concepts that underpins the TfD practice. This is because, the practitioners have empowerment as their goal instead of coercion; they seek to liberate rather than subjugate. And this approach was what the study relied on to communicate with the people of Kumasi.

2.2 Literature review

The review will focus on what marriage is and what constitute marriage among the Asante and the marriage process for the purposing of exposing the validity of customary marriage. Theatre for Development is also examined to establish its effectiveness in communicating intent and relevance to the study.

2.3 Marriage

Marriage according to the Longman Dictionary of contemporary English is a union of a man and woman by a ceremony in law. Marriage by a priest is Lawful in England without another ceremony; it is a state of being so united. It is therefore, for life which is assumed and expected to last all one's life and is a serious business.

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In Ghana, there are three main types of marriages. These are customary marriage, statutory marriage (i.e. marriage under ordinance and other statutes), and foreign religion marriage (both Christian and Muslim). Statutory marriage is of a comparatively recent origin and is confined mainly to the educated young people in towns and cities. It has been clearly considered that customary marriage is still the most predominant form of marriage in Ghana. Writing on the *Traditional School of Marriage*, Dzobo writes that:

> Marriage as one of the supreme aims of life in the traditional (Ghanaian) society and as a union between man and woman to perpetuate the lineage through procreation. Marriage has been instituted as the acceptable and respectable mode of ensuring the continuity of the family line. Children are therefore expected to be the first fruits of marriage and young men thus always look for young women who come from families that have a high birth rate. Marriage consequently has become a means whereby a man and a woman fulfill the main aim of their personal lives; i.e. to make possible for the lineage to continue in existence".[20]

He again opines that an individual's life is not therefore considered complete if he remains unmarried. Besides it being a way of self-realization and fulfillment, marriage is contracted for the sake of companionship and mutual service. Marital roles are therefore clearly defined for the man who contract customary marriage in most Ghanaian communities.

It is crucial to note that in Africa and Ghana for that matter, traditionally, marriage has an extra social meaning for a woman besides the general aims. Usually, when a woman is not married, all sorts of men, young and old, handsome and ugly tend to approach her or try flirting with her in ways that is not dignifying. Women consider this an insult and disrespect for womanhood and so want a settled life of marriage which makes them feel respected and valued. Furthermore, a woman's status in marriage is further enhanced when she has children. Women therefore consider it a personal tragedy if they cannot

[20]Dzobo K. N, *African Marriage: right or Wrong: The Morality of Marital Behaviour among the Ewe*. (Accra: Presbyterian Press, 1975).P.35.

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have children. This point is further substantiated and enforced clearly by J. S. Mbiti's argument on the concepts of African marriage when he writes thus:

> To Africans, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet the departed, the leaving and those yet to be born. All the dimension of time meets here and the whole drama of history is repeated, renewed and revitalized. Marriage is a drama in which everybody becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator: Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate and not a spectator. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and a law-breaker and he is not only abnormal but under-human. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that, the person concerned has rejected society, and society rejects him also in return.[21]

Mbiti's submission means that marriage in Africa, unlike the west is not optional; in fact it is an obligation hence the generation of apprehension when a woman or man of marriageable age shows no commitment to marrying. In the case of the man there would be conclusions of impotency. Salm et al., (1996: 130) in *Culture and Customs of Ghana* also states that;

> Unlike marriage in many other parts of the world, marriage in Ghana is seen as a requisite stage in life, rather than an option, and remains the most important social institution. Marriage sanctions, reproduction is still believed by many to be the most important function of the union between a man and woman. Children are signs of status and wealth. They represent a successful marriage, provide valuable domestic help around the house, and can contribute agricultural labour. Marriages between individuals from outside their kinship group are most common under customary law. Through this marriage, new social contacts are made and kinship ties are extended[22].

Marriage therefore, serves to establish alliances between families and communities. This is because it is sometimes permanent, unity generating commitment of love between a man and woman, for mutual fulfillment, happiness and procreation for the generation of offspring.

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[21]John Mbiti, *African Religion and philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc, 1991).P.108.
[22]Salm et al.(*Culture and Customs of Ghana.*Westport, CT:Greenwood Press, 1996).p.130.

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Oppong in *Marriage among Matrilineal elites*"asserts that marriage is an old and respectable social institution the world over". She went on to emphasize that "every society has evolved rules and procedures to govern it towards separating the permissible from the forbidden in the relationship"[23]. These rules and practices she said, form a crucial and primary part of the society's culture. Furthermore, she buttresses the point that marriage in Ghana is more than a private relationship between a man and a woman. It is one of the foremost transitional points in the lives of young people; and that, their relatives take a keen interest in it. Moreover, the descendants join the already large group of relatives, bringing additional glory or shame to it if the lady is able to keep herself before marriage or did otherwise. Marriage according to her therefore, unites families and clans. It may even mark the beginning of a new lineage or community. Consequently, the decision to get married is considered too important to be left completely to the two parties involved, especially when they are young and inexperienced, the elders must guide them and the ancestor's blessings must also be sought.

In a way, every marriage concerns the whole society in which it takes place, for this reason, all societies lay down rules regulating sex in general and of marriage in particular. It has been noted by the researcher that the main reasons for customary marriage in Ghana and for that matter in Akan traditional society are first to marry and procreate in order to provide adequate parental care for the children. The second reason is to marry in order to command respect and social standing in the society that one belong.

Another reason is to continue with the lineage as the formation of new families in order to come together for its preservation. Children who come out from marriages, as fruits of

[23]Oppong, C. *Marriage among a matrilineal elite*. (Cambridge: Cabridge University Press, 1974).P.59.

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life are also considered as wealth and value, not only to the biological parents, but also to the community in which they are born, and to Ghana as a whole. Therefore, it is a paramount responsibility of everybody to see to it that the child is brought up in a proper responsible manner for the good of the society at large.

Another essence of traditional customary marriage in Akan traditional society is to serve as a uniting link in the rhythm of life. Generation in Akan are said to be bound together in the act of marriage-past, present and future generations. The past generations are many but they are represented in one's own parents, the present generation is represented in one's own life, and future generations begin to come on the stage through childbearing. The situation therefore is considered tragic when no child comes out of a marriage. Then people do not consider it to be truly a marriage, and other arrangements are made to obtain children in the family.

Marriage is also regarded in Akan traditional society as the counter-measure against the myth of continued existence. Through marriage the departed are in effects reborn not in their total being but by having some of their physical treasures and characteristics or personality traits reborn in the children of the family. This mostly made manifest in the naming of the child after the personality the parents want to see in the child. This is done in the hope that the quality of life the departed lived will be exemplified by the newly born child. It is therefore necessary to note that if no children were born, these traits and features of the departed members of the family would not be seen again. While death takes away individuals one by one, and disperses families, the purpose of marriage in Asante or Akan society one can say is to bring people together, to increase them, to multiply them and to keep them alive.

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2.4 Asante Marriage types

As discussed earlier, three of the fundamental issues that almost all the scholars allude to when it comes to Asante marriages are the concept of personhood, kinship system and their preference of extended family system to the nuclear one. One has to understand how these govern marital and domestic lives of the Asante people. Although the *mogya* (blood), *nton* (spirit) and *kra* (soul) are acquired on the day a child is born, the *mogya* (blood) which defines one's *Abusua* which is used to describe both extended family and larger clan is what is very significant.[24] This actually shows why the Asante are strictly matrilineal in kinship, succession and inheritance. The Asante concept of personhood and kinship largely accepts the rules of exogamy.

Traditionally, an Asante cannot marry anyone from the same *mogya* (blood) and that means a member of a clan no matter how distant that may be. It is considered a taboo for the mixing of blood by the ancestor and gods of the land. Should such a marriage happen unknowingly, the solution is to dissolve the marriage or face banishment or even death.

The Asante may also not marry from his *nton* (spirit) because such people are regarded as siblings. It is also worth noting that since the *nton* is transmitted by the father, one cannot marry any child of the male siblings of his or her father since they will be having the same *nton* (spirit). Notwithstanding this, a man can marry the father's niece or uncle's daughter and vice versa.

This is termed as cross-cousin marriage. It is so revealing in the Asante proverb that says "she or he becomes your sibling only when you don't get the opportunity of marrying your father's nephew or niece". This type of marriage is between people who do not share the same *mogya* (blood) and *nton* (spirit). At this period, one can therefore list a number of marriages and sexual relations that is not allowed among the Asante. Marriage

[24] Interview with Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, Rtd Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, 2013.

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with these people by a man is strictly prohibited: Grandmother or grand aunt (maternal); his mother; his sister; his mother's sisters, mother's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughters' daughter; his sister's daughter; his daughter's daughter; his daughter's granddaughter; his father's sister; his father's brothers' daughter, his father's brothers' sons daughter; his granddaughter; anyone of the same blood (abusua) or whether kindred or not.[25]

The Asante customary marriage is a process used in bringing two adults male and female of marriageable age together as husband and wife; these individuals must come from two different families or clans. The Asante have so many types and ways by which a man and woman can be brought together as husband and wife. According to Osei, "Marriage in Asante could be classified into six types"[26] but Kuffour also outlines additional four, bringing it to ten[27]. The four she mentions are all types of marriage practices by the Asante. She confirmed this in a personal interview at the Wesley College of Education, 2013. These two authorities give a vivid description of these marriage forms and how it was and is contracted. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will not delve into all the ten marriages but will discuss a few and investigate particularly "*Aware Pa*", the "Ordinary marriage"[28] which forms the basis of this work. The various types of marriages practiced by the Asantes as outlined by Kuffour and Kwadwo are betrothal (*Asiwa),* widowhood marriage (K*unu wade*), replacement marriage (*Ayete*), Debt substitution marriage (*Awowawade*), unofficial marriage (*Mpena Wadee*), and Ordinary marriage (*Aware Pa*).

[25]Rattray, R. S. (London: Oxford University Press 1923).p.37.
[26]Kwadwo Osei, *A Handbook on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002).p.22.
[27] Kuffour Osei Janet, *Akanfoo Amammere ne Asaesesem* (Kumasi: Wilas). 2009 Pp. 56-60.
[28]Kwadwo. Osei, A *hand book of Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002).p.24.

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2.4.1 Betrothal (*Asiwa*)

This type of marriage is contracted between the parents of a girl and the-would be husband without the consent and knowledge of the girl. Here, the man will promise to marry a young woman not of the marriageable age, this man will in some cases take care of this little girl until she is due for marriage. In some instances, parents of a young man can ask for a little girl's hand in marriage for their son. These two young individuals in question will be monitored until they reach the marital age and the necessary custom will be performed for them to become husband and wife. In another development, parents would rush to see parents of a young girl and betroth her to their son. This is because; the parents might have witnessed some kind of positive attitude and character from the little girl's home. On the contrary, parents could also rush in to betroth a male for their daughter if the house from which the young boy originates is of good behaviour. This type of marriage worked successfully in the olden days but is currently fading out and dying a natural death.

2.4.2 Widowhood Marriage (*kunu wade*)

Custom demands in the Asante traditional society that when a man dies, the brother or nephew who succeeds the man will have to inherit the wife in addition to whatever he acquired. The reasons behind this type of marriage is to ensure that the lovely relationship that existed between the two families remains, parental responsibility still exist as the brother or nephew takes control over the house. Also if the man owes anyone, the one who succeeds him will make arrangements for payment. In this instance, the wife does not suffer much but always have support taking care of whatever the late husband left behind.

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Kwadwo clearly states that the acceptance by the nephew or brother to marry the bereaved is not mandatory. However, if he decides not to marry her then tangible reasons will have to be given why he cannot marry her. This type of marriage is also dying out because the reasons given above to establish this form of marriage have been catered for by the PNDC Interstate Succession Law (PNDC Law 111, 1986). Therefore its existence is shattered.

2.4.3 Replacement Marriage (*Ayete*)

Before other clans settled in some areas in the Asante states, one female from the immigrants was usually made to serve as a wife to the king of the Asante King as a form of compensation and agreement. A woman selected for this kind of exercise was known as the replacement wife. Also during war times, the Asante would conquer some states or areas and make the inhabitants servants; the king would then select a female from the royal house conquered as a wife and live with her in the palace. The Asante according to Kuffour[29] were smart and quick enough to have come out with such decisions; they had these women from a different clan as wives for fun sake but had a genuine reason which they did not provide. The researcher holds different opinion to these as to how tangible reasons are there for having another wife in addition to yours simply because they came to settle in your land or have them as captives. In as much as Asante wanted to protect their interest, the researcher argues that it was a risky exercise. This is because if one allows a stranger into ones home to the extent of getting in contact with the superior, then secrets concerning the throne, much more the entire Kingdom could be leaked. This can consequently lead to the downfall of the empire, family or the throne.

[29]Kuffour, Osei Janet. Akanfo) Amammer1 ne Aseses1m (Kumasi, Willas Press Ltd. 2009).

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This practice according to Osei[30] is still in existence because of the pride for being named as a king's wife. In some areas or with some individuals, the call to become a king's wife is a prestige and individuals do not hesitate. It is normally in-camera these days as the society looks at it in a different way because of modernization. The influence of western education and the current awareness creation of choosing a partner in films, books and other organizations like churches have hindered the progress of this application.

2.4.4 Debt Substitution Marriage*(Awowawade)*

In the olden days, women were allowed to be used as collateral for the granting of loans. During this period, the lender if satisfied could marry the woman used as a surety and the debt would be waived. Another situation was where a family would give a woman out for marriage because of a loan collected; this was only possible when the loan or a debt incurred was to be paid. In-laws were called upon to pay and if they failed then a wife would be taken away from you and given to whoever is willing and able to pay. This is basically a replacement of a loan taken and could not be paid back. In some cases where the money is paid back and the lender is interested in marrying the woman, then the necessary marriage rites was performed.

The researcher finds this type of marriage a bit awkward; a woman is a human being and should not be subjected to this kind of negotiation. She should have the right to choose her own partner and thereafter seek the consent of her family, not the family imposing a man on her in replacement of a loan.

[30] KwadwoOsei. *A hand book of Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002).p.25.

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2.4.5 Unofficial Marriage (*Mpena Wadee)*

This type of marriage is commonly found these days. It is basically cohabitation, where a couple live together as man and wife without any marriage rites performed. The current socio-economic circumstance with the influx of foreign cultures, single parenting, the breakup of marriages, school drop outs and economic hardships to mention a few allow for the practice of cohabitation among the youth. This is not recognized as a proper marriage and individuals contract it at their own risk.

2.2.6 Traditional Marriage*"aware pa"*

This is the commonest marriage practice today. It is contracted between two consenting adults and with the consent of both families[31]. In this relationship, the initiation is done by the young man and woman before announcing it to their parents. Both parents will in turn visit each other on several occasions on the same issue and when both are satisfied, the final marriage rite is done. A lot of negotiations go on between the two families before this marriage is sealed. This is a "marriage contracted between a man and a woman in love... When their parents also agree, they will fix a time for the boy's parents to contact the girl's parents and talk about the marriage. When everything is through, a time will be fixed for the marriage rites to be performed". [32]

2.5 Age of Marriage and Nubility

There is no prescribed age of marriage for boys among the traditional Asante. The underlining factor is one's ability to take care of a wife; this implies that a man should be

[31] Interview with Nana Sarfo Kantanka, former Deputy Ashanti Regional Director of Centre for National Culture, 2013.
[32]Osei Kwadwo. *A Hand book of Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002).p.24.

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mature, and have the means to take care of a family. This also suggests that any time from the late teens, one can marry if he so desires.[33]

During puberty, young ladies undergo what is termed as the puberty rites. The mother of the child makes known of her daughter's first menstruation to the Queen mother and women folk. The pouring of libation and thanks giving are made to the Supreme God, *Asaase Yaa* (mother earth), spirits of the gods and ancestors for helping the girl to become a woman.[34] The girl is then totally shaved; head, armpit, and pubic parts. She is then dressed in her best cloth with breast and upper body exposed wearing golden ornaments and chains. She takes her position in the village square under an umbrella each day for a period of five to seven days of celebration and singing by girls in the village; this mostly reflects the menstrual period. She is fed on mashed plantain or yam and eggs. It is crucial to mention that there is no secret initiation or teachings that take place but the songs that the initiates sing are full of advice. When it ends, she is taken to the riverside to wash. She is then presented at the village square to receive gifts and congratulations. From thence, she is considered as a woman.

The rite she undergoes introduces her to the larger community as a mature lady. At this point she can undergo any of the marriages that she qualifies for because she is considered a woman who is of age. If she is betrothed, she is expected to become a wife after this ceremony. If she has been married as a child (*Asiwa*), the husband is immediately informed and the marriage is immediately consummated thereafter.

2.6 The Purpose of Marriage Choice

Often times the issue of intimacy as a factor in Asante marriages is not considered; love and intimacy on the other hand can be considered as essentials and they play a role in

[33] Interview with Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, Rtd Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, 2013.
[34] Ibid

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Asante marriages[35]. The question that emerges out of the statement made above is that, what then would the role of love and intimacy in Asante marriages be? In answering this question, it is critical to distinguish marriages that are consensual and those that happen among grown-ups in their latter life. It is observed that in the case of the latter, usually it happen because the people involved want intimacy and love but not to make babies because they might have had enough in their previous marriages, unless otherwise. The marriage ceremonies always involve the extended family. Secondly, grown-up couples have freedom of sexual association provided they obey the rules that govern abominable marriages and with this, simple marital customs often become less elaborate.

In the case of the first time marriages and the younger generation, the matrilineal families and parents assume greater role and often for good reasons. The reason being that, girls marry at a young age often almost immediately after puberty. Most of the marriages contracted are done for them by the families. It is obvious that the family's interest becomes paramount in the process than whether the girl loves the person or not.

The total psychology and expectation of both spouses and their families when it comes to the first marriage is to have children[36]. This is because childless couples are subjected to derision and often children of other people refuse being sent on errands disrespectfully by such people; something that is highly abhorred by the Asantes. So the pressure and need for making children becomes so paramount that the marriage is sometimes and often not said, put on probation until the woman gives birth. Childlessness is therefore a ground for divorce either by the man or the woman, but often the woman prefers being in the marriage for her husband to resort to polygamy. This goes a long way to confirm

[35] Interview with Nana Sarfo Kantanka, former Deputy Ashanti Regional Director of Centre for National Culture, 2013.

[36] Interview with Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, Rtd Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, 2013

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Mbiti's observation that "the greatest threat to happy marriages in Africa is childlessness"[37] and this is very true with the Asante.

One of the fears of the Akans is for any family to become extinct because there is no one to tend the ancestral shrine. Warren posits that "this horror underscores the attitude towards childlessness and divorce from barren women… A marriage is never complete until a child is born".[38] Fortes also write that "childlessness is the greatest of all personal tragedies and humiliations for both male and female in Asante." This I believe reinforces the above statement of Mbiti.

It is therefore not surprising to hear that almost all the prayers said during a marriage contract to *Odomankoma* and libations poured to the ancestors and the gods include request for children. In fact, one's standing in the society is positively measured against the number of children he or she has, this is why having a tenth child is seen not only as an honour but something that calls for celebration[39]. The matrilineal family observe this by giving the husband a sheep for the tenth born. Even before this, the sixth and the ninth children are considered as good luck. It is therefore crucial to note that having children was and remains the principal purpose of marriage among traditional Asantes.

Love and intimacy were important consideration but secondary especially in first marriages. Parents are preoccupied with the anticipation of their grandchildren, ten months after marriage and that becomes their primary consideration.

2.7 The Marriage Process *("Aware Pa")*

The process of this marriage starts with the identification of a partner to the consummation of the marriage. This includes a love relationship between two consenting

[37]Mbiti J. *African Religions and Philosophy.*New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.1990
[38]Warren, D. M. *The Akan of Ghana: An Overview of Ethnographic Literature*. Accra: Pointer Limited, 1986.
[39] Interview with Nana Sarfo Kantanka, former Deputy Ashanti Regional Director of Centre for National Culture, 2013.

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adults (Male and Female), knocking, in-camera visitations, discussions and the marriage ceremony[40].

In Asante traditional societies, customary marriages are of importance and are therefore supervised strictly by head of families, the *Abusuapanin*, uncles and elders of a family before it is sealed. Customary marriage is much concerned with two families unlike other marriages from different countries like the United Kingdom and United States of America, where a couple can arrange marriage without the consent of any family member. Asante customary marriage seeks to bring unity, peace and life in a society. They see it as the only source of legitimate reproduction of the human race and this is why women are very special and treated with respect within the Asante people. It can therefore be explained as:

> The coming together of man and woman from two different clans to establish a family such that offspring could ensue to replenish and perpetuate the tribe, is a solemn, social, and a happy occasion in all communities in Ghana. This is marriage. For the most part, consenting adults go through an institutionalized process recognized by society, and witnessed by the living and the ancestor.[41]

It can be deduced from the above that the Asante customary marriage helps in creating an affiliation for two families quite apart from sex and economic responsibilities. It is a social institution which serves as a unifying factor between families and the community at large. In addition to the above, Nukunya in his book, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology* also defines it as:

> The recognized institution for the establishment and maintenance of family life and a socially approved sexual union all over the world. All societies have rules that regulate who can engage in sexual activities with whom and under what conditions children should be conceived and given birth to. Traditional law and belief also require that certain categories of kin may not marry each other because their relationship may be considered too closed. In Ghana and other parts of Africa, the most

[40] Interview with Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, Rtd Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, 2013.
[41] Assimeng Max, *Social structure of Ghana: A study in Persistence and Change* (Accra: Assembly, 2007).p.79.

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> widespread rule is that of lineage and clan exogamy which forbids marriage between members of descent groups.[42]

2.7.1 Relationship / Courtship

As already mentioned, marriage contracts within the Asantes are mostly associated with two families and this art form undergoes several stages before it becomes complete. This however, must always involve a male and female of marriageable age, because according to the marriage laws in Ghana, individuals can only marry at the age of 18 years and above (P. N. D.C Law 111).

Danquah does not give a consistent account of the marriage processes of the Asantes but gives a description of how the marriage can be contracted. He based the process on love and courtship, the giving-in-marriage, head money and dowry, the wedding, that is, the marriage ceremony and the marriage life.[43].

In another development, Assimeng however describes vividly the process of marriage. First is by choosing a partner, this stage is the background of any marriage whether it is going to be successful or not and much is taken into account before its cultivation. This is generally termed as courtship. Assimeng says:

> If a young man saw a young woman and wanted to marry her, he went (usually) to his own mother for advice; and the prospective wife would equally consult his mother. It is generally, believed that the old lady would know more about the background of the suitors….[44]

This is in total contrast to the modern day Ghana where couples do not rely so much on their parents' investigation or expertise. This somehow still exists in some communities but generally, this practice seems abrogated. Some people believe that a young person is

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[42] Nukunya G.K, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology (*Accra: Ghana University Press, 1992). P.3

[43] Danquah . J.B. *Gold Coast: Akans Laws and Customs* (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd, 1928).p.45.

[44] Assimeng Max, *Social structure of Ghana: A study in Persistence and Change* (Accra: Assembly, 2007).p.27.

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not competent enough to make such a weighty decision, because marriage is a long lasting relationship and should one make a hasty decision or wrong choice, he or she is bound to face difficulties permanently. In modern times, courtship has been the trend for choosing a partner. Some even go to the extent of living together or even have children before marriage. This is normally referred to as "*mpena aware*" (co-habitation) and it is unacceptable in the Asante society. Kuffour in addition stresses that, the act of talking to a woman, spelling out your intent and her response can be classified in the Asante language as "Kasasie"[45] meaning communicating secretly. This is known to be the first stage of "*Aware pa*" and can be translated later on as a courtship if their friendship becomes known to both parents and have their consent as well.

Although courtship and other forms of relationships bring individuals together and later get married, the two people in question must come from two separate families, thus, there should be no blood relation and this is what Rattray captures in his book, *Religion & Art in Ashanti*. He explains that:

> Before a proposal of marriage, and the subsequent seeking of the consent of the parents (more especially that of the mother) and the exchange of gifts, it is the business of the young couple to satisfy themselves that their union would not violate any of the Prohibited degrees of consanguinity… It will be sufficient here to state that an Asante may not knowingly marry any of the following persons.
> 1. His grandmother, grand-aunt (maternal)
> 2. His mother
> 3. His sister or half sister
> 4. His mother's sister, mother's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter's daughter
> 5. His sister's daughter
> 6. His daughter's daughter
> 7. His daughter's daughter's daughter…[46]

[45] Kuffour Osei Janet, *Akanfoo Amammer*1 *ne* Asaeses1m (Kumasi: Wilas, 2009).p.60.
[46]Rattray,S. R, *Religion & Art in Asante*. (Glasgow : Oxford University, 1969).P.79.

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What Rattray establishes is not only important to the Asantes but almost all the tribes in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The above make the sealing of marriage contracts very important and are therefore presided over by heads of families, an *abusuapanin*. A lot of informal actions and customs precede marriage once the two young people have shown interest in each other and or their parents have given their approval with regards to the prospective partner.This also has a scientific significance, according to Dr Adu Gyamfi of the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital it helps in preventing the transmission of some genetic illness and other diseases were not passed on to other generations in a family.[47]

2.7.2 Knocking

"Knocking of door" is also another important stage in the marriage process. It is somehow the official declaration of the relationship to parties, loved ones and sometimes the community. This is where the groom announces his intentions formally and is generally described in Akan as "a visitor entering a house for the first time". This according to Kuffour is also called the "*nhunuanimu*" meaning going forward to seek for something. She further states that it can be termed as "*Kokooko*". The Asante custom require individuals to knock at the door of any house, wait patiently for a response to enter or deny entry. The Asantes also believes that some days in the week are holy and peaceful, so they prefer to perform such ceremony on "*Memenedane Edwoada*" Saturday and Monday.[48]

Osei also explains that knocking is where both parents agree to their ward's proposal to marry and fix a day to meet and perform what custom demands. It is also a period when:

> ... the couple meet and discuss marriage. When they agree to marry they would inform their parents. When the parents also agree, they would fix time for the boy's parents to contact the girl's parents and talk about

[47]Interview with Dr. Adu Gyamfi, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi, 2013
[48] Kuffour Osei Janet, *Akanfoo Amamm*er1 *ne Aseses*1*m* (Kumasi:Wilas, 2009).P.61.

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> marriage. When everything was through, a time would be fixed for the marriage rites to be performed.[49]

In another development Danquah makes mention of drinks in the knocking ceremony and confirms the above explanation by Kwadwo that this can only be after both have completely gained the heart of each other. The male partner introduces himself together with his family to the parents of the girl. He further states that:

> It falls upon him to introduce himself to the parents of the girl. This may be done by appearing personally or sending messengers with drinks, to make the announcement. When the parents' consent is given, she automatically becomes betrothed to him. There is no need for engagement rings or other superficial intimations of the deed.[50]

Whereas Danquah makes mention of drinks without specific amount in the door knocking ceremony, Assimeng gives an account of the items to be presented during this period. The researcher thinks that, modernity has changed the trend of so many cultural practices and as such what existed during Danquah and Rattrary's time has in one way or the other changed. Assimeng stresses that:

> After a while, with a bottle of schnapps…or some other traditional token drink…the father of the young man and an accompaniment would approach the father of the girl to 'knock the door'. This brief ceremony lays bare the intentions to marry the girl. It signifies that the girl is in company of the young man, and that if something should happen to the young woman thereafter, her parents should be in a position to locate the source…[51]

Assimeng's explanation is not quite different from that of Danquah's because both raise similar issues. The researcher agrees with Assimeng because in any given event traditionally, drinks are generally accepted as part of the custom and it is used in offering

[49]Osei Kwadwo. *A hand book on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002). P.24

[50]Danquah, J. B,*Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs* and the Akim Abuakwa Constitution. (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd, 1928) p. 147

[51] Assimeng. M. *Social Structure of Ghana: A Study in Persistence and Change*, (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, Assembly Press, 2007). P.80

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a prayer to call on the ancestors and '*Odomankoma Nyankopong'* before any event commences.

Kuffour on the other hand gives a descriptive process of the knocking ceremony. She tries to explain what happens at the ceremony, for example the dialogue:

- Receiving and welcoming the man's family into the woman's family home, preferably her uncle's house.
- They ask of their mission.
- Man's family declares their intent (to ask for a woman in their house's hand in marriage) supported with two bottles of schnapps.
- Woman's family accepts the items and promise to communicate their decision back to the family of the man.
- Man's family thanks them and asks permission to leave.
- Ceremony ends.

She again stresses that, this ceremony does not allow for the woman to move into the man's house. She violates the law if she does so and could be punished in the olden days. Their relationship to live together as a man and wife is not accepted and recognised in the society and as such would be called "... *Mpena-wadee*"[52] meaning co-habitation.

It can also be argued that the items mentioned above may have been delivered insignificantly and were not present in old times during such occasions. Once the bride's family accepts these presents, they will then ask the groom's family to wait for their response if they will willingly give their daughter to the groom to marry.

[52]Kuffour Osei Janet,(Transcribed),Akanfoo Amammer1 ne Aseses1m (Kumasi,Wilas, 2009).PP.61-62

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During this period, the bride's family according to Assimeng takes time to investigate the young man's background to see if he is worth a man to marry. He again stresses that the bride's family will have to investigate:

> If the young man be able to physically, financially and emotionally offer the woman enough security? Have there been traces of infertility and impotence in the generational history of families of the prospective couple? Or previous instances of lunacy and other congenital diseases? [53]

This investigation is to prove that both families have good reputation that is, uncles, aunts, and siblings are not known to be morally corrupt or debauched. Background checks are done with the man's family to ascertain whether there is a history of unclean disease in her family; generally, criminality, hereditary diseases, wife abuses and anything the family may consider being unacceptable. Once the background checks are done satisfactorily, formal courtship begins.

No sexual relationship is expected and tolerated but open courtship is allowed once the parents agree after their checks. It is observed that traditional marriages are usually within the locality, the family would have known each other for generations and therefore the checks are almost instantaneous but such cannot be said of the current generation.

Dovlo, speaking about marriage in Ghana generally seem to have captured the step by step approach in Asante marriages. He writes that it has three stages which are knocking, asking and taking: The knocking which is a formal asking of the hand of the girl in marriage from her parents and the matrilineage. The next is asking, which is the performance of the marriage ceremony itself and finally the taken, which is the consummation[54].

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[53] Assimeng. M. *Social Structure of Ghana: A Study in Persistence and Change* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Coperation, Assembly Press.2007).p.80.

[54] Dovlo, C. K. *Chritianity and Family Life in Ghana*. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1962.

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2.7.3 Marriage Ceremony

Marriage ceremony is a kind of African art form in which everyone participates. It is a home coming event and merry making for both families. It is the actual climax of the marriage process where a woman is given to a man as a wife. This is a special day set aside by the two families, both from the young man and the young lady to inter into an agreement to become one family. Also, it is basically a meeting between two families who come together after several negotiations as a union and bring two consenting adults who have both agreed to spend a life time together.

Quite a number of people gather at the ladies house preferably her uncle or family's house (clan) to witness and participate in this ceremony. It is a joyful atmosphere and bachelors and spinsters are eager to see what happens. Marriage therefore can be further explained as a dramatic piece where everyone plays a role, it is an ensemble work and its participation involves the whole community. Mbiti states that, marriage ceremony has to do with all and not only the people concerned. The whole community must participate to make it work. He writes:

> Marriage is a drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator. Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he is a rebel and a law breaker, he is not only abnormal but under –human. Failure to get married under normal circumstances means that the person concerned has rejected society and society rejects him in return. [55]

This is where the bride price is paid to the ladies family for her hand in marriage together with other traditional items such as drinks and cloths and jewellery. The main issue here is the payment of the bride price and this according to Osei, in the olden days was paid by the father of the young man who has reached the marriageable age. This was

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[55] Mbiti J. *African Religions and Philosophy. (*New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc, 1990).p. 130.

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the case because a son would have worked for the father for ages and the father in return would pay his bride price for his hard work. He writes:

> In the olden days, when boys had to toe the footsteps of their father, boys worked for their fathers till they were of age to marry. It was then the duty of the father to marry for the son. The father would pay all the cost involved.[56]

The researcher agrees with Osei because the son's responsibility to the parents particularly the father was enhanced. The respect and recognition of a father was highly significant and because it created a kind of well-structured family for building a good society and a nation. However this situation is fading out since urban migration is on the increase due to modernity and education. Boys do not nowadays live with their parents for long and if they do, most of them do their own jobs without their father getting involved. Also the huge cost of marriage ceremonies these days discourages parents from footing the bills for their son's marriage. At best parents may contribute but not taking sole responsibility of paying the bride price. One cannot completely rule this practice out because some fathers within the Asante enclave still pay for the bride price for their sons.

Osei further explains that the bride price paid today differs from one family to the other. Bride prices in the olden days and even in some instances today are determined by the statues of would-be or the prospective wife. It must be noted that if one marries from a royal family, the bride price and items presented during the marriage ceremony are totally different from that of an ordinary person. Osei writes:

> In those days, bride prices were determined by the status of the girl's clan. If the girl was from the royal clan of the town, her price would be higher than that of an ordinary girl. If she was a daughter of a noble or a chief or a traditional priest, the price too would be higher that of an ordinary person.[57]

[56] Kwadwo Osei, *A hand book on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002). P.27.
[57] Kwadwo Osei, *A hand book on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002). P.27.

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Danquah however spells out a particular amount quoted in the olden days which authorities have failed to convert to the current currency. All the literature examined do not categorically state the bride price amount and this is one of the reasons why the Asante customary marriage has somehow been adulterated. Danquah states that:

> …the girl's parents or other guidance gave their consent to the marriage then thanks money, varying from 12s to £2 8s (always limited by law according to the position of the husband), will have to be paid to the father or uncle making the presentation…what has been called dowry has very little comparison with head -money which is paid by the intended husband or his people. Head-money is usually paid to the father or uncle...[58]

What Danquah discusses here is different from Nukunya, because Nukunya gives a vivid description of the traditional marriage payment items but also fails to quote the amount involved in today's currency. Nukunya states that:

> Among the Asante, drinks and money constitute the payment. The formal establishment from marriage results from the payment by the groom and his people…of the tiri – nsa… which the Asante describe as Aseda, a thanking gift. This usually consists of two bottles of gin and agreed equivalent cash. In Rattray's time the bride price for a princess was eight pounds, a commoner, ten shillings and six pence and for a slave, seven shillings and two pence, half of the drinks and money goes to her father, and the rest to her mother's brother who receives the items as the legal guidance.[59]

Again, items presented to the woman's family together with the bride price differ from one house to the other. Most of the literature read so far does not seem to have given the accurate materials for a marriage contract. They all refer to what was presented and accepted in the olden days and cannot simply convert some of these items to meet today's existing materials. Also, some items presented in the olden days are hard to find in this 21st century and some of them are also not in use currently like cowries.

Kuffour however gives a vivid account of what goes into the "*Aware pa"* ceremony and further explains its importance. She defines "*Aware pa"* as a marriage contracted with

[58]Danquah, J. *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs* (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd1928).p.149
[59]Nukunya, G. *Tradition and Change in Ghana; An Introduction to Sociology* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press,1992).p.42

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the consent of two families whose wards (male and female) have reached the marriageable age and have agreed to spend a lifetime together[60]. She again states that the custom associated with this type of marriage must be highly emphasised to bring out the beauty of the Asante culture. Below is an example of a format the researcher captured in an interview with Adjei and Kuffour at the Centre for National Culture on how the *aware pa* marriage ceremony is performed;

- Official welcoming of the man's family and friends.
- Woman's family asks man's family of their mission or purpose of visit.
- Official declaration of man family's intent.
- Woman's family receives the message and in return informs man's family about the news in their house.
- Formal introduction of both families follows or can be scheduled somewhere as the ceremony unfolds.
- Woman's family asks man's family what they bring to support their intent.
- Man's family declare the items[61]

2.7.3.1 Etire Nsa

The first important item when contracting an Asante *Aware pa* marriage is the payment of '*Etire Nsa',* meaning the head drink. *Etire Nsa* has two meanings according to Kuffour, first, the *Etire* means the woman's hair and the *Nsa* means drink. It consists of two (2) bottles of schnapps (*pantu*) and some amount of money. Whereas the drinks are quantified, the money is not because according to Kuffour, the amount of money accompanying these drinks differs from one family to the other. One of the drinks is used to inform the entire woman's family of the marriage and more importantly it is sent to the father of the woman if he is not around or does not stay with the family in the same

[60]Kuffour Osei Janet, Transcribed, Akanfoo Amammer1 ne Asaeses1m (Kumasi:Wilas).pp.62-66.
[61] Interview with Mr Samuel Adjei and Kuffour Osei Janet , Centre for National Culture, 2013.

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house to announce his daughter's marriage. The other drink is used in offering a prayer to God and the ancestors to ask for their blessing on the said marriage contract. All present also take their share of the drink to confirm witnessing the marriage.

Kuffour further states that, the payment of the *tire* makes the man responsible and respected because, he has confidently proven beyond all reasonable doubts that he is a responsible man unlike others who engage in co-habitation. It is believed in the Asante society that once you are able to marry and raise children then there is the tendency that you are morally disciplined. They also believe that on one's way to the ancestral land, one will be asked to prove how responsible he was on this earth and that can only be proven by showing a portion of his wife's hair. This and many others are the reasons why a widow shaves the hair when her husband dies.

2.7.3.2 Tire Adee

This is an amount of money paid by the prospective husband to pay off any debt the woman's family owe. This is to avoid the wife being used as collateral or serve the lender as in debt substitution marriage. If there is no such debt then the money would be used to purchase a plot of land in the old days or any valuable property currently for the woman and her children. If the marriage collapses, then this amount is payable back to the husband. In the researcher's view, this present is of much importance because the value placed on it is great. The family of the woman receives something to rely on if the husband dies or becomes physically challenged and cannot work. In the old days, the prides'ss brothers rather farmed on this land for their nephews, nieces and the whole family to benefit in the future.

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2.7.3.3 Tire Aseda

Tire Aseda is simply some additions to the already mentioned presents for the marriage contract. These include:

- ***Obaa ayeyedee***, literally to mean a woman's gift such as clothes, scarf, beads and many more. None of the books read gives a specific description of the items presented in this section. Here the prospective husband uses his own discretion to purchase some items for the lady including an amount of money. Again according to Kuffour, this amount depends on the value of the woman for example, if she is educated. The researcher feels the custom should come out with one laid down procedure and concretely spell out what needs to be presented in order to treat everyone equal at any given Asante marriage ceremony. If one wishes to present anything to his woman after the ceremony, he can do so but in order not to bring about greed, jealousy and competition, then one principle should be applied.
- ***Agya ayeyedee (danta)***, this is a present given to the father of the would-be wife to thank him for his support for his daughter from infancy. It is normally some amount of money or a piece of cloth. This can also be called '*Agya Anyamedwan* or *Tammoba*'[62] .
- ***Ena ayeyedee***, this is also a price given to the prospective mother-in-law for her support and efforts in nursing the girl child from birth to adulthood. It is also called '*ena Muhoma'*. These items can be in the form of clothes, scarfs and money to mention a few. It is believed that the Asante people take much care regarding this kind of present because it is a cord from the womb the would-be husband is taking away from the mother of the would-be-wife.

[62]Kwadwo Osei, *A hand book on Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002). P.27.

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- ***Akontagye Sekan***, this is a present in the form of cash for the prospective brothers-in-law. Again, this amount differs from one house to the other, sometimes depending on the number of males in the house. In the olden days, the amount was used to buy cutlass for the males in the woman's family to farm, earn money and also prepare to marry. In another context, this same cutlass is used as a symbol to clear the path for their sister's first visit to the husband. Moreover, this cutlass is used as a weapon to protect their sister should any man try to date or come close to her.
- ***Abadwadee,*** this is presented to all who witness this marriage ceremony from the woman's family. It is usually an amount of money shared among the lady's family to gain confidence in the would-be-husband. In the old days, this amount was used to purchase salt or matches and shared among all in the house. With this present in mind, the family of the prospective wife is ever willing to help their sister execute any duty for the man when need be, for example, when he is bereaved. In recent times, this has not been clearly spelt out for participants to get a clearer understanding of the present. It is worth noting that some presents are very expensive and if the man is unable to purchase them, it can delay the marriage contract. Also, it has created a kind of competition among some people. Although it is meaningful, the researcher thinks it would be appropriate for it to have a well-structured and definite quantity for its presentation.

  Once these items have been presented, the woman is brought forward and asked three times if she is willing or wants to marry the young man. She is again asked if the family should accept the presents. If she says yes to all the questions, then the marriage is sealed usually with the pouring of libation or saying a word of prayer by the elder of the woman's family and thereafter advice is given to the couple. This signifies the end of that part and it leads to refreshment (food and drinks).

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- **Aduane Kesee** is a meal prepared by a wife with the help of her family members and sent to her husband for the first time. It is basically a variety of meals well prepared for the husband and his family as well as close friends to enjoy for the first time after the marriage ceremony. This act is somehow fading out because currently, one see's the family of the husband having the (*aduane kesee*) meal in the wife's house. Kuffour stresses that, the food prepared should be some of the best meals Asantes enjoy such as 'Fufu with palm nut soup, *aprapransa* and *eto* to mention a few. She further states that, the meat used for the dishes should be special, according to how Asantes cherish their meat, for example, '*mpunam*' that is, bush meat and this should contain the skin for one to recognize what he or she is taking. She added that '*adwene*'; a smoked fish can be added to the meat mentioned above.
- **Nkunkyire nna**, this is the first night a woman spends with the husband after the marriage ceremony. After the husband has enjoyed the meals with his family and friends, he sends his colleagues to fetch the wife in the evening. The woman dresses neatly, nicely and makes sure she is attractive to the husband. She is usually accompanied by the old woman of her house who spends time with the couple explaining and sharing some ideas on marriage before she leaves. She bids them farewell.[63]

2.8 Regulation of Customary Marriages

Customary marriages in Ghana differ slightly according to the ethnic group, yet they all follow the same pattern. Again, Ghanaian law currently indicates that a male and female of age eighteen (18) years and above, who are not closely related by blood or through marriage, can lawfully enter into a marriage provided that other laws in force do not

[63]Osei Kwadwo. *A hand book of Asante Culture* (Kumasi: Cita, 2002). Pp.27-28
Kuffour Osei Janet, Transcribed, Akanfoo Amammer1 ne Asaeses1m(Kumasi:Wilas).pp.62-66.

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prohibit the relationship. In addition to this was a law enacted to protect, secure and defend all who contract customary marriages in Ghana by The Provisional National Defence Council (P.N.D.C). The government enacted the Intestate Succession Law which was and is still applicable throughout the country.

2.9 Theatre for Development (TfD)

Theatre for Development has been defined in many ways by professionals and practitioners of this genre. To begin with, Zakes Mda tries to differentiate between‘drama’ and 'theatre’. He reason’s that it should be ‘theatre for development’, and not ‘drama for development’ and writes that:

> …'theatre' here refers to the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself, in other words a transaction or negotiation of meaning in a performer-spectator situation. 'Drama' on the other hand, refers to the literature on which performances are sometimes based, the mode of fiction designed along certain dramatic conventions for stage representation.’[64]

From the quotation above, it becomes clear that the quest was to identify an avenue that is democratic in nature when it comes to issues of communication in regards to the theatre. The meaning of a phenomenon is communicated and it happens through the interaction between the actors and the audience. This message is one that seeks to inspire change. This change too must also have the potential to affect the lives of people positively. One has to observe that this aim of effecting the needed change that is imbedded in the TfD praxis is what has brought into being the varied number of terms and approaches that are used in theatre for development. Some of the terms include popular theatre, development theatre, theatre for conscientization, community theatre for rural integration, to mention but a sample[65]. The need to help the grassroots in the

[64] Mda, Zakes. “Marontholi Travelling theatre: Towards an alternative perspective of development” Journal of Soth African Studies. Vol. 16. No. 2. June 1990:352

[65] Mda, Zakes. *When people play people. Development Communication Through Theatre (*London: Zed Books 1993).p. 39.

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developing world to be able to improve their lot economically, politically and socially accounts for the emergence of such genre.

TfD is the kind of theatre that seeks to empower; a theatre that speaks to the day-to-day drudgery of the people. It takes into consideration their language and their ways of life, their cultural practices and the way they perceive things. This assertion helps us to understand why Mlama puts popular theatre and theatre for development as two sides of the same coin. She writes that:

> In popular theatre, people research into their problems of life, discuss and analyse them, bringing out their root causes and suggesting their possible solutions. The problems are also concretised in theatrical portrayals incorporating the people's view points and expressions, followed by collective strategizing and mobilization for action to solve the problems in question.[66]

When theatre for development is used in the context of development, reaching the audience the researcher believes become one of the key aims and its attainment too becomes easy. Mlama confirms Abah's conception of theatre for development. They agree to the fact that TfD has at its core the need to address issues that affects the ordinary person and from his stand point and not from the understanding of the one who is financing the development project.

It is believed that the focus on the need to empower the ordinary people is what greatly contributed to the evolution of the genre. This is why Kamlongera asserts that theatre for development evolved because of the functional nature of indigenous theatre and this also makes itself manifest in recent times. In furtherance to the clarity of the argument above, kamlongera write thus:

> It is not a cliché to say indigenous performances in Africa contain within them some functional element. In most cases this takes the form of a didactic statement. While performers might engage in doing spectacular

[66]Mlama, Penina. *Culture and Development:The Popular Theatre Approach in Africa.*(Motala: Notala Grafiska, 1991).p.20.

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> movements and dances, they also carry within the performances special messages or lessons to some members of their audience. Some work in Theatre for Development is a direct result of recognizing this characteristic in indigenous Africa performances.[67]

The ascertion that using theatre to serve a particular function in society originated with Freire and Boal is aptly negated by the qoute above.Abah writes that, TfD is a "people's theatre, addressing their own problems in their own language, using their own idioms and on their own terms. The ordinary people are the subjects, and in practice, the ones in control. That is, they decide the agenda and participate in making the drama on those chosen issues[68]. It further mentions that the professional ensures that the masses are the priority and things are done from their point of view. In discussing and confirming what the two scholars have said Mumma Opiyo also states that:

> Theatre for Development (TFD): This movement, like Popular Theatre, recognizes the characteristics of indigenous African performances. Where TFD exists, it is facilitated by a team of theatre experts who work with various types of development and extension agencies, helping them create theatre that will carry a message on such themes as nutrition, literacy, health, environment, sanitation, and agriculture around the communities. This kind of theatre varies from straight drama to song and dance. The songs are usually simple, catchy tunes with a clear message, composed and sung by the extension workers together with the audience. TFD workers fall into various groups: government agents and autonomous practitioners among others. They are sometimes animators or facilitators.[69]

Mumma Opiyo corroborates Abah and Mlama's assertion about the genre. Opiyo emphasizes that Theatre for Development and popular theatre are inseparable because they both employs or recognizes the 'characteristics of indigenous African performance'. They use indigenous language and this serves as an advantage of TfD because language

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[67]Kamlongera, Christopher.*Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia.*(Bonn. German foundation for International Develoment,1989)p.88.

[68] Abah, Ogah as cited by Mda Zakes *When People Play People:Development Communication Through Theatre*.(London/New Jersey: Zed Books, 1993).

[69]Opiyo, Mumma. "Concepts and Terms." Levert, Opiyo Mumma and Loukie. *Drama and Theatre, communication in Development. (*Nairobi: Kenya Drama/Theatre and Education Association, 1997).pp.10-11.

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is an important weapon; both in the ideological struggle and also in the battle for how we regard ourselves. This helps in our struggle for communal and individual identity. It is important to observe that language can be considered as paramount in every culture. This happens to be the first thing that anyone who comes into contact with any group of people is greeted with or identifies with regards to a particular people. This also confirms why TfD makes use of indigenous languages of the communities or cultures within which it operates.

Consequently, Ngugi notes that "language is therefore a carrier of culture; culture is a carrier of values – and values form the basis of people's self-definition – basis of their consciousness".[70] By employing indigenous languages, practitioners are able to communicate effectively with the target community. This actually draws us close to understanding the categories of popular theatre that exist. In an interaction with Mr. Arkhurst, one gets the notion that:

> The first part of popular theatre is the type of theatre which is available to a section of a society. This could be because they stay in the same place and are familiar with what is presented. The second category of popular theatre is that which is used for commercial purposes and the last category is that which is done by, for, of and with the people.[71]

From the above categorization, I believe the third category of popular theatre is what Opiyo is talking about and that is what Arkhurst also favours when it comes to TfD and community empowerment. In Tim Prentki's opinion,

> Theatre used in the service of development aims; a tool available to development agencies which pursue the goals of self-development and an improved quality of life of all people whose material conditions leave them vulnerable to hostile, predatory forces, both natural and human. In other words, it is an instrument in the struggle to help such people become the subjects, and cease to be the objects, of their own histories.[72]

[70] Thiongo wa Ngugi. *Enactments of Power:the politics of performance space*. Theatre Development Review. Vol 41 No. 3. 1997:26
[71] Arkhurst S. Interaction on TfD, University of Ghana, Legon, 2013.
[72] Tim Prentki. *Must the show go on?* Theatre Development Review,1998:419.

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What he tries to tell us is the fact that as part of its aims, there is the need to make the less important become very important. One has to contend with the fact that TfD seeks to empower the ordinary person to take charge of his destiny.

Although most practitioners agree with the fact that TfD and popular theatre goes hand in hand and can be considered the same, Zakes Mda thinks otherwise. He observes that "the dichotomy here is a simple one and lies in the fact that theatre-for-development may not necessarily utilise popular theatre". [73] What he tries to say is that theatre for development projects use popular theatre elements but the same cannot be said about popular theatre. This is a view I share because popular theatre to a large extent is one of the offspring of TfD. This leads us to the history of TfD in Africa.

2.10 Theatre for Development in Africa

The foundation of TfD in Africa is the Laedza Batanani TfD Projects of Botswana. This is considered as one of the foremost experiments in the use of theatre as a two-way communication process in which a performance becomes the catalyst for discussion. The Laedza Batanani was a group of adult educators and extension workers in northern Botswana which started in 1974[74]. They started the project because they thought that they could make very little impact on agriculture and other issues if they do not begin to analyse the larger social forces and any perceived hindrance contributing to their state of being. Out of this, they decided that the best way is to mobilize and demand the active participation of the whole community, they came to the understanding that dramatic performances in the various communities, infused with frank discussion and collective action is what will serve as the beginning of the answer they are seeking because it attracted people to come together.

[73] Mda, Zakes. *When People Play People: Development Education Through Theatre.* (London:Zed Books,1993).p.47.

[74] Laedza Batanani. Organizing Popular Theatre: The Laedza Batanani Experience, Gaboroni, Popular Theatre Committee. 1974

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The performance also attracted the people and helped them to focus. Furthermore, it provided a means for frank self-expression of feelings and analysis about major problems in the community. Finally, it served as a mirror to the society as the focus for discussion and a stimulus to take a more critical look at their situation[75]. "Laedza" means "the sun is up, wake up" and "Batanani" means "let's come together and work together". According to Kerr, "Laedza Batanani," in Setwana means, "The sun is up, let us go and work together." Therefore Laedza Batanani is a kind of revolution or wake up call to the community to take their lot into their own hands by taking action to improve their situation. It is worth noting that their method has been widely employed throughout Africa and often serves as the basis of most TfD practice. Even the TfD methodology that was developed at the Chalimbana workshop of 1979 in Zambia is also rooted in this methodology. The methodology of the Laedza Batanani comprise of the following steps:

a. A research into the community's problems.
b. Workshops are held with community leaders and extension workers after the data collection. This in essence helps in the prioritization of the problems identified. Their subsequent work will then be based on the prioritized data.
c. A smaller group is selected to prepare a performance of drama, puppetry, dance and songs.
d. The drama is then rehearsed and performed in the villages. This usually takes the form of a tour to a number of villages with the performance.
e. After each performance, the actors and local extension workers divide the audience into groups and organize discussions of the problems presented.

[75]Kerr, David. *African Popular Theatre: from pre-colonial times to the present day (*London: James Currey, 1995).p.149.

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f. In a report-back session, the chairperson tries to get agreements on decisions for actions to be taken[76].

The follow-up is then done by the extension workers later after the performance and when they have left the community.

The Laedza Batanani model was adopted in other places: first by the Chikwakwa Theatre in Zambia, which is collaboration between the Theatre Department of the University of Zambia and the community. The next is the Amadu Bello University Theatre Collective (ABUTC) in northern Nigeria (Zaria). What they also did could also be said to have taken inspiration from the processes above.

Kerr also outlines the following steps which were developed from "*Art as Tool, Weapon or Shield?"*during Arts for Development Seminar, Harare. This format has informed the practice of this genre in Africa. He indicates the following:

- Research into a community's problems;
- Using a workshop technique to create a play contextualizing those problems;
- Presenting the play to the community, and;
- Using the post-performance discussion as the basis for initiating action to solve the problems.

Although this methodology was developed in a different workshop, it is obvious that the idea follows what was started by Laedza Batanani. This methodology, therefore, has been widely adopted and adapted generally by TfD practitioners on the continent. Oga Abah is acknowledged as having reiterated Laedza Batanani's TfD methodology as follows:

a. The creation and maintenance of trusting interpersonal relationships between the village people and those from the Workshop;

[76] Kerr, David. *African Popular theatre: from pre-colonial times to the present day*. (Portsmouth: NH:Heinemann. 1995) pp 151-154

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b. The collection of accurate information on the specific problems and concerns of the village;

c. The sensitive discussion and analysis of the information so that priority issues surface;

d. The dramatization of those issues in such a way as to reflect the socio-political complexities involved in reaching a 'solution';

e. The utilization of existing performance forms so that, if possible, the drama of TfD is created as an extension of indigenous forms rather than imposed alien form;

f. The post-performance dialogue in which opportunities arise for people of the village to discuss further;

g. Throughout all this, continued and committed interaction with the people of the village should be maintained by workshop participants[77].

Although the methods above are solely in relation to the Katsina and Benue workshops, they also re-emphasize the four steps evolved by the Laedza Batanani TfD methodology. It is worth noting that the use of the indigenous performance forms in the drama became paramount because it makes the people relate with the performance easily and also actively own the process and participate without any barrier in terms of language. This to a large extent enhanced the dramatic performance.

Another innovation that caught the attention of most practitioners globally is Augusto Boal's theatrical techniques. His approach fits well with the TfD genre and that actually made a lot of practitioners adopt it in their TfD practice. This is because of the emphasis his practice places on the involvement of the spectator (audience) in the dramatic processes. One of the reasons why his techniques have been immensely practiced in

[77] Abah, S. Oga. Popular Theatre, Base Groups and Continuity: The Samaru Case, Group Media Journal. Vol. 5, No. 3:18-24

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Africa is perhaps, because they were developed out of conditions in Latin America (Peru) that is similar in so many ways with the African condition.

It is crucial at this stage to discuss the beginning of TfD practice in Ghana which is based on' "Propaganda & Mass Education: Alec Dickson & Drama for Development in the Gold Coast". The article documents what this study believes to be one of the earliest attempts at employing theatre in development in what was known as the, Trans Volta Togoland of the Gold Coast then and now, Ghana. Gibbs gives an account of the way Alec Dickson, who was an education officer, employed drama in his service between 1945 and 1950 during the colonial era. Literacy is what the work of Dickson was about, and this notwithstanding, he delved into other areas such as physical training, debates and courses on civic education. He employed the performing arts (music and drama) in his works considerably. It is in this purview that Dickson is quoted by Gibbs as saying: "We toyed with the idea at first of presenting little plays featuring Ananse the spider of West African folklore…."[78]

Dickson is noted for using Christian and Biblical stories in his dramatic creation process instead of using traditional stories. The only reason that can be ascribed to this is the fact that may be that was popular then. Gibbs makes an observation on this by writing that, "in view of the importance of Ananse stories to Ghanaian dramatists and the use that has been made of Concert Parties to teach and preach, this is a paragraph full of missed opportunities". What Gibbs tries to tell us is the fact that there is the need to make good the use of indigenous performance art because they are the most effective. The initiative of Dickson was further built upon by the Nkrumah government because the government continued to use theatre and other art forms to educate the people with regards to its agenda.

[78] Gibbs, James. *"Propaganda & Mass Education: Alec Dickson & drama for development in the Gold Coast." In African Theatre in Development. Ed. by Banham et al* (Oxford : James Currey, 1999).p.18.

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Kerr further observes that the use of theatre in other West African countries by:

> African governments, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, carried on with the colonial tradition of didactic theatre and cinema after independence, as part of developmental media 'packages' on topics such as health, agriculture and birth control, discharged from centralized information sources. With such packages theatre was looked on as another 'mass' media like radio or cinema, capable of reaching remote 'target' audiences.[79]

One can therefore say that TfD has entrenched itself as a practicable tool for development purposes in Africa because it was earlier employed by governments to disseminate their policies and programs.

The Concert Party tradition in Ghana could be said to be the mainstay of TfD in the country. The concert party had such a great influence on the theatre and drama of the country. This is what accounts for why most people in Ghana, particularly the non-literates regard drama as the same as Concert Party. Efua Sutherland's "Kusum Agoromba", a drama group of the Ghana Drama Studio, existed as a Concert Party group and was purported to have been involved in TfD activities in the mid-1960s.

Barber et al. write that "sometimes staged propaganda plays with government sponsored messages, for instance, on family planning."[80]Theatre therefore has been in the use and TfD in particular has entrenched itself as a viable developmental tool over the years in Ghana.

Talking about TfD in Ghana, one can say that it had not been adequately reviewed and offered the needed consideration both in academia and the development arena until the 1980s, when Arkhurst started a programme at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. Although Dickson can be regarded as a pioneer in some regards, mention

[79] Kerr, David. *African Popular Theatre: from pre-colonial times to the present day (*London: James Currey, 1995).p.149.
[80]Barber et al. West African Popular Theatre, Bloomington, Indianapolis and Oxford, (Indiana University Press and James Currey, 1997) p.20.

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should also be made about Efua Sutherland, who in the 1960s introduced the people of Ekumfi Atwia, in the Central Region, to the community theatre practice.

In an interaction with Arkhurst, he disclosed that the Ekumfi Atwia project started and evolved out of a situation that presented the people of the community as being suspicious of any third party as they felt that they had not been treated fairly when it comes to issues of development in their area. So, they felt marginalized since they lacked basic amenities such as electricity, good drinking water, good schools, good roads, etc.

The role of the School of Performing Arts (SPA), University of Ghana, in promoting the 'TfD' genre and its practice in Ghana is very significant and Sandy Arkhurst is the one who can be credited with this initiative. When he returned as a visiting lecturer from Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, he began TfD as part of the academic programmes of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. Arkhurst says that this effort was supplemented by the support of two Dutch students who arranged an initial donation of twenty thousand (20,000) US dollars, from Novib Foundation in Holland. Thus, in September 1988, a workshop on TfD was organized at University of Ghana for two weeks as part of the undergraduate programme in TfD. Students of the School of Performing Arts (SPA) have since then been involved in TfD projects to enhance awareness creation on societal problems in order to effect the appropriate change in the society.

Arkhurst[81] provides evidence of the work of the staff and students of the SPA. James Gibbs writing about 'Patterns of Theatre in Development' in Banham et al.'[82]*African Theatre in Development* confirms Arkhurst's assertion. He reveals how students of SPA did all they could to engage and encourage most communities in the country regarding

[81]Arkhurst, Sandy. "The Community Theatre Project: A Rethink" *School of Performing Arts Newsletter* (2), University of Ghana. (April – June, 1994).
[82] Gibbs, James, *"Patterns of Theatre in Development" In Banham et al. African Theatre in Development* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999). p.119.

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the use of drama to "raise awareness of issues concerning health, education, family life and the environment." In emphasizing the significant role of SPA in the introduction and development of TfD in Ghana, Gibbs further contend that "[p]artly through Arkhurst's influence on his erstwhile colleague, Yaw Asare, the National Theatre Company has come to see part of its role in terms of providing theatre for development." [83] TfD practice in Ghana is seeing new and varied methods as both undergraduate and graduate students of SPA, University of Ghana continue to undertake projects in the Ghanaian communities under the supervision of practitioners like Sandy Arkhurst, Elias Asiama, among others.

2.11 Importance of TfD

Theatre for development is closely integrated with the social life of the communities that the projects take place. It is mostly integrated into social life and has its own purpose both in the life of an individual and that of a community. Often people perceive theatre as entertainment. Although the art has not received the needed recognition that it needs, it has a lot of relevance in the society.

Theatre for development for instance is a wonderful tool when it comes to community organization. This strength stems from the fact that it employs the language of the people; the mode of performance that they are familiar with and also addresses issues that affects their daily existence. With this at its basic engagement strategy, its capacity to mobilize for any purpose cannot be underestimated.

Theatre for Development is also seen as a weapon that if not used well can be dangerous to the society. Mostly practitioners' use this to expose the ills of the society and point the people to the right path. The genre confronts the people and makes them understand that

[83] Ibid.p.119.

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there is the need for them to change their condition. This is why most of the development projects prefer the participatory approach which is what theatre for development at its basic level tries to achieve. It is therefore important to acknowledge the fact that TfD is a potent weapon to change the society.

Conversely, it can also be a destructive weapon when it is left in the hands of the governments or policy makers who do not have the interest of the people at heart. They can use it to disseminate information that can lead the people astray and cause them to do things that might not really serve the interest of the people and the nation as a whole.

2.12 Conclusion

From the review above, it can be deduced that customary marriage has always been a valid and legitimate marriage. It is also evident that the customary marriage rite has varies. Most importantly the literature indicates that Theatre for Development approach has been successful in similar circumstances and therefore very suitable for the study.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how Theatre for Development (TfD) was applied to achieve the researcher's objective thus, encouraging Asante Customary marriage, (*aware pa*). It deals with issues related to the methodology, that is, the practical project processes which mainly focus on the field work using the qualitative research design. These include familiarization, data collection, story creation, rehearsals, testing, performance, post-performance discussion and fellow up as clearly illustrated in the diagram below:

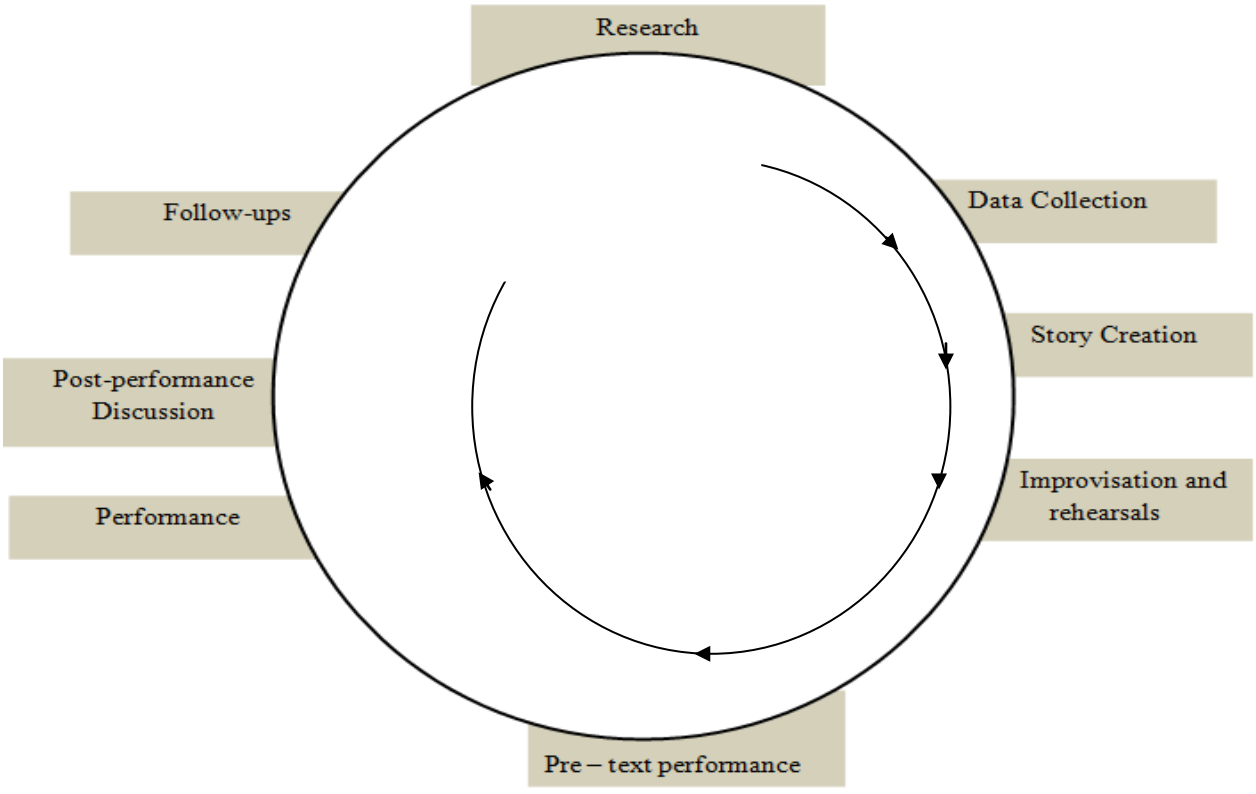

Plate 1: Theatre for Development Cycle

Source: Arkhurst/Asiamah

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3.2 Laboratory Site

The study was done in Kumasi. The people of Kumasi are hybrid of different ethnic background but the Asante people dominate and occupy most of the vicinities such as *Bantama, Santasi,Kurofrom, Asokwa, Suame, Buokrom, Manhyia, Ashtown, Dickhemso* and Breman to mention a few.

3.3 Target Population

Since the researcher could not work in all these areas in the capital, he concentrated on people who are married, divorced, separated, and those yet to marry, that is, those who have reached the marriageable age in areas such as *Bantama, Suame, Santasi*. In addition to these areas are institutions such as St. George's Church Kumasi, St. Louis training college, Centre for National Culture and Manhyia Palace. These are highly dense populated areas where Asante people have settled and made families. In furtherance to the above, these areas are packed with activities such as marriage and funeral ceremonies every weekend.

3.4 Familiarization

The researcher first visited some important areas in the community, introduced himself and declared his intent. He visited places like the Manhyia Palace. Mr. Kofi Badu, the Chief of Staff for Asantehene spent time with the researcher in his office and deliberated on the research topic for almost an hour. He was very happy with the researcher's intent and promised that the Palace would give their support.

Again, the researcher visited Mr. S.F Adjei, the Director for Centre for National Culture, Kumasi and discussed the topic under study with him. He was emotionally touched and said he has been contemplating for quite some time now as to how the

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name 'engagement' migrated into our society to replace our customary marriage. He also noted that we do not understand what we are practicing, blindly copying other cultures which in turn hinders the progress of our development as a people. Mr. S.F Adjei was happy that the researcher is taking this on and hope people will change their attitude and behavior towards blind imitation of other cultures in our society.

He pledged to be one of the resource persons for the final performance. The researcher also visited the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly where all types of approved marriages were registered. In addition to these places visited were churches and some educational establishments in the city. All these institutions and others gave the researcher a warm welcome, embraced the work. On a different occasion, letters were sent to these establishments requesting to interview them and were successful. The next step in the field was to start collecting data using the qualitative research design.

3.5 Research Design

Qualitative method of research was adopted in exploring the thesis topic. This type of research design was probably the best option taking into consideration the topic and the people involved. This is because the language barrier was going to be very tedious designing a questionnaire and more so the respondents would not be able to express themselves well on paper other than the conversational type of interaction. More importantly, Osuala stresses on the need to use qualitative research approach saying:

> Qualitative methods can highlight subtleties in pupil behavior and response, illuminate reasons for action and provide in-depth information…Qualitative research method is of particular benefit to the practitioner because qualitative reports are not presented as statistical summations rather in a more descriptive and narrative style.[84]

[84] Osuala . C.E, *Introduction to Research Methodology* (Nigeria: Africana-First, 2007).p. 175.

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It deals with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and other informal interviews as well as participant observation. This technique allows individuals to come out freely with their opinions and makes it easier to access people's attitudes, views and behaviors. Also, Anderson and Taylor highlight why it is sometimes necessary to use qualitative research design. According to them:

> Field research is especially effective for studying subtle nuances in attitudes and behaviours and for examining social processes over time…Another advantage of qualitative research is the flexibility it permits. Researchers can modify their field research design at any time and as often as they like. Further, one is always prepared to engage in field research, whenever the occasion should arise; as there is little to no preparation needed…Field research can be relatively inexpensive as well.[85]

The advantages of this approach allow individuals to express their opinions well especially in their mother tongues and other official language, Asante Twi and English. Flexibility is achieved and the research is not structured in strict format, continuity is highly achieved and both the researcher and respondents enjoy it.

3.6 Material Used For Data Collection

Material for the research included still, video and sound recorders. These gadgets were used in capturing images and recording sounds for the research work. Also field notes books; pens and other important stationery materials needed were employed. These materials helped the researcher to revisit some past information and activities in the laboratory site and also for further references.

[85] Anderson, M.L. and Taylor, H.F. *Sociology: The Essentials* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2009). P 34-36

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3.7 Library Research

The first stage of the data collection involved the acquisition of literature on the topic under study. Materials gathered regarding the Asante Traditional marriage and other relevant information included books, essays, articles, films, and audio recordings. The majority of these materials were acquired in the field from the following three institutions: the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi; School of Art and Cultural Studies library, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the archival unit, Centre for National Culture. Information was also retrieved from the internet.

3.8 Field Research

The researcher also conducted field research from October 2012 to January 2013 in various parts of the capital already captured, particularly *Santasi, Bantama, Suame* and *Manhyia*. These consisted of focus group discussions (FGD), informal interviews, interaction and other random informal interviews as well as participant observations.

. The objective of the field research was to:

1. Retrieve additional information on the process of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage;
2. Observe and explore the way the people regard the marriage;Explore the diverse angles relevant for the research;
3. Observe the cultural reception and tolerance from those who believe in customary marriage as a complete form of marriage and those who believe it must be validated ;
4. Identify reasons that influence those who say the "*aware pa*" customary marriage must be validated; and,

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5. Know if the people are familiar with theatre and how it can be used as an effective tool to promote our customary marriage?

3.8.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In a discussion with Arkhurst, a TfD specialist and a retired Senior lecturer of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, he explained Focused Group Discussion as a well-structured debate or discussion is meant to investigate perceptions or ideas in a particular area of study or interest. This involves a moderator also known as the researcher, a field assistant and participants not less than eight (8) and not more than twelve (12). He further stresses that, the number of people invited for a (FGD) if less than eight will give no variety of views and opinions; the options are limited and moreover leave alternatives. However, if the participants are more that twelve then there is the tendency that one will have repetition of ideas and more importantly participants might lose focus due to noise making.[86]

Arkhurst again explained FGD as comparatively inexpensive research strategy that can be executed anywhere provided it is conducive, that is, the meeting place should be quiet to allow audio and video recording if possible. The facility should not be disturbed by observers and more so the participants should also not get attracted by other activities outside the facility. Seating should also be comfortable, adequate to accommodate all participants and moderators and finally, the facility should be designed specifically for the purpose.

The researcher conducted focused group discussions (FGD) with people from different backgrounds, occupation, status and not familiar with each other. This was to help in bringing out some of the factors that seemingly contribute to the negative attitude of the

[86]Arkhurst Sandy. Discussion on Theatre for Development, University of Ghana, Legon (2013)

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Asante's on the "*aware pa*" marriage and customary marriage in general. It is worth mentioning that this cross-section of people can be considered as hybrid. Some have their allegiance embedded in their traditions, others are solely taken in by what their pastors or their Christian doctrine dictates, while some practice the two. These groups all in Kumasi included the staff from different departments at the Centre for National Culture (C.N.C); members from various clubs in Suame Roman Catholic Church; St. George's Church, Women's Fellowship Kumasi Anglican; Zone 6 and 7, Kumasi Hairdressers Association and selected students from St. Louis Training College-Kumasi. Some of these groups allowed audio and video recordings while others did not for privacy sake.

The (FGD) gave quick responses and yielded immediate results; it was very flexible in narrowing down questions because of the discussion approach and finally was excellent in obtaining background information.

3.8.2 Personal Interviews

Personal interviews whether formal or informal are of much importance when it comes to doing a qualitative research. This is because Nachmias and Nachmias in their book, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* explain that:

> ...The personal interview is a face to face inter-personal role situation in which, an interviewer asks respondents questions to elicit answers; pertinent to the research... the interviewer allows great flexibility in the questioning process and the greater the flexibility, the less structured the interview.[87]

The researcher conducted informal interviews with Rev. Peter K. Sarpong, a renowned cultural anthropologist and Nana Sarfo Kantanka, an ex-deputy director of Centre for National Culture of Kumasi.

[87] Nachmias, C. F and Nachmias D. *Research Methods In the Social Sciences*. (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1996) P.103

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Plate 2: Personal interviews with Nana Sarfo Kantanka(left) and Bishop Akwasi Sarpong **(right)**
Source: Picture taken by the Researcher, 2013

The informal interview conducted with these scholars unearthed most of the challenges faced by the contemporary society with regards to their perception about the topic and what they believe contribute to the current situation.

Their angles of discussion the researcher noted, helped in the comparison between the tradition and the contemporary situation, the lack of understanding when it comes to the traditional practices and what they stand for and the way forward; that is, the need for a paradigm shift in terms of perception and understanding by the seeming contesting institutions.[88]

The researcher was again officially granted the permission to seek information and interview staff of the Marriage Registry Department at the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly but this was much of a problem. Were there enough records kept and if yes, where and in what condition? After several visits, he gave up because he could not get the assistance needed and therefore decided to proceed further without wasting time.

[88]Interview with Rev. Stephen Kwofie, Kumasi (2013)

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Fortunately, the deputy lawyer at the Registry, Lawyer Patrick Adu-Poku happen to be a high school mate, so he granted me an interview based on marriage contracts he had witnessed. He added that, "people do not know and understand what they practice these days, I think it is peer pressure and some influences from some religious institutions"[89]. He did not want to mention names.

3.8.3 Interaction and Other Random Informal Interviews

Interaction and subsequent active involvement of Rev. Stephen Kwofie, Pastor-in-Charge of St. George's Church, Kumasi and Mr. S. F. Adjei, the director of the Centre for National Culture, Kumasi proved very helpful. Their involvement made the reception from the churches encouraging and made them open up to discuss the issues dispassionately and shared their opinions on the "*aware pa*" marriage and what it entails. It is worth noting that quite a number of random informal interview amounting to twelve (12) was also conducted at places such as football fields, drinking pubs and other gatherings in other areas of the city.

3.8.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation was also employed in this research. Although this type of data gathering has many trends, the researcher found it necessary to apply it using the informal interviewing technique. This is because it:

> ...is usually informal, and is usually more like a casual conversation among acquaintances. After all, the goal of the technique is for the researcher to participate in naturally unfolding events, and to observe them as carefully and as objectively as possible....The basic rule in carrying out interviewing or conversing during participant observation is that the researcher is intent on following the lead of the informant, exerting only minimal impact on the topic and flow of the interaction.[90]

[89] Interview with Lawyer Adu-Poku Patrick (Marriage Registry, Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, 2012) .
[90] Dewalt M. K. & Dewalt R. B. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Field Workers* (New York: Littlefield Publishers, 2002).p.120.

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May also stresses on participatory observation and according to him "... it appears to be just about looking, listening and generally experiencing and writing down" [what you observe].[91] Within the period of conducting the said interviews, the researcher also made time to witness and participate in most of the marriage ceremonies that occurred in some parts of the city which they erroneously named it 'engagement'. The researcher familiarized himself with the people and even had the opportunity to play the role of a brother-in law for a lady he shared an apartment with his Aunt in Kumasi, Santasi. She had to authenticate the ceremony in church with another event called wedding; which means marriage before the couple could live together as husband and wife according to the principles of the Church of Pentecost.

The field research to observe the way the "*aware pa*" ceremony is performed and how the people regard it also helped the research process. It helped establish the way people perceive and understand customary marriages and especially the "*aware pa*" customary marriage of the Asante people. This was revealing because it helped to know more about the state of affairs and also establish the fact that a lot of people do not have information about their traditional way of doing things, thereby working with anything that they hear without challenging it. This contributed to shaping the performance process and the ideas that fed the designing.

The process and performance of an *aware pa* customary marriage witnessed at Bantama and other vicinities in Kumasi depicted that the people, although Christians believed in their traditional way of doing things. What the researcher discovered, however, is the fact that no matter how long it takes, the people are still expected to bless the marriage at the church they attend if they are Christians. These phenomena can be attributed to the fact that, the churches insist on that, although they do not force the people to do it

[91] Tim May, *Social Research, Issues, Methods and Processes* (Buckingham, U.K: Open University Press,2001).P.125.

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instantly. They also make it clear according to a cross-section of people who have undergone the ceremony that, the people must bless their marriage in church because that is the only way God can recognize it and make it acceptable to the Christian community. What this brings to the fore is the fact that there are a number of issues which need to be addressed; the seeming intolerance of religious beliefs; the regard for tradition and the need for a better appreciation of the life of the traditional Asante and how he or she is likely to hold the tradition sacred and in high esteem.

Throughout the field research, one gets the impression that most people who engage in the "*aware pa*" customary marriage do so because their people, that is, their family members believe in their tradition and would support the children to go through their ceremonies with or without the church validating the marriage. This as noted serves as one of the catalyst that propelled and grounded the research work. It provides an alibi by which we can really juxtapose a lot of things that happen today with the understanding of the details of the traditional "*aware pa*" customary marriage.

It is also through the field research that a clear understanding of the process evolved. This confirmation greatly helped in identifying the problems that exist between the traditionalist and the contemporary Christian community. Most of these observations informed the story creation and performance.

3.9 Data Processing

The data collected went through a process of filtering, editing and careful investigation to know what people think about or perceive the Asante Customary Marriage. As a performing artist and a theatre for Development practitioner, the artistic and creative idea of crafting a dramatic piece based on the revised data was applied, thus conceiving a message and working around it to come out with a dramatic presentation. This process lasted for almost two months between February and March, 2013. Activities during this

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period consisted of the translations and transcriptions of some recordings during the data collection period as a result of the FGDs and other interviews as well as its analysis. The outcome of this exercise forms the basis of the story creation.

3.10 Story Creation

This is one of the sensitive stages when all information gathered during data collection process and some expositions analyzed were crafted into a story. The people who volunteered to perform were those involved in this process. This is because they were fluent, understood and spoke the Asante Twi without hesitation. Also these people helped in the translation and transcription of some recordings during the data collection process and were also well prepared to help the researcher achieve his objectives.

One thing that became obvious during the field research and some of the FGD conducted was the fact most of the Asante people are trying in as much as they can to protect their heritage. This is because they, including those who share the view of validating the marriage after the traditional performance, agree with the fact that the tradition needs to be preserved. What actually serves as the point of departure is the fact that people believe it cannot stand on its own as a complete form of marriage. Mostly, their reasons are based on the fact that they are Christians and they believe in their church doctrines. The thrust of the research after unearthing the issues that form the basis of the controversy or otherwise is to see how best awareness can be created and to get people conscientized to see the *aware pa* customary marriage as a complete form of marriage. I should say at this point that, it is not limited to the traditional people but also to Christians and Muslims, as well as any person who is of the Asante ethnicity. This is because the customary marriage actually is already done in the context of the religions, especially Christianity. The only bone of contention is the insistence of another

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ceremony after the customary marriage before it can be regarded as an approved marriage.

The varied reasons and information that the field work produced, thus, FDGs and the interpersonal interviews was what informed the theme and the choice of the title of the skit-***The Heritage***. The Heritage according to the Webster's New World Dictionary is a "property that can be or that is inherited… something handed down from one's ancestors or the past as a culture or tradition." This is exactly what Sekyi captures in his play *The Blinkards.* At the end of the play Mr. Borofosem says:

> The people of the old days were wise indeed; if only we would follow the customs they left a little more, and adopt the ways of other races a little less, we should be at least as healthy as they were.[92]

It is also to make the people understand that this is a legacy that forms the basis of their existence as a people. Their culture is epitomized in the marriage ceremony and its performance too is a whole theatre on its own.

It is worth mentioning that the story creation forms the basis for the awareness creation; the knowledge of the people on culture which forms the thrust of the information the researcher seeks to project about the "*aware pa*" customary marriage of the Asante people. The entire process of creation was through improvisation because that was the only way that rough edges of the skit and pertinent issues that might have been ignored were captured. The improvisation style also helped in making the performers adept in the style and had the opportunity of relating to, and using audience related languages. Theatre for Development by its nature seeks to elevate and give everyone the opportunity to actively participate and contribute their quota. This is because everybody is regarded in the process as a learner and also as a contributor of knowledge.

[92]Sekyi, K. *The Blinkards* (Edinburgh Gate, Essex: Readwide Publishers/Heinneman Educational Publishers,1997). P.173.

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The thematic concern was to encourage Asante people to accept, understand and practice their customary marriage which is complete and authentic. Again, how it has been adulterated and mixed up was also taken much into consideration.

3.11 Story / Play (*Our Heritage*)

The story enacted is about some young ladies in a community, who are torn between traditional values and modernity. In another scenario, a young lady called Foriwaa brands customary marriage as "engagement" and prefers the western type, usually called wedding. She tries to convince her partner and other colleagues in the community to accept this blind imitation of a marriage as the status quo. A young gentleman, named Afranee, who is a friend to Obaa Yaa, tries to take undue advantage of their relationship and have sex with her but Obaa Yaa rejects the idea. She insists that Afranee should follow the proper procedure, ask for her hand in marriage and perform the necessary marriage rites before he could "touch her". Her persistence makes Afranee see reason in her stance and informs his family about his interest in marrying Obaa Yaa. This led his family to visit and make their intention known to Oba Yaa's family, after which the marriage process begins. This is actually what sets the platform for the theme of the skit to be brought to light.

As the story unfolds and the controversy over which type of marriage they should contract is settled, Obaa Yaa's mother narrates how the Asante Customary Marriage is contracted to her family. The people understand her and they then set a day for the final marriage rites. The colourful nature of the event and performance of an authentic Asante "*aware pa*" marriage rite ends the skit.

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3.12 Rehearsal

The people who had expressed interest to perform during the data collection period were called to come for an interaction and possible audition. Aside these people, a number of players were also contacted because a one-on-one interaction with them revealed that they understood the issues at play and could also help project the message in a performance. The performers consisted of National Service Personnel, the Folkloric Theatre Group at the Centre for National Culture and some personnel from Culture and Tourism, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST).

There was no formal audition; casting was done after a short improvisational exercise which helped us agree by consensus the role each one should play. It is worth mentioning at this point that the entire play was performed in the local language of the people which is Asante Twi. This is because it is the language that majority of the people will understand. The language also helped in bringing out the details of the ceremony and using the right terminology in describing the process. Another reason why we agreed to use the Asante Twi was the fact that it is the language that is widely spoken by all in the Asante Region, the home of the Asantes and used as a medium of communication in other regions in Ghana. Again, this medium was helpful because the presentation could be easily executed in any of the Akan speaking societies because the custom is similar.

The researcher managed to secure a rehearsal space at the Centre for National Culture, Kumasi called *Dwabirem* Theatre Space. This facility has both traditional and conventional space for theatrical performances and is an open space facility like Efua T. Sutherland Drama Studio at the University of Ghana. It has easy access with so many entrances, exists, and players could move freely and interact with audiences without any hindrances. Consequently, these endowments made this facility an appropriate place for rehearsals. Below is the schedule.

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3.12.1 Rehearsals, Performance And A Follow- Up Schedule To Promote Asante Customary Marriage (Aware Pa), April, 2013 –July, 2013.

Table 2: Schedule of Activities for the Play.

DATE	ACTIVITY	TIME
22 -30/04/13	Informal Auditioning and casting/ production conference 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Scenes blocked	9:00am –12:00 pm each day, excluding weekends
01 – 03/05/13	Blocking – 4th scene	9:00am – 11:00 am
06/05/13	Blocking – 5th Scene	9:00am – 11: 00am
7/05/13	Discussion and character analysis, nature and role	11:30am – 1:30pm
8/05/13	Refresh blocking for all scenes	11:30am – 2:00pm
9/05/13	Scene 4; Polishing	11:30am – 2:00pm
10/05/13	Introduction; Costume and sound (Discussion)	9:30am – 12 noon
13/05/13	Dance & music (Discussion)	9:00am – 11:00am
14/05/13	Traditional dance rehearsal	9:00am – 11:00am
15/05/13	Traditional dance rehearsal	9:00am – 11:00am
16/05/13	Free day, research on character profile.	
17/05/13	Free day, research on character profile	
22/05/13	Discussion on role and nature	9:30am – 11:00am
23/05/13	Run through, scenes 1,2 & 3	9:300am -11:00am
24/05/13	Run through, scenes 4 & 5	3:30pm – 5:00pm
27/05/13	Discussion on props, make-up & costume	9:30am – 11:30am
28-31/05/13	Holidays/ Free days	
03/06/13 – 07/06/13	Run through some important scenes and polishing them up. (Director CNC, Mr. S.F Adjei visits)	2:00pm – 4:30pm each day
10/06/13	Costume line up, line rehearsal / Dance & Music	9:30 am – 11:30am
11/06/13	Dress Rehearsal, Run through (Nana Sarfo Kantanka present)	9:30am – 11:30am
12/06/13	Text Performance (Resource persons available) Mr Daniel Appiah-Agyei & Very Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour	10:00am – 12:30pm
13/06/13	Final Performance (Wesley College of Education, Kumasi)	10:00am – 12:30pm
15 – 17/0713	Follow up exercise	10am – 12:30pm each day

Facilitator: Ernest Bogya
Assistant: Anita Fordjour Boateng

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The rehearsals went smoothly as planned and mid-way through the process, the skit took shape with all of us trying possible ways and means to develop it.[93]

3.12.2 Test Performance

We had a test performance and this allowed a good critique on the dramatic piece and also paved way for corrections. Some directors in various departments at the C. N. C, Very Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour and Mr. Daniel Appiah-Agyei were available to share their views, and also established the appropriate and necessary cultural inputs.

It attracted quite a number of audiences both outside the centre and other visitors. This test performance covered costume line up and a full length dramatic piece including traditional music and dance as preludes.[94]

3.13 Performance

The final performance came off on June 13th, 2013 in an open space near the hockey pitch at the Wesley College of Education in Kumasi. Letters had already been sent to various institutions such as the Culture and Tourism Department, KNUST; St. Louis Training College; The Asanteman Council and The Kumasi Hair dressers association to mention a few, inviting them to come and witness their own thoughts being enacted and thereafter share their opinions. Resource persons such as Emeritus, Rev Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, Mr. S.F. Adjei, Nana Sarfo Kantanka, Queen mothers from the Asanteman council and quite a number of dignitaries were also invited not forgetting my supervisors Dr. Regina Kwakye-Opong and Mr. Sandy Arkhurst.

[93]Rehearsal schedule for the project performance Kumasi, 2012-2013
[94] Test Performance Disc, 2012-2013

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Plate 3: Wesley College of Education, Performance Space Kumasi.

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

The researcher gathered all players at the Centre for National Culture, including theatrical equipment, props, costumes and a standby generator between 7:00am and 8:30am on this day and transported them to the performance space. Between these hours, most of the schools had already arrived and were seated. These included St. Louis College of Education led by Madam Efua Konadu, Cambridge College of Education and other invited guests. At half past ten (10:30) in the morning, we started the programme with Mr Daniel Appiah-Adjei as the master of ceremony.

To begin, we called on Madam Efua Konadu of St. Louis Training College to say an opening prayer. This was followed by '*ket1*' an Asante traditional drumming and dancing and this attracted most if not all participants to enter the arena and dance. This confirms that, to get participants actively involved in any developmental project, their culture, like music and dance which forms a greater part should be very much taken into consideration. This drumming and dancing paved and prepared the participants for the event. This was followed by introduction of all present especially the resource persons

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followed by the chairperson, Very Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour's remarks. The purpose of the gathering was delivered by Dr. Regina Kwakye-Opong, my principal supervisor. She took the opportunity also to introduce the researcher for this project and urged all who were present to actively participate in the programme.

Plate 4: Dr. Regina Kwakye-Opong (Supervisor, Left) and Mr. Ernest Bogya (Researcher, Right). Mr. Daniel Appiah-Agyei (background) during performance at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

Another traditional dance to prepare for the skirt was performed. It was overwhelming the level at which participants embraced the skit just at the beginning. They got actively involved from the very start of the dramatic presentation and responded positively and negatively to the players in the arena. Some agreed with most questions asked by players while others disagreed. In some cases, participants joined the players and actively participated in the performance in the arena.

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Plate 5: Participants in the performance arena dancing with players

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

The student participants started to discuss issues in the skit among themselves and this generated a kind of debate. The performance space was an advantage to allow players move freely without any hesitation and smoothly interact with participants.

Plate 6: Audience reaction during performance

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

This is because "In theatre for development a participatory situation is achieved through theatre-in-the-round ...[95]" Within an hour, the skit came to an end, followed by a discussion called post performance discussion.[96]

[95] Mda Zakes, *When People Play People; Development Communication ThroughTheatre* (London : Zed Books Ltd, 1993). P.109

[96]Performance disc on Aware Pa (2013)

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3.14 Post-Performance

Post-performance discussion is a period for participants to express their views and opinions on what they have executed together. It was time to ask questions if need be on what has been produced for resource persons to answer and clarify some issues. It must be noted here that not all questions can be answered by the resource persons, any individual who has in- depth knowledge on a particular question can also help. This was a deliberation on the message delivered by, for and with the people concerned.

During this post-performance discussion, most of the participant for example "Sala" confessed how she had been fighting for the Western type of marriage. Her fiancé had now given up and their relationship is about collapsing due to her demands which the partner finds unacceptable, inappropriate and worthless. Similar to this was a member of the Centre for National Culture; he had to apply for a loan from his bank in order to foot the bills for his wedding in church. He said:

> I now understand our ways, we are our own enemies. We must cut our coat according to our size. After marriage at home, I can simply put on my nice Kente Cloth or white African batik shirt with trousers and stand at the altar for blessing.[97]

Plate 7: Questions from participants during post performance discussion

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

[97]Participant Expression , Final day performance on *Aware Pa* (Wesley College of Education.2013)

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All who wanted to ask questions were given the opportunity to do so creating an atmosphere of bottom to top approach. In all, sixteen (16) participants asked questions and all were answered. Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour and the Queen mothers again explained some issues raised in the skit and also expressed the need to preserve our authentic marriage which is affordable to all irrespective of class and religion. They urged the participants to visit them for further clarification. They were so happy and again urged the youth to create more awareness on such issues especially on culture in our communities.

Plate 8: Very Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour (resource person) responds to some questions posed by participants

Source: Picture taken by Researcher, 2013

At the end of this session, Mr. Daniel Sackey Annan of the Centre for National Culture said the vote of thanks and Madam Efua Konadu of St. Louis College of Education concluded with a closing prayer.

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The reception of the message and the interaction gives indication that the performance was effective. The researcher saw that the message has really gone deep down is hopeful that the attitude and behavior of participants concerning customary marriage will be impacted. Next on the schedule was to do a follow up some weeks after to evaluate and find out the changes or impact this performance has had on the target people.

3.15 Synopsis of the Play – Scene One

Obaa Yaa and Afrane are two characters who are already in love. However, their love is not based on sex as is the practice with young men and women of today. The desire for sex however made Afranee try to take an undue advantage of their love to have sex with Obaa Yaa. In order to achieve his aim, Afranee invites Obaa Yaa to visit him. When she obliged, he tries to have sex with her, which she refuses. Instead she tells him that the only way he can have the opportunity of having an affair with him is when he performs the marriage rite. She insists they are not yet married and as such, Afranee has no legitimate right to have sex with her. She enumerates a number of things she considers as consequences she is bound to face if she agrees to Afranee's demands. Among them are teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, single parenting, parental irresponsibility, economic hardships, avoid any degree on consanguinity, and blessing from parents. We are also confronted in this scene with Afranee chasing Obaa Yaa from outside until she enters her house. Afranee then hides at the back of the main entrance door for a while. Later, Yaa comes out to check if Afranee is gone and decides to wash her clothes. Afranee emerges from the back door and tickles her, Yaa screams and shouts at him not to touch her. She wants to be respected at home and would also want to live a moral life as a lady. She sends Afrane off and comments on his intentions. She goes back to the room annoyed.

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3.15.1 Scene Two

The scene ushers in Adwoa Mansah, the mother of Akua Dufie. There is conflict of interest in the house and this has created tension between mother and daughter. Dufie wants to marry a young man but the parents object because after a thorough investigation, they realize that the gentleman is not worth marrying their daughter. Their reasons are that; he is unemployed, lazy, disrespectful, not trustworthy, a drunkard and moreover, does come from a family with a history of some strange disease. Uncle steps in to solve issues but Dufie brushes him off and leaves the stage. Dufie's uncle, Wofa Adu, who was called in by her mother to intervene is shocked at Dufie's attitude and insists that the family will not allow this to happen.

3.15.2 Scene Three

Two sisters, Foriwaa and Sala enjoy themselves at home with a popular music. They are preoccupied with nothing but the need to get "engaged", have a wedding, although they do not really understand what it means. Foriwaa sees the "*aware pa*" customary marriage as primitive and thinks that the western type of marriage is the real marriage. Prince, who is Foriwaa's boyfriend enters the house without knocking and dances to the tune of music. He dances with the two ladies for a while and sits with his girlfriend. Foriwaa informs Prince on the investigation she has done about their marriage. Prince is shocked by Foriwaa's words and demands for some material he feels unnecessary. This result in a conflict between the two and they both agree to end the relationship. Foriwaa demands the western style of marriage and name the marriage price values as "engagement." Afriyie, a school mate of Foriwaa enters and sees Foriwaa angrily talking to herself. Foriwaa explains to Afriyie the cause of her anger but Afriyie also disagrees with her.

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His visit ends up in an argument and Afriyie leaves the house. Foriwaa is annoyed, begins to rant profusely and goes into her room.

3.15.3 Scene Four

The first part of the fourth scene presents Afriyie and Asantewaa coming from the well. They discuss the type of marriage Foriwaa is bent on having. Asantewaa's confusion is depicted in the conversation and this makes her decide to consult her parents when she gets home. This part of the performance freezes.

The second aspect of the scene presents Afranee and Obaa Yaa discussing about their marriage and Afranee promises Obaa Yaa that his parents will be coming to her family soon. After some deliberations between them, they part company. We are then presented with Afranee and his parents discussing Afrane's intention with regards to his plans to marry Obaa Yaa. The parents agree with him and also take the pains to do as their child wants. The parents of Obaa Yaa sound appreciative and inform Afranee's family that they will get back to them with a response. After their investigation, they duly inform Afranee's family that they accept and are willing to give their daughter's hand in marriage, so they can come and commence the necessary rites. The scene ends with Obaa Yaa's family preparing the house for the ceremony.

3.15.4 Scene Five

The scene opens with a traditional dance performance. After some few minutes, Afranee and his family members enter the performance arena; they are greeted with music and dancing after which they are offered seats. Dialogue begins. After deliberations, the family of Afranee presents the items appropriate for the marriage, Obaa Yaa is now called to give her consent on whether the items presented should be received and she

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answers in the affirmative. The marriage is sealed with a prayer offering to "*Odomankoma Nyankopon*" and the ancestors. Both families offer words of advice to the couple and thereafter there is merry making. Asuo the storyteller as well as the spokesperson of Obaa Yaa's family advises on the need to preserve custom. This marks the end of the skit.

3.16 Follow up Exercise

The researcher went back to the community within a month after the performance to evaluate and find out the impact of the project. Almost all the staff at the CNC were convinced and now accept the customary marriage as a complete one, they asked if I could assist their theatre players in sending this message across board, thus, performing this skit all over the Ashanti region in their senior high schools and other tertiary institutions and if possible make a video to be shown on television nationwide.

The Kumasi Hairdressers' Association has also started educating their members on customary marriage and their leader for zone 6, Madame Ama Serwah said, she has deliberated on this issue in her church, which is Pentecost and has argued strongly against their doctrine that, one cannot start enjoying life with a partner after customary marriage until they perform another ceremony called wedding in the church.

In another development, Mrs Oduro resident in Holland who has been informed by a relative of this project came to see the director for CNC Kumasi, to ask for the recorded version of the research work to be shown to a group of women in Holland. This group according to her stands to protect our cultural practices and also educate the Ghanaian youth in Holland.

Also, the Very Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour has been planted as a social actor in the community for people to seek more information on the topic under study. She confirmed

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that her school has asked for the recorded version of the programme several times to be shown because authorities think it is a good material to educate students and the nation as a whole. Again, Efua Konadu, tutor at St Louis Training College and also a host for cultural programme at Adom television spelt out her intentions to promote this work through the media if permission is granted.

It was also very encouraging to know that all the three teacher training colleges have started restructuring their drama clubs. They have seen the power of theatre and how it can be used to disseminate information, educate, communicate and entertain. Most of them have never had the opportunity to watch a life performance, others who had did not value the essence of theatre either, and for that matter theatre was not part of them.

The researcher believes that if an awareness creation of this kind is well promoted, publicized and staged in a well-structured arena targeting a lot of participants, the behavioral change for which this thesis seeks to address will increase rapidly.

3.17 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has looked at how the researcher used the qualitative method of research to collect his data and thereafter used the TfD methodology to execute the project. It has also looked at the empowerment level of TfD, creating an opportunity for a face to face interaction with individuals concerned with a particular problem or issue. The impact is there and then received; it is a great asset for all to embrace as it creates room for bridging the gabs left behind. It is bottom to top approach type of educating people and much cooperation is achieved. Not a single person is allowed to take proceedings but rather all who witness the performance. It is comparatively less expensive and open to all.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Having looked at the methodology and its efficiency in the implementation and achievement of the aims and objectives of the project in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on analyzing the project process within the conceptual framework that underpinned its implementation. It is crucial to state that this was done by examining the project process, the performance, issues of participation, post-performance discussion, the follow-up and finally, the impact that the project had on the people.

4.2 The Project Process

The praxis of Theatre for Development (TfD) can be classified into two main areas. The first one looks at the process and the second one the final performance or the product. It is important to note that the project process as I envisaged (that is the step by step actions that lead to the final performance) was very crucial to unraveling my findings. This is because it aided in putting the research work in perspective. It also contributed immensely to unearthing a lot of the findings of the research work. The themes and issues teased out and inculcated in the final performance were heavily drawn from the process.

Foremost in the project process is the data collection which is aptly captured in the methodology. The approaches employed are the informal interviews (both targeted and random) and FGDs. These approaches came across as the best because of the sensitive nature of the project work; I say sensitive because of the religious dimension and the simmering potential clash between the traditionalist and the Christians with regards to their faith.

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4.2.1 Informal Interviews

Taking into cognizance the sensitive nature of the research work, the informal interview which in some literature is referred to as the unstructured interview[98] came across as one of the best methods that put the objective of the project work in perspective. It provided a clear definition of the parameters of the project and established the frame within which the project should revolve. For example, it helped in making my resource persons understand and appreciate the context in which the research is being conducted. Using this approach helped clarify most of the misconceptions that might have arisen, had it been that the research was not put in context in my interaction with the resource persons. One of the observations that could have become a hindrance that was clarified from the onset and that shaped the nature of the research and opened an angle of enquiry is the understanding of the people (from all the divides) about the concept of marriage. This is because people define and understand marriage and its process only from the perspective of their religion. Even those who belong to the same religion also operationalize their understanding within the context of what the sect they belong to designate.

In my interaction with Emeritus Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, he delineated the need for people to discard some negative ideas acquired; understand what marriage means and its process; and also clearly be able to differentiate between marriage and blessing a marriage. He says that the word "engagement" to a large extent has a lot to do with the misconception in the system. This, to some degree makes the people regard the "*aware pa"* customary marriage as mere segment of the marriage process and not the marriage itself. This analysis establishes the fact that the problem actually comes from the understanding of what constitute marriage.

[98] Fontona and Frey , *The interview: from structured questions to negotiated text* (London: Sage, 2000).P.652.

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One revealing allusion he made is that, "even the Christians have a limited understanding of what marriage and its processes entails".[99] He went further to differentiate between what "blessing a marriage" and "a marriage in church" is.

Generally, most Christians consider a marriage that happens in the church premises with a pastor overseeing the process as the Christian marriage (wedding) and also regard the traditional marriage as they mostly term it "engagement". Bishop Akwasi Sarpong clarified by saying that the *aware pa* marriage is actually the marriage and does not contradict any Christian tenets. However, if one prefers a wedding which they often term Christian marriage, then that is different. It is usually a matter of choice and preference.

He also said that, blessing a marriage can be done in the presence of just two witnesses; that is the Biblical standard. So even in the church, there is still the need to exercise modesty. This notwithstanding, people also tend to prefer the glamorous display of marriage, for example, expensive decorations, elaborate cake and ostentatious bridal wear. He stated without equivocation that "there exists a lot of misinformation in the system which can only be corrected with projects like yours"[100].

Nana Sarfo Kantanka and Mr. S. F. Adjei also agreed with the assertion by Akwasi Sarpong. The only difference that arose from my interaction with Nana Sarfo Kantanka was the fact that, the latter places the fault at the door step of the pastors. He believes they are to be blamed for the way people seem to regard anything traditional as evil. He believes this is what makes Christians go the extra mile to try in as much as they can to give it a different name; all these in an attempt to make it acceptable to their fraternity or social groupings.

[99]Interview with Bishop A. Sarpong on what constitutes marriage in the Akan communities today(Kumasi: 2013)

[100]Interview with Bishop A. Sarpong on what constitutes marriage in the Akan communities today (Kumasi: 2013)

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What I also deduced from the interaction I had with the interviewees is the fact that they believed that the hybrid nature of our society is what is contributing to the changing circumstance of our people, although sometimes, the people also try to do things that they believe will make them be "accepted" by their peers and community (be it church or any other groupings they may belong to).

What became clear throughout the informal interview is the fact that, the resource persons all came to the conclusion that, most of the strict conditions laid down by some churches are solely the practice of the church which has become a convention but not strictly biblical or a laid down rule in the Bible. They reinforced the need for making people understand that, the "*aware pa*" marriage is a complete form of marriage that does not need to be validated in a church or by any other institution.

They, however, acknowledged that, it will take a deliberate awareness creation for this misconception to be corrected. Their informed contribution helped in shaping my understanding of the exegesis of the Bible in relation to marriage and the conception of "*aware pa*" in particular; the nuances of the project to the setting or the people of Asante Region. The interaction actually spurred the project on and brought out issues that I could tease out when doing my random interaction with the people of the selected lab sites to be able to determine their readiness and or reception of the project work.

4.2.2 Random Interview

Following the in-depth ethnographic interview with the people mentioned above and what it unraveled in relation to the nuances of the project, I decided to have a random interaction with people within the project areas. The thrust of this exercise is to pick their ideas on the issue at hand; understand their perspective; gauge their readiness for such a project so as to be able to determine the ground rules and the type of questions that will

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feed into my focus group discussions. This also aided in understanding the temperament of the people; their beliefs and how to be able to find the appropriate question that would make them become interested in such a project. The random interaction really helped in establishing the mood and readiness of the communities when it got to issues that were cross-cultural and religious in nature.

My target populations were people who reside in areas such as Bantama, Suame, Santasi, and Manhyia. In the end, I discovered that I had a cross section of people who can be said to represent the make-up of the communities. These included married people; divorcees; those who have separated and those who have reached the marriageable age. Below are the figures of the people interviewed randomly.

Table 3: Random interview of the selected communities

Community	**Married**		**Divorced**		**Separated**		**Marriageable Age**
	O	**A**	**O**	**A**	O	**A**	
Bantama	32	10	12	10	17	8	36
Santasi	35	5	8	4	7	8	26
Suame	30	15	18	3	16	3	28
Manhyia	26	18	22	6	5	1	18

Source: Field notes from data collected in the selected lab sites, 2013

Key

O is Ordinance Marriage

A is Aware Pa

The table above represents people who were interviewed randomly in Bantama, Santasi, Suame and Manhyia. The interviewees were people who were married, divorced or

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separated. It was revealing from these communities that majority of the people performed another ceremony, the ordinance, after the "*aware pa"* marriage rite. For instance in Bantama, out of forty-two (42) people who are still married, thirty (30) performed the ordinance in addition to the "*aware pa*". For those who are divorced, twelve (12) out of twenty-two (22) did the ordinance while seventeen (17) out of twenty-five (25) who are separated also performed the ordinance. The trend reveals that these are Christian communities and the members feel they have to perform the ordinance after the "*aware pa*" to validate their marriages in their churches.

Also what came out forcefully is the fact that most people did not really have problem with traditional practices. They will however not indulge in it. When asked about the "*aware pa"* marriage, they confessed that they have never heard about it. They consider the traditional aspect of the process as "engagement" and therefore deem it necessary for the church marriage which is termed "wedding".

A common trend discovered from those who are divorced and majority of those who are yet to marry is the fact that they would prefer an alternative way if it is cost effective. When further questioned about the "*aware pa*" marriage, they mentioned that they donot have enough knowledge about it and also showed concern that if their church agrees with it, then, they do not have a problem with the "*aware pa*" marriage.

4.2.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

As already captured in chapter three (3.8.1), focused group discussions was employed in this study. Whereas informal interviews are more likely to allow for extended narratives, open talks are especially where one wants to justify his perception or opinion[101]. FGDs provide a forum for discussing topics that one would like to talk about, but rarely get the

[101]Macnaghten, P. and Myers, G. (2004). *Focus Groups. In C. Seale*, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. London: SAGE Publishers.

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chance to do so. FGD, therefore, takes place in the context of different strands of argument, where people have conflicting views or beliefs. In this study, FGDs were very useful in dealing with perceptions held on beliefs among the people. The groups had a detailed discussion and argued over opinions and attitudes towards "*aware pa*" customary marriage and even the role of culture vis-a-vis religion.

Using preliminary analysis from informal interviews and random interviews, the researcher identified special respondents for the FGDs. Meetings of small group of about eight (8) to twelve (12) people were arranged. These groups were engaged in discussion sessions lasting between one and a half hours, with the researcher playing the role of an "interventionist moderator, raising topics directly, calling on some participants and holding off others, cutting off lines that seem unproductive, challenging some apparent contradiction and vagueness"[102]. At some other times the researcher rephrased questions or paraphrased statements to ignite more discussions.

The FGDs revealed difficult, contradictory and irregular definitions and different levels of commitment, agreement and understanding of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage as a fully-fledged marriage that did not require any validation from another entity. It also provided an opportunity for people to prompt each other to talk, correct perceptions and respond to each other, thus revealing differences in perceptions and understanding of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage and its stance with regards to other religions. A total of six different such sessions were organized.

The researcher used groups from different professional backgrounds; thus groups that were heterogeneous or not very closely related such as religious affiliations, cultural and social groups for the discussions. The researcher tried as much as possible to balance the gender, age and even their level of education, where applicable, so as to capture the

[102]Ibid page 75

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different perceptions and subject them to resolute discussions. This being a research on "*aware pa*" customary marriage, care was also taken to use a language that every participant was competent and proficient in as opined by Macnaghten and Myers. This stems from the belief that qualitative research deals with meanings which are mediated mainly through language and action and allows informants to interact effectively[103].

This tool was also used to verify and validate the reliability of the data collected by the other two instruments already mentioned above. The tool enabled the researcher to capture the participants as they create their own structure and meaning,[104] thereby clarifying arguments and diverse opinions. Such discussions were audio recorded and later replayed during transcription. The replaying and transcription of the recorded data allowed the researcher to listen to the discussions again and do further analysis that greatly informed the creation of the story.

4.3 The Performance

The main medium of reaching out to the people is through performance. This is because performance has embedded in it our indigenous media of communication. And, in dealing with issues of development and conscientization, one has to take the target audience into consideration. When one employs a medium that the target audience is conversant with, he or she is bound to get the needed feedback on the objective of his or her project. Ansu-Kyeremanteng corroborates this with his statement:

> …the characteristics of the target audience assume even greater importance in choosing appropriate media. When familiarity and popularity of indigenous communication systems with villagers are considered, it follows that they will be legitimate factors in media choice. Indeed, in development education, it will be necessary for educators to be conscious that media may be differentially effective for

[103] Dey, I, *Qualitative data Analysis: A user- friendly guide for social scientists.* (London: Routledge, 1993).pp 27-51
Sayer, A. *Methods in social sciences: A realist Approach. (* London : Routledge, 1992).
[104] Denzin, N. K, *The Research Act*. (2nd. edition). New York: McGraw-Hill

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> different types of learners, and, therefore, media that are best suited for various leaner types should be identified.[105]

The choice of this performance medium therefore became the appropriate one due to the fact that the people were all conversant with its language. The performance was projected through the use of folk media, which are drama, dancing, music and singing. These tools are employed as a process of increasing the consciousness of the people so that they can take charge of their personal 'liberation' and community development. The idea has been applied in varied circumstance and according to Malama Thomas,[106] it was first mooted in 1977 as a response to the need for a paradigm shift in the way the extension workers and adult educators reach out to their communities. It is worth mentioning that, the same idea underpinned the usage of the concept.

Conscientization here refers to a gradual and sometimes subtle learning process in which people look critically at their socio-economic realities in order to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of their problems. The process as employed throughout the project is predicated on the notion that, an increased critical understanding of one's socio-economic conditions, might lead to him or her gaining control over his or her life and thus effecting the needed change to improve the situation he or she find him or herself.

> The major drive is the potency of the approach or method employed, which is the folk media. These traditional media are not merely a form of expression but are a way of expressing knowledge in a manner which is acceptable and functional. The poorest man in the land has access to his culture, expressed in the story, poem, play, song, proverbs, custom, ritual, rites or a variety of other ways characteristic of folk culture.[107]

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[105] Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. Indigenous Communication in Africa: A conceptual Framework (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2005).p.16.

[106] Thomas Malama, Theatre for Development in Sierra Leone: a study of care's project learn; Africcan Media Review, Vol. 1. No. 3, 1987). pp.89-94.

[107] Ingle, H. T. *Communication Media and Technology: A look at their role in non-formal education program*.(New York: Continuum, 1972).p.29.

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Kyeremeh supports this claim as he writes that "drama, storytelling, proverbs, poetry and other such indigenous forms of communication are found to be good channels for communicating effectively…"[108] It must be emphasized that, the choice of this approach had a lot to do with the need for effective communication because of the issue at hand; it also means that "indigenous media are thus basically interactive, utilizing concurrently the senses of sight and sound in face-to-face encounters; and, therefore, maximizing active participation of audience in the communication process".[109]

The nature of the performance is such that, it employed a lot of traditional performance elements because of its functional nature. In a related circumstance, Ingle posits that:

> These traditional media are not merely a form of expression but are a way of expressing knowledge in a manner which is acceptable and functional. The poorest man in the land has access to his culture, expressed in the story, poem, play, song, proverbs, custom, ritual, rites or a variety of other ways characteristic of folk culture.[110]

Ingle further gives a cogent point as that goes to justify the style of performance used for this project. This is because "in order to convey a message with effect, one has to use the language, symbols and styles familiar to the audience".[111] The approach to the performance of this project, therefore, gives the participant audience an opportunity to identify with what was being discussed because it employs a medium of communication that they understand without being tutored on its rudiments.

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[108] Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. *Indigenous Communication in Africa:Concepts, Applications and Prospects*(Accra:Ghana University Press, 2005)

[109] Ansu-Kyeremeh, *Indigenous Communication in Africa:A conceptual Framework*.(Accra:Ghana University Press, 2005)

[110] Ingle, H. T. *Communication Media and Technology: A look at their role in non-formal education program*.(New York: Continuum, 1972).p.29.

[111] Ibid p. 23

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4.4 Audience Participation

The success or failure of development initiatives has been closely linked to how actively the targeted community participates in the initiatives.[112] Over the years practitioners have observed that development initiatives require genuine community involvement from the onset if the undesirable conditions affecting their daily livelihood are to be changed. It has emerged that if people are left out from the crucial starting stages of the development programmes, they are less likely to appreciate the initiative. Therefore, participation, as envisaged in the current development discourse, involves allowing people the freedom to chart their destiny by harnessing the existing physical, economic and social resources available to them in order to attain the objective of community development programmes and projects[113]. Participation therefore offers the community a strong means of legitimately articulating their needs and satisfying these needs through self-reliance and mass mobilization. Community participation provides space to the community to reject authoritarian and paternalistic alternatives advanced by the elite members of the society and the development agents. More often than not such authoritarian proposals never favours the poor people's opinion, in which case participation encompasses a process of awakening and raising levels of consciousness among the poor.

Participation in this sense, where the people have freedom to express their minds without fear or inhibition, can be equated with Plato's conceptualization of participation in the *Republic* in which the ideas of freedom of speech, assembly, voting and equal representation are guiding factors. Participation in this sense is essential to democratic practice and when applied to community development it denotes the involvement of the

[112] Oakley, P. *Projects with the people: The Practice of participation in rural development. Geneva*: International Labour Office, 1997)p11.
[113] Oakley, P. *Projects with the people: The Practice of participation in rural development. Geneva*: International Labour Office, 1997) p 15.

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community in identifying, planning, and implementing of development programmes[114]. This is synonymous with Plato's basic tenets of democracy described as a form of government of the people, for the people, by the people.

Julius Nyerere affirms the point espoused above. He writes that "people cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves".[115] In other words, one of the ways a people can develop is through a conscious and active participation in development efforts and planning. By extension, one can arguably posit that, without active participation by the communities in question, there will be a limit to the appreciation of a development agenda. Melvor also mentions that "give an audience lecture and they will listen. Give an audience theatre and they will participate…"[116] This sets the stage towards understanding not only the use of the approach but also the justification of why it was used. The people really showed a communal spirit and also embraced the approach as one that they were familiar and can identify with.

In view of the fact that the performance technique is forum theatre in nature, audience participation was one of the key issues focused on in the skit titled "*Our Heritage*". This was enhanced and fortunately had a positive impact on the entire performance. The researcher in one way or another tried to adopt as Augusto Boal suggested, the process of forum theatre to conform to what objectives and what the study sought to achieve.

The result was encouraging. In the end, the performance confirmed Gecau's believe that "the mobilization and transformation of men and women-a nation's most important resource-to become the makers, the subjects, and the objects of their own lives and

[114] Maser, C. *Sustainable Community Development, Principles and Concepts*(Florida: St. Lucie Press,1997) p 46
[115]Nyerere, Julius K. *Freedom and Development* (New York: OUP, 1973) 64-67
[116]McIvor, C. (Theatre for Development in Zimbabwe) D+C, 3.1990.p. 29-30.

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history".[117] Indeed the project transformed them and began a subtle mobilization agenda for the subsequent diffusion of the knowledge acquired at the project performance.

The audience came from three teacher training colleges namely; Wesley College of Education, St. Louis College of Education and Cambridge College of Education. The audience were more receptive and actively participated in the entire process from the time the skit stated to the end.

This could be attributed to the fact that the performance was done in the arena type of theatre; audience related languages were used and the performers were also conscious of the fact that it is important not to concentrate on the performance but to also get the people to perform as the tenets of forum theatre demands. It became apparent from the beginning of the performance that we were all learners and contributors to knowledge on the field. Because of these happenings, one can also say that, imbedded in the acts were that notion of teaching people; the notion of sharing and learning from the audience.

4.5 Post-Performance Discussions/Interventions

After the performance, the resource persons took time to go through the rudiments of the play and the thrust of the research work. Issues in relation to some of the concerns the play portrayed were discussed and solutions suggested by the audience. It is worth mentioning that Osei Amponsah, who was a member of the audience, lamented and recounted his story about how he had to borrow money from his bank to plan his wedding. He confessed that if he had this information or education, he would not have subjected himself to the ordeal of going through a number of challenges before marriage. It is fascinating to note that the people were amazed and did not believe that, a religious leader from the Christian angle could be a resource person, support and also advocate for

[117] Gecau, Kigali. (A theatre for Development in Zimbabwe) Africa report, 25 (6):24-26. 1982:89

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the recognition of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage as a complete form of marriage. The general atmosphere was very calm and unassuming.

The occasion saw the patronage of several resource persons including, Nana Akosua Nyarko, a Buoho Hemaa, Rev. Bishop Akwasi Sarpong, a Rtd Catholic Bishop of Kumasi, Nana Pokua, a queen mother of Breman Koforidua, Rev. Janet Osei Kuffour, a tutor at Wesley College and a royal from the Manhyia palace, S. F Adjei, director for Centre for National Culture, Kumasi. Their presence encouraged the people to ask questions to clarify a lot of misconceptions they had about the "*aware pa*" customary marriage. One important observation is the fact that, this part of the project nearly turned into a confession ceremony. The participants were honest and openly acknowledged their limitation but also pledged their resolve to ensure that the message does not end there but rather carried wherever they go.

4.6 Follow-up

Follow-up, I should admit, is one of the important aspects of a project work if one is really keen on ascertaining whether the project had an impact or not and also if behavioural change is to be examined. This is because the thrust of one's objectives as a researcher is actually to see behavioural change and one cannot see behavioural change after one week. Since the study has to be completed within a specific time frame, I decided to do a select follow-up on some of the participants and their schools that were present at the performance.

During my follow-up on the selected training colleges, I discovered that the students, who participated in the programme, as if by design, went back to their various schools and made the topic a subject for discussion by the entire student body. In St. Louis for instance, I was told that an informal debate was organized by the seniors who participated in the project performance for the first year students on the topic

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"Customary or Contemporary Weddings: which way to go'. This clearly shows that, the performance had an impact on them. Or at least, it made them cogitate about the current situation. Secondly, Madam Afua, Konadu intimated that, the students who participated actually suggested to her to facilitate the possibility of the project being staged on their campus to educate the entire student body. They wanted a platform for them to be able to disseminate the lessons they learnt because they were sure it will go a long way to help people. They also thought that academically, they could also learn it as a form of cultural or social studies.

4.7 Conclusion

One of the things that came out clearly is the lack of education with regards to the "*aware pa*" customary marriage and therefore needs awareness creation. Theproject also revealed that Theatre for Development approach is effective in initiating developmental projects through education, discipline and organization. The next chapter will focus on the challenges, research findings, and application of the study, limitations and recommendations and conclusion.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This chapter focuses on the salient points that have emerged in the study. It summarises the issues identified as crucial from the process of story creation to the final performance. The chapter also deals with the challenges, research findings, and application of the study, limitations and recommendations.

Theatre for development contradicts the notion that the local people of any given community in which a project takes place, do not have any theatre experience. This is because, TfD believes in the indigenous art of the people. It therefore advocates for creating a theatre with the people if it is to serve as an empowerment tool. What mostly becomes the bone of contention is participation. Most of the TfD that the researcher has witnessed, either directly or indirectly aimed, to some degree, at creating awareness and empowerment. Mda quotes Christopher Kamlongera that "participation in Freire's terms means total involvement even at the level of conceptualizing the vehicle of articulation"[118]. It is important to note that, the thrust of the research work is about empowering through awareness creation. And as such the issues of partcicpation is very crucial.

The study sets out to achieve three main objectives; to explore the factors that accounts for the seeming "negative" attitude of Asante's generally towards traditional marriage practice and its effects on the people and the society as a whole; to ascertain why customary marriage practice has lost its identity or has to be backed by another event or celebration before it is regarded as a complete marriage; and to use Theatre for Development (TfD) as a tool for creating awareness on the fact that Asante customary

[118]Christopher Kamlongera in Mda, Zakes. *When People Play People.Development communication through theatre* (London: Zed Books. 1993).p.13

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marriage (*aware pa*) can be regarded as a complete form of a marriage contract that does not need any other form of validation.

5.2 Partcipation

Participation happens on different levels. And it is one of the key ingredients when dealing with the issues of conscientization, intervention and awareness. The only time the people are concientized or become aware of the problems in the communities is when they get involved. The random interviews was the first point of interaction and involvement of the community members. Their views from the focus group discussions shaped the entire research work because it was greatly applied during the process of story creation. The purpose of involving the people was to give the particpants the chance to intervene and express their thoughts about the change they were about to experience.

Forum Theatre, which was adequately employed, taking the performance area into consideration, granted the people the opportunity to participate actively in the performance. They told their story without any restrictions. They felt that they were a part of the performance from the beginning and were also eager to contribute at any point they were called upon or when they felt that they needed to make an intervention. One point worth noting is that, the way the researcher employed this approach, to a greater extent, got the people involved throught the whole process of the perfromance.

It is one of the core beliefs of TfD practitioners that making the people a part of the process is the best way to make them appreciate and own the process, so as to ensure the sustainability of the change process that the project might initiate.

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The people at a point saw themselves as partners. That also can be attributed to the level of awareness raised at the end of the project performance. Futhermore, among the things that really worked the magic for the study, was the way the researcher heeded to the advice Mda gives about the TfD process and the traditional communities. The thrust of his argument is that, when one decides to employ traditional elements in TfD, the felow must do it the right way. He writes that:

> …Some modes of traditional performance do not lend themselves well to such uses, since they would be out of their social context in a theatre for development situation. The practitioner of theatre for development and of development communication must take great care to ensure that, if and when traditional performance are used, they are used proficiently.[119]

I employed a lot of things that resonated with the people. The tradtional drumming and dancing which the participants were familiar with actually did help enormously. It got the people really excited and helped to do away with the nostalgia associated with going to a new place.

5.3 Direct and Indirect Impact

The study has illustrated that theatre has the potential of affecting the life of any given people. The project process of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage has helped clear some misconceptions. It is worth noting that the performance did have a positive impact on the people who showed up at the function. The vehemence with which the resource person spoke, is a clear testimony to the fact that there was a positve impact. Another one is the informal debate organized for the first year students in St. Louis College of Education, that they all attest to the fact that, their participation in the project is what ignited their

[119]Mda, Zakes. When people play people;Development Communication through theatre. London;Zed Books ltd. 1993:185

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curiosity, understanding and subsequent zeal to ensure all and sundry benefit from the same information.

The change in the mind-set of some people at the place of the performance may have also been influenced by the dramatic performance. More so, because they actively participated in the performance, they began to appreciate and even understood that there are a lot of misconceptions about the "*aware pa*" customary rite. One obvious thing that resonated with the participants was the thought about how much they would have saved had it been that they were privileged to have this information (about *aware pa*) before they did their wedding.

Those who are now preparing to marry might have to consider this option because it is cost-effective and also complete as a form of marriage. A clear testimony came from one person during the post-performance discussion.

It is worth noting, that, all of the participants agreed that their level of knowledge on the "`*aware pa*" customary marriage increased after they participated in the project. The manner in which the project was carried out and the way in which the people were made to actively participate clearly touched the people and enlightened them about the process of the marriage rite.

5. 4 Limitation

There were a number of issues which challenged the progress of the project. The major problem encountered was the issue of marriage in question. Marriage seems to be a sacred and private life of some individuals, spelling or exposing how it was contracted, how fruitful and many others were very difficult, especially those divorced and separated. Apart from the sensitive nature of the topic, there were other issues to deal with.

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- Most of the electronic media like Nyira FM, Hello FM, Boss FM and Luv FM did not see the need for the research because they have already erroneously accepted the term "engagement" in place of the "*aware pa*" marriage and think it cannot be corrected or reversed. It also became obvious that, the Asante marriage (*aware pa*) have not been properly documented for future references. Most of the related literature available was very contradicting and this was one of the main problems that hindered the progress of this research.
- One other issue that served as a limitation to the project is the fact that the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly does not have any information about the number of registered marriages at the registry. The researcher could not access any data on marriage types contracted due to poor storage. The marriage registry was not welcoming although permission was granted from the administration to access information.

5.4 Findings

It is apparent that forum theatre has the penchant of creating adequate awareness if it is modified to fit into the local context. The research points to a way by which subsequent researchers could localize the forum theatre method. The positive effect that the project had on the students from institutions that showed up for the performance is a clear manifestation of what the Forum theatre technique can achieve. I believe it is because their perception changed; their understanding enhanced; and their beliefs in it strengthened, that is why they extended the positive effect to their schools.

Forum theatre in the context in which it was used increased one's capability, which means one's ability to transfer or educate another, based on what he or she has learnt. It does this by increasing the people's level of knowledge and also encouraging them to be

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able to talk to people about the issue. This approach simplifies the issue and demystifies the process for all and sundry to grasp the rudiments.

Another aspect that made especially the performance effective is the fact that the performers of the skits understood the import and the thrust of the technique. It means that they understood and knew exactly what to do at any given time. This implies that they really knew how and what to portray in the skit and what to look out for at every material moment.

Another thing that came to light is the fact that, some people believed what they were told about marriage because they did not really know the details and processes of the *aware pa*. They took to the current trend which is the church wedding either because someone has done it and they were happy with the glamour that came with it or one party insisted on it being the way or because of their faith. Other sources of influence include coercion from social groupings; influence of the people who grant them favours; and lastly because of prestige.

One important issue that came up is the fact that the religious tenets do not oppose the traditional approach and especially the '*aware pa*" customary rite as a complete form of marriage. What happens is that lack of information on the part of some religious leaders often makes them put issues related to the "*aware pa*" customary marriage in a wrong perception and set rules that leave their church members with little or no choice to make.

5.5 Recommendations

After careful study of the process and unravelling the merits of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage as a complete form of marriage, I will like to recommend that the

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research work should be further staged in other Akan communities by the Asanteman council for the youth to be educated.

The Manhyia Palace should come out with well documented material that spells out the processes of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage of the Asante. This to a large extent can accommodate customary marriages in general.

Conscious efforts should be made by the traditional authorities to educate the religious leaders of various sects to get to understand the process of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage so as to prevent the continuous entrenchment of the misconceptions that already exist in the system. When this is done, there will be greater harmony and coexistence between the traditional people and some religious leaders.

The Ghana Education Service I believe should adopt the study and factor it into their cultural and heritage studies as a way of helping reduce the misconception about the "*aware pa"* customary marriage.

Agencies like UNESCO, Centre for National Culture other institutions that deal with issues of heritage should also employ this resource in creating awareness because it reaches out to people and help them understand what it takes to play a role in sustaining and developing or promoting the culture of the people.

The Asante Traditional Council should embark on awareness creation campaign on *aware pa.* This campaign will serve as a platform to educate the youth on the need for the contraction and performance of the marriage rite *aware pa.* This will also help eradicate the extravagant nature of marriage and encourage the youth who are shying away to marry.

Finally, the research findings and some of the issues raised should be developed into research topics for future research.

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5.6 Conclusion

Theatre has a direct correlation with a nation's development. It is socially, culturally, religiously and economically replete. Of all these, the first and most important is human development; both resource and personnel. With regards to human development, two branches can be established. These are the practitioner using theatre and the audience who are affected by it or experience it. Theatre for Development combines the two and adequately engages to ensure the development is holistic.

Theatre is a tool and an avenue that can serve the people in a profound way. It is one of the approaches that have a democratic tendency. It is very important to note that the "*aware pa*" customary marriage is one of the legacies that can really serve the interest of the Asante people. The promotion of the "*aware pa*" customary marriage would therefore be the "saviour" of the younger generations. It will help in promoting and curtailing the differences that exist among the religions. It will also help do away with the seeming confusion between the traditional and the Christian beliefs.

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APPENDIX A:

MAPS

Plate 9. Map of Ghana (Ashanti Region marked in red circle)

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SOURCE: http://juliabeccia.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/ghana_region_map.gif.15/03/2014.

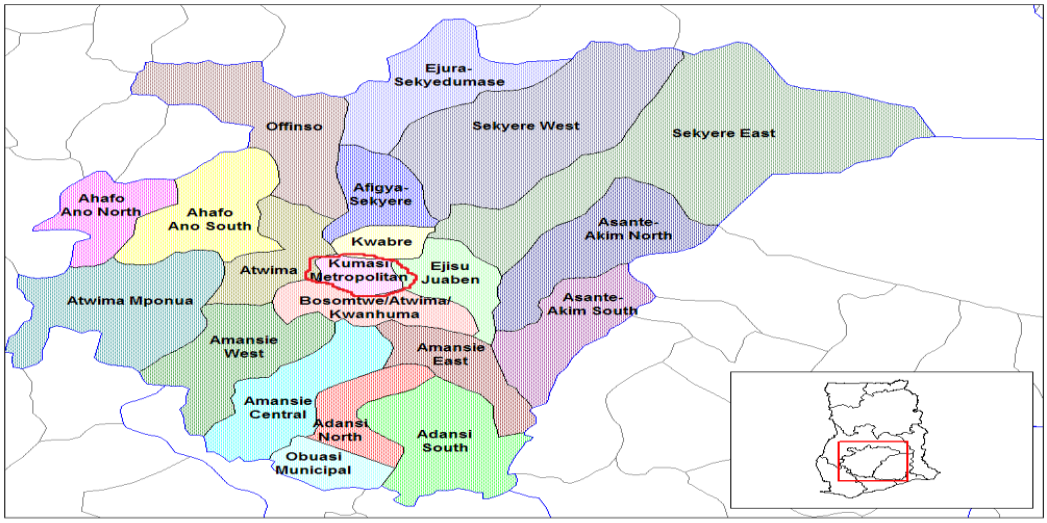

Plate 10: Map of the Ashanti Region (Kumasi metropolitan in red circle)

SOURCE: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/Ashanti_districts.png,15/03/2014

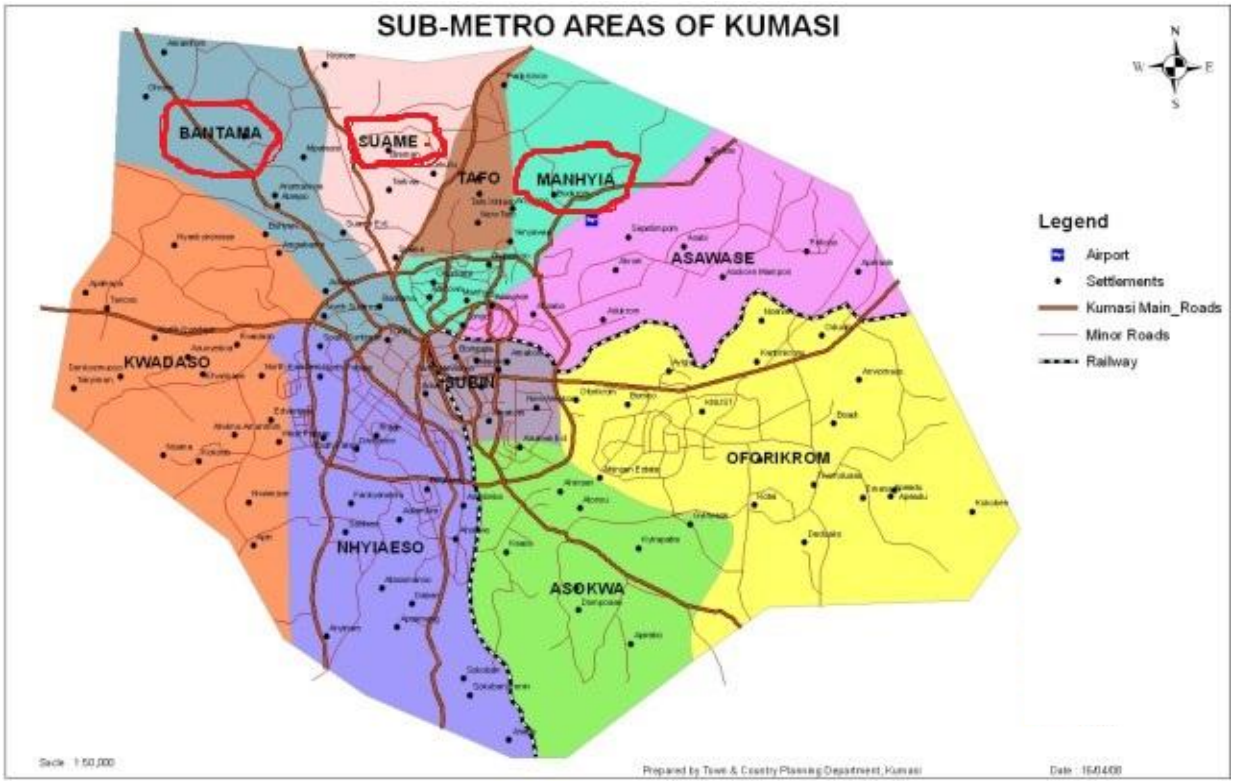

Plate 11: Map of Kumasi (Research areas marked in red circles)

SOURCE:http://mofa.gov.gh/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Kumasi-Metropolitan1.jpg, 15/03/2014.

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APPENDIX B: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE PLAY *"Our Heritage"*

Transcription of the Dramatic presentation performed at Wesley College of Education to create the awareness that *''aware pa''* customary marriage is complete in its self.

Although TfD researchers are not required to write a transcription of the performance, the researcher found it necessary to transcribe the play for future reference in any of the Asante communities. The play was written in the simplest form of informal and formal English Language which is a medium of communication for the target group made up of three institutions; Wesley, St. Louis Cambridge Colleges of Education.

Moreover, other institutions in the Akan or Asante communities can also benefit from this transcription whereas the indigenous Asante who cannot understand English can also enjoy the recorded version of the dramatic piece which the researcher has made available at the Manhyia Palace, Centre for National Culture and the three institutions mentioned above.

CAST

Sarah Obeng	-	Obaa Yaa, young lady
Louis Gyamfi Boateng	-	Afranee, young man
Sharon Obeng	-	Adwoa Mansah, mother of Akua Dufie
Caroline Asante	-	Akua Dufie, young girl
Solomon Opoku-Mensah	-	Wofa Adu, uncle of Akua Dufie
Esther Nyarko	-	Foriwaa, lady from abroad
Martha Amankwah	-	Sala, Foriwaa's sister
Prince Agyenim Boateng	-	Prince, Sala's boyfriend
Mavis Duah Pomaa	-	Afriyie, Foriwaa's old school mate
Grace Adjei	-	Asantewaa, Obaa Yaa's sister
Asuo Kwame	-	Opanin Adjei, uncle of Obaa Yaa
Theresa Owusuaa	-	Awo, Obaa Yaa's grandmother
Drunkard	-	Samuel Aboagye, Obaa Yaa's brother

BRIDE'S FAMILY		**GROOM'S FAMILY**	
John Kofi Boame	Father	Elvis Opoku Dwumfour	Father
Susana Pokua	Mother	Adobaw Issabella Ekua	Mother
Grace Adjei	Sister	Asuming Bismark	Elder
Esther Nyarko	Antie	Mavis Duah Pomaa	Sister
Rita Oppong	Cousin	Solomon Opoku-Mensah	Uncle
Patrick Asamoah Sarkodie	Uncle	Caroline Asante	Sister
Prince Agyenim Boateng	Brother	Sharon Obeng	Antie
Theresa Owusuaa	Grandmother	Patricia Nyarkoa Baah	Friend
Samuel Aboagye	Brother	Martha Afriyie Yeboah	Sister
Victoria Osei	Sister	Agyemang	Uncle

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Drummers:
Eric Owusu
Osei Kwabena
Philip Owusu Agyemang
Emmanuel Atta Poku

Dancers:
Comfort Addo
Vera Addai
Prince Agyenim Boateng

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SCENE ONE

(*There is noise from outside, Afranee chases Obaa Yaa but she manages to enter her house, panting and looking round if Afranee is still after her.)*

Afranee: (*To the audience*) where did she pass my dear, eii, she is gone, has she entered the house?(*To the audience*) If it were you, would you leave her? Please let me sit here with you and spy on her, she will surely come out. (*He sits down in the crowd waiting for Obaa Yaa)*

(Obaa Yaa enters the arena talking to herself)

Obaa Yaa: This boy, let me check, he usually hides himself at corners, (*To the audience*) please is he gone?

Well, if he is gone then let me go and start washing my clothes, it has been a while since I washed my clothes. Mummy will be back soon. (*Goes to the crowd and grasps a bucket then enter the arena again still talking to herself. Afranee tickles her from the back*). Hei Afranee,

Afranee: What, what have I done, why do you scream like that?

Obaa Yaa: Afranee, you are not gone yet, what are you doing in my house?

Afranee: Why do I have to go, please come, come (*she pushes him away*) come Obaa Yaa

Obaa Yaa: Let your hands go off me, hei Afranee, do not touch me, no, I mean it do not touch me.

Afranee: Obaa Yaa, calm down. Have patience. I love you with all my heart, why do you have to get angry when I touch you?

Obaa Yaa: Heii! Stay where you are; do not get any closer please! What did I hear you say? This is not what I want, I have told you several times to inform your parents to come and ask for my hand in marriage. Then you will have me as a wife and everything (*referring to her body*) will be yours.

Afranee: *(To the audience) Eiii* eiii eiii, my fellow brothers and sisters, listen to her, she does not want me to touch her and what do I do*? (Crowd response yeeeee, do not give up, go and see her parents. Females jubilate while the males encourage him to force her).*

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Obaa Yaa: (*To the audience*) Love ones, please bear with me, will you allow a man who has not performed the necessary marriage rites to be seducing you? No I will not, if you will, I will not, please.

Afranee: *(Moves to the crowd*) please tell me, is this the best way to treat a boyfriend? I buy her all sorts of clothes, shoes and accessories; (*moves back to Obaa Yaa in the arena*) come around my dear.

Obaa Yaa: No, no, am not coming anywhere, I said come with your parents and perform the marriage rites, you want to stand at corners with me, impregnate and leave me to struggle. Or give me sexually transmitted disease? no way, I will not give myself to you just like that.

Afranee: I have told you several times that I am making preparations to meet my parents then we can come and see yours, *aware ne kwan ware.* It is not a short journey to embark on so please exercise patience. You are too difficult to deal with, I love you so much Obaa Yaa. (*Makes attempt to hold her*).

Obaa Yaa: Please do not touch me I say, now leave my house; leave my house now, now I say!! My mum is in the house, go away go away, (*pushes him into the crowd, gets angry the more and moves to the crowd*) where is this coming from? No, I will not accommodate his actions. I will never give in to what he proposes; he should customarily marry me. (*She moves out of the arena angrily talking to herself*)

SCENE TWO

(In the arena is Adwoa Mansah sweeping and lamenting about her stubborn daughter, Akua Dufie. Dufie enters the arena and crosses to the other side of the crowd carrying water)

Adwoa Mansah: You have now arrived, Dufie, Dufie, Akua Dufiee, is it not you am calling? (*The mother makes an attempt to pull her from the crowd but she enters the arena with a frowned face*) what are you doing there?

Akua Dufie: Oh leave me alone, you have nothing to tell me.

Adwoa Mansah: Heii, you have now returned since you went fetching water in the morning, Dufie, you are very stubborn…

Akua Dufie: Oh please, let me have my peace of mind, you are always nagging, old woman you…

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Adwoa Mansah: Akua, I gave birth to you, whether you like it or not, I am your mother. You will never be older than me in this house, it will not happen (*Dufie moves some few steps away to prevent her mother from touching but the mother chases her in the arena, some of the participants shouts!! Leave her alone, others say discipline her!!).* I guess you are coming from that good for nothing young man, tell me, is it not true? (*Make an attempt to hit her*)

Akua Dufie: Leave me alone, yes I am coming from there. Is there any reason why I should not visit him? Whether you like it or not, I will marry him. Gone were the days you old folks married for your daughters and sons, today is not the same. I do not need your consent to get married, moreover you are not the one going to take care of me after marriage, *(to the participants*) what is your take on this issue brothers and sisters? Please let…

Adwoa Mansah : (*Shocked and surprised*) Oh my God, I have given birth to a daughter who now commands me like a little one. (*Moves to the participants*) Please listen to my story, this daughter of mine wants to marry a gentleman, but after thorough investigation, this gentleman is not worth marrying but she still insist she wants to marry him, come rain or shine.

(*Tension increases as she returns to her daughter, the argument reaches its climax and mother tries to lay hands on daughter.* Wofa Adu, *uncle of* Akua Dufie *steps in to separate them.)*

Wofa Adu: Adwoa Mansah what is the matter, what is all this shouting for? What is going on, I do not like this behavior of yours, what is the matter? I have told you on several occasions not to use abusive words to correct a child nor should you use force to settle matters. I overheard you from my bedroom shouting and screaming as if a gorilla has entered our home. I will not sit and watch you treat my niece in this manner. What kind of behavior is that?

Adwoa Mansah: Any time I talk about your niece it seems I am…

Wofa Adu: What is the matter Dufie? (*Moving Dufie to the other side of the arena*)

Dufie: Why, are you not on talking terms with your sister? Ask her.

Wofa Adu: (*Shocked*) Akua Dufie, heii, so you do not want anyone to talk about your affairs, eiii (*turns to the sister*), Sister, what is the matter?

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Adwoa Mansah: This is not news. It is the same old story; the gentleman we have warned her about is still seducing her in corners. Since morning Dufie went to fetch water, she is now coming, I have done all the house chores.

Wofa Adu: So it is this old story you people are quarrelling about (*cuddles the niece*). Akua Dufie, don't be disturbed about your mums reactions, we love you so much, we have done all we could to make sure you get into the hands of a good person. Having delved into this gentleman's character and family, we have realized he is not worth marrying, that's why we advise you again and again not to…

Adwoa Mansah: This is uncalled for…

Wofa Adu: He is not industrious. There are several infectious diseases in his family. He will be a liability rather than asset. He is a complete dependent. Our family has opposed this marriage and thus we will not allow…

Adwoa Mansah: We will not say yes to it, you will ….

Akua Dufie: Wofa, what are you talking about, look at your "togas" (*shorts*), is it all you came to say? I do not find any sense in your advice. Whether you and the family like it or not, he is the one I love and will marry.

Adwoa Mansah: You hear her, when I talk about her, you people think it is hatred, now you have your share, I thank God.

Wofa Adu: What am I seeing? Akua Dufie, is it me Wofa Adu you are talking to?

Akua Dufie: Who are you?

Wofa Adu: You describe and address me with such impunity, eii, eii, eii, you tell me to look at my "togas"? (*Walks to Adwoa Mansah*) Adwoa Mansah, what do we do?

Adwoa Mansah: Hei, hei, don't call me, what do we do? Ask yourself. When I discipline her, you complain and now she is beyond control, please she is your niece, decide, I have to go prepare food.

Wofa Adu: Adwoa, you are right, please forgive me for the interruption. As the elders say, wisdom is not in the head of one person. You wait, I will be back (*Move to the participants leaving Dufie and her mum in the arena, he asks the participants questions on how to deal with the issue at stake, after several questions and answers, he comes back to Dufie and mother still exchanging words*). Adwoa Mansah, we will not wait to see this shame fall on our family. We will have to act now.

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Adwoa Mansah: Good. You are now talking like a man and a brother.

Akua Dufie: Hei, hei, listen, what will happen if he talks like a man? Nothing can change my mind, you people with primitive ideas (*she walks away*).

Wofa Adu: Akua Dufie, you are talking to Wofa Adu not anyone else ooh! You will meet the one to discipline you (*He chases Dufie as he speaks followed by the mother*).

SCENE THREE

(*There is the sound of drums and Boahemaa dances to the tune of the drum happily, enters Foriwaa, her big sister from abroad*)

Foriwaa: Boahemaa, what are you doing?

Boahemaa: I am dancing.

Foriwaa: Dancing? You call this a dance, eiii Boahemaa, please do not go and disgrace yourself at the party grounds.

Boahemaa: Ah! Sister, is this dance not a good one? It is the new dance I learnt on the internet.

Foriwaa: Hahaha! You call this a new dance? Have you not heard of the new Azonto dance?

Boahemaa: No sister, what is Azonto dance?

Foriwaa: Azonto is a new move that even babies in the womb recognize and dance, are you telling me you have not heard of it?

Boahemaa: Tell me about it, sister, what is it?

Foriwaa: Ah! Boahemaa, you are too "kolo" (*move to participants*) Brothers and sisters, don't you all know about Azonto dance moves? Boahemaa, come and let me teach you. (*She starts to teach Boahemaa but she cannot get along with very well. After several attempts, she makes a good move*). Come let's all dance together and teach her (*they both pull participants and dance with them for a while and then sit down. Prince enters the arena, shouts if he can come in; he is allowed in, hugs Foriwaa and sits down. Boahemaa leaves them alone*)

Foriwaa: Eiii sweetheart (*hugs him tight*). Please sit down.

Prince: How are you, babe?

Foriwaa: I am good, thank you and you?

Prince: I am well.

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Foriwaa: You have kept too long in coming, why? I have been waiting…

Prince: I am sorry, be patient, now tell me, what happened, what is the news?

Foriwaa: I have enquired about everything concerning our wedding (*happily getting up from her chair*). Now to begin with, I enquired about the beautician, the wedding gowns, our flower girls and page boys. I don't want to go for one or two, but I want four grooms men and bridesmaids on each side and a page boy and flower girl in front. (*Moves to audience*) What do you think, folks? I have also enquired about 10 latest posh cars in town for our convoy. We will relax in one and the others for our bridesmaids and groomsmen. Our dinner will be a buffet popularly known as "serves yourself" and many more you can think of (*moves back to Prince*)

Prince: Please sit down Foriwaa, are all this included in the marriage?

Foriwaa: Yes, why, all this for our wedding, why, anything wrong?

Prince: Wait, Foriwaa, are you telling me this is how our marriage is contracted? No I don't think so, you are confused. Who told you all about these gowns, cars, bridesmaids, groomsmen and all these accessories?

Foriwaa: Yes, they are the things needed for our wedding.

Prince: Do you really mean it?

Foriwaa: Yes I do. Why, are you not ready to bear all the cost? Oh! Do not be a coward and…

Prince: But I never asked you to go and asked for all those gowns and others. I thought you went out to inquire about our traditional clothing like kente…

Foriwaa: Ah! Prince, I am confused, you talk as if this is news. Were you not the one who asked me to go and enquire about all these …

Prince: Yes I did but not these cars and groomsmen. What do I need them for, am I going…?

Foriwaa: (*To the participants*) my sisters and brothers, listen to my story (*moving towards them*) this gentleman wants to marry me. He came in so strong that I couldn't resist, now listen to what he is telling me. How do we marry these days, is it not how I have explained to him? I can't simply understand you men of today.

Prince: (*Gets up and also moves to another direction of the arena*) Love ones, please listen carefully, people always say fair ladies are expensive and

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difficult to handle. Do you think we can end up somewhere the way my love one is going about this marriage? (*Shouts from participants*)

Foriwaa: You proposed to me and I agreed, bring money so that I start paying for our marriage items, then you "vex", "wey tin be this" (*she gets applauds and shouts from the female participants, Prince also discusses the issue with male audience who sympathize with him until the two disagreeing couples return to the centre of the arena*).

Prince: If you insist on these unnecessary things as part of our marriage, then, I don't think you are ready to marry because this is not part of our culture and besides I cannot afford. We have to call this relationship a quit.

Foriwaa: You can leave; after all, you are not the only man on this planet. Go away, I don't even need you in my life again, go away, Boahemaa, see him off! (*Prince leaves the stage*)

Boahemaa: Sister, what is the matter? (*Afriyie enters and interrupts*)

Afriyie: What is going on? There is too much noise in the house. Foriwaa, stop this shouting and welcome me please. I demand some respect, okay!

Foriwaa: Afriyie, it is my …

Afriyie: Your what, sit down and talk to me, what is the matter?

Foriwaa: My husband to be has broken my heart, he asked me to go and make investigation as to how we are going to contract our marriage, but it seems he wants to change his mind.

Afiyie: What information did you give him that will make him change his mind?

Foriwaa: I told him about my wedding gowns, the cars, buffet, bridesmaids and many more, what else can you think of my sister?

Afriyie: Did you actually ask for the necessary items needed for the marriage and from whom?

Foriwaa: What kind of question is that? I did inform him all that I have told you initially. All about my wedding, the dress, bridesmaids and groomsmen, page boys and girls, luxurious cars and a buffet dinner during the reception.

Afriyie: Foriwaa, you are highly mistaken; marriage in our culture is not contracted between the two adults but the entire family. Your boyfriend has not enough money to cater for these expenses and come to think of it, these items are not needed for our marriage ceremony. As a matter of fact,

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you have no idea of what you are requesting for. This is going to make him indebted to a lot of people and even financial institutions for years to come which will affect the stability of your marriage.

Foriwaa: Afriyie, don't come and annoy me, you are…

Afriyie: No, no! This is too much for a young man of marriageable age to afford. Besides, from the traditional perspective I do not see it as part of our custom and to be honest with you I have not witnessed this type of marriage before in our community. This is double marriage. (*To the participants*) Don't you all agree with me?

Foriwaa: (*Pushing Afriyie away*) Please do not get me irritated. Get out of my house, get out! I mean it (*Afriyie walks out and leaves Foriwaa alone angrily speaking her thoughts out*). This girl is "kolo" she is worse than my boyfriend(*she is disturbed, can't control her emotions and eventually leaves the arena*).

SCENE FOUR

(*Actors are at different vantage points in the arena. Afranee and Obaa Yaa at point A, mother of Obaa Yaa and Father at point B, Afranee parents at point C. The first action is on Afriyie and Asantewaa, Obaa Yaa's younger sister entering the arena. These two characters discuss Foriwaa's ideas on marriage ceremonies*)

Afriyie: Do not talk about water; we have leaders who enjoy the flow of water in their homes throughout the year.

Asantewaa: Hmm! There is no flow of water from our pipes, the only stream is drying up, what do we do now?

Afriyie: I do not know. Asantewaa, listen!

Asantewaa: What is it, you gossip, what is the news now? Tell me!

Afriyie: Do you remember Foriwaa?

Asantewaa: Who is Foriwaa?

Afriyie: The lady who went oversees for only three months and now wants to be hailed. You mean you don't know Foriwaa? Hei

Asantewaa: Foriwaa, Foriwaa (*trying to remember the name*).

Afriyie: So you don't remember Foriwaa, ah!

Asantewaa: I do not. Remind me, who is …

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Afriyie: Ah! Ah Ah, our classmate Foriwaa who just returned from abroad and wants to sit on our shoulders.

Asantewaa: Aaaaaah! Our own friend Foriwaa who just came!

Afriyie: Yes, who else. I went to see her and …

Asantewaa: Afriyie the "konkonsah", "Konkonsah", tell me, what did you see?

Afriyie: Hmm! It is more than the eyes can see... You know, I went to meet her in a heated argument with the boyfriend.

Asantewaa: Were they fighting?

Afriyie: Wait, it was more than a fight. It was about their marriage. Foriwaa wants to have the type of marriage she witnessed outside while the husband to be disagrees. It was not a joke ooo! You should have seen it for yourself.

Asantewaa: So you stood there listening and watching all this? Eh! Afriyie

Afriyie: What else could I do than to watch? Foriwaa was so furious; she even sacked me when I disagreed with her.

Asantewaa: (*To the participants*) my sisters and brothers, do you really understand the story being told? Ei Foriwaa should be very careful. I pray she gets another man to marry or else it is going to be difficult for her to get a husband. Afriyie, I hope you are not convinced by her words.

Afriyie: No.

Asantewaa: If no, what sense did you put in her head?

Afriyie: She will not let me speak, but threw me out of house like a sack of cassava.

Asantewaa: Please, I am getting angry, this conversation will earn us nothing. I am going home. My mum is waiting (*They both set off to their various destinations*).

(*On the side of the arena is Obaa Yaa's mother seated, there is a knock, enters the sister of obaa yaa's mother*)

Sister: Agoo!

Mother: Amee, who is there, please come in.

Sister: Ei sister, the meeting has not started yet? I thought I was late. How are you my sister?

Mother: Do not worry, you are not late. I am fine, have a seat.

Sister: Now tell me, what is matter you called me for, tell me quickly, what is it?

Mother: Eei not bad, it is my daughter Obaa Yaa.

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Sister: What about Obaa Yaa? Tell me now.

Mother: Take your time sister. She told me about a gentleman who has promised to marry her and as custom demands, I cannot stomach this alone, so I called you and our brother Opanin Adjei to come for us to discuss.

Sister: And where is he?

Mother: He has just not arrived. You know him and his bottle, he … (*enters Opanin Adjei, he greets the sisters and makes himself comfortable on a seat*).

Op. Adjei: Sorry I am late, where are they, have they not arrived?

Mother: No, they have not, I do not know why?

Op. Adjei: Well, I saw some people around the corner close to our house.

Mother: Then it might be them coming.

Sister: Are they of high high …

Mother: Yes, yes, they come from a wealthy home, a respectable one of course.

Op. Adjei: Wait, I know they are people of high status.

Mother: Sister, this marriage will be a great one if and only if the gentleman is worth marrying.

(*Enter Asanteewaa carrying a bucket of water*)

Asantewaa: Eii maame and uncle, you are always discussing issues, what is the news now?

Op. Adjei: We are discussing something important.

Asantewaa: Uncle wait!

Op. Adjei: Oh! go, I say go away aah!

Asantewaa: Uncle wait, I have got news for you. The water in this community is drying and the pipes are not flowing as well. It is high time leaders in this community stood up and performed their respective responsibilities in consonance with the privileges they enjoy on day to day basis.

Mother: Hei hei, you are trying to find excuses for coming home late.

Sister: She is finding excuses for not bringing water home, they are like that, she is …

Op. Adjei: I have told you to be very strict my sister on this young lady, if you do not …

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Mother: Go away, we are discussing something important. Be careful, you spend too much time outside following those girls.

Asantewaa: Mama, another one, listen, please listen.

Mother: There she goes again.

Op. Adjei: Listen to her. I say listen to her.

Asantewaa: There is a new type of marriage in town called wedding brought from overseas. They say it is nice and calls for expensive gowns, maids, not the maid in the house ooo, big cars, flowers, food, and many more.

Mother: So you went listening to all this nonsense instead of coming home to help me. Oh I see!

Op. Adjei: We are not interested in this news there is something important for us to discuss. (*Very angry, Asantewaa picks up her bucket and slowly moves onto another side of the crowd)*

Mother: *(To uncle)* please take your time, don't be shouting at her like that. *(Action moves to Obaa Yaa and Afranee on the side of the arena*)

Afranee: Obaa Yaa, why have you kept long in coming?

Obaa Yaa: I was busy doing something.

Afranee: Oh Ok! I did not even notice what you are wearing. Please I am sorry (*trying to cuddle her*).

Obaa Yaa: Do not worry, what is the matter?

Afranee: Lets us go, I will tell you, I want you to accompany me to see …

Obaa Yaa: See who? I am busy doing something, besides I am not in a good outfit. Wait Afranee, what are you doing about what we discussed the last time?

Afranee: Ah! What did we discuss? I don't remember.

Obaa Yaa: Eii eii eiii (*to the participants*), listen to Afranee, he has now forgotten about all the promises he gave me. He does not remember telling me anything. See how men are, they are all the same (*moves back to Afranee who is disturbed and shy*). Have you forgotten you promised to inform your parents to come and ask for my hand in marriage?

Afranee: Ah! Ah! Ah! (*To the participants*) look at her, I never knew you were talking about this issue. Do you think you need marriage more than I do? You don't need marriage more than I do okay! Please have patience. My family will soon visit your parents, so do not be upset. I love you. I will see them this evening. Be patient, my love (*Obaa Yaa smiles*).

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Obaa Yaa: You are delaying, be quick.

Afranee: Hmm see her,acting like an angel. After marriage, she will start scratching my teeth and throw all sorts of words at me.

Obaa Yaa: I will never do that or you think otherwise?

Afranee: Oh no, I know you will never act like that. Come close to me, Obaa Yaa, this dress is not appropriate I would have wished you accompany me to see a friend. Go home and I will see you later in the evening.

Obaa Yaa: Ok, see you later; remember to inform your parents first thing when you get home. (*To the participants*) I thank God for changing the mindset of Afranee. He has finally agreed to marry me.(*Obaa Yaa walk to her Mother, Auntie and Uncle, then action moves to Afranee who also moves to the other side of the arena to joins his parents. They are happy to see him*)

Mother: Afranee, you have arrived, I was just informing your dad that you are late and …

Afranee: It is true mother but where is uncle?

Father: Look at him coming (*they receive him happily*).

Uncle: "Akonta". In-law, your waist is bad.

Father: Don't worry, it is old age.

Mother: Brother tell me, did you pass by the usual place before coming? I mean the VC – 10, I can smell something here.

Uncle: why are you always spying on me, you are too inquisitive. When did you see me going behind the fence?

Father: (*steps in*) "Akonta" welcome, what brings you here?

Uncle: Eeei, I heard …

Mother: Let me bring him water first.

Uncle: Thank you I am okay, thank you.

Father: "Akonta", continue your story.

Uncle: I was around the usual place when I had information that you wanted to see me so I made my way here.

Father: It is true my brother-in-law, Afranee; your nephew informed me three days ago that he intends to marry.

Uncle: Good news, Afranee, I am your uncle, now, tell me the story.

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Afranee: I thank you for coming, uncle. You remember telling me to find myself a partner, I thought about it and have found someone I love (*they all cheer up*).

Uncle: Congratulations Afranee (*shaking hands*). You have wisdom just like me.

Father: No, it is from me (*takes off his hat*). Look at my big head, Afranee.

Afranee: "Papaa".

Father: Is she working?

Afranee: Yes papa, she is a teacher by profession.

Father and Uncle: Where?

Afranee: Osei Kyeretwie Senior High School.

Father: How is she like, please tell us more about her.

Afranee: I do not know how to describe her perfectly, but Uncle, you can recognize her; she lives in your friend's house, Opanin. Agyemang.

Uncle: I know the place, thank you Afranee. This is not far from home but ermm, Akwasi, I have one question. Are you ready, I mean do you have all the means to marry? You know, your Uncle, I am "broke".

Afranee: Uncle, don't worry, I am well prepared.

Father: Afranee! Afranee! Afranee!

Afranee: Papaa.

Father: I am impressed by your actions. I, your father have taken all the cost for your marriage (*hits his chest*).

Afranee: Papa, do not bother yourself. I am gainfully employed now and have saved towards this important stage in my life.

Father: Now Afranee, which of the ladies in the house are you talking about?

Afranee: Eei … not the slim one, the one with weight, black …

Father: Eii Afranee, the big one! Yeii, Afranee, you are in trouble, (*getting up*) my waist problem is all because of fat ladies ooo. (*To the audience*) Is it not true, am I lying? Yei yei yei , Afranee, are you really prepared for this journey?

Uncle: Afranee, thank you very much, but please excuse us (*Afranee leaves*).

Mother: (*To the Uncle*) Hei you, your mouth is full of lip services, you cannot afford to marry for your nephew, yet you encourage him to marry.

Uncle: Sister, please do not insult me, I have got schnapps under my bed and that can be presented.

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Father: "Akonta", do not let us waste much time on this, let us go immediately and investigate, then proceed to ask for her hand in marriage.

Uncle: Don't worry, I know the uncle very much, he is my friend, Op. Agyemang. I know him verywell; he was my mate at school.

Father: Okay, when do we go? Is Wednesday okay?

Uncle: Eeiih……Wednesday.

Father: No, Maame Adwoa's one week celebration is on Wednesday.

Uncle: Then let us make it Saturday.

Father and Mother: No no no, "Akonta" stop, stop, Saturday, no! Please.

Father: Woman, wait, let me speak to him, you will surely get drunk on Saturday (*Uncle is shy*).

Uncle: Did I say Saturday?

Father: Yes, you said Saturday.

Uncle: Okay, I reverse my statement.

Father: So when?

Uncle: Saturday, eeii Saturday.

Mother: Why don't you go on Monday and?

Uncle: Shut your mouth, woman!

Father: Keep quiet; don't put your mouth in the affairs of men.

Uncle: Okay, Saturday, I will not drink, I promise I will not drink, full stop.

Father: Is it okay with you, woman?

Mother: It is I am okay. Let us hope he does not drink.

Father: Let's go and prepare for the day, get up, let's go!

Uncle: (*To the mother*) did you not prepare any soup or…?

Mother: Soup, come and eat, what did you bring along when you were coming? I have got nothing. You have never brought anything into this house.

Uncle: Have you also visited my end with something before? Move, move!

(*At another corner of the arena is Afranee's mother and her friend, a gossip*)

Friend: I have heard of your son's marriage.

Mother: Yes, it is true, what is wrong with that? I am very happy; soon, I will have a grandson.

Friend: Yei, yei, yei, that day, I will dress.

Mother: Why, are you going to dress more than me? Why are you people so nosy?

Friend: Let me ask you, ehm…..has your son's lady undergone puberty rites?

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Mother: Oh Yes! She has, I saw it with my two eyes you gossip. I witnessed it, so do not worry.

Friend: Okay, I see hmm, that day, I will dress like a queen.

Mother: Eiii, busy body.

(*They go outside the arena.... action moves on to Obaa Yaa's family waiting to meet to meet Afranee's family members*)

Op. Adjei: Ah! We have been waiting all because of these people.

Antie: Sister informed me they will be here around 12:00 and they are still not here

Mother: I taught they would be here on time you know African people once they say 1:00 it is 4:00 o'clock. This is what …..

Antie: It is good we are all here early because it is not good for a visitor to come and wait for us; we rather have to prepare for their coming.

Op. Adjei: You said 12 noon it's now 12:00 noon

Mother: Please exercise patience eh!!

Antie: Where did you meet this gentleman?

Obaa Yaa: When we attended Maame Adwoa's funeral.

Antie: So you could not find any suitable place to meet a partner that at funeral grounds.

Op. Adjei: Oh I See! Our elders were wise indeed. You can meet your partner anywhere; this funeral has been very useful.

Asantewaa: Uncle I will also come with you tomorrow to a funeral

Antie: Keep quiet! Asantewaa

Op. Adjei: Don't worry; I will go with you to Opanin. Kwadwo Kra's funeral

Mother: Do not take her along and later insult her.

Antie: She is a kid and as such……*(There is a knock on the door,)*

Mother: Obaa Yaa, see who is at the gate please.

Antie: Ah but why are you sending Obaa Yaa while Asantewaa sits down doing nothing?

Asantewaa: Ah! Maame, I am not going anywhere, I can't go (*there is another knock*)

Obaa Yaa: Uncle don't worry, I will go and check.

Op. Adjei: Please do

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(Obaa Yaa takes some few steps away; she sees Afranee's Uncle and father, while the mother Ante and Uncle still try to discipline Asantewaa. Obaa Yaa comes back to inform her parents of Afranee's family presence)

Obaa Yaa: Uncle is Afranee's dad and uncle

All: Let them in, please let them in

(*They are all relieved now; she goes back and leads them into her house)*

Op. Agyemang: (*with all excitement*) Agyei, Agyei, Agyei

Op. Adjei: Yeeii. Opanin. Agyemang, *(They all exchange greetings and sit. They are offered water to drink and Opanin. Agyemang passes witty comment)*

Op. Adjei: You are welcome, as the elders say, we are good, and you are coming from far, what brings you here?

Op. Agyemang: "Akonta" they have asked of our mission.

Afranee's father: Please let it flow, tell them about our mission.

Op. Agyemang: Yoo!!! Fellow elders. We have come with good intentions. My nephew Afranee has informed us that, he is interested in your daughter, Obaa Yaa, so we have come to ask for her hand in marriage.

Father: (*standing up*) Afranee is my only son

Op. Agyemang. This is a difficult period for young men and women and if we don't allow them to marry, they will resort to cohabitation. He has really done a thorough investigation and he thinks your niece would be a better wife This Flower is most cherished by him and we want it in our home please.

Op. Agyemang: Wait. Did I hear you say flower? I am sorry; we don't have any flower in our family. We have nursed human beings please. Why do you address a young woman in my house as a flower, please I will not accept this.

Mother: Exercise patience my brother; we all fault sometimes, so please...

Op. Agyemang: I am sorry; please I will revisit the elders and speak appropriately as customs demands. My nephew Akwasi Afranee has talked to your niece Obaa Yaa and we would want to ask for her hand in marriage.

Op. Adjei: *(To the sisters)* Good news my sisters, we welcome you once again. Let me also give to them the news at home. Opanin Agyemang, as you can see, we are all doing fine, nothing bad has happened. We got wind of your visit and we were looking forward to it. *(The two families make happy gestures)* Opanin Agyemang, as the custom demands, what have you brought to confirm your family's intent?

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Op. Agyemang: Abusua, we did not come empty handed, as tradition demands, we have two bottles of Schnapps, called "Pentu" to confirm our knocking *(Offers it to Opanin.Adjei).*

Op. Adjei: Good *(taking the drinks)* you people have come like men, so we will treat you as such.

Mother & Antie: You are always happy to receive drinks, you ….

Op. Adjei: Is that a problem, Obaa Yaa is my niece and as such, I must receive her drinks and no one else. Opanin. Agyemang, my family and I thank you so much for your respect. We have received these drinks in good faith. There is no problem at all, do not worry, our family will get back to you in no time.

Op. Agyemang: Thank you Opanin Adjei, for your warm reception. We will beg to leave.

(*Op. Agyemang & Father thank them and leave, Mother, Antie and Uncle are very happy, they discuss how to investigate and get much information about Afranee and his family before accepting their proposal. They dismiss and join the participants to gather information. While mother and Antie discusses Afranee with the participants, Uncle goes to a drinking bar to discuss Afranee with friends who are mostly drunkards. He takes the two bottles of drinks with him. They are happy to see him with the drinks, they play traditional music and he dances. They all hail him)*

Op. Adjei: Brother, I have news for you. A youngman wants to marry my niece. Look at these two drinks, today; we will drink to our satisfaction. "Hey cut and let me cut" *(they sing and drink).* Wait, now friends, you tell me because I do not know much about this community. This gentleman in question is called Koofie, he...

Friends: Koofie, Koofie, hey wait, is it Koofie, are you sure! No! no! no! no! that one is as bad as a ……

Op. Adjei: Hey wait; he is not a good choice?

Friends: He is a rapist, cursed, a thief, a drunkard, a lazy boy, don't agree

Op. Adjei: Hmm! So they came to trick and deceive us, much more take away my niece eeihh! We shall see.

Friends: Don't agree to this marriage; he is not a good one at all, at all.

Op. Adjei: I see, then they will come and meet me, they will go empty handed. *(They drink while action move to Obaa Yaa's mother with the participants)*

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Mother: *(Asking the participants*) please can you tell me about Afranee?

Participants: Oh! Afranee, he is a good one with good character, hardworking and respectful.

Mother: Thank you very much

(S*he walks into the Arena while action moves to Antie also delving into Afranee's character)*

Antie: Please do you know about a certain gentlemen called Afranee? Please tell me about him.

Participants: Afranee is a nice person and we do not have any bad records associated with him

(Participants say good things about him and Ante gets convinced. She moves back into the arena to meet uncle and mother)

Mother: Brother, what news did you bring?

Op. Adjei: I will not talk, eiieiieii, the world is bad.

Mother: Why, brother? Speak, what is the matter? Tell me, what have you heard about the gentlemen?

Op. Adjei: Why do you worry me like that, that boy is a a …, bad boy, a drunkard, thief, rapist, lazy.

Mother: Hei, Hei, wait, where did you get this news, this boy I learnt is a perfect choice, he is well presented in public and people look up to him. They say our daughter will have a good husband. What about all this bad …..

Op. Adjei: Wait woman, you talk too much, the burden will eventually not be on you, but all of us, and you *(to the Ante)* what news did you bring?

Antie: Well, I learnt Afranee is very quiet and has a good character. All the ladies in this town are happy to see him marrying.

Op. Adjei: Ok I see. I will not allow it; this boy I investigated about is a criminal, stubborn and he...

Mother: I said it, friends listen to him. *(Getting up and moves towards participates)* I said it, he went to the drinking pub, the VC 10 *(to the participants)* don't you think he is influenced by alcohol?

Op. Adjei: Insult me, say all sort of words. He is not...

Mother: You went to the bar?

Op. Adjei: Yes

Mother: And you had a drink…?

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Op. Adjei: Yes

Mother: You are a little bit tipsy?

Op. Adjei: Yes, is that a problem

Mother: But nothing better will come from the mouth of those guys, do you know that?

Op.Adjei: It is only that place you can get accurate and undistorted information if you care to know.

Mother: No matter what you do, Afranee is a best choice and he will marry Obaa Yaa. You are always on the opposite why, why? Now tell me, whom did you go to ask for?

Op.Adjei: Who is asking for Obaa Yaa's hand in marriage?

Mother: I said who? Whose name did you enquire about?

Op.Adjei: Koofie of course

Mother: Ahhh! I said it, look at all this, his name is Afranee

Mother & Antie: You are a pain, you are always causing trouble, stop this behaviour or else…

(Uncle is quiet, there is knocking)

Op. Adjei: Koofie

Mother & Antie: Is Afranee

Op.Adjei: Koofie, I say Koofie

Mother & Antie: Is Afranee, stop this brother or else we….

(Antie leaves them while they still argue. She later comes in with Opanin Agyemang and Afranee's father; they greet them traditionally and sit. They are offered water to drink by Antie while Uncle and mother still argue. Ante gives them the signal to top and ask for their mission.

Op. Adjei: Opanin Agyemang, you are welcome, what brings you here this morning?

Op. Agyemang: Thank you, it is nothing bad. Your family informed us to come and see you today regarding our request.

Op. Adjei: I see, Agya Agyemang, you are welcome Once again, nothing bad has happened so far, we are all fine. Our family accepts your proposal for your nephew to come and pay the bride price for my niece in order to have her as a wife.

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Op. Agyemang: *(They thank them as custom demands and sit down again).* Thank you very much Opanin. Now, may I ask what items are we supposed to bring along for the marriage ceremony? I mean the list of items.

Op. Adjei: Oh! Agyemang; One does not thrown away his or her custom; else you destroy your life. Please we are not selling our daughter and for that matter, we have no specified items for you to bring, but please consult your archives and come along with what custom demands.

Op. Agyemang: Thank you very much Opanin. We do not know much to thank you. *(Walks to them and shake their hands).* We will beg to leave and you will hear from us soon. You know, our family will have to hear the good news and prepare for the marriage ceremony. Thank you once again. *(They leave).*

Op. Adjei: Now let us prepare for their coming, the house need cleaning, painting, scrubbing and many more. Make sure you tidy the house because many people will witness this marriage.

(Drumming is heard at the background, workmen are doing their work, others sweeping. When they finish, Opanin Adjei, Uncle of Obaa Yaa steps into the arena as a story teller and informs us about what is about to happen).

Story Teller: Fellow brothers and sisters, you are about to witness a marriage ceremony, not just a mere ceremony, but the Asante "aware pa" customary marriage between Obaa Yaa and Akwasi Afranee.

(Townspeople, Obaa Yaa's family members emerge from the participants and sit. As they await Afranee's family, they are entertained with traditional dance "Adoso". The dancers lead Afranee's family into the arena, they great participants and sit. The dancers also lead Obaa Yaa's grandmother into the arena, she make some dance moves and sits. The drumming and dancing continuous, Afranee's father steps into the arena to dance, all hail him).

Op. Adjei: Opanin Agyemang you are welcome. *(Obaa Yaa's family shakes hands with Afranee's family and goes back to their seats).* Opanin, you and your family are welcome once again. As custom demands, may we know what brings you to our home this morning?

Op. Agyemang: *(Stands and address his people)* Abusua, they have asked for our mission.

Abusua: Please inform them.

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Op. Agyemang: Thank you, Opanin Adjei. We bring you peace and comfort. There has been a lot of deliberation between your family and us and today is the final day to end this discussions. That is, paying for the pride price of your niece Obaa Yaa'. This is our mission today. Thank you.

Op. Adjei: Yes, it is true, we were looking forward to your coming and God willing you are here. Now to cut a long story short, please declare your intent and what you bring to support it. Today is a happy day for us I suppose.

Op. Agyemang: Thank you, Opanin, to begin with, we will like to mention our names so as to identify and address us properly when talking to us or if we meet somewhere again. *(Afranee's family identifies themselves and Obaa Yaa's family do likewise)*

Op. Adjei: Now Opanin. Agyemang, tell us what news you bring precisely.

Op. Agyemang: Thank youOpanin. Obaa Panin will take it from here, reveal our intent. (*He delegates power to Obaa Panin to continue)*

Obaa Panin: Nananom, elders, we thank you for your warm reception, since we cannot take away your relative just like that, as custom demands, we have brought these items to ask for Obaa Yaa's hand in marriage. So we have come fully prepared. (*The ladies bring the items forward. They go round in circles showing it to the participants, she picks the envelopes and items and declares to the whole public as her words unfold).*

Now I am going to present these items one after the other. To begin with, we have this envelope and drink for your '*abusua'*. Please use this to say prayers for the family through the ancestors.

The next one, which is very important, is the "*tri ade*". This is to symbolize that we have paid the bride price to the family and thus if you accept, then Obaa Yaa will become part of our family. Another envelope we bring is her "*tri nsa*". This is to symbolize that, our son Afranee has bought Obaa Yaa's hair and has the right to touch her, again in future, Afranee can prove to his ancestors when dead that he was a responsible fellow and that is why he has some portion of the wife's hair in his possession.

Now the mother of this lady has suffered and nursed this girl from birth till date, so we bring the mother this envelope to buy a cloth to replace what the daughter eased on. We cannot leave the father out. You have given us

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something valuable. You are a man, and this envelope is for you to buy '*danta*'and a piece of cloth.

We cannot leave one important person out. The grandmother of Obaa Yaa, Grandmum, we adore and honour you. Your descendants are and will be great. This envelope is for you (*Old woman demands hers quickly and she is given).*

Also, we will not enslave any of your household who helped to make this occasion a success. This envelop is for your family to buy something for them as a symbol of witnessing this event. The last but not least, what I can say, this lady has clothed herself for years for our son to admire her, so we must honour her with what she deserves. This suitcase and all items in it are for her. (*Lady brings forth the case and opens it).* She has in it scarves, ten pieces of cloths. Again, it is a good woman who deserves good materials, so we bring her the best accessories a woman can buy. This is beads or '*toma*'. This is to show to the ancestors when she dies that she was a woman of prestige, married by a man and he bought her beads. The last but not least is this envelope. In this is something valuable for your daughter to start with, cook for our family to eat and also enjoy life together financially with her husband.

Finally, this envelope is for the woman's brothers – "*Akonta gye sikan*". This envelope is from us to thank you for your protection and safely presenting your sister today to marry. Well done brothers. Use the money in this envelope to trade or farm, increase your wealth and then be a man to also marry. (*Brother emerges from the back to collect the envelope).*

(To the participants) Applaud for we have done well. Elder, I am done.

Op. Adjei: Thank you Obaa Panin, we really appreciate it. Today is a great day. I am overwhelmed by your presents. We thank you. But eiih wait. Please bring the items closer to me. Opanin Agyemang, Please introduce your nephew for us to see him.

Obaa Panin: Thank you. Afranee, stand up and get closer (*The two families shout and make noise teasing Afranee*)

Op. Adjei: Opanin, I will now call my niece for Afranee to tell us if she is really the one he wants to marry. I will … (*Obaa Yaa's elder brother sing from behind, a drunkard).* Look at him (*he points to the drunkard who is*

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happily moving towards them, goes left and right). Ah! Ah! Ah! This one, get him out of here. (*He is held and pushed away but he refuses).*

Drunkard: Hei hei, what is going on? What do you people want in this house? Leave me alone. I say leave me alone.

Op. Agyemang: Leave him please. He is well. We all drink and we have someone like him in our home. Don't worry at all.

Drunkard: Leave me alone I say, hei (*moves towards Afranee's family).* Hei, what do you want in my house*? (He moves strongly towards them but is held by one of his brothers and dragged to sit down quietly.*

Op. Adjei: (*Trying to give him a knock but drunkard refuses to hit back)*. Hei you have touched me. Your days on this earth have shortened. If we finish this ceremony, we will see who is who. Elders, we are sorry, he is always like that.

Op. Adjei : Obaa Panin, I stand here again to ask you to spare me a minute. I want to hear from my niece if we should accept these items. If we collect them, and she comes to say no, then we are in trouble. So please exercise patience. Asantewaa, call Obaa Yaa for me. (*To the participants*) is it not the right way to do it? (*Obaa Yaa enters the arena and positions herself).* Obaa, come and stand on my right. Obaa, you know I am your only uncle, so I suppose you will give me all the respect and answer truthfully (*pointing to the items*). These items have been presented to ask for your hand in marriage. Should we accept and receive them? Wait, Afranee stand up, come closer and declare if it is Obaa Yaa.

Op. Adjei: OK. Now Obaa, answer my question. Should we accept these items or ask them to take it away?

Obaa Yaa: Please receive them.

Op. Adjei: Now for the second time, should we accept them or not?

Obaa Yaa: Please accept them Uncle.

Op. Adjei: Obaa, answer wisely for the third time. Please don't look at these material things and be saying yes, yes ooo! Now answer the question.

Obaa Yaa: (*With excitement*) Uncles please accept the items. (*All hail and shout. Afranee's family is excited and they make all sorts of gestures*).

Op. Adjei: Now Obaa and Afranee, stand forth. Let us now pray and seal this marriage by pouring libation. Please bring me the drink and a glass. (*He*

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moves to stand in front of the couple seated in the arena. He is offered a glass and begins to pray).

Onyankopon Kwame Nsah, The Earth '*Asaase Yaa Nsa', Nananom 'nsa', Offin nsah, Akos nsa,* gods of our land *nsa*, come and drink with us. We call you this morning to come and drink with us and also ask for your guidance and protection for Afranee and Obaa Yaa. The two families have come together as one to celebrate this joyful day. Do not let Afranee go blind in the night. When he 'shoots', let it flow into the appropriate place. We need children because it is out of a family that emerges a society. So let his 'shots' hit the right place. Do not allow barrenness for my niece. Whosoever wishes them bad let it bounce back onto them. Curse be onto anyone who does not wish this marriage a success (*All hail and shout. He drinks and everyone takes a sip as a symbol of witnessing the marriage. There are drumming and Opanin. Adjei dances to the tune of the drum. Others also join him).*

Op. Adjei: Obaa Panin, please let us know whoever is supporting this marriage should anything unexpected happen.

Op. Agyemang: I Opanin Fredua Agyemang support this marriage and they can count on me in times of trouble.

Afranee's father: I, father of Afranee, support this marriage fully. They can rely on me for any help. Thank you.

Obaa Panin: I Konadu Yiadom, I support this marriage fully. Thank you.

Serwaa Apaafo: I, mother of Afranee, also support this marriage fully and I pray for their success. *(Moves to Obaa Yaa's family*).

Op. Adjei: I am in full support. She is my beloved niece and will be willing to take care of all their troubles and problems.

Father: I am the father of Obaa Yaa and I give her my blessing and support

Mother: I, Afia Pokuaa, support my daughter and pray for their blessing.

(*The drunkard rises and struggles to speak)*

Drunkard: Please I want to speak.

Op. Adjei: Shut up, what can you say!! Nothing sensible.

All: Please allow him to speak (*Drunkard is offered the microphone*).

Drunkard: (*Moves forward.*) You gentleman, listen to me, always inform me before you sleep with my sister okay?

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Op. Adjei: *(Takes the microphone from the drunkard*.) Shut your mouth. Now ladies and gentlemen, it is time for us to give them advice. Time is far spent and I suggest we select two people from each family to give them advice.

(*Both families give advice to the couple who are seated in the middle of the two parties. Thereafter, they all enjoy food and drinks, dance and enjoy to the sound of music.*

THE END OF THE PLAY

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APPENDIX C: CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE (REGISTRATION) LAW, 1985

In pursuance of the Provisional National Defence Council (Establishment) Proclamation, 1981 this Law is hereby made:

PART I – REGISTRATION OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

1. On the commencement of this Law any marriage contracted under customary law before or after such commencement shall be registered in accordance with the following provisions.

2. (1) Where a marriage has been contracted under customary law, wither party to the marriage or both parties shall apply in writing to the Registrar of Marriages (referred to in this Law as "the Registrar") of the District in which the marriage was contracted for the registration of the marriage in the register of marriages in this Law referred to as the "register".

(2) The application for the registration of the marriage shall be made within three months of the marriage, except that an application for the registration of a marriage contracted before the commencement of this Law shall be made within three months of such commencement.

(3) The form of the register shall be as set out in the First Schedule to this Law.

3. (1) The application for registration of the marriage shall be accompanied by a statutory declaration stating the following: –
   (a) Names of the parties to the marriage;
   (b) The places of residence of the parties at the time of the marriage;
   (c) That the conditions essential to the validity of the marriage in accordance with the applicable customary law have been complied with.

(2) The statutory declaration shall be supported by the parents of the spouses or persons standing in loco parentis to the spouses except where there are no such persons living at the time of the application for registration.

4. (1) The Registrar, shall upon receipt of an application for the registration of a marriage, register the marriage and shall by notice in the form set out in the Second Schedule to this Law notify the public of the registration of the marriage.

(2) The notice shall be displayed on a public notice board in the office of the Registrar within twenty-eight days of the application for registration.

5. (1) Any person who knows of any cause why the Registrar should not have registered the marriage, or objects to the validity of the marriage under the applicable

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customary law, may at any time after the publication of the notice by the Registrar under section 4 of this Law, file the grounds of his objection in the District Court in the District in which the marriage was registered.

(2) Copies of the grounds of objection shall be served on the parties affected by the objection.

(3) If upon the hearing of the grounds of objection the District Court is satisfied that there are no legal grounds for the objection the Court shall dismiss the objection.

(4) If the District Court, upon hearing the grounds of the objection, is satisfied that there are legal grounds for the objection the Court shall make an order empowering the Registrar to expunge any entries made in the register in respect of the registration of the marriage to which the objection was made.[120]

[120]Provisional National Defence Council: *Intestate Succession Law,1986*. (Accra: Ghana Publishing Coporation, Assembly Press,1986.)

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APPENDIX D: PICTURES TAKEN BY THE RESEEARCHER FROM THE FINAL PERFROMANCE

Queen mothers who served as resource persons

Students from St Louis Training College with Researcher (left) Researcher and supervisor (middle), Resource persons and Mr Daniel Appiagyei-Agyei and supervisor (right).

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Resource persons reacting to questions asked.

Scenes from the play

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Scenes from the play

Scene from the play (Players dancing and interacting with participants)

A scene from the play (Obaa Yaa and Afranee seated in the performance arena (left) and a display of some items presented for marriage) –right.

Feedback from participants after the play.