

**ANANSE AS A FOLKLORIC CHARACTER IN NEW GHANAIAN
DRAMA**

BY

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the women in my life; To my baby Chloe Jidudu Tara whose smiles wipe away my stress and brighten my day; to my sister, Adolphina Addo-Lartey who has always been my role model. And I will not forget my mom, Beatrice Addo, for always being there for me.



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mawu ne yira mikatan.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the various roles that Ananse play in Ghanaian Drama and how this folkloric character has evolved and transformed with time. The study also seeks to determine if Ananse as a folkloric character is justifiably a villain as society has most often dubbed him, or if he has other redeeming qualities which equally need to be highlighted. This thesis therefore seeks to answer the question of who Ananse really is as a folkloric character as well as what motivates his actions. Again it assesses the features of Anansegoro as the basis for the study. The appropriate framework within which this thesis is embedded in the post-colonial theoretical discourse. This is because it forms part of the theatre in post- independent Africa. Within this framework, Ghanaian writers made conscious efforts to explore the indigenous socio-cultural structures such as their history, cultural beliefs, practices, customs and the totality of the African experience in creating their own unique theatres. Apparently, this theatre can very easily be identified and described as a true reflection of African and Ghanaian heritage in particular. The study also documents the contributions of four Ghanaian playwrights namely; Efua Sutherland, Yaw Asare, Martin Owusu and Efo Kodjo Mawugbe in the growth and development of theatre in Ghana. It focuses its analysis on four plays in which Ananse is depicted as a folkloric character in order to examine Ananse's role and what he seeks to achieve in the various plays. The analysed plays include, *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975) by Sutherland, *Ananse in the Land of Idiots* (2006) by Asare, *The Story Ananse Told* (1999) by Owusu and *Ananse- Kweku Ananse* (2004) by Mawugbe. The study examines new perspectives to certain features of Anansegoro mostly in the style and the treatment of Ananse as a character by each playwright. The subject-matter and motivations of the playwrights in each play is also discussed. The study reveals that Ananse as a folkloric character is not always a villain. He is a cultural hero in whom most of our traditional values, customs and practices are reflected. He is also a hero from whom we gain advice and learn

traditional values. At other times he is merely a narrator or the owner of the story whose role is to tell us how things are in the society. In other words, my study argues that against the traditional stereotype of villainy, Ananse is a multi-dimensional character that epitomizes the attributes of heroism and villainy.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Trickster animals as personified in plays play different roles in folklore in several parts of Africa and other parts of the world. In some parts of Africa, they are considered as deities such as Eshu in Nigeria (Asiedu: 2011). Most often, they are used as allegories to represent human beings in the society. Examples of some animal trickster characters include the hare, pig, squirrel, hen, spider and antelope. Among these animals, Kwesi Yankah asserts that the spider is the most famous animal trickster in some African countries (Yankah: 1983).

In the Ghanaian society, the spider is referred to as Ananse among the Akans. When Ananse is presented in a story he is often humanised as well as allowed to maintain his originality as a spider. This makes him both a spider and a man. Being a 'Spider-man', he is granted access to interact with humans, animals and gods alike. The folkloric character Ananse can be viewed as a metaphor for the complex nature of human beings in the society because of his dual personality (example being good and bad). Ananse is believed to be the most famous trickster animal in African folklore (Peek & Yankah: 2000, Yankah: 1893) and the custodian of folktales. The question is why would society accord its traditions to a trickster to be a custodian? The figure of Ananse as a character and its equivalent in the different Ghanaian languages has dominated the oral narrative and folklore traditions of Ghanaian drama from the colonial era to modern times. Historically he was first presented in literary drama by J.B. Danquah in *The Third Woman* (1943) in which Dankwah presented the myth of how Ananse became the gatekeeper of folktales (Asiedu: 2011). After colonization, Efua Sutherland elevated Ananse unto the modern stage of Ghanaian theatre through her experimentations with Anansegoro. Being set loose, Ananse has appeared in many post-colonial plays. The

most recent play in which he appears is Efo Kojo Mawugbe's *Ananse- Kweku -Ananse* (2004).

Within the world of folklore Ananse's antics as a famous trickster is well noted by all and sundry especially in West Africa. Observations made about Ananse by critics indicate that he appears as a paradoxical figure whose behaviour appears to mock the serious rules of society, its beliefs, customs and practices (Vecsey: 1981). He is often depicted as a wayward, capricious and a consummate liar who is undoubtedly an expert at throwing doubt on the concept of truth itself yet he is the custodian of folktales (Asiedu: 2011, Donkoh: 2007, Vecsey: 1981) .

Ananse is mostly cast in a negative mould by some critics (Judy and Morrissette: 2008). I am however of the view that this assessment is one sided and that Ananse is multi-dimensional. Ananse is more than a villain and there is a need to look at his other traits in a whole in order to make a fair assessment. There is a need to ascertain who exactly Ananse is from different angles in order to gain a better understanding of his motive in folktales. I believe that Ananse deserves a breather for mostly being referred to as a villain. Ananse has contributed immensely to Anansegoro, a story-telling tradition created from Anansesem by Efua Sutherland. As a genre, Anansegoro has evolved into a unique theatrical art form to which other writers have employed and as a result adapted its conventions and modified it in the creation of their own versions.

After independence, the story-telling tradition became very important in the growth and development of Ghanaian drama. There was an urgent need to promote national identity and re-establish native cultures. This led contemporary playwrights such as Efua Sutherland, J.C.

De Graft, Martin Owusu, Yaw Asare, Asiedu Yirenkyi, Mohammed Ben Abdallah and Efo Kojo Mawugbe to move away from the western story telling format and inculcate their indigenous oral traditions- hence Ananse in their plays. I believe that Ananse's dual nature opens a world of possibilities in analysing Ananse as a folkloric character.

It is also vital to assess Ananse as a character in order to unveil his contribution to the world of folklore. For the purpose of emphasis, New Ghanaian Drama is about the conscious effort made by Ghanaian dramatists after colonialism towards the creation of a theatre that could be identified as uniquely Ghanaian. The discussion will mostly be centred on Sutherland and writers who were and are inspired by Sutherland in her creation of Anansegoro. The study is such that it interprets new understandings in the Ananse tradition. Even though old plays are included in this analysis, the significance of the concept of newness can be described from my re-reading of heroism and multi-dimensionality of the Ananse character. It will look at plays in which Ananse has been depicted as a character from when Sutherland coined the term Anansegoro to date. The major plays for analysis will include Efua Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975), Yaw Asare's *Ananse in the land of Idiots* (2006), Martin Owusu's *The Story Ananse Told* (1999) and Efo Kojo Mawugbe's *Ananse –Kweku –Ananse* (2004). In these plays, the different tasks of Ananse will be examined in order to understand his motive within each play. Also the background of the playwrights and their contributions to the development of New Ghanaian Drama will be discussed.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many critics (such as Yaw Asare , Martin Owusu, Efo- Kodjo Mawugbe among others) have for sometime focused on the search for an authentic Ghanaian theatre. Efua Sutherland's Anansegoro has always served as the basis for most contemporary playwrights who have

adapted Anansegoro and enhanced it into a modified version of their own by adding certain perspectives to it. In most Ghanaian plays (such as Owusu's *The Story Ananse told* and Mawugbe's *Ananase - Kweku –Ananse*) Ananse has been touted as a villain but I believe that Ananse is multifaceted and that he has other faces which equally bear examining. This thesis seeks to examine the various roles Ananse plays within New Ghanaian Drama in order to position Ananse as not merely a villain but as an important social commentator.

1.3 OBJECTIVE

This thesis seeks to:

1. Assess the conventions or features of Anansegoro
2. Look at the profile of Ananse
3. Discuss the role and contributions of four Ghanaian playwrights in the development of New Ghanaian Drama.
4. Analyse the position of Ananse in the plays: *The Marriage of Anansewa*, *Ananse In The Land of Idiots*, *The Story Ananse Told* and *Ananse- Kweku- Ananse*; and
5. Identify and assess Ananse's contribution to Anansegoro and the world of folklore.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

Identifying the various roles Ananse plays in New Ghanaian Drama will give him a respite from the stereotypical mould in which most analysts seem focused on. It is significant to assess his contribution to folklore in order to bring out the specific function he plays when he is depicted in a play. It is most vital to examine who Ananse is in order to establish him in other lights and not just as a villain.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION

Based on the fact that some modern Ghanaian playwrights (J.C.Degraft, Mohammed Ben-Abdallah and Yaw Asare) have looked to Anansem as a source material for their play, there is the need, therefore, to assess the principles upon which Anansegoro was coined.

Many playwrights have presented Ananse in different standpoints for specific purposes. It is vital that we investigate the various function of Ananse in different plays in order to show Ananse in different perspectives.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The main approach to this study will be textual analysis, reviews and interpretation of various literatures. Primary information on four contemporary playwrights will be discussed alongside a critical analysis and evaluation of the content, context, style, language and subject matter of the four plays.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the questions

- a. Who is Ananse and why does society entrust him, a perceived trickster - with custody of their traditions (folktale)?
- b. Aside from being placed in a negative light, what other mould can Ananse be cast?
- c. How does Ananse serve society?
- d. What are the thematic concerns of contemporary Ghanaian playwrights and how do they seek to reassess Ananse as a character?

It is necessary to historically position Ananse as a folkloric character in order to establish a basis upon which to understand his nature and the different roles he plays.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis explores Ananse as a folkloric character in New Ghanaian Drama. It also discusses the effort of some Ghanaian writers in the development of a particular genre that can be identified and viewed as authentically Ghanaian.

The discussion of the thesis relies heavily on the post-colonial theoretical discourse. Banham *et al* maintain that:

Centuries of European economic and political domination have had a massive influence on the social and cultural life of Africans and especially its theatre... after the 1950's, in a movement that has paralleled the political emancipation of so much of the continent, there has grown a theatre that comments back from the colonised world to the world of the colonialist, that discusses the shared experiences in the shared languages and reasserts its own cultural and linguistic integrity (1994: Introduction).

They further suggest that post- colonial theatre has successfully forged its own boundaries - one that lies within the contents and context of its native culture. This could be because many playwrights in Africa have resorted to exploring the indigenious forms to communicate in English not as the colonialists taught them but a deliberate attempt to introduce into the English language some aspects of their own language and oral traditions. In particular, when local maxims are employed, it succeeds in communicating a powerful poetic meaning that eludes the Standard English expression or which the Standard English expression does not normally allow (Banham et al: 1994). This view is shared by Gilbert and Thompkins, who assert that:

when playwrights interfere with received discursive codes or introduce the rhetorical devices of other languages into English they diminish the power invested in the colonisers language and re-establish local or indigenious modes of expressions for theatrical representation (1996:181).

The implication of this view is that the best ways to minimise the influence of colonialism is to ensure that playwrights introduce their native languages as well as their correlative cultures and histories into their plays so as to give their work some form of authenticity.

The term post-colonialism has been discussed by many writers and critics (Soyinka: 1996, Wetmore: 2002, Banham et al: 1994). Gilbert and Thompkins however reiterate that there are many misconceptions in the implications of the term. They discuss the assumptions mostly made by people by noting that, the term post-colonialism is often misconstrued to imply the period after colonialism was discontinued or the time after independence on which a country breaks free from its governance by another country. To this they view post colonialism as:

an engagement with and contestation of colonialism discourses, power structures and social hierarchies. Colonialism is insidious because it invades far more than political chambers and extends well beyond independence celebration. Its effects shape language, education, religion artistic sensibilities and increasingly popular culture (1996: 2).

This assertion suggests that the concept of post colonialism, in theory, is very broad and goes beyond a mere description of what transpires in a country after it attains independence and an account about the events that took place during colonialism but it involves and applies to the responses to colonialism. Therefore it can be inferred that post colonial Drama or plays are also responses to colonialism.

This thesis falls within this domain because modern playwrights in Ghana saw a great need to revive their native cultures and produce literature that can be deemed as uniquely Ghanaian or deeply rooted in their oral traditions.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THESIS

The thesis is in five main chapters. Chapter one introduces the topic and provides some background for the study. It also put into perspective the concept of New Ghanaian Drama and what it entails.

Chapter two is the literature review. This looks at the nature of folklore in Africa as well as theatre in Ghana. It pays particular attention to New Ghanaian Drama and the elements and factors that contributed in shaping and strengthening it.

Chapter three focuses on a critical study of Ananse the folkloric character around whom tales are woven, as well as the concept and features of Anansegoro.

The fourth chapter is in two major parts. The first part looks at the four Ghanaian playwrights and their role in the growth and development of Ghanaian Drama. Their achievement and influence on the Ghanaian Theatre platform is also discussed. The second part focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the content, context, style and thematic concern of the four plays. Here particular attention is paid to Ananse as a folkloric character in New Ghanaian Drama as well as the new additions and innovations that have been made to Anansegoro. This is very crucial because the purpose of this thesis is to evaluate Ananse from different viewpoints to expose or bring to bear the diverse roles he plays to serve society as well as highlight on his many other characteristics. In other words this thesis seeks to identify and establish the different roles played by Ananse in Ghanaian drama.

After these four chapters, conclusion as well as some recommendations is provided in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents a review of crucial literature on theatre in Africa and Ghana. It will map out the state of African and Ghanaian theatre from pre-colonial to post colonial era. Attention will be given to what has come to be known as contemporary or New Ghanaian Theatre. This chapter will also comment on works by outstanding writers who have played key roles in the growth and development of theatre in Africa in general and in Ghana in particular. Some of the basic concepts used in this research will also be defined.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEATRE IN AFRICA

Many scholars have speculated as to whether drama and theatre did or did not exist in pre-colonial Africa. David Kerr in his book *African Popular Theatre* (1995) suggested that much of the misgivings are created by the use of terminologies such as ‘drama’, ‘theatre’ and ‘ritual’ because they are embodied with various meanings derived from the European rather than the African culture. He expresses that in order for Africans to affirm this concept, they may have to come up with their own model of describing pre-colonial performing art in Africa by making use of indigenous aesthetic terminologies. Other literature on the development of theatre in Africa report of an almost obliteration of pre-colonial theatre due to the sparse availability of collected works covering that era. Kerr explains that, “one reason why colonial theatre may seem to have withered away is that many of the scholars who write about it do so with an understandable elegiac tone of regret for the passing of richly complex artistic forms” (1995: 42).

It is possible that Kerr's insight on this issue is based on the fact that day in day out, Africa's indigenous traditional songs and dances are becoming continually overpowered by social transformation and without any documented literature on origins and significance of these performing arts. These arts may become underappreciated or even corrupted with time. In addition, early writings of the historical literature on pre-colonial theatre were written by Christian missionaries and western anthropologists. Unfortunately their perception of the indigenous culture which included traditional customs and values were short sighted. Ruth Finnegan, a non-African writer has mostly been criticized by many critics on her wrong perceptions and assumptions about Africa and her believe that in Africa, drama is neither widespread nor developed (Bame: 1991, Amponsah: 2008).

K.N. Bame in his book *Drama and Theatre in Traditional African Societies* (1991) also asserts that theatre and drama existed in traditional African societies. He provides data and materials from different parts of Africa which indicate that traditional African theatre possesses certain features which distinguish it from western drama. He identifies that, western drama takes place in the theatre which is constructed for such purposes accompanied with all the paraphernalia of a modern theatre; whereas the traditional African drama takes place in the village square or in the courtyard of a house without the accompaniment of complex lighting and other instruments provided in western theatres.

On the other hand, Kerr's brief survey of pre-colonial theatrical forms identified several theatrical forms that existed. They included narrative drama, initiation rites, spirit possession rites and several others.

Banham et al also confirm the fact that African theatre existed prior to the invasion of the continent by the Europeans. In their book *The Cambridge Guide to African and Caribbean Theatre*, they assert that, “the roots of theatre in Africa are ancient and complex and lie in the areas of community festivals seasoned rhythm and religious rituals as well as in the works of court jesters” (1994: introduction).

In the book *Drama of the Gods* (1988), Martin Owusu also identifies story telling or ‘epic’ narrative as a category of traditional, informal and spontaneous activity that exists in towns and villages which mostly involve the entire community or some sections of it. *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* (2001) also accounts for the clearest indication yet that theatre and Drama existed in pre- colonial Africa. Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh, expresses that:

Theatre is one of the cultural elements that best exemplifies Africa. It is at the crossroads of the sacred and the profane, oral and the written word, of diverse forms, and it is rooted in Africa’s traditions. Long before cultural contact with Europe, Africa had its very own personal forms of dramatic expression. But in order to understand them one must banish all notions of theatre as it is thought of today. Something dependant on text, on halls, on lights, sound and box office returns. In this sense, African tradition has not handed down to us a specific theatrical system, rather it has handed down a series of functions, which themselves were modified under colonial influence and which gradually moved away from their roots though they were eliminated completely (2001: 17).

Eyoh’s explanation on the development of theatre gives credence to the fact that pre-colonial African theatre did exist, but was never given an opportunity to complete its own evolution because colonialism interfered and subdued the existing forms. He further advances the argument that “it is the functions of society itself which most directly dictates artistic expressions in Africa, whose theatre is rooted in myths, rites and folk celebrations which externalize the beliefs, passions and concepts that preoccupy any given group” (2001:17). He however agrees with Kerr that Africans did not bother with terminologies to designate their representations. Similarly, they did not have any generic name for their theatre. The

invasion of foreigners¹ therefore caused a devastating effect on several aspects of African life, including culture and theatre.

Banham et al also note that it would be difficult to look at African theatre without being too homogeneous because centuries of European social and political control have had a great influence on all aspects of the African cultural life, including the theatre. The Europeans treated Africa as a dark continent without any theatrical tradition. They perceived the people to be primitive and their rituals obscene which indicated that, African traditions were inferior to the supposed superior and rational European culture. This belittlement of the African culture led to an attack on the indigenous performing arts. Kerr asserts that, “the most concerted and ideologically articulated attack on African indigenous performing arts came from the proselytizing zeal of European Christian missions” (1995: 18).

Owusu (1988) gives credence to this statement by affirming that in Africa, the missionaries purported that the one true religion was Christianity. The natives were taught to resist the temptation to worship their local gods which the missionaries perceived as paganistic. Kerr believes that, “the underlying factor to the missionaries unwillingness to accept the Africans indigenous practices was due to the realisation that the cultural forms were the symbolic key to the religious and moral bases of indigenous societies” (1995: 20). This assertion by Kerr makes it obvious that, the Europeans invaded Africa under the pretext of bringing Christianity and literacy to a ‘savage’ society but their actual intention was to take over the continent and impose their culture on the people.

¹ Africa was first invaded by the Arabs and then later colonized by the Westerners, namely British, French and Portuguese.

Having given some reviews that indicates that theatre did exist in pre-colonial Africa, I shall endeavour to proceed to an examination of literary theatre in Africa.

2.3 LITERARY THEATRE IN AFRICA

Africa is made up of about sixty (60) countries which consist of hundreds of different cultures, thousands of languages and dialects and millions of people. Kelvin Wetmore (2002) believes that, any attempt to discuss theatre in Africa will lead to a generalization of a vast diverse body. To this effect, Michael Etherton also adds that;

it is difficult to determine what constitutes African theatre in the first place, the more religiously or ethnically based the theatre becomes, that is the more essentially African, the less accessible it is to other parts of Africa. Conversely, the more exportable the theatre is within Africa, in terms of the use of English or French, recognisable situations and common contemporary theatre... the more it becomes like any other international theatre... the move towards an internationalised theatre in Africa leads to the rapid transformation of performing arts into literature (1979: 5).

Etherton and Wetmore both have a point, for Africa is indeed a vast continent with about sixty countries. However, all nations in Africa with the exception of Ethiopia² experienced some form of colonialism and this has created certain patterns that make it possible to discuss literary theatre in Africa. Literary Theatre can be described as a play in a written form and it also constitutes a form of literature.

In Africa, the nations where European occupation and domination was established early led to some form of literary dramatic tradition springing up. This led to the incorporation of formal European literary theatre into African theatre. Towards the end of the nineteenth century when formal colonialism was established, the colonizers who settled in Africa wanted to feel at home so they introduced cultural and leisure structures such as sports clubs

² Ethiopia was the only African country that colonized another African country (Eritrea) .

and theatres. In West Africa, literacy was introduced to the people mainly through the establishment of churches and schools by missionaries. Along with this, European forms of drama such as Shakespeare and Moliere were introduced as well.

With regards to African literature, Ernest Emeryonu asserts that;

The literary world was not prepared for the emergence of African writing when it did. Those who posed as its judges knew little or nothing of the true roots of written African literature. Some of them were gaining their first insight into the African social scenes and approached African writing for its socio-logical rather than its literary interest (1971: 1).

This could explain the lapses in the almost absent literary information history regarding pre-colonial African theatre. O. R. Dathrone (1975) adds his voice to this by stating that the newly literate had a role thrust on them for which the society had inadequately equipped them for. They had been educated by the colonisers in an alien culture and endowed with new beliefs and values that was not of their own but artificially inculcated into the system.

The exploitative nature of the colonial structure could be witnessed in many forms including the nature of their didactic theatre which they sought to impose on Africans by taking away the effective instrument of knowledge and rendering the people passive and dependent on the European systems of beliefs. The Christian missionaries disrupted the indigenous performances and replaced them with European performances and art that surrounded religious feasts such as Corpus Christi. In Ghana, plays were performed during the thanksgiving service which took place annually. They often involved an enactment of biblical stories such as the birth and crucifixion of Christ, David and Goliath, and the parable of the

prodigal son. It appears that the missionaries resorted to the same tactics that were done by the Christians in the medieval³ era to win people to Christianity.

This notion is further strengthened by Zakes Mda who reiterates that;

The colonialist intention of promoting drama among Africans was geared towards weaning them from their pagan and uncivilised ways. They conceived that an African drama must be based on dance, must be childlike and simple in form, and must involve story-telling and drumming (1973: 7).

The above postulation indicates that the colonialists' concept of African drama obviously did not include the traditional African forms because they had already made up their minds that they were only going to accept the indigenous practices that only fitted into their civilised mission. They therefore initiated the European drama and theatrical forms into Africa without acknowledging and understanding the pre-colonial theatrical and dramatic forms.

Again, during colonialism, Africans were usually only permitted to write and publish plays under the patronage of the colonial rulers. All this began to change around the 1900's before many nations started claiming their independence (Gilbert and Thompkins: 1996). West Africa first attained literary prominence with the emergence of a few playwrights. This regional prominence was due to the fact that, the colonisers trained and allowed the people to govern along with them. The local cultures were therefore vibrant in some areas and that created a strong sense of cultural identity in the people especially those who were educated under the system in both the region and in Britain.

In Ghana and Nigeria many schools and colleges were established and some of these institutions trained new writers that showed interest and had access to both indigenous and

³ In the Medieval era, the church used theatre to win souls to Christ through Biblical performances such as Quem'quaretus and other biblical enactments.

foreign dramatic forms. These writers saw an urgent need for literary reclamation of their history and native cultures. Femi Osofisan states that:

These playwrights were all, without exception keenly tuned to the beating pulse of the age. The pressing problems, at least from their elitist perspectives as members of the ruling, western- educated class, bore on the cultural implications of the society's transforms. Hence they ploughed assiduously the theme of cultural alienation, trying to demonstrate, now the splendour of our ancient past, now the inanity or parasitism of certain recrudescing customs (2001: 119).

The second generation of playwrights that emerged in post colonial Africa held fast to this realization as well. They attempted to decolonise their societies through the theatre by searching for alternative indigenous structures and dramatic forms.

Etherton confirms this when he writes that in Africa, "the development of theatre as literature is conscious and deliberate and is the result of the clear goal of raising the standard of drama, that is of making it capable of conveying insights and perceptions which we associate with all great literatures" (1979: 61).

Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins add their voice to this and state that "post colonialism's agenda is to dismantle the hegemonic boundaries and the determinants that create unequal relations of power based on binary oppositions such as us and them, first world and third world, white and black, coloniser and colonised" (1996:3). They imply that post colonial writers had a specific aim which is to destabilize the cultural and political authority that had been inflicted by colonialism. According to Stephen Clenon, post colonial literature "is a form of cultural criticism and cultural critique: a mode of un-identifying whole societies from the sovereign codes of cultural organisations and an inherently dialectical intervention in the hegemonic production of cultural meaning" (as cited by Gilbert and Tompkins: p.3).

This zeal and active intervention of playwrights in their nation's politics has landed several playwrights in trouble with authority including Kenya's Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Nigeria's Wole Soyinka.

Soyinka's plays sometimes have radical themes. He delights in debate that deals with the African classes and often portrays strong admiration for history and dialectical conflict in his plays. For instance, in *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975), he depicts Elesin as a tragic figure as well as a representation of traditional African culture which had withered under colonial domination. He uses Pilkings to represent colonial domination and Amusa for the mentally colonized segregated society in his play. Kerr affirms that, Soyinka seeks to react to colonialism through an intellectual adherence to indigenous cultural practices (1995; 121). Another example can be seen in Soyinka's satire of the criminal class in Jero's metamorphosis.

The devastating effect of colonialism left an imprint in the minds of Africans. The need for power has led to the crumbling of many governments as they sought to do to their own people what the colonialists did. Mda's *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall* (1995) criticizes the African government for its vanity, corruption and nepotism. Mda uses satire to describe a modern African cabinet as consisting of a collection of self-serving, morally bankrupt, vain and corrupt government officials who do nothing but vie for power to cover their backs and their avaricious lust for women and money.

For a continent such as Africa, one cannot enjoy art for art's sake alone as many Europeans do. Theatre is mostly channeled towards social transformation and cultural identity. In Cont Malanga's *Workshop Negative* (1990), Malanga aims at promoting unity among the three

rac⁴ of Zimbabweans that existed at the time of independence. He draws on their indigenous forms of drama to bring to bear the problems facing their society. Likewise, Osofisan also adopts several approaches to instigate social change including audience subversion⁵ and surreptitious insurrection⁶. His play *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1994) was based on an actual incident that was happening in Nigeria and Osofisan chose to create societal awareness by writing about it. The government's murdering of armed robbers was not producing a lasting solution to the increasing incidents of robbery in the society. Osofisan believed that theatre should be interactive. He therefore allowed the audience at the end of his plays to decide the best solutions to the problems at stake instead of telling them what he believes they ought to do.

Osofisan breaks the concepts of African literature and the subject of identity into separate categories;

The first is works written by Africans living in exile in the Diaspora and therefore publish in their native countries. The second is literature produced by Africans, regardless of their place of habitation, which are written in response to some experience of racism. In Europe and America or a commission by the euro- American agency written by those living and working in Africa and mostly published in Africa, and which are written in response to our on-going socio-political disjunction (2001: 163).

However, Osofisan's categorisation did not account for published works by non-Africans about Africa. It seems to suggest that African literature must be written only by Africans since they have lived it and can best describe it. One can therefore argue if this implies that

⁴ The three races that are left in Zimbabwe after independence that constitutes its citizens are blacks ,whites and mulatoes

⁵ Audience Subversion is a method employed by Osofesan in which he deliberately ends his play contrary to what the audience expect

⁶ Surreptitious Insurrection is another method in which Osofisan ends his plays by providing an alternative ending so as to allow the audience on which best provides a solution to the problem stated.

works by writers such as R.S. Rattery⁷ and Ruth Finnegan⁸ must be ignored on the account of the authors not being Africans. That being said, I am inclined to disagree with Osofisan because R.S. Rattery for instance lived in Ghana for a number of years and he interacted with and has had continuous affiliation with Ghanaians, before he produced his works. Sekou Toure supports my argument by stating that;

To take part in the African revolution is not enough to write a revolutionary song; you must fashion the revolution with the people. And if you fashion it with the people, the song will come by themselves and of themselves. In order to achieve real action, you must yourself be a living part of Africa and of her thought; you must be an element of that popular energy which is entirely called for the freeing, the progress, and the happiness of Africa. There is no place outside that for the artist or for the intellectual who is not himself concerned with and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering humanity (as cited by Fanon : 2002 :415)

Toure's statement certainly accounts for writers like Athol Fugard who may not be of black ancestry but wrote a number of books about how unfair the blacks were being treated in South Africa at the time of apartheid. Fugard's books do not only capture the struggling of the blacks, but it describes his frustrations as a Whiteman as well as his inability to do much about the prevailing circumstances. Frantz Fanon (2002) in *African Drama and Theatre*, "On National Culture", argues that the cultural problems created by the colonisers gives rise to ambiguities and that the native intellectual is limited in his knowledge of his history because the colonisers imposed their culture on the colonised country. He therefore ascertains that in order for the native to reclaim his own identity and escape from the supremacy of the colonisers' culture, he must turn towards his culture to re-discover his own roots. Fanon then traces the work of native writers in phases which characterize the evolution of African writers under a panorama of three levels.

⁷ Rattrary produced many works on the Akan Folktale, Ashanti laws and Customs. His most popular book *Akan- Ashanti tales*(1930) narrates how Ananse became custodian of all Stories .

⁸ Finnegan's work on *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970) produces some arguments on the nature of theatre in Africa

The first is the period of assimilation in which he explains that the native intellectual has assimilated the culture of the coloniser. This can be seen in his writings, and a close look at his works reveals definite trends in the literature of the coloniser. In the second phase, he describes the native intellectual as being disturbed because he has come to the realisation that he is cut off from his roots and does not know his history. He then begins to make an attempt to re-learn his tradition. During this period we begin to see traces of creativity in his work. The native is no longer imitating the writings of the coloniser but he is making an attempt to incorporate his own culture and tradition into his work. He resolves to reinterpret old legends and myths of his people. At this point, it appears in his writing as though he is trying to get the attention of the coloniser, as though he is bragging and saying 'you take your culture, I have my own history and I don't need yours'. The third and final phase is what Fanon describes as the fighting phase. Here Fanon explains that the native intellectual becomes an awakener of his people, he produces a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature and a national literature that opens the eyes of his people to issues prevailing in their society and urges them towards the path of social change (2002: 420).

I believe that Fanon has captured aptly the phases that describe works by African writers. These characteristics can clearly be seen in works by Wole Soyinka, J. B. Dankwa, Rev. Fiawoo, Kobina Sekye, Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, J. C. Degraft, Martin Owusu, Yaw Asare, Mohammed Ben Abdalla and John Pepper Clarke, just to mention a few of the continents prolific writers. In their writing one can tell that they are making a deliberate effort to sever ties with their colonisers.

Emenyonu restates what Fanon and many other critics of African literary theatre have been saying by echoing that, African literature has come to mean several things to several people:

To some, it is a tool for the literate African's arrogation of the essence of the contents and excellence of a black culture on a white dominated continent; to others African literature means a new literature of the world with its authentic and original genre, themes and messages. To a few, it is simply a political document of protest against the assumption of colonialism and imperialism as they relate to the world of the black men (1971: 1).

The word authenticity brings to bear the dilemma most colonial and especially post colonial writers sought to write in. They needed to reach their people to send a strong message of Cultural Revolution. At the same time there was a need to take into consideration the best means to reach a wider audience beyond their native lands. Having discussed the themes, motivations and subject matters of playwrights and critics in the development of African literary theatre, I shall now advance to the language of choice.

2.4 THE LANGUAGE OF CHOICE

Selecting a language in which a writer can express a dramatic piece of art in itself can have a political connotation in that it can define the stance in which the writer is operating. Kenya's Ngugi wa Thiong'O deliberately writes in his native Kikuyu because his audiences are his people and his message is primarily for the people of Kenya. Almeseged Tesfai of Eritrea also writes in his native Tigrinya, because he seeks to reach his people in a language not understood by his colonisers. His play *The Other War* (1984) was a source of inspiration to the guerrilla fighters during the liberation struggle with the Ethiopians. The Ethiopian state purported to eradicate the Eritrean identity by any means necessary and impose the Amharic language on the Eritreans. Alemseged believed that writing in Tigrinya was the best way to represent the Eritrean society and make sure that the native language does not disappear. Similarly, Cont Malanga includes all the three major dialects of Zimbabwe in his plays. Today, most Zimbabwean writers mostly write in Ndenglish which is a combination of Ndebele and English.

In English-Speaking African countries, especially in West Africa, the writers were educated in English and when they began to write for themselves it appeared as though they did not have much of a choice in the language they wrote in. Osofisan expresses that they wrote flexibly in English when addressing their colleagues but the irony was that, they were severely concerned with the degradation of their culture which was brought about by colonialism. They therefore focused their subject matter on restoring the heritage of the African history to show that the African was already civilized and did not need the coloniser to show him the path to civilisation. He adds that in Nigeria, English is the main language of drama because it is the lingua franca of the state. The government made that choice after independence to maintain the colonial language as the lingua franca in order to maintain order and stability in the country. This was because, the country possessed several indigenous languages and to select one as a national language would have led to chaos and rebellion. The problem that arises with English as a choice for literary works is that only a minority of the people were fluent in this language because one had to be schooled in order to be literate. Sadly there were few schools and they were ill equipped to take on this responsibility. Osofisan explained that the dilemma was therefore in the choice of language because if the writers wrote in English there was the tendency to include only a minimum information on the national culture of the people but if they wrote in the mother tongue, then they would be ignoring a great proportion of the nation's population who belong to the other ethnic groups and did not speak or understand the language of the author.

Personally, I tend to agree with Osofisan's assertion of the difficult choice that African writers had to make. In order to instigate social change, one must produce literature that can be accessible to the masses of his people.

Etherton lends credence to Osofisan's statements by reiterating that "the language used in African drama is a problem for which there is no easy solution. The choice of language is a problem which faces each African playwright every time he sits down to write a play because he is monolingual" (1982: 96). The question here is what about the Africans' mother tongue? I believe that the use of monolingual is inappropriate because the African playwright still has his mother tongue but perhaps he chooses to write in English because he has been educated to read and write in English. This statement is however not true of all African playwrights because writers like Kwabena Sekyi and Ngugi Wa Thiongo wrote their plays in their native tongues. It must be noted that based on the continual struggle for cultural identity, there arose a need for authenticity in order for the author's message to reach the people. Writers needed to find a new language to express themselves, and after combing through archives of traditional cultural forms and modernisation through the medium of western dramatic traditions, they created a hybrid kind of "total theatre" (Osofisan: 2001). This form of writing is mostly characterized in contemporary African drama. This experimentation, with regard to the choice of language produced several hybridity in written language by African writers. Most often in plays, writers mix languages and retain the local languages in order to make their work authentic. In plays by Nigeria playwrights, one can easily identify the Nigerian pidgin which is mostly spoken by the masses. In Ghana, playwrights like Rev. Fiawoo and Kobina Sekyi wrote their plays in the local languages as well in order to create some form of authenticity in their work. Yaw Asare, Femi Osofisan, Ola Rotimi and Asiedu Yirenchi all make use of their local languages to some degree in their work. In Ghana, some of these writers mostly use Akan in combination with the English language.

Commenting on the choice of language, Dathorne notes that;

The literature in the written vernacular languages of Africa provides an imaginative and essential link between unwritten indigenous literature and writing in European

languages. In considering this literature, one must also mention the struggle that was going on to establish standard orthographies. The difficulty facing writers cannot be overestimated; they were in the main transforming a category of experience. Therefore these writers not only had to acquire an education; they needed to dismantle the apparatus of reception- to reorganise their entire sensibility (1975: 1).

From Dathorne's statement one can tell that writers indeed had a difficult task placed before them, one that had been thrust onto them and of which they were not fully equipped to handle. On the other hand, Gilbert and Tompkins maintain that when a writer chooses to write in a native language rather than English he is refusing to submit to the authority of the imposed Standard English and subscribing to the reality it sustains. Gilbert and Thompkins define indigenous languages as "those languages which were native to a culture prior to colonisation and which have since maintained their original grammatical structures and their basic lexicon" (1996: 169) .

From their point of view, language can act as a resistance barrier; and its use in a text can represent an act of defiance and an effort in reviving cultural identity. Dathorne however, is of the perception that though it is unfortunate that European literature had to be introduced through colonisation, if it had not taken place, vernacular literature would have taken far longer to emerge.

Somehow, my thoughts on these speculations differ considerably. I believe that Dathorne is being preposterous in assuming that without colonisation, Africans would not have gained literacy at an earlier pace. The future, in my estimation can never be fully fore-told, and perhaps one way or the other, literature would have found its way to Africa and it need not necessarily have to be through colonial domination.

Having examined the choice of language in which playwrights choose to express their work we shall now advance to what mode African writers choose to present their work. One major trend of post- colonial writers was the concept of adaptation and transposition.

2.5 ADAPTATION AND TRANSPOSITION OF WESTERN PLAYS INTO AFRICAN THEATRE

The pervasive influence of western influence can be seen mostly in contemporary African literature. Could it be that African writers are aiming at gaining international recognition in their effort to promote cultural identity in their plays? After African countries began to gain independence around the late 1950's, this trend of adaptation and transposition especially of Greek tragedies as models became quite popular.

The *Introduction to Post Colonial Drama* claims that African writers are fond of Greek adaptation because the plays are of self-exploration and point towards colonial resistance. It claims that, Greek Adaptations:

Generate meaning by rejecting Eurocentric interpretation and indigenous explanation and rather explore the modern African experience through a hybrid of classical Europe and contemporary Africa. Such plays are not only cross-cultural, but also cross-temporal, using material two and a half millennia old to comment on contemporary political and social situations in an entirely different culture from the source culture and an entirely different historical period from the original (Gilbert and Tompkins: 1996: introduction).

This makes it clear that Greek plays make easy adaptation because their themes are cross cultural and when adapted they mostly maintain relevance to the African society. This gives credence to the statement by Banham et al (1994) that African audiences neither know nor care about the original plays that were adapted. The significant factor is that it has bearing in the African society. This point is reiterated by Wetmore in *The Athenian Sun in an African*

Sky (2002) that the audience must not necessarily know or understand the original tragedy but must comprehend what concerns, themes and points that the adapted version has engaged and its relevance. Wetmore restates that the adaptation of Greek tragedy by African playwrights “contribute to a big extent the cultural struggle against colonialism and Eurocentric thought” (2002: 35). Wetmore’s statement could be because the colonial structure introduced the western models to Africans in the classroom. The introduction of the Greek cultural material to Africans was part of the attempt to suppress the indigenous cultures and impose the supposedly superior culture of the Europeans.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin contend that “the discourse of post colonialism is rooted in struggle for power; power over representation and evaluation” (as cited by Wetmore : 2002: 32). This suggests that post colonial writers and artists aim to empower Africans through literature that redirects their thoughts towards their own native heritage. Goff and Simpson (2001) also noted that adaptation of plays is enormously theoretical as well as a daring practical act. Kwame Botwe-Asamoah (2001) on the other hand contends that when plays are adapted, the author is isolated from his innate roots because he has effectively rendered the African cultures subsidiary to those of Europe. This perception is shared by Linder Hutcheon (2006) who states that it is likely that adaptation will be greeted as minor and inferior and definitely never as great as the original on a broader scale.

I tend to disagree with the assertions by both Botwe-Asamoah and Hutcheon because adapting an original play into a cultural setting that has meaning and relevance to the people cannot be deemed as secondary and inferior. Hutcheon goes on to add that adaptation is another way of repetition without replication because the adapter is most likely to make

changes even unconsciously and this will have a large effect on the setting and change the entire meaning of the play to suit the adapter.

In adapting plays or narratives from one medium to the other or from one culture to the other, Keiko Macdonald makes note of three primary considerations; “what is kept from the original, what is removed from the original and what is changed or reworked from the original, in other words, retention, deletion and alteration” (Keiko McDonald as cited by Wetmore : 2002: 3).

Etherton also observes that reworking or rewording of a play from one medium to another can be grouped under five forms.

1. Character, places and title names may be changed (For example, Efua Sutherlands *Edufa* is based on Euripides’ *Alcestis* where Admetus becomes Edufa, Ampoma - Alcestis, also Admetus’ Greek courtyard becomes Edufa’s Ghanaian courtyard likewise all other names are given the Ghanaian equivalents).
2. Changes may also include the period or setting (For example, the Classical Greek Thebes in *Oedipus Rex* has been transported to Kutuje in Yoruba land in *The Gods are not to Blame* (1971)).
3. Changes may also take place within the framework or context (For example, *Antigone*, the third of Sophocles’ Theban trilogy has been adapted by several playwrights in different context such as Victor Yankah’s *Dear Blood*(2010) and Fugard ,Kani and Ntshona’s *The Island* (1973)- a political play).
4. Changes in the story may also take place. (For example, Sutherland makes the story about Edufa instead of Ampoma while the original is about Alcestis. Also Euripides

play is a tragi-comedy while Sutherland's is a tragedy. Again Alcestis comes back from the dead while Ampoma remains dead when the play ends).

5. Themes in the play may also be changed. (For example, Sophocles *Oedipus Rex* is about the inescapable nature of fate while Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not To Blame* is about personal culpability. (1982: 102- 103).

The concept of adaptation involves superficial changes while a transposition involves more detailed changes. Having discussed the various forms of adaptation and transposition⁹, the concept of adaptation can then be described as the reworking, rewriting or rewording of plays from other cultures to suit one's own society. Etherson's categorisation of forms presupposes that adaptation and transposition of plays may be limited to shallow changes or detailed rewritings to the entire play. I believe that he has captured aptly the various forms that adapted works appear. He maintains that "translation, transposition and adaptation have been endemic in European drama. They represent the means by which play-texts have survived the process of history and have become part of a great tradition." (1982:102). Goff and Simpson (2001) are also of the view that Africans are fond of adapting or transposing Greek plays because the Theban plays for instance mirror most changed themes that can be found in post-colonial literature and theatre. Those themes are the subject of identity and the difference or violence on which it may be dependent on.

This discussion ends on the note that any playwright who transposes or adapts a play text from one culture to another culture is not by virtue of this fact, less of a playwright than another who creates an original piece (Etherton; 1982). Having reviewed literature on the

⁹ Adaptations and transpositions are sometimes referred to as translations in Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* as well as other books

wide umbrella of literary theatre in Africa, I shall now narrow my discussion to a more specific review of theatre in Ghana.

2.6 THEATRE IN GHANA

So far, the discussion of this essay has established that African Drama existed before the invasion by foreigners. Owusu (1988) describes that Drama in West Africa takes on diverse forms. He contends that the concept of Drama is traditional, informal and spontaneous activity found in towns and villages may involve the whole community or some portions of it. This may be described as Drama. This particular form he explains includes Epic narratives or storytelling. He expresses that the storytelling offers an intense dramatic exposition. If Drama according to the Encarta Dictionary is a tense, gripping events and actions either in a work or art or in a real life situation, then Owusu's statements indicates that the storytelling sections in town-squares and village gatherings can certainly be deemed as Drama.

Again Owusu asserts that Drama in West Africa falls into two broad groups namely traditional and modern. In the Ghanaian society, rituals and festivals form an essential aspect of the daily life. Ritual ceremonies mostly take place during puberty rites, marriages, funerals and naming or outdooring of a new born. These life-stage passages usually involve the entire community, and during these celebrations, one can identify various dramatic elements in the course of the celebration. Nketia notes the importance of these elements by stating that:

Another very important focus for performing art is festival. There is hardly any month in which a festival of some sort is not celebrated in some locality in Ghana... as festival is an integrative event in community life and a means of upholding a peoples way of life... from the beginning to the end of the public rites of a festival, one sees nothing but the dramatic enactment of belief or tradition against a general background of music and dance (as cited by Owusu: 1988: 7).

Charles Angmor (1996) a critic of Ghanaian literature also contends that drama in Ghana is developed from both indigenous Ghanaian verbal art and western dramatic art. To this, he describes modern dramatic expressions in Ghana in two forms namely Operatic Drama and Literary Drama. He further divides operatic drama into three different categories, namely the cantata of Christian societies, the comic plays of itinerant musical bands known as concert parties and the folk opera which is a copy of the European opera.

Banham *et al* (1994) state that folk opera may owe its development to Gilbert and Sullivan operettas in schools though during the colonial era some of the educated sophisticated Ghanaians acquired European tastes. K.E. Agovi (1989) on the other hand suggests that literary theatre in Ghana started during colonialism and it was aimed at the educated African. The colonisers sought to create a target audience who would be loyal to the British models of theatre and would not offer any resistance. In order to succeed, the colonisers used every means at their disposal, including the creation of formal educational institutions, patronage, leadership and guidance devices in theatre productions and used the targeted Ghanaians as models in the minds of other educated Africans. Agovi goes on to add that in the “1930’s the dissemination of literary theatre reached its highest point because the colonial government had created all the necessary conditions for the sudden flowering and growth of the arts” (p.19). He maintains that the attempt to produce literate Ghanaians who were loyal to the crown and this resulted in three classes of Africans who bore different degrees of allegiances to the colonial institution. The lawyer- merchant classes were those who regarded themselves as the natural heirs to British rule; an influential, minority from their ranks seemed focused on attaining cultural nationalism and yearned for Africans to discover their own roots and not kowtow to the colonisers. This minority consisted of Kobina Sekyi (*The Blindards: 1974*), J. B. Danquah (*The Third Woman:1943*), Casely Hayford and Ephraim Amu.

Coming back to Angmor, he states that the flowering of literary drama in Ghana is evident in the publication of J.B. Danquah's *The Third Woman* and F. K. Fiawoo's *The Fifth Landing Stage*¹⁰. Before the 1940's, Ghana had no documented literary or professional theatre. This observation gives credence to Agovi's statement that the writers had been trained in the western literary forms and they desired to cultivate some form of Ghanaian literature. Fiawoo's play especially adopts a different model other than the Aristotelian concept he had been taught by the colonial institutors. Secondly the play was first written in the Ewe language before it was later translated into English. This indicates that even before independence these writers were making a conscious effort towards the establishment of some form of a native literature. Angmor notes that because there were no professional theatres in the period when the plays were written, it affected their creation and a careful examination of the plays will reveal that the plays are more of a wishful thinking for literature than an actual theatre.

James Gibbs seems to be in agreement with Angmor's observation when he states that "my initial reaction to the fifth landing stage was that it was an ill constructed, heavily moralistic drama, with so many scenes, characters and ponderous speeches- all to ensure that the play would have a huge, melodramatic impact" (2008:88).

In assessing Danquah's *The Third Woman*, one can identify the themes of the Ghanaian legends, myth, folklore, and Christian doctrine. The play is bombarded with so many ideas about different things so much so that it becomes a blur, thereby making it difficult to identify the central theme. Angmor believes that Danquah employed the dramatic medium as

¹⁰ Fiawoo's *The Fifth Landing Stage* was originally titled *Tokoatolia*

a means for an intellectual array of ideals. He adds that the dramatic elements of the play are mostly derived from indigenous drama. In examining both plays it is easy to see some similarities. The subject matter leans towards anthropological, mirroring certain aspects of the Ghanaian traditional life. Fiawoo's plot structure is divided into five parts and he utilised the Ewe language in the initial writing of the play, along with its proverbial utterances and incantation in order to reflect the people he wishes to portray. Danquah on the other hand writes in the English language though he also borrows his themes from several aspects of the indigenous culture.

The Blinkards by Sekyi which Angmor describes as the seed of literary theatre in Ghana was written in 1915 and published in 1974. Today this play has become a set book written in English in various parts of Africa. Gibbs (2010) asserts that *The Blinkards* discards the conventional western approaches to the unities of time. Sekyi's play is about the effects of imitating European cultural life to the detriment of the native culture. The play is explored against the background of colonialism. Sekyi calls attention to the blind coping and excessive attraction to all things considered European by the people of Ghana. He calls for a need to value the distinct cultural heritage of his people. He chooses satire as a medium to criticize his society. The difference between Sekyi's play as against Fiawoo and Danquah is that whereas Sekyi draws on issues prevailing in his society at the time during which he wrote his play, Danquah and Fiawoo draw on some aspects of the indigenous cultural heritage to write their play.

The second phase in the development of Ghanaian literary theatre started after Ghanaians had won their independence from the British colonizers. Two prominent figures that stood out in the tireless effort towards the cultivation of a form of literary theatre which was rooted in the

Ghanaian heritage are Efua Sutherland and Mohammed Ben Abdallah. Their experimentation resulted in two memorable creations, *Anasegoro* and *Abibigoro*. Sutherland's play *The Marriage of Anansewa* is described by Djisenu as "the play that sets the tone for the genre" (2000: 37). Abdallah on the other hand created an extension of Sutherland's *Anasegoro* which is called *Abibigoro*. *Anasegoro* means Ananse plays and *Abibigoro* implies black peoples' play. *Anasegoro* is a form of Ghanaian theatre which has its roots in the storytelling tradition of the Akan people of Ghana.

Angmor however believes that in the early phase of the development of Ghanaian literary theatre, three outstanding playwrights stood out. They were Efua Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo, and J. C. DeGraft. This is because these playwrights produced at least two published plays each which could be identified as both literature and theatre.

Before advancing into the kind of literature produced in the second phase, there is the need to examine a very popular kind of drama that sprung up in the 1920's known as the Concert Party Drama.

2.7 THE CONCERT PARTY

This kind of drama was widely renowned among the entire Ghanaian populace. Gibbs expresses that, "the concert party is the most exciting development of theatre and dramatic art form. The concert parties of coastal Ghana and the neighbouring republic of Togo are the only professional theatres in the region" (2008: 39). K. N. Bame also states that "the comic plays are a Ghanaian type of popular drama staged by itinerant guitar bands who call themselves "concert parties", "trios" and so forth, and the authors are all male" (1991: 55). This kind of drama according to Angmor falls under the 'operatic drama'. Bame (1985)

exploring the beginnings of concert party states that it has its deep roots in indigenous as well as foreign influences and that the present form can be traced back to sixty years ago to the concerts given by Teacher Yalley, who performed solo by acting at his schools Empire Days concerts in 1918. He cracked jokes, sang and danced wearing fancy clothes, wigs and false moustache as well as make up like black and white minstrels (Barber, Collins and Richard: 1997). Owusu also adds a voice to this and states that “it did not grow out of African sources and although the plays reflect contemporary social and cultural issues, their style and form are initiation of western forms” (1988: 9). Later, concert party became famous under ‘Bob’ Johnson in the 1930’s. They were first known as the two Bobs and their Carolina Girl and then as the ‘Axim Trios’ These trios flourished and became more popular in the 60’s and 70’s. As stated by Owusu previously, the literary form that developed had influences of the western models as well as the indigenous culture. Banham et al explained the form of concert party “moved away from the western influence as theatre practice attempted to link the depiction of Ghanaian attitudes to the sensibilities of the audience” (1994: 39).

Angmor advances that the drama of concert party did not operate as a rule on conflict and its resolution, but as a general consensus to promote harmony within the entire country. Today the concert party has transformed through many changes. A typical concert party includes music, dance and drama. The actual performance of drama comes after a long performance of live band music. Bame (1991) asserts that the concert party has manifest as well as latent functions. Among these functions, he states that the comic plays can sometimes be used as a medium for public information and campaigns to get the general public involved in building the nation. Again in the urban centres where traditional bands are becoming almost nonexistent, it provides the only form of live entertainment available to the people. Among

the latent functions that the concert party performs, Bame states that comic plays enable the members of the audiences, through an active response to the plays (because they are mostly interactive by encouraging audience performer relations) such as laughing, coming on to the stage to encourage the performers with money, to release their emotional tension and stresses. They are given the opportunity to purge their emotions and re-live memorable experience sometimes. Having discussed the role of concert party drama in the development of Ghanaian theatre, I shall now advance on to a discussion of post colonial theatre and New Ghanaian Drama.

2.8 POST-COLONIAL THEATRE (NEW GHANAIAN DRAMA)

As stated earlier, many African countries began gaining political independence around the late 1950's. After independence, there aroused an urgent need to build up nations based on the indigenous cultures. National, political, social and economic structures became a necessity to replace the damage caused by colonisation. There was a need to revive a national cultural identity so as to ensure a national unity. Penina Mlama asserts that cultural nationalism became a continuing necessity to fight the pervasive foreign cultural influence on the African culture. Mlama explains cultural nationalism as:

A sense of national cultural unity and identity, suggests the overcoming of some of these contradictions. Cultural nationalism was an inseparable companion of the political nationalism of post independence Africa seeking to free the newly independent states from the humiliation of belonging to colonial empires. Assertion of national identities called for political, economic, social and cultural self-determination and national cultural identity became a necessary component of nationalism" (1995: 23).

In the 1960's through to the 70's, many Ghanaian playwrights made a conscious attempt to propagate cultural identity in their plays. The plays produced dealt with themes and subject matters that were often far- requiring in their moral and philosophical implication (Banham et al: 1994: 40).

Sutherland's *Foriwa* (1962) dealt with changes that occur in the society. Thus, transitions from the old to the new. Her *Edufa* (1967) is about the importation of foreign influence into the local traditions and the values of the Ghanaian culture. Martin Owusu's *The Sudden Return* (1973) explores the history of some part of the Ghanaian society for posterity. J. C. DeGrafts *Through a film Darkly* (1966) offers a painful analysis of black racism and the treatment of Africans in Europe. Atta Aidoo's *Anowa* (1970) deals with the impartation of the colonial legacy of slavery and the perceived role of a woman in the society. Her *Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964) is also about domestic problems and conflicts that arise from social transformation and the neglect of one's own cultural heritage. J. C. DeGrafts *Sons and Daughters* (1964) touches on the performing arts and the role the arts play in the contemporary Ghanaian society as well as its role in building up the nation. Asiedu Yierenkyi's *Blood and Tears* is about betrayal and conflicts that pertain in marriage as well as human nature. Other plays include, Kwesi Kay's *laughter and Hubbub in the House* (1972) and Sutherlands *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975) which talk about the Ghanaian traditional customs and practices respectively.

Since the 1980's till date, more playwrights have sprung up and the focus of their play's deal with various themes from relationships, responsibilities, conflicts and marriage. However, these plays are not as focused on cultural identity as the earlier plays were. They include Mohammed Ben Abdallah's *Verdit of the Cobra* (1987), *The Trial of Mallam Illya* (1987), *The Slaves* (1989), *The Alien King* (1987), *The Fall of Kumbi* (1989), Yaw Asare's *The Leopard's Choice* (1993), *King Kokroko* (1994), *Bride of the God's* (1996), *The Choice* (1996), *Secret of an Ancient Well* (1998), *Desert Dreams* (1999), *Ananse In The Land of Idiots* (2006), Martin Owusu's *The Story Ananse Told* (1999) and *The Legend of Aku Sika*

(1999), Efo Kodjo Mawugbe's *Take Me To The Altar* (1993), *Grave Yard People* (2002), *Ananse-Kweku Ananse* (2004), *Acquired Prison Traumatic Syndrome* (2005), *In The Chest Of A Woman* (2008) and Faustina Brew's *Murder of the Surgical Bone* (2010) among others.

In an effort to create a kind of theatre that could be deemed as authentically Ghanaian, Efua Sutherland ushered Ananse unto the contemporary stage through her experimentations with Anansegoro. Other playwrights inspired by this innovation, modified and created their own version of Anansegoro. New Ghanaian Drama is about the conscious effort of some playwrights towards the creation of a kind of theatre that is deeply rooted in the Ghanaian cultural heritage. It therefore focuses on plays that were inspired by Sutherland's Anansegoro towards the evolution of this genre.

The preceding discussion serves as a background against which works of Efua Sutherland, Yaw Asare, Martin Owusu and Efo Kojo Mawugbe will be explored as well as a major focus on the study of Ananse as folkloric character in New Ghanaian Drama.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 ANANSE AND ANANSEGORO

Ananse the spider is a folkloric hero of whom innumerable tales are told and to whom all stories belong. The legend of Ananse goes beyond African folklore. Ananse is also found in the Caribbean and African American tales as well. His presence is registered from Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Curacao, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and the Virgin Islands as well as the United States¹¹ (Judy and Morrissette: 2008). In West Africa, Ananse the spider is the most popular folkloric hero in folktales. In the Ghanaian society especially among the Akan he is affectionately referred to as “Kweku Ananse” by all and sundry. He has been described as many things, including cunning, dubious, intelligent, and as a mythical being.

This section will focus on a critical analysis of this mysterious creature in order to shed more light on certain perceived mysteries and allegations regarding Ananse’s character. Additionally, an enquiry into why he stands out as the most suitable character for Ghanaian folklore will be addressed. In Akan folktales, Anansesem, ‘tales of Ananse or Ananse’s words is often used as an introduction to all forms of story-telling, even when Ananse himself is not included in the story.

In the Ghanaian concept, when a person is perceived to be telling a lie or concocting a story in the hopes of being believed, it is also considered to be Anansesem (i.e. Ananse story) . Anansesem became a major source material for contemporary Ghanaian authors particularly after independence when national policy of reconciling national cultures led many playwrights to abandon the western modes of storytelling format and inculcate local myths and legends in their plays - hence Ananse. This mission was led by Efua Sutherland with her

¹¹ In the United States, Anansi metamorphoses into a female Spider trickster known as Aunt Nancy.

creation of a unique genre known as Anansegoro after which writers such as Joe De Graft, Mohammed Ben Abdellah, Martin Owusu, Yaw Asare and Efo Kojo Mawugbe adopted Sutherland's model in a creation of their own version of Anansegoro. It is therefore prudent to explore the elements and conventions of Anansegoro.

3.2 FOLKTALES IN AFRICA

Before commencing a discussion of Ananse's character, we must first take a look at folktales and what it means because that is the world in which Ananse exists.

In African folklore, animals often play the role of the protagonist. One the reasons given for this is the fact that it would be arduous to understand our identities as human beings had it not been for other animals who serve so conveniently and appropriately as a structure for us humans to identify our own activity and reflectivity (Fernandez as cited by Peek and Yankah: 2004). This implies that human beings gain a better understanding of their identities and social structures by acknowledging their differences and similarities with animals. When humans engage in telling stories about animals they are mostly making an allusion to themselves and their situation. Through puzzles, riddles, proverbs and tales, people are able to discuss themselves and their situation indirectly. This is a very important component for the society because when animals are used as protagonists in folktales certain follies and vices of undesirable characteristics of human nature can be brought to bear without risking frictions that are involved in a face to face confrontation. This is because animals also have human characteristics. For example, the monkey is always fooling when others are very busy. The parrot is also very chatty and the mull is extremely stubborn and does not yield easily. These are all traits that can easily be identified in humans as well. Also, in a continent like Africa that is mostly characterised by towns and villages, it becomes vital to avoid conflict or any actions that will lead to disunity. Attention can therefore be brought to

disharmonious behaviour and congenial atmosphere through telling of tales. When we talk about African folklore, we are mainly talking about folktales. This is because what little scholarship there is on folklore in Africa is limited to ancient myth and animal tale (Peek and Yankah: 2004).

Folklore is an integral and vital aspect of our daily lives. Georges and Jones points this out with the following words:

‘folklore’ denotes expressive forms, processes and behaviours that we customarily learn, teach and utilise or display during a face to face interactions and that we judge to be traditional because they are based on known precedents or models and because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, through belief and feelings (1995: introduction).

Basically, this implies that the concept of folklore is colossal and it embodies all that we say or do in life. Owusu (1988) also states that story telling or epic narratives are a subset of folklore. However, it becomes very fascinating when Daniel Crowley in describing the relationship between folklore and theatre in Africa, states that:

‘folklore’ is not literature, but theatre, and badly needs to be considered in this light, especially in the context of both actual and cultural, the relationship of performer to audience, the nuances of gestures and language that are the hallmark of the gifted raconteur and the aesthetic value system of his audience. Once more, this great work can only be done by Africans, who in this way can open up their vast and still virtually unknown treasure house of narrative art for the appreciation of the whole world (1971:15).

It appears that Crowley also sees the act of story-telling which is subset of folklore as theatre because story-telling also consists of speech and role playing. The narrator engages in acting out some parts as he narrates the story and Crowley believes that this kind of theatre is unique to Africa. On the other hand he states that folklore is not literature but theatre. The question then is how this can be, considering that literature has three branches, i.e. drama, prose and poetry? Can we then distinguish between literature and theatre?

Having established that folktale is a set of folklore, the Encarta dictionary gives a definition of folklore as “a story or legend that is passed down orally from one generation to the next and becomes part of a community’s tradition”.

Dan Ben -Amos in his article *Folklore in African Societies* explains that folktales refer to:

Oral narratives in general or to a particular genre of oral tales. It is mostly told by traditional people. He states that in their verbal art these groups were thought to embody the spirit of a nation however today the term extends to tales of groups with strong, traditional, ethnic or regional bases on their literary imitations (1975: 89).

It must be noted that the division of folklore into folktales, myths and legends is not universal. Different societies differ in how they categorise their narratives, the choice of distinctive features that distinguish among them, and even the number of categories they identify and name. This implies that the concept of folktales and meanings of narratives have the potential to not only vary from one culture to another, but also change over time within a single society. Traditionally, there are two places in which folktales are told in storytelling performances. Those are the home or domestic setting and in the village square which is held at an open space in the town or village. In the domestic setting, the stories are mostly told in open court yard of a compound or family house or under a stall in the inner yard, corridor or veranda.

Yeboa- Dankwa in his article “The Folktale of the Akan and Guan of Ghana: The Audience and Its Role” (1992) points out that, there are some traditional norms which determine the choice of a folktale narrator. Age is one such norm, and this is because in the Ghanaian society, age is perceived to be a sign of wisdom and in order to weave a good tale, the narrator must be wise. Hence, most competent narrators are usually older men and women in the community, although children can be allowed to have their own sections. The audience of a folktale session in the domestic setting is mostly small. It may comprise of a nuclear family or the nuclear and extended families who mostly gather by the fire side at night after a day’s

work and chores have been done. It may also comprise of only the children in a compound house with the narrator being an elderly member of the household. Folktale in village square is the opposite because it takes place in the village or town square, and it mostly attracts a large crowd. It also involves singing, drumming and dancing. Sometimes, the audience also becomes part of the story telling. The stories are sometimes laced with proverbs in order to educate the audience. This is the means by which the audience acquires their knowledge of folktales of their societies. The storytelling sections can provide many functions for the society. One important function of folktales is that it serves as a tool for social control. They are sometimes geared towards educating the society on general conducts, acceptable behaviour, norms and customs as well as traditional values. They can be used to alter undesirable conducts and promote harmony and unity in a town or village. This is done through humour, satire and ridicule. It therefore creates reconciliation by bringing together people with different background and interest by breaking down barriers of ethnicity and tribalism.

Folklore also provides didactic functions which relates to the pedagogical role of inculcating the values and social processes that the town or community holds in high esteem, such as good morals, virtues and ideas of good conduct while providing a plausible explanation to social¹² and natural¹³ phenomena. It can be used as a platform to express repressed grievances and injustice. Here the narrator may use the weapon of insinuation to tell his or her tale. The folktale sessions therefore serve as a forum for laughing at, and improving upon the lives of humans in the society. Furthermore, because these sessions take place in the night, it reduces the likelihood of immoral conduct among the youth and serves as a way of controlling the birth rate as people would engage in these sessions instead of having nothing to do and being

¹²Social phenomena such as for instance how Ananse gained the title of custodian of all folktales

¹³Natural Phenomena could explain how day and night come to be.

lured into romance to while away time. Again, because these sessions are mostly in a congenial and audible setting, children and the youth are able to accept rebuke without taking offence because it is done in a light hearted manner. At these sessions, creativity as well as social skills and the art of speaking in public are all taught. Members of the audience are encouraged to participate and voice out their opinion on characters when the tales are being told. It breaks away shyness and timidity and encourages bravery and a good self esteem. Folklores can therefore provide entertainment, education and preserve culture.

Having discussed the world of Ananse in folktales I shall endeavour to examine and analyse Ananse the legendary hero of whom countless tales are told.

3.3 ANANSE THE LEGENDARY HERO

Growing up as a child, my perception of ‘Kweku Ananse’ was that he was mean- spirited and wicked. This perception was fuelled by stories from ‘By the Fire Side’, a popular television programme that featured traditional story-telling sessions about the exploits of Ananse. In these tales Ananse was always depicted in a negative mould and his shenanigans always ended in his disgrace. My opinions about Ananse were further grounded by my mother who always repeated the phrase ‘me ntie Kweku Anansesem biara’ (I’m not prepared to listen to any lies) whenever she doubted the sincerity of what she was being told. Based on this, Ananse to me represented an image of falsehood, totally untrustworthy and a very bad influence. Thankfully through formal education, I have come to the realisation that there is more to this character than just being an accomplished trickster.

As mentioned earlier, narratives in which Ananse the spider has been depicted, brings to bear the concept of folktale in Africa. Ananse has been characterised by many scholars as an

ageless hero, supreme/mythical being, and odumankoma's (the Almighty God's) chosen one, among others (Peek and Yankah: 2004). Ananse vacillates between animal and man. This means he is a liminal character. Thus, his socio-cultural relevance to the whole society may be determined based on how he is depicted in stories (be it negative or positive), the world in which he operates, the socio-cultural context and the motive behind his actions. He appears self-centred, cruel, unscrupulous, vain, unappreciative, constantly rebelling against societal norms and values of man. Others also describe him as lawless, anti-social and immoral because his actions are usually geared towards satisfying his own desires for self-gratification without regard for social conventions and moral restraints. When viewed in this perspective, there is the tendency that his value within the society may be shadowed and his character misunderstood.

Kwesi Tekpetey in his article "Kweku Ananse, A psychological Approach" (2000) points out that Ananse's literary function in the Akan oral educational system appears to be a deliberate attempt to expose the danger he poses to society in spite of the fact that most times the audience sympathises empathetically with him; especially when he operates within the framework of what is permissible and lawful in the society. Artistically, Ananse is depicted as a man. Traditionally his first name in most narratives is 'Kweku', a day-name given to a Wednesday-born son in most parts of Ghana. In Ghana, it is highly unlikely for animals to be given a day of birth name. In most narratives, Ananse is often presented as a family man with a wife and four children. His wife is called Aso among the Ashantis and Okonore Yaa among the Fantis. His eldest son is Ntikuma, followed by Tikenenkenen¹⁴, Afudohwedohwe¹⁵ and Nankonhwea¹⁶. The elder son's name "Tikenenkenen" means the ability to think fast and make prudent and pragmatic decisions. Such traits are most desirable in people because it

¹⁴Tikenenkenen is literally translated to imply, extremely huge head.

¹⁵Afudohwedohwe is literally translated to imply, extremely huge belly on the verge of an explosion.

¹⁶Nankonhwea is literally translated to imply, extremely skinny legs.

implies that they could be counted upon and relied on. It is also an inherited ability of his father considering that Ananse is shrewd and witty. Afudohwedowhe is a connotation of huge stomach. Beyond that it suggests that he has a big belly to stomach all the troubles that will come their way. Having a father as Ananse, it stands to reason that he will definitely need a big stomach to digest the many mishaps that his father is most likely to fall into. Nankonhwea draws up an image of an extremely long and skinny leg implying that should trouble arise, he has the ability to escape with his family to safety. This could explain why Ananse is always on the move. Ananse's family is therefore a human family with comic and absurd physical features, led by the hero himself who is always engaged in humorous, quaint and witty actions while commuting in between the human, animal and ancestral worlds.

As a personification of man, Ananse is endowed with eloquence and his humour is legendary. In the Ghanaian traditional context, a child is not a recognisable being or has no status unless he has been out-dooed in a naming ceremony which takes place usually on the eighth day after his birth. Ananse is then an allegorical representation of man in the society. Being a man, he equally encounters the same life trails as all humans do. As a social being he works mostly as a farmer, though he is sometimes considered lazy and there are tales in which he would steal from his neighbours rather than work hard. Sometimes he is very selfish and he keeps the whole farm produce to himself instead of sharing with his family. He is mostly allied with conditions that pertain to animals and humans alike. He is known to contract acquaintances and friendships but most often because he is an opportunist who knows no bounds and will go to the extreme to achieve his purpose, hence his relationships are short lived. This is also because, sooner or later he violates the trust bestowed upon him, or once he has achieved his goal and needs nothing more, he moves on to the next adventure. This could explain why there are no details concerning his habitation and domestic environment. He is

never stationed. After tricking four chiefs in prospects of a marriage to Anansewa, he finally secures a husband for Anansewa and gains wealth in the process. He then moves on from place to place till he finally settles in the land of Idiots where he succeeds in fooling an entire Kingdom and wins the hand of a princess in the bargain as well as securing a chieftom and all the possessions and wealth that come with it. He later moves on to another place to defend his title against other prominent figures of the society such as Ampadu and Azuma Nelson. Thanks to his interactions with humans, he is able to gain knowledge about people and things to manoeuvre things to his advantage. In spite of the fact that he is integrated into society and has a penetrating awareness of what is decent and what is unacceptable, he chooses to remain a law unto himself.

Judy and Morrissette in their book *African and the Americas: Culture, Politics and History* (2008) points out that Ananse manages to fail or succeed but always comes back incredibly to create new puzzles where none existed and to solve puzzles. In some narratives his actions appear not only motivated by greed but by a fatherly concern to do what is best for his daughter (Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa*: 1975). He exhibits cunning, shrewdness and guile in his exchange and negotiations. Though he is extremely intelligent, there are tales in which he exhibits utter and sheer stupidity such as when he gathered all knowledge in a gourd and climbed a tree to hang it on so he can keep all the knowledge for himself but he fell and the gourd broke and knowledge scattered in all corners and every section of the world so that all humans gained access to wisdom.

A careful examination of Ananse the spider reveals a most admirable and entertaining insect. It builds its web after which it rests patiently waiting for an unsuspecting prey to fall in its trap. When an insect or a fly falls in its trap, it advances carefully in order not to lose its prey.

Its web has most often been likened to a hangman's noose because the more a prey tries to free itself, the more it gets tangled in knots. Consequently, without much effort from the spider, the prey is most often stuck in its sticky web with no hope of being freed. The spider then looms upon the prey, winds more web to render it motionless, then feeds on the ensnared prey. Kwesi Yankah in his book *The Akan Trickster Cycle: Myth or Folktale* (1983) points out that, Ananse as a human figure is meant to antedate the insect and that Ananse suffered degradation from man to animal as the penalty for his duping. This would be supported by:

etiological character of Ananse narratives and the fact that narrators telling stories of how Ananse acquired his animal features normally begin by saying for example ... I am going to tell you how Ananse walks up the tafferatse. From this point of view such stories as well as several others in the Ananse cycle, would constitute an account of the fall of Ananse, as well as the general creation of the world. This would tie up with a possible view of Ananse as a culture hero who sacrificed his form for the sake of generating culture (1983:7).

David Donkor in his article "Kodzidan Mboguo : Supplanted Acts , Displaced Naratives and the Social Logic of a Trickster in the ' House of Stories'" also adds that among the Akans, Ananse is imagined as a spider and his wittiness is considered an extension of the spider's known craftiness' - its mastery of disguise, ability to walk on water or survive under it on accumulated packets of air, capacity to leap or be borne by wind over great distances; and adroitness at spinning intricate, artistically admirable webs of its saliva" (2007: 45). With all these abilities, it is no wonder Ananse's fame is legendary. He seems to possess the capacity to achieve greatness and appears as a paradoxical figure whose antics mock the seriousness of established rules. He is divine and human, a person and an animal, creative and destructive. Tales about him are mostly connected with myths, legends and sometimes rituals. They have the ability to evaluate and reflect upon realities, thereby making the realities clearer and more profound to the people who tell and hear the tales (Vecsay: 1981).

Yankah (1983) also alludes a conceivable rationalisation of Ananse's dual image in narration by exploring the possibility that as a wondering figure who transients between human, animal and supernatural words, Ananse would need to adopt multiple physical characteristics to enable him to deal efficiently with his multifarious tasks. This exploration by Yankah can be viewed as artistically motivated. Based on Ananse's role as protagonist in most narratives, narrators often have the privilege to choose from a wide range of traditional repertoire of basic themes and subject matters to create an original Ananse tale.

In examining his origins to analyse him as a character, he appears to have existed since the beginning of Odumankoma's creations, his birth has not been recorded and described in any narrative by far. He is however immortal because he is ageless and no narrative has also mentioned his death. He has affiliations to the sky god (Nyame), and he appears as an everyman or everyone in spite of him being a spider as well. Most narratives explain how he is the way he is such as, how he ended up bald, how wisdom came to the world and why he is found in corners of the house hiding in dishonour and disrepute. With respect to how he became custodian to folktales or owner of all tales, legend according to Perrin (2007) has it that Ananse was once a human being who took delight in cracking jokes and making fun of people. One day he went too far and one of his victims punched him so hard that he broke into many pieces. When he managed to assemble all the pieces together he discovered he had become something else. He had a flat body, eight legs and some strange new appendages and abilities. He had become a giant ugly spider, but he had an ability to change into man at will. He then decided to become a 'spider-man'. He soon got bored with the earth and slung a long strand of spider web into the sky to see what is happening up there. When he got there he noticed a wooden box kept beside the sky god (Nyame). Ananse's interest was picked and he kept begging to know what was in it. He eventually got to know it was a box of stories. He

kept pestering Nyame to sell it to him till one day Nyame got fed up and agreed but demanded four items in exchange for the box. These four items were ill-tempered creatures with teeth or fangs and other unpleasant qualities. They were python (known to swallow people whole), lion (often with big bloody teeth), the hornets (wasps with poisonous stings) and Aboatia (believed to be a dwarf spirit being). Ananse came down to earth and discussed it with his wife Aso who advised him to start with the python. He then hatched a plot with his son Ntikuma and they succeeded in luring the python to come down from a tree. Ananse then wove his strongest web and trapped the python. He succeeded in capturing the lion and the hornet with tricks as well. His dilemma then came in his ability to capture Aboatia because he was an invincible being. His wife then came up with a plot to construct a glue man to lure Aboatia into revealing himself so as to get stuck to the glue man. Miraculously, this plan succeeded and Ananse returned with the items to Nyame who honoured his word and gave the box to him. Ananse returned to earth and guards this box safely while polishing it always. One day, while polishing the box, it slipped from his hands, fell heavily, and cracked. Curiosity got the better of Ananse and he opened up the cracked portion and took a peek at what was inside. Lo and behold, stories came pouring out in droves; all manners...fictional stories, true stories, love stories and so on. As the stories swam by, Ananse heard bits and pieces and put them together which he retold from generation to generation and became the custodian of all stories.

In his book *Reclaiming the Human Sciences and Humanity Through African Perspectives*, Kofi Anyidoho expresses that “if the sankofa bird stands as a defining metaphor for the question of methodology or approach to artistic practice as pointer to the nation’s search for direction and self definition, it may be argued that Ananse the spider man comes closest to being a defining metaphor for the complex nature of the individuals in the society (2012:

1162). It goes without saying that in a traditional sense, Ananse may not be considered as a hero because he does not appear to be a good role model of good social standing order but he can be considered as a hero of a sort when it comes to comic narratives. Within this stance of a seemingly contradictory character we also find heroic attributes when he resorts to solve knotty proverbs which others could not fathom. He is also fundamental to disentangling mysteries as well as creating cultural phenomena. A two-step approach to analysing this is that he may be far advanced to humans based on his supernatural and super human qualities or he may be considered subsidiary based on his lack of moral ethics. Either way, he possesses the ability to use his knowledge for either constructive or destructive purposes (Judy & Morrisette: 2008).

In Sutherland's words, Ananse appears to

represent a kind of everyman. Artistically exaggerated and distorted to serve as a medium of self-examination. He has a penetrating awareness of the nature and psychology of human beings and animals. He is also made to mirror in his behaviour fundamental human passions, ambitions and follies as revealed in contemporary because he is most often overreaching himself, he ruins himself and ends up impoverished. Ananse is artistically a medium for society to criticise itself, exterminate Ananse and society will be ruined (1975: v).

Ananse has therefore been made into a psychological representation of people in the society and how they behave and react to all manner of things.

3.4 CONCEPT OF ANANSEGORO

Having analysed Ananse as a legendary hero and discussing some of the myths that surround him, it stands to reason that this extraordinary character will be chosen from among the numerous animal characters to be the custodian of folktales. His superiority and intelligence displayed in various tales outshines any other folkloric character. It goes without saying that

his ability to outwit the sky god earns him the right to be the owner of all stories. Sutherland transforms the traditional Akan spider tales known as Anansesem into a new dramatic form called Anansegoro. The search for authenticity to create a theatre that reflected the culture and identity of the native people and away from the clone of colonial powers urged many writers to dig into their cultural roots. According to Martin Banham (1994), in Ghana, the traditional roots of drama in the oral culture became extremely significant for the forms, themes, and set the tune for what has become New Ghanaian Drama. Sutherland adhered to this call to revive Ghana's lost cultural identity. She exploited the oral traditional format in her experimentation of Anansegoro. Isidore Okpewho (1992) points out that in exploitation, modern writers make selective use of elements of the oral tradition. The form of representation bears a limited relationship to the oral tradition and even when familiar characters are used, they are deployed in an unfamiliar setting and in a somewhat altered order of relationship. Anansesem existed already, but Sutherland transformed it in her creation of Anansegoro, thereby changing it from narrative to play, making it Ananse plays. Asiedu believes that "by adopting this folkloric character's name in developing her Anansegoro, Sutherland was affirming the African play-wright's role as the conscience of the society; as the one that holds the mirror up for society to see itself and to take necessary steps towards positive vale" (2011: 369). In the Ghanaian concept, 'agoro' defines all manner of plays including concerts, drumming, dancing, singing and acting.

The beauty or aesthetics emanates from the enjoyment or satisfaction gained from watching such displays. Also in the Ghanaian concept, the mention of 'agoro' brings to mind fun, entertainment, pleasure, song and laughter because it is entertaining to watch Sutherland usage of agoro, which captures aptly the Akan traditional concept of performance aesthetics (Asiedu: 2011). Within the storytelling tradition of Anansesem, Sutherland adapts some of its

conventions in her experimentations in Anansegoro and this is exemplified in her play *The Marriage of Anansewa*.

In shedding light on the relationship between Anansesem and Anansegoro, Sutherland states that ;

there is in Ghana a storytelling art called Anansesem by Akan speaking people. The name, which literally means Ananse stories, is used both for the body of stories told and for the story-telling performance itself. Although this story-telling is usually a domestic activity, there are instances some specialist groups who have given it a full theatrical expression with established conventions. It is this system of traditional theatre which I have developed and classified as Anansegoro (1975: v).

In examining the origins of Anansegoro, Kerr also adds that, “one Ghanaian writer who may have been very concerned with bridging the gap between popular and art theatre is Efua Sutherland. Efua Sutherland was very active in building a sophisticated and skilled art theatre on the basis of popular Ghanaian traditions” (1998:118).

Having analysed the concepts of Anansesem and Anansegoro, I shall now proceed to discuss the features of Anansegoro.

3.5 FEATURES OF ANANSEGORO

As discussed above, Anansegoro is a unique genre created by Efua Sutherland based on the Akan oral traditions known as Anansesem. Generally Anansegoro takes the form or structure of a narrator, music, dance and audience participation. It is also well rooted in the Ghanaian heritage. In *The Story Ananse Told*, Ananse is the narrator, he begins by telling us who he is after which he starts the story with...once upon a time, there was a hunter... (p.32) One major feature of Anansegoro is the story teller. Okpewho expresses that, “the most significant element in the relocation of the oral narrative tradition in the dramatic form of Anansegoro is the story teller because he is central to the action in *The Marriage of Anansewa*” (1992:313).

In his role as narrator he exercises control over the whole range of activities and events in the drama. According to Sutherland (1975) he is the owner of the story with the conservative right to have knowledge of all that is happening, to have the mandate to be personally involved in the actions of the events and to engage his audience to believe they are part of the action. John Djisenu notes that, the story teller in the actual traditional context is the owner of the story:

It is his brain child and he embellishes it by adding details. Well versed in the oral art, he may use various devices such as imagery, proverbs and onomatopoeic words to give a comic or dramatic twist, an actor himself, he can imitate different accents and voices and dramatise actions through movements, gestures and facial expressions. He doesn't tell the story- he performs it (2003: 39).

Being the owner of the story, it implies that he knows the story very well. He can therefore pause the action from time to time by recalling events of the past and their effect on the present situation at hand. He therefore tells us “friends, Anansegoro does not take long to grow” (Sutherland: 1975: 16). Aside from engaging the audience from time to time, he also engages the characters on stage in a dialogue. He asks Akwasi after a fight with Akosua “... young man! Gentleman (Akwasi stops), if you know that this girl is in the wrong, why don't you take her to court?” (p.16). He watches his exit and entrances and his role also involves providing continuity and unity. Being the owner of the story, the story teller reveals to us at the end of the play! “That's the nature of Anansegoro, it is such that as soon as you release your mind to it, it takes off with your mind, penetrating where it might not have been possible for you to go. “Do you notice that since we started thinking we have arrived right where the eye of the story is?” (p.66). This statement implies that he knows the story inside out and has the tendency to get his audience actively engrossed and thinking. The story-teller coaches the performers (Akosua and Akwasi) and makes it clear the lesson which the audience should learn and the ways in which the overall performance taking place can apply to their own

lives. Sometimes he literally and metaphorically guides and directs the music, assists the property man and helps the performers to continue the action. He therefore performs a multi task such as stage hand and music director. At some points he brings in a prop of a screen that is decorated as a spider web to symbolise Ananse.

Another feature of Anansegoro is the use of music and songs. This is referred to as mboguo. Traditionally, mboguo was sang in a story when a story was deemed bad or a clear lie. Mboguo was also sung when the narrator does not tell the story well but decides to add his or her own fabrications to the extent that the meaning of the story is totally lost. But today the meaning and implications of mboguo has undergone some transformations. Sutherland explains that the mboguo are integrated in the stories and are performed in context, led by the story teller. The mboguo is contributed by all others present including the audience. Sutherland explains that contributed mboguo may be reflective of a mood or aimed at guiding the pace of the performance or inspiring the general assembly (p.61). During this musical interlude, the audience is welcomed to dance along amidst the drumming and singing and the songs are mostly related to the theme of the action at present. In the play, the action begins in act one with the players who give a fore-shadow of what is about to happen with the song. “Oh life is a struggle, oh life is a pain, oh life is a struggle, oh life is a pain in this world “... Ananse then comes in saying... while life is whipping you; rain also pours down to whip you some more. Whatever it was that man did wrong at the beginning of time must have been really awful for all us to have to suffer” (p.1). This statement sets the tone for the play and gives us an indication of Ananse’s status. Yeboa-Dankwa (1992) notes that, there is a close relation between folktales and songs and those songs are mostly a feature of folktales. In discussing the functions of mboguo, he states that, the mboguo uplifts the moral of the audience. They also participate fully in the narration and this is especially good as it improves

interaction between the story teller and the audience. The songs also enable the audience to be awake and alert. They also give the story teller a break as the audience take over for a while and allow him to rest.

The Akosua and Akwasi scene is also a form of mboguo. Another form in which the mboguo takes is a play let – i.e. plays within play; such as the scene of Akosua and Akwasi. Dzisenu points out that, “the mboguo are also convenient pauses in the story, which mark the small units, the scenes of the performance and provide transitions between situations- such as between the letter- writing scene and that set in the post office” (2000: 38-39). The mboguo give life to the story and ensure that its narration leads to a success.

The use of the property man is also another important feature of Sutherland’s Anansegoro. As a property man, he remains in full view of the audience from beginning to end. He hands out props such as Anansewa’s typewriter and envelopes for letters to be posted. His role and presence is to ensure the smooth flow of the play. This particular feature is borrowed from the western format and blended perfectly with the Akan oral tradition to create a hybrid kind of total African theatre. Sutherland makes the property man stand on stage and distributes props when needed, he also sets the scene. At certain times he plays the role of prompter and reminds the other player of things they may forget. In act two he sets the chair and side table and Ananse comes to sit, he then commands the property man, ‘serve my gin here’ (p.22) to which the property man complies. The property man also appears to be at the receiving end of the frustrations of some of the characters. When Ananse gets upset over the turn of events, he lashes out at the property man to fan him hard. Christie also scolds him for not pleasing Ananse in his duties (p.43).

Audience participation is also a very important component of Anansegoro. An effective audience participation is a major feature of a traditional anansesem, the main source for Anansegoro. The audience form part of the performance. Sutherland comments in the foreword to her play:

...though the specialist controls the main flow of the story, their performance requires the participation of the audience...People come to a session prepared to be, in story telling parlance, hoaxed, ... Hence in the course of a particularly entrancing story, it is normal for an appreciative listener to engage in the following exchange:

Listener: Keep hoaxing me! (sisi me!)

Narrator: I am hoaxing you and will keep on hoaxing you!(mirisisi wo, mesisi wo bio!) (P: vii).

Asare strengthens this participation by placing Ananse in the midst of the audience he makes it clear that they are there to watch a play and calls on them to support him when he needs morale to boost him up.

Ananse: (facing audience) what I've got myself into... Yes, I need inspiration from you Look ... to think... to create... to scheme... to plan strategies. You must inspire me. Here then, chant for me! Kweku Ananse, Kweku Ananse osee yiee!

Chorus/Audience:

Yiee.....yiee! (p. 21).

The interaction with the audience is very vital because it creates an intimate relationship between the storyteller and the audience.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 EFUA SUTHERLAND, YAW ASARE, MATIN OWUSU AND EFO KODJO MAWUGBE AND THE ANALYSIS OF THEIR PLAYS.

INTRODUCTION

As stated in the objectives, this chapter will be based on the works of four playwrights; Efua Sutherland, Yaw Asare, Martin Owusu and Efo Kodjo Mawugbe. It will highlight their achievement and contribution to the Ghanaian theatre. The chapter will also deal with an in-depth analysis of their plays; *The Marriage of Anansewa*(1975), *Ananse in the Land of Idiots*(2006), *The Story Ananse Told*(1999) and *Ananse, Kweku- Ananse* (2004).

4.2 EFUA SUTHERLAND: LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Efua Theodora Sutherland (nee Morgue) was a Ghanaian theatre pioneer, children's author and Dramatist. Sutherland was also a pioneer of African theatre and also credited with founding of the Ghana Experimental theatre which aimed at exposing both urban and rural Africans to drama. Sutherland was born in 1924 in the Gold Coast, now known as Ghana and attended secondary school in St. Monica's training college in Ashanti Region. Afterwards she went to England to school at Homerton College, Cambridge, where she received a bachelor's degree in education before going to the University of London to study at the school of Oriental and African studies. In 1951, Sutherland returned to Ghana where she first taught at a Secondary School in Takoradi, then later at her former school St. Monica's. She married William Sutherland, an African American in 1954 and together, they founded a school in the Trans-Volta region in northern Ghana. They also established a theatre for local production in and around the central region. In 1958 Sutherland founded the Ghana experimental theatre in Accra. In 1960 she received funding from the U.S. based Rockefeller Foundation and the

Arts council of Ghana to start the Ghana Drama Studio. This studio later became part of the University of Ghana in 1963. Sutherland was then granted a long-term research position at the Institute of African Studies at the University Of Ghana. Working there she founded the Ghana society of writers. After that she formed a community theatre in Ekumfi- Atwia called Kodzidan and a travelling performance group called Kusum Agoromba (Kusum players) who performed at schools, churches and training colleges. In 1962 Sutherland began working at the New School for Music and Drama headed by the distinguished musicologist J.W.C. Nketia after which she enjoyed positions with Ghana's National Commission on children and a consultant at the Dr DuBois centre for African culture. From there, Sutherland spent much of her career in theatre travelling around the country with her performance groups. Through her efforts and achievements in cultural Ghana, she gained recognition on the international scene. In the 1980s she served as an advisor to Ghana's ex-President Jerry John Rawlings. Efua Sutherland died in 1996.

Sutherland started out writing short stories. She turned to drama because she came to the realisation that it would lend her works a greater appeal in a country where the majority of citizens are illiterates. Her experimental theatre groups performed on the streets of the nearly independent Ghana under its first president Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Sutherland turned from the colonial English language traditions in theatre to the popular village theatre based on oral story telling traditions to emphasise the importance of performing in Ghanaian languages. Through drama she was able to reach people who could not understand the written word. She believed that theatre had an important role in educating and entertaining people. A few years later, Sutherland designed another outdoor performance area for experiments. She began a television series in 1966 and produced plays on regular basis. This institution flourished until 1990 when the building was demolished to make way for a new National

Theatre. An exact replica of the Drama studio was built next to the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana. The Ghana Drama Studio also collaborated with the Workers' Brigade Drama group founded by Felix Morriseau- Leroy.

Sutherland received a five year project funded by the VALCO Trust Fund. The project was used to collect information about children at play both in formal and informal terms. Sutherland also established a children's theatre laboratory called Childrens Drama Project at the Drama studio which created avenues for children from selected schools to explore theatre from different angles such as Creative Dramatics while learning about their culture and the basic techniques for the stage. (Sutherland- Addy: 2007). Though her initiation of drama for children, she was appointed in the 1980's to lead Ghana to become the first country to ratify the U.N. convention on the Declaration of Rights of the Child. She was a founding member and Chair of the Ghana National Commission on Children. Several initiatives for children were made during her era including the Children's Park library complex network, child literary and mobile science laboratory projects as well as the commission of extensive research on the Ghanaian child. Her work was recognised by both the state and major agencies such as the Rockefeller Foundation, UNICEF and UNESCO. Other supporters of her works are Arthur and Ruth Noah, the Arthur and Dorothy Clift family of Bromley UK, Dr Vivian O. Windley, Merle Worth, the Abyssinian Baptist church in Harlem, USA and the Children's Television Network.

4.2A Major works

After independence, in the spirit of raising national identity and cultural reawakening, Sutherland set out to explore and study the Ghanaian culture in details. She came to the realisation that she did not know her people as she ought to. She stated:

I'm on a journey of discovery; I'm discovering my own people. I didn't grow up in rural Ghana- I grew up in Cape Coast with a Christian family. It's a fine family, but

there are certain hidden areas of Ghanaian life- important areas of Ghanaian life, that I just wasn't in touch with, for the past four or five years I've made a very concentrated effort to make that untrue. And I feel I know my people now.(Efua Sutherland in cultural events in Africa. No.42,1968).

Sutherland's first major play was *Foriwa* (1962). This play originally appeared as a short story entitled "New Life at Kyerefaso". *Foriwa* is an allegory about a village named Kyerefaso, whose inhabitants are stuck with the outmoded ways of doing things and refuse to accept change and progress. It is not until Foriwa, daughter of the town's Queen mother marries a student by name of Labaran that the village is brought to enlightenment and progress begins to take place. *Foriwa* can be considered as a metaphor for Ghana in the twentieth-century with Sutherland campaigning for national unity irrespective of gender, ethnicity, tribe or ideological differences. She produced *Edufa* (1962) an adaptation of *Alcestis* by the Greek dramatist Euripides. *Edufa* is a vain western educated newly rich man who consults a diviner and is told that he is about to die but he can avert his death if he finds someone to take his place. He poses a riddle hoping to get his father to answer but unfortunate for him his wife accepts to die in his stead without knowing what she is promising. But while Euripides' version of the story is a tragi-comedy, Sutherland's is a tragedy, where trading in traditional values in favour of modernity, greed and narcissism brings about the downfall of *Edufa*. After that she produced *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975), Sutherland employed the techniques of traditional oral storytelling which included a narrator who serves as a mediator between the actors and audience. Sutherland employed the trickster figure in folklore 'Ananse' to manipulate events that led to the marriage of his daughter Anansewa. Mabel Komasi (2007) states that though Sutherland's main contribution to Ghanaian literature was in the field of drama and incorporating Ghanaian folklore into the traditions of Ghana, her other major interest was in the field of creating a suitable literature for Ghanaian children. Sutherland was the first Ghanaian writer to take an active interest in

producing works for children. She was a teacher, a poet and a playwright. She became a pioneer in the establishment of reading materials for children.

Being a teacher she was able to identify the importance of role playing in enhancing the learning abilities of children. In light of this her first children's book was titled *Play Time in Africa* (1960). This was followed by a pictorial essay, "The Road Makers" (1960). Later she produced a short story, *Obaatan Kesewa* (1967) published by the Bureau of Ghana Languages. Komasi (2007) asserts that Sutherland was the first Ghanaian writer who attempted to produce a book with an indigenous background for children in Ghana because she recognised a bond between oral literature and literature for children. At the Drama studio, Sutherland also organised Children's Drama Development Programme. In 2000 *Children of the Man- Made Lake* was also published. Her passion to educate Ghanaian children led to her establishment of Mmofra Foundation- a non-profit cultural organisation for children. After her death, a language club was established at her home to provide a forum for children to read, tell and perform stories while being educated about the essential values of the Ghanaian culture. Sutherland was a firm believer in the importance of preserving Ghanaian culture and perceived that writers have a significant role to play in the society. Therefore their task is to produce works that bare relevance to the cultural norms and practices of the society.

4.2B Selected Works

The Road Makers (1961), *Foriwa* (1962), *Playtime in Africa* (1962), *Edufa* (1967), *Odasani* (1967), *Vulture! Vulture* (1968), *Tahinta* (1968), "The Original Bob: The story of Bob Johnson, Ghana's Ace comedian" (1970), *Ananse and the Dwarf Brigade* (1971) (based on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in wonderland*), *Anansegoro. A story-telling Drama in Ghana* (1975), *The Marriage of Anansewa*(1975), *Efua Sutherland of Ghana* (1978) (recording), *The Voice in the Forest* (1983).

Many of Sutherland's works were broadcast in Ghana on a popular radio programme 'The Singing Net'. Sutherland was devoted to building the Ghanaian cultural heritage and education. She served as mentor and an inspiration to many notable African personalities in the field of Drama and other professions such as Ama Ata Aidoo, Kwaw Ansah and Meshia Asare.

4.3 SYNOPSIS OF *THE MARRIAGE OF ANANSEWA*

Sutherland's play *The Marriage of Anansewa* is about Ananse's determination to rid himself of his poverty stricken state and at the same time secure a marriage for his daughter Anansewa. Ananse writes to four chiefs, Chief of Sapaase, Chief of Mines, Togbe Klu IV and Chief Who-Is-Chief. These men are his selected suitors for the hand of his daughter Anansewa. He promises to each of them in anticipation that they are well vexed in custom enough to respond with gifts and money which will help solve his financial distress. At the same time and unknown to the four suitors, Ananse sets up a very lively competition in order to enable him discover who would be the most suitable, loving and dependable husband for his Anansewa. Fortunately for him, his scheme succeeds and all four suitors respond with the gifts he anticipated. Ananse becomes rich, unexpectedly all four suitors indicate an interest to finalise the marriage ceremony and take Anansewa home as wife. Ananse then connives with his daughter to fake her death in hope of revealing the intensions and motivation behind each suitor's proposal. All the four suitors show up to reveal their levels of commitment and real intensions. The most suitable suitor of the four turns out to be Chief- Who Is Chief, a wonderful coincidence as he is the one most preferred by Anansewa. Anansewa miraculously wakes up from the dead and all is well as the play ends.

4.4 LANGUAGE

Language can be the most important technique when it comes to the analysis of any dramatic piece of work. This is because language is the medium through which every playwright communicates his or her ideas. Playwrights therefore manipulate the language of choice to suit their purpose. Language can be in many forms such as gestures, speech, signs or symbols. Language used in drama is very special because the playwright is obliged to integrate the descriptions of the characters, setting and the general presentation of the story through the characters. The dramatic language in essence must therefore be picturesque, vivid and expressive. Hence in plays, playwrights must take into consideration the characteristics of their characters, their speeches and actions, as well as the environment and situation in which they operate so as to incorporate them into the language. Through dialogue, playwrights are able to convey the atmosphere, mood, situation and the environment in which the actors operate. The choice of words then becomes very important because it carries the message of the playwright across to the audience or reader. The diction can be simple or complex depending on the playwrights intended audience. If it's simple and direct it implies that the play will be accessible to a wider audience because more people will read and understand it as well as comprehend the writer's message with ease. If it is simple, it also implies that the playwright has made use of modest and familiar words. On the other hand, if the language is difficult or complex, then it means that the play is impregnated with unfamiliar words, terms, signs and symbols. It implies that the writer was writing for a select group and other readers not in that group will have difficulty in appreciating it because the diction or language is unfamiliar and lost to them.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Sutherland employs simple and direct language to present her message. She aims at reaching a wider audience so much so that most local sayings have been made into a direct translation in English language. This is termed as transliteration.

Ekuwa : didn't I say so? Did I not turn prophet and prophesy that as soon as the people of Nanka see a little improvement in our circumstances 'skin- pain' will seize them? (p. 53)

Here Sutherland translates the local saying *Ahuoyaw* (envy) into a direct English translation so that non Ghanaians reading the play will have some form of indication as to what Ekuwa may be implying. There are no ambiguities in Sutherland's choice of language, it is clear and direct.

Aya : Ekuwa

Ekuwa: Aya

Aya: You see that woman

Ekuwa: Yes

Aya: I'm telling you today, for your information, that she is serving my son Kweku too hard.

Ekuwa: Do you think so?

Aya: I've dressed up my daughter Anansewa, indeed! When did my grandchild become her daughter? And also whom is she calling mother? Me?

Ekuwa: Aya, she is just trying to be helpful. Because our child is in training with her, Kweku specially invited her to come and help and she came.

Aya: (snorting) the way I see it, she is leaning her ladder on my grandchild in order to climb up to my son (pp. 36- 37).

This dialogue between Aya and Ekuwa is clear and it shows an indication that Christie is interested in Ananse and she is using Anansewa's situation to catch the eye of her father. Aya obviously does not approve of her methods. Also, because Sutherland wants to reach a large audience, local jargons that cannot be translated into English language have been used in sentences as they ought to, but translated in footnotes so that all and sundry can have access to its meaning and implications.

Aya: Ah, bring out my precious bead, my 'bota' bead, my gold child (p.38).

Sutherland footnotes 'bota' as one of the most famous and precious beads, known as the Aggrey bead. Also Ekuwa asks property man to give her the 'Nyanya'. Sutherland footnotes 'nyanya' as a vine used in ritual ceremonies, believed to have the power to purge and avert evil forces and to purify (p.39). In act four when Ananse fakes Anansewa's death the women begin to call for a Dispenser. Sutherland explains that a dispenser is a pharmacist but another popular use practically meaning doctor (p.59). Another importance of Sutherland footnoting local expressions is that it helps to preserve the language at all times. Language is dynamic and it undergoes many transformations. In Sutherland's time the term dispenser was very popular among the locals but today, no one uses that term anymore, therefore by reading this play, one gains an interesting insight into the local culture and what was prevalent at the times when the play was written. Another reason why Sutherland chose to present this play in the simple and direct English language could be that, at the time of her writing, Ghana had just emerged out of colonialism and literacy was still at a bare minimum, which means that, people may not have grasped the complexities of the English language yet, therefore if she had chosen to write in complex and difficult language, her message would have reached only a small and select group of people. In this light then, given the situation and the circumstances, Sutherland chose the most appropriate diction for her folkloric play.

4.5 STYLE

Style mostly deals with the way and manner in which the writer chooses to present his or her play. It also deals with the general structure and organisation of the play. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Sutherland divides the plot into four parts which she labels as acts. In Act one, we are introduced to Ananse and we gain an insight into his life and the problem or challenges he is facing. We are also introduced to the four chiefs and we get to know their names and appellation. We get to understand right away that Anansewa has been promised to four

suitors. In Act II we notice that, Ananse's scheme has succeeded and that all four chiefs have showned their favour by sending gifts and money to Ananse. Ananse has become rich and the changes are evidence in his life. We are faced with suspense as tension begins and Chief-Who-Is-Chief has declared his intentions to formalise the marriage arrangements and take Anansewa home. Events get to a climax in the third act when all four chiefs express interest in coming forward to finalise their marriage arrangement to Anansewa. In the final- part we see how Ananse, together with Christie and Anansewa, fake Anansewa's death and we get to know the real motivations behind the actions of the chiefs as Chief-Who- Is-Chief wins the day and Anansewa miraculously wakes up.

Sutherland ushers Ananse unto the contemporary stage and goes on to give the whole play a modern touch in order for the play to have a contemporary appeal. Anansewa is schooling at E.P. Secretariat School which shows her high level of education. Okpawho (1992) explains that Anansewa being a student at the secretariat school was a standard training that was mostly sought after by West African girls in the 1960 but today the vogue is a university education. Sutherland also gives Kweku Ananse a Christian name- George. Also she introduces modern appliances to show that the time is contemporary.

Ananse: fellow don't you realise how hot it is in the garden today, bring me some ice cream from the fridge"... fetch the electric fan out here to blow more breeze around me (29).

All these contemporary elements help the creation of the comic effects that Sutherland uses in building the play and reflect on Ananse as a modern man. Sutherland also employs a technique known as play-within-the play. This is a play that is created in another play. It is usually complete on its own with a beginning, middle and an end. Mostly it has its own theme that is usually related to the theme of the main play. This technique is mostly created for a specific purpose. Sutherland uses the scene between Akwasi and Akosua (pp. 17-19) to

establish the fact that in the Ghanaian traditional cultural practice a gift does not bind you to the owner and unless a man presents a head drink to the woman's family and they accept he cannot call her wife irrespective of the gifts he may have lavished on her. Djisenu (2000) states that the scene between Akwasi and Akosua provides a pivotal commentary on the theme of the play that there is no lawful marriage until the appropriate rites have been performed; no matter the number of gifts a man may lavish on a woman.

Sutherland uses the medium of comedy to present this serious play. Towards the end, she employs dramatic irony to bring Anansewa back from the dead. The audience and some members of the play are aware that Anansewa is not really dead but to Chief-Who-Is-Chief and other people in the play, a miracle really took place. Perhaps though the theatre is built on make belief and willing suspension of belief, Sutherland wanted her audience to stay in the world of reality so as to understand that, situations taking place on stage is an everyday occurrence in the lives of people in the society.

4.6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS/ MOTIVATION OF ANANSE

Characterisation deals with the playwright's imaginative creation of characters that can effectively give life to his story. Most of the actions in the play are presented through the characters. Most often playwrights create characters so as to make them believable; they therefore give their characters certain recognisable human traits and qualities. These may include physical attributes, psychological and emotional dispositions and so on. In order to tell a story effectively the playwright must use characters to illuminate his or her theme and impel the plot. His or her dexterity in weaving a story so as to enable his or her characters merge well in the plot is what is termed characterisation. A character is therefore an artistic representation of a personality. It is built up on traits, actions and habits of a person.

Motivation on the other hand deals with the drive or ambition behind every action that a character takes in a play.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Sutherland presents Ananse as a family man beset with problems of poverty and unable to take care of his only daughter, Anansewa. He has two options; to sit down and wallow in poverty and misery or employ his God given talent to kill two birds with one stone. Many people may condemn his actions as deceitful and dishonest. Tekpetey points out that “ Ananse appears as an opportunist and thief who will take advantage of any possible situations that may hold out for him by deliberately ignoring few opportunities for trickery and self- aggrandizement” (2006:76). Sutherland maintains that Ananse is a representation of everyman, artistically exaggerated. In analysing his role in this play the most obvious characteristic that comes to mind is ‘cunning’ and ‘deceitful’. First he deceives Anansewa into writing letters about her marriage to some chiefs without her consent (pp 5- 9). Here, note how he succeeds in using psychology to manipulate Anansewa into feeling guilty.

Ananse: ... take a look at my condition, I'm not young and yet what are my prospects? To whom can I look forward? After you have gone out and returned home, here, will my hope for a more comfortable future be any better? The mattress on which I try to rest my bones after each day's up and down will it have changed from a straw stuffed, lumpy mattress to a soft, bouncy Dunlopillo?

Anansewa: No oh, father please...

Ananse: I haven't finished, apart from things like that, when you return, will there be a better, leak- proof roof over our heads, let alone some comfortable chairs to sit in?

A fridge in the kitchen... (p.4).

Ananse uses their poverty stricken situation to make Anansewa feel guilty about wanting to go out so she agrees to type the letters. Again, Ananse writes to four chiefs and promises to give Anansewa's hand in marriage while receiving gifts from all four to better his situation (pp. 5- 9). Ananse also lies to his mother and aunt about the burning farm in their village in

order to get rid of them so he can concoct more lies. He goes on about enemies wanting his destruction and puts up an award winning performance that is so utterly convincing (pp. 52-56). He puts on an outdooring ceremony for Anansewa to convince the chiefs that Anansewa is ready for marriage. His mother makes the statement that she does not understand Ananse's motivation because there is a specific time for out-dooring and that time must be respected.

Aya: I can't understand my son Ananse at all. Why does he want an out-dooring ceremony for Anansewa all of a sudden? You school people say you have thrown these things...but to wait until five years after the girl has become a woman, and then say out-door her, that's not good custom- keeping in anybody's world (pp 35).

Finally Ananse deceives the four chiefs that Anansewa is dead and she miraculously wakes up by stating that she heard Chief Who-Is- Chief calling her and that his love has raised her from the dead (p. 80).

Having outlined Ananse's actions, there is the need to uncover what informs those actions. Judging him on a surface level based on his actions would mean to miss his use and value within the society as well as to misread him. Sutherland uses Ananse to educate us about the need to take our responsibilities seriously as well as the importance of preserving our traditional customs and practices. Most importantly Sutherland uses Ananse to comment on contemporary social realities. Ananse is motivated by desperation to save himself and his daughter from poverty. He states at the beginning that the world is hard. While life is whipping you, rain also pours down to whip you some more (p. 1- 2). This tells us that situations at home are indeed dire for him. All is not well at home, Anansewa has been staying home for nearly two weeks because her father cannot pay her fees. To add to that, the roof of their house is leaking badly. Ananse is getting old and has no prospects of making any money. Most importantly he has a responsibility towards his daughter whose typewriter he has not finished paying for. Ananse has many urgent needs. He laments to Anansewa:

Ananse: will there be some comfortable chairs to sit in? A fridge in the kitchen? A car in the garage? My name on invitation lists for state functions? Embassies, parties, tell me, tell me, will I be able to go to memorial services, this week in a fine cloth, next week in a suit or a different cloth? Will I be able if I go, to thrust my hand confidently into my pocket in public and take out a five-guinea donation?

Anansewa: (miserably) father, you have said enough, please.

Ananse: let me add one or two things more, imagine a great congregation at church on an important occasion. It is time for the collection. There sits the priest. There stand the gleaming collection plate in everybody view. They call out: those born on Sunday, those born on Sunday, the Kwesi's and Esi's rise walk up and deposit their money in the plate. Those born on Monday! The Kojos and Adowas file up; they deposit. It is soon to those born on Wednesday, mark you. To the Kweku's and Ekuwa's. And my name is Kweku. Tell me how many times have I missed going to church, because there is nothing in my pocket to deposit in full view of the public? ...finally, when I breathe my last and die, will my coffin be drawn in a fine private hearse instead of a municipal hearse? Will the people who come to my funeral eat salad and small chops and drink good whisky, instead of chewing bits of cola and drinking cheap gin and diluted fanta? (pp. 4- 5).

Through these remarks it is easy to identify that Ananse has need of many reasonable things. It is most sad that Ananse is so poor that he cannot even go to church, the one place he could receive some comfort and forget his trouble for a change. But such are today's realities; money opens doors to so many places. The churches are mostly about money and people who make donations are mostly respected. It is no wonder Ananse feels very embarrassed and chooses to stay home instead of go to church. What is he to do? Fortunately for Ananse, he has been blessed in abundance with intelligence. He then decides to use his brains to better his situation. He clearly explains:

Ananse: ... I'm not saying I want that much. But what if a few things can come my way... if a few things can come... I'm not saying I'll eat chicken every day but what about a little fish today, and tomorrow a little meat on which I can count? I'm not saying my only daughter Anansewa must become a judge of the supreme court... but what about her finishing her secretarial course? And perhaps... well... perhaps (p.5).

This statement by Ananse clearly rules out any perception of motivation by greed. Ananse clearly states that he only wants to survive and take care of his lovely daughter. He does not

want luxury or riches. Also in order to put his plan in action he needs to trick Anansewa into writing the letters. Being as naive as she is, she clearly will not have co-operated with Ananse. Therefore she leaves Ananse with no choice but to be tactful in order to do what has to be done to save them. Secondly, Sutherland teaches us the importance of responsibilities. Ananse did not take Anansewa for granted in his entire endeavour. As a parent he owes a duty to his daughter to ensure that she is educated and her basic needs are also met. He did not propose his only daughter to any rich man but went through pains of careful selection. He told Anansewa,

Ananse: I covered miles. I travelled the country, by bus, by train, by ferryboat. I lobbied for introductions into palace after palace. I listened with ears alert. I observed with keen eyes. I assessed everything before I selected the four chiefs to whom I could show your photographs with advantage.

Anansewa: but why on earth four?

Ananse: Oh let's say that covers, north, south, east and west... listen my one and only daughter what I have done is that I have organised around you a most lively competition (pp 11- 14).

This indicates that Ananse indeed loves Anansewa very much and wants to do only what is best for her. By writing to four instead of only one indicates that his motivation is to secure the best suitor for Anansewa. Besides being very wise, Ananse did not want to put all his eggs in one basket and a competition is always the best means to determine a winner based on their actions and intentions. Ananse as a social being is very aware of the custom and practices of his people and he fully uses it to his advantage. In his letter to the chiefs he did not state emphatically that he is in need of money nor did he ask specifically for any donations of a sort. He states:

Ananse: ... to show my gratitude, I will guard the object of your interest with all the vigilance in my power. Now, I know that you who are seated on the ancient stools of your land know the a.b.c of all our cherished laws, all our time honoured customs. Since forwardness has never been one of my faults, I will not even dare to drop a hint that the way is open for you now to begin oiling the wheels of customs. You, who do not pay mere lip service to law and customs but really live by them, need no

prompting from anyone. Therefore I will only add that I'm very happy to be yours in the closet of likes in the not too distant future (p.6).

This indicates that Ananse deliberately selects the chiefs for a purpose. He chooses chiefs who are well vexed in custom traditional practices so that his words would have the desired effect. Sutherland introduces a play-within- a play in which a boy accuses a girl of being his wife on the premise that she receives gifts from him. Sutherland makes it clear that in our traditional practices, a gift does not bind the giver to the receiver. It is only if the head drink has been presented to the girl's father and he has accepted that marriage can be said to have taken place. The story teller then absolves Ananse of all possible crimes by stating emphatically that,

Storyteller: ... it is possible for Ananse to profit from the gifts his daughter's suitors bring and not be bound by any obligations at all (p.19).

Ananse played a dangerous game that could easily have turned on him. He teaches us that in this world, you gain nothing if you don't take risks.

Anansewa: but aren't you afraid?

Ananse: who said I wasn't afraid?

Anansewa: then why are you doing it?

Ananse: I'm counting on human nature to help disentangle it. All four suitors can't be winners, don't you see? Child, your father is trying for you. Don't ask too many complicated questions. Your father can cope with one step at a time (p.15).

Story teller also comments on Ananse's actions by stating that:

... let me admit that I can feel a little for Ananse. I am a father myself, to tell you the truth, I wish I had a little bit of his kind of cunning. It's very clear that he knows the customs more than well. Notice how he has them at his fingertips, spinning them out, weaving them into a design to suit his purposes. It would be amazing if there was any among those four chiefs who didn't know that a man who desires to marry somebody's daughter can improve his chances by paying his way with gifts. Ananse has selected men who will do exactly as he hopes and do it properly too (p. 16).

He confirms that there is no law binding Ananse to give his daughter to any of the four chiefs as none has presented the head drink yet. The storyteller again makes it clear that Ananse has put into thinking a careful consideration in the selection of suitors for Anansewa. It is then easy to conclude that Ananse is motivated by love and care for his one and only daughter. Being well vexed in tradition, Ananse goes ahead to organise an outdoor ceremony for Anansewa. Aya expresses her confusion of Ananse's action because the time for out-dooring has long since passed and Anansewa is now of an adult age. Aya has no knowledge of Ananse's scheme of promising Anansewa to four chiefs. I am of the perception that, Ananse is fully aware that if Anansewa is not out-doored properly, the chiefs may have some reservations about taking her as wife. It will not do for a future Queen of any chief not to go through the proper channels of the traditional customs and practices. Sutherland uses this scene to teach us a very important lesson. In life one must always be vigilant and question everything that poses a threat. Aya and Ekuwa accept everything Ananse says, hook, line and sinker, they accepted the statements about the burning farm without asking a single question. Even Ananse is puzzled and in an aside he asks:

... why have they believed me quickly without subjecting me to close investigation?
(p. 54).

Ananse teaches us that we get taken advantage of in life because we allow it to happen . We make it too easy for others to have their way with us. Also in trying to examine Ananse's motivations and his need to better his situation, it is worthwhile to note how circumstances change around him as soon as he acquires wealth. Suddenly he is a respectable member of the society and he is addressed as 'sir' by everyone (p. 30). Now Ananse can also go to state functions in fashionable clothes and make donations. He can go to church and show off. He hires labourers to fix his house because he can afford it; they also take advantage of him using a month to do a job that can be done in two weeks. This shows that Ananse is on the

rise due to his ability to use his brains effectively. Sutherland uses Ananse to draw out the contemporary flamboyance and money-oriented society that we live in, no wonder every one aspires to be rich because that is the guarantee to respect and invitation to social functions. Finally, Sutherland teaches that a competition is not necessarily a bad thing. Ananse's motivation for writing to four chiefs has already been discussed. Probing deeper, it comes to light how each chief's behaviour and character is carefully examined. Through Ananse, Sutherland teaches that, it is only proper for a man to aid his intended's family if he has serious intentions towards her. Each of the chiefs knows the customs very well and has no problem oiling the wheels of customs. The messengers of Sapaase state:

... And he also asks us to place this money in your hands; he says he is placing in your hands so that if the object of his interest should need anything you will have the wherewithal. He wants you to understand that in doing this, he does not mean to tell you that he wants anything from you immediately. This is an outright gift. If others gifts follow afterwards, he knows you will understand that he is merely doing what is beautiful to do until the time arrives (p. 23).

This implies that the chiefs are clearly aware that they have no hold on Anansewa. Neither is anyone forcing them to do anything they do not want to. In the end, the intentions of the four chiefs are revealed. The messengers from the mines make it obvious that they want Anansewa for her educational skills that, she will have become just another wife to the chief and will have met with jealousy and envy from the other wives. Ananse gladly gets rid of them. The messengers of Sapaase also make it clear that they have been waiting for the chief to marry Anansewa so that his other wife will be driven out of the way. When they leave, Ananse states:

... had you people got hold of my child, you would have involved her, blameless as she is, in your contentions in Sapaase palace and driven that wild woman of whom you speak to kill her and bereave me for nothing. It is the lord I thank, for I would have pushed my child into disaster (p.72).

Messengers from Akate express that Togbe Klu wants to build his town with Anansewa by giving her the place of honour and making her administrator to all his projects. Ananse then realises that he has underestimated the man and placed his wager on another chief being the winner. Ananse expresses regret and doubt by stating:

Ah! Togbe Klu. You whom I even forgot sometimes to count among those in the race, lo and behold, it is you who turn out to be the one with such good intentions...What if Chief-Who-Is-Chief doesn't come? (p.74).

Ananse begins to worry because he has placed his wager on Chief-Who-Is-Chief, but alas he is right for he turns out to be the most sincere and loving. He opts to take care of the whole funeral though he is not obligated and he treats Ananse as an in-law. His gestures moves Ananse so much that Anansewa suddenly wakes up pretending to have heard being called by Chief-Who-Is-Chief (p.81). So in the end, all is well and everyone is happy with none being the wiser.

Sutherland chooses the medium of folklore to use this folkloric hero Ananse to teach so many lessons and educate us on the traditional customs and practices as well as comment on contemporary societal issues. Ananse is indeed a hero from whom we have learnt so many moral lessons. Besides there is nothing wrong with a man employing his God given talent instead of wallowing in misery, stealing or worse killing to acquire wealth. The play shows how man can use his intellect and cunning to overcome life's challenges. Ananse uses his wittiness to attain a higher social status without antagonising anybody. He succeeds in outwitting four chiefs. It's a satirical reflection of the ordinary Ghanaian, his hopes and aspiration. It reflects the common persons need to survive in this contemporary world and own some of life's luxuries. Sutherland connects Ananse to Everyman so that in reading or watching the play one can exercise self-criticism. Ananse is used to mirror humans; he reflects the idiosyncrasies and follies of our nature and forces us to take a good look at our

reflections. Sutherland chooses the medium of comedy because laughter is the primary response to Ananse. He is the product of a culture that is able to take criticisms and laugh precociously at them.

4.7 YAW ASARE: LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Yaw Asare was born at Nkonya- Tayi in the Volta Region of Ghana in 1953. He had his basic education there and after obtaining his ordinary level certificate at Nkonya Secondary School he continued to St. Francis Xavier Teacher Training College to obtain a Teacher's certificate 'A' in order to become a teacher. He taught for a few years and then enrolled at the University of Ghana's School of Performing Arts to pursue a Diploma in Theatre Arts in 1979. This marked his formal entry into the world of theatre and the world of make - believe. His passion for drama urged him in 1986 to pursue and further his university education to obtain a Bachelor's degree in English and Theatre Arts at the University of Ghana. His relentless pursuit for education led him to obtain an MPhil at the Institute of African studies in 1993 also at the University of Ghana. Asare had a difficult life growing up. He practically had to fend for himself because he was orphaned at an early age. He took up odd jobs to enable him make ends meet and put him through school. Looking back, it is easy to identify that the events in his life shaped him into a determined successful playwright. His plays are most often laced with humour which is guaranteed to send the most serious and strict individuals to spasms of laughter. His ability to spin such incredible intelligent tales irrespective of the harsh background he had tells of a person with great courage. Amponsah (2008) states that Asare grew up in a village that constantly practiced traditional story telling sessions. He also had the opportunity to witness many festivals and that gave him an

insight into rituals, song and traditional dances. Within the period of 1998- 2002, Asare was actively involved in the Performing Arts and he distinguished himself as an artist. He wrote extensively and directed many plays. All his plays with the exception of one, remains unpublished. However, most of his plays have been staged several times. They include, *The Leopard's Choice* (1993), *Secret of an Ancient Well* (1998), *Desert Dreams* (1998), *Ananse, In the Land of Idiots* (written in 1993 and published in 2001), *Bride of the Gods* (1996), *King Kokroko* (1994). He also wrote for the screen and radio as well as many articles for the media. In 1994, he moved to the National Theatre and for five years he was the artistic director of the resident theatre company Abibigroma. He founded his own theatre company Dawuro Africa which toured some of Ghana's neighbouring countries such as Togo, Burkina Faso and Cote D'Ivoire with the French versions of *Secret of an Ancient Well* and *Desert Dreams* in 1998. During this time he also wrote *The Choice* and *Ananse and the Price of Greed*. Asare returned to the University of Ghana in 1999 as a full time lecturer at the School of Performing Arts where he continued to write for the stage, radio, television and video. During his life he received many awards for his achievements including the ACRAG playwright of the year (1997), the Nkrumah Prize for Excellence (African Studies in 1992) and a Fulbright scholarship award which would have afforded him the ability to pursue a PhD degree at the University of California but for his untimely death in 2002. Yaw Asare was among the most versatile and highly accomplished when it comes to personalities in the growth and contribution to the Ghanaian Theatre. He was an accomplished, playwright, director, choreographer and an academician.

4.8 SYNOPSIS OF ANANSE IN THE LAND OF IDIOTS

This play focuses on Ananse and his exploits at Dim-Nyim-Lira- popularly known as the Land of Idiots. Ananse is the major character and he goes to the Land of Idiots for a change

of scenery. His arrival coincides with a ritual ceremony taking place for the maidens in the forest. Ananse sees the food prepared for the gods and goes to feed upon it because he is hungry. Unfortunately for him, he is caught by the royal guard Akpala and sent to the king's palace. Ananse is charged with defilement because what he did is a taboo and consequently, he must be punished accordingly. The priestess in charge of such matters is called upon and she decides that Ananse must be put to death in accordance with the customs of the land. Ananse succeeds in convincing the king and his elders by bribing them with kente bands and a promise to weave for the royal couple Pootagyere and Sodziisa clothes that have no match in splendors and dazzles anywhere, so they can wear for their upcoming marriage ceremony. The king and his elders agree to this amidst the protest of the priestess. In exchange for this, Ananse will win his life back. Ananse then makes a request and his wishes are granted. Having analysed the nature of the people, Ananse then plots to win the princess for himself and kill the prince. In order for his plans to succeed, he enlists the help of Akpala who he deceives with honey. Ananse assures Akpala that he will share all the wealth he receives with him as well as give him the secret of the honey. Akpala then kills the Prince and Odudu the town's idiot witnesses it all but keeps mute about it. In the end Ananse succeeds in impersonating and marrying the princess as well as acquiring a whole chiefdom and all the wealth that comes with it. Ananse betrays Akpala and leads Akpala to his death and finally escapes to Boyele with his new bride. When the truth comes out, the king confronts Odudu and demands to know why he did not say anything, Odudu replies by stating that no one asked him.

4.9 LANGUAGE

In *Ananse in the Land of Idiots*, Asare employs very simple and direct language that is easy to understand. He uses proverbs which are appropriate and artistically constructed. Ananse states at the beginning of the play,

Ananse: it is said that if at sundown, able-bodied customers shun your rotten mushrooms at the centre of the market, carry them to the fringes, the handicapped will buy! (pp. 3-4) .

This proverb quoted by Ananse is an indication that he has over-stayed his welcome at his former location and the time has arrived for him to move on to a much congenial place where his talents would be most appreciated. The elders also have a proverb that goes,

Elder; when the priestess throws down a sacrificial egg, who am I, short-sighted mortal to cushion it from breaking? (p.13).

This implies that the verdict given by the priestess is final and cannot be over-turned because the priestess represents the mouthpiece of the gods and to disobey is tantamount to incurring the wrath of the gods. By blending these local maxims into his play, Asare shows that he is well versed in traditional oral art. It also adds to the aesthetic beauty of his work. Again, Asare uses simple and direct language in order to attract a wider audience both local and international, he aims at making his play as African as possible, he therefore makes use of the Ghanaian local dialect which is twi and interlace it with the English language. Ananse calls on the audience to inspire him when he gets frustrated with the situation.

Ananse: Kweku Ananse, Kweku Ananse osee yiee!

Chorus/ audience:yiee, ... yiee,

Ananse : Ananse onyansafo Ananse osee yiee!.

Chorus/ Audience, yiee... yiee, Kweku Ananse oo.... Yiee!, onyansafo Ananse oo... yiee! aiyiee (pp. 20- 21).

In the Ghanaian setting, chants are used to praise a person, boost morale or urge a person on when confronted by a difficult task. Asare gives the priestess a higher form of speech to

distinguish the difference between her and other characters. Her speeches have rhymes and verses and they resound of ancient wisdom and knowledge.

Priestess: ...And sweet dew- drops, dipping from the naval of an alien god, moisten twitching tongues of desire turning reason into pungent vapours of insanity. As rainbow fingers, blend with parrot features to hypnotise virgin nipples, that welt into eyes, of fiery lust..., And prepare the fertility of the land for rape... rape... rape..rape (p. 64).

The priestess lays emphasis on rape implying how they have let their gullibility rob them of their virtue. Asare's ability to weave such creative poetry into his play shows that he is a genius and very artistic.

4.10 STYLE

Asare presents his play in four movements. In the first movement, we are introduced to the protagonist Ananse and he tells us that he is going to the Land of Idiots. He chances upon the maidens doing their ritual dance which he terms as idiotic after lusting over their firm contour bodies. He sees the food meant for the gods and begins to eat thinking he will get away with it. Luck is not on his side and he is caught by the royal body guard and he is sent to the king's palace to await his fate. He is told by the priestess that he must die but he convinces them to spare his life and they agree against the will of the priestess. For his end of the bargain tells the King tells him he is to weave a cloth for the prince and princess to wear for their upcoming wedding. In the second movement Ananse is at work busily weaving the cloth while Akpala who is supposed to be guarding him is deeply asleep. The princess and her maidens come over to dance for Ananse who insists that it's a must in order to watch and weave the correct patterns into the cloth. Ananse uses the opportunity to seduce the princess, and upon deciding to keep her for himself, deceives Odudu and Akpala with honey. He convinces Akpala to kill the prince and help him impersonate the prince. In the third

movement the prince arrives to take his measurement and antagonises Akpala who is already bearing a grudge against him for an incident that happened in the past. He therefore has no qualms about killing him and burying him in the forest. In the fourth movement, Ananse impersonates the prince and marries the princess. Akpala demands his share of the royal treasures and once again Ananse tricks him with his honey and seals his mouth with glue. He then succeeds in convincing the people that Akpala has been possessed by the evil spirit of Ananse and must be put to death immediately. Ananse departs to Boyele with his princess and Odudu later reveals the death of prince. Upon investigations the whole truth comes out but nothing can be done by the empire as Ananse has gone away with the only boat available to the land and it would take months to build another boat and get to him by which time he would have built a strong kingdom and trained many soldiers for defense.

Asare's style can be seen as his way of creating realism based on events of the past. With regards to staging, he gives a picturesque detailed vivid stage description of items or props and persons. In the first movement, he describes the scene of the ritual ceremony...

Ritual music. The priestess clad in raffia and wielding a white flywhisk leads a procession of seven simply dressed in white loin- cloths and short sleeveless white blouses. The leading maiden carries an earth bowl heaped conically with a meal of mashed yam-in-oil. Around the edge of the bowl, evenly surrounding the yellowish meal are six boiled and shelled eggs. A seventh egg is stuck at the apex of the conical heap. Following at the tail are three female singers/acolytes, with a long piece of white cloth tied around the bust of each of them. The middle acolyte is holding a large calabash of water. Coming behind the singers are four male drummers, bare chested and wearing loose pants (p. 4).

By doing this Asare has ensured that the play can easily be staged. Every aspect of the set for staging has clearly been spelt and set out. He makes room for multiple set on a single stage without scene changing. This also makes it easy to picture the characters and items on stage as well as the general scenery. The reader is then able to picture the stage vividly without

seeing it. By doing this it's easy to conclude that Asare is indeed a great designer as well as very creative. Another important style worthy of note is how Asare creates a different wording in the priestess speech pattern. Her speeches are in short staccatos so that she falls in a different category. By doing this Asare is differentiating the priestess speech from the speech of a normal human being indicating also that her words are supernatural from the gods and must never be disobeyed (p. 12). Also using the medium of comedy Asare employs humour in many situations.

Ananse: o...no...no! Please, shift that arrow to the right... that's my heart you're aiming at. Shift it a bit please (p.7).

The situation is very serious, a matter of life and death but Asare deliberately uses humour to ease the tension and relax his readers or watchers so we can pay particular attention to what is happening.

4.11 CHARACTER ANALYSIS/MOTIVATION OF ANANSE

Asare presents Ananse as a single man who goes to Dim- Nyim- Lira and takes advantage of their idiocy. He is the same Kweku Ananse in *The Marriage of Anansewa* but this time he leaves behind everything; his wife, children and wealth. Therefore in assessing his action, one can safely justify that he is acting for himself and not the welfare of anyone. In analysing his character, he easily comes off as an opportunist and manipulative. He goes to the Land of Idiots, a place he has been before so one can deduce that he knows the kind of people that live there and the place very well. He comes upon food for the gods knowing it is a taboo, yet he feasts upon it. When he is caught and sent to the place he manipulates events and eludes a death sentence. He makes requests and strangely they are granted. He then realises his good fortune and decides to take advantage of the whole situation. He seduces the Princess, conspires with the royal guard to kill the Prince, assumes the role of the Prince and marries

the Princess. When it comes to time for him to hold his end of the bargain he turns traitor and incite the people to commit murder. These look like the actions of a villain but what can be the motivations behind his action and what is Asare's message. First of all it must be noted that Ananse is a very proud man and proud of his traits. He makes no apology whatsoever for any grievances that others may hold. He states,

Ananse: I am Kweku Ananse... oh yes... Kweku Ananse himself... odumankomah's head weaver, master craftsman in the Guild of Divine creation from the fringes of a vibrant web; hunter extraordinary; fellow of cult of cosmic linguists, supreme strategist, odumankuma's mystery messenger! Ananse the cunning crook (p.2).

These appellations of himself tell us about who he is and his achievements. Ananse however has grievances with the world for what he perceives to be an unfair assessment of his character and a non-appreciativeness of his role in the society. The woman in the crowd confirms this when she states:

Woman in crowd: Everybody here, even the smallest kind knows you... well your sly and deceitful ways (p.3).

Ananse : your world misunderstands me.... they give terrible appellations.

Woman in crowd: what did you do to deserve them (p.3).

Ananse realises that he has made a bad name for himself and the time has come for him to move on.

Ananse: It is said that if at sundown able bodied customers shun your rotten mushrooms at the centre of the market, carry them to the fringes of the handicapped, they will buy! (pp. 3- 4).

This indicates that Ananse feels that his talent is unappreciated so he is moving to another place where his talents will be recognised. This is a clear motivation for his going Dim-Nyim-Lira for a fresh start. If circumstances had not altered, perhaps he would not have taken those drastic actions.

Ananse also expresses that other writers are responsible for defaming him. They seem focused on painting him as a villain instead of probing deeper to bring out his contribution to mankind. He then thanks Efua Sutherland for being the only writer to present him in a positive light with regards to the marriage of his daughter Anansewa.

When Ananse chances upon the food meant for the gods, he did not feed on it out of any malice or disrespect for the gods but out of the sheer intensity for survival. Simply put, he is starving so much so that he deludes himself into believing that it is okay to eat the food and that the gods will understand. He states,

Ananse: Tweduampong Kwame! Mashed yam... a real meal... hey! And with eggs too! What a feast for the gods... whatever gods you are... that have been offered the sumptuous meal, spare Kweku Ananse a bite... you gods know how long my journey have been without a morsel of food for days. Allow me a bit of your sacrifice to work (p. 6).

If Ananse is a reflection of everyman, then Asare is telling us that, Ananse did what any other person in the same circumstance would have done. The other alternative will be to die of hunger. Secondly, when he is taken to the palace, the priestess demands that he must be put to death. According to Gyekye (1996), the priest or priestess are men and women who serve the spiritual being supposed to be intermediaries between God and human beings to make claims about honours received messages from deities for specific situations. This implies that their words are final and cannot be changed. Her verdict was very clear,

Priestess: ... great king... this...man....must die... he must die instantly... wipe this evil soul from the land of the dying sun...(p.12).

When Ananse is being dragged away he asks to make a proposition. The King's mistake is in giving him the opportunity to make a request. As soon as Ananse shows them the kente band the king makes the second error, his eyes lit up in interest and he states,

King: let me see that one... yes, yes! The one with the purple fringe... ah! This is splendid. Never seen anything so beautiful. Have you, old one? (p. 11).

From that moment Ananse realises he has won victory for it will take very little effort to manipulate their weak and feeble mind. The third mistake that the king makes is in trusting such an important task to a total stranger. It goes to say that he clearly underestimated Ananse. He did not view him as a threat otherwise he would not have sent only one person to guard him. The king's fourth and biggest error was granting Ananse his three wishes.

Ananse: First, that I may be given an isolated spot somewhere in the forest to undertake my task.

King: granted. And your second?

Ananse: that tomorrow afternoon the princess and her peers come to dance and sing while I weave....

Ananse: Third, a certified idiot is made my messenger, to run errands between my secret workplace and this palace (pp. 16- 17).

In the first place a prisoner has no right or privileges to make any request of a sort as the elder rightly put it.

Elder: You forget Kweku Ananse, that you're a condemned man striving to buy back y our life eh? You have the impudence to make request for leisurely private gest... (p. 17).

For the king to grant his request immediately without looking for an ulterior motive tells a lot about his character. He goes on to brag that "idiots abound in our land, and you'll have one readily" (p.17). This indicates that he has a low opinion of his own people and has no clue that he is the biggest idiot of them all. Ananse has to come up with something immediately in order to survive. Once again his motivation is survival. Asare uses Ananse to teach us not to give up in life but look out for opportunities and possibilities to overcome impossible situations. If Ananse bribes his way out of death, he does so because the people of Dim-Nyim Lira did show not show him any mercy when he broke their taboo. Again in the

secluded forest the guard supplied to bear watch over him in order for him not to escape is snoring away on the ground whilst Ananse is working. Initially Ananse has no malicious intention for aspiring for greater things, he is determined to work his way up and win the respect and honour of the people. He states:

Ananse: I shall accomplish this task, go ahead to earn myself honour, recognition and authority here. Tell me... what man with such intellect as I have, shall willingly turn his back on a good life in this land of idiots? Sumptuous meals and pretty smiling maidens! Not me! (p. 20).

But events change and he realises that he can get much more from them because they are gullible. Also it must be noted that the princess Sodziisa allows herself to be seduced. For a royal maiden to behave as she did leaves much to be answered for her supposed pureness. Even when Akpala comes to her defense, he gets scolded for his effort.

Sodziisa: This is tickling... ooo! mm! mm!...,

Ananse: control yourself; this should be over in a moment...,

Akpala: Excuse me Ananse... I think you're over stepping your boundary; she's a betrothed woman...

Sodziisa: Look here Akpala, were you sent to guard over a captive or supervise creative work? What do you know about art?,

Akpala: I ... I'm sorry mistress. Only the way... he... was... holding you,

Sodziisa: And what has that got to do with your role here....

Ananse: I think I must give up. People always misjudge me. But I will rather die than ruin my hard- earned creative reputation, by compromising my method.

Akpala/Sodziisa (on their knees): o...no, no... please Agya Ananse...please,

Sodziisa-: You see what your rude intrusion has caused? If he fails to complete my cloths, I will get you beheaded... no lie down... on your face! Bury your face in the ground... stay that way until I order you up!

Sodziisa: Sorry for the interruption. Agya Ananse. Shall we go on now!

Ananse: good, stretch out your bosom... tighter good! (Ananse begins to measure, Sodziisa's bosom. This exercise turns out to be an intimate embrace as Ananse fondles Sodziisa who gasps and groans with pleasure (pp. 28- 30).

After analysing this situation, how can Ananse be blamed completely? Sodziisa makes it very easy to be taken advantage of. Asare is using Ananse to teach people that, we get taken advantage of because we allow it. It must also be noted that, it is immediately after Ananse's

encounter with Sodziisa that he hatches the plot to kill the Prince Pootagyiri and keep the Princess for himself. He deceives Akpala and Odudu, the certified idiot with honey claiming he is in cahoots with the gods and that they lead him to their treasures. Akpala instead of being the vigilant guard decides to be an idiot and buys into the idea that something so sweet can indeed be only from the gods. He is so desperate to do anything to have it. He then decides to bargain and strike a deal with Ananse. This makes it all too easy for Ananse to achieve his goal. Once again Asare uses Ananse to teach us that one can only be manipulated if they allow themselves. Through his ignorance, he believes a condemned man and plots to commit homicide for the sake of honey and half a kingdom. If what Ananse did is abominable, then what does it say of Akpala's action? To conspire with a stranger to get even with a kinsman is appalling and unpardonable. He harbours resentment towards Pootayiri for past incidents and immediately jumps at an opportunity to take revenge. Ananse sees an opportunity in his dislike for Pootagyire and immediately capitalises on it.

Akpala: But he's my kinsman and that will be murder...

Ananse: kinsman? Isn't he a privileged prince while you're a servile guard? And ...

Akpala: What happens if you renege..if your refuse to honour our pledge?

Ananse: Me? Renege on my pledge? You think the gods will consort with such a dishonourable man?

Akpala... (dreamily) And as for Pootagyire... aa! I haven't forgotten how the fool humiliated me during our seclusion as initiates in manhood. Maybe this will be my rightful revenge....

Ananse: Your rightful revenge! (p.37).

Knowing that Akpala is harbouring a vendetta against the Prince, Ananse grants him the opportunity to get even. Ananse also makes it easy for him by appealing to his emotions and justifying his reasoning. In the third movement when we meet the Prince, his character and his actions make it hard to give him any sympathy. He comes off as extremely arrogant and domineering and he makes it easy to understand Akpala's sentiments. He gets into an argument with Akpala and uses his position to intimidate the man.

Protagyire: You are lucky I wasn't here Akpala, if I had been you'd have been living in perpetual darkness by now. I would have shot arrows straight into each of those peeping eyes of yours.

Akpala: This rage of yours is pointless, Prince! I was posted here by the king to watch over the master-craftsman... how could I have avoided taking a glance at her without losing sight of my charge?

Protagyire-: You know that no lowly one must take any pleasure- physical or visual- from the spouse of his superior- I will surely remember to reward you when I assume my chieftom. Just you wait (p.42).

With this vow for revenge from Protagyire, it only fuels the fire that is burning inside Akpala. Any compunction Akpala may have been holding inward about what he intends to do will have vanished. Protagyire makes things worse by adding that he deliberately punished Akpala severely during their initiation for peeping at maidens and he will repeat the punishment yet again. (p.44). Ananse sees the opportunity in the natural enmity that lay between the two. Seeing that there is no love lost between the two, he zeroes in and has his way. He is motivated by their intense dislike and passionate hatred for one another. In the end he succeeds with his plans and marries the princess. But he refuses to share anything with Akpala and tricks him in a most unexpected way.

Ananse: Open your mouth... wider.... good what do you taste?

Akpala: Honey,

Ananse: Good, swallow... and open your mouth again.... what do you taste,

Akpala: Honey, sweet honey!,

Akpala; Good swallow it again, open your mouth again. But this time do not swallow; keep your mouth open until I have smeared your lips with honey. Then I will tell you what to do next, right! (p.55).

With this Ananse succeeds in sealing Akpala's lips with glue so he cannot confess what they have done. He then convinces the people to kill Akpala because he is supposedly inhabited by Ananse's spirit. Asare uses Ananse to teach that crime does not always pay. It must again be noted that though Ananse has no knowledge of this when he hatches his plot, the King of

Dim-Nyim-Lira also had no intention of keeping his part of the bargain and honouring his promise either. He tells Ananse pretending to be Pootagyiri that,

King: Ananse's death was good riddance, for he was bound to die after completing his task. The priestess won't, eat, drink or talk, she insists Ananse's defilement and the catastrophe it entails remains with us as long as Ananse lived. He went the way he was bound to go. No memories of him, no legacy of his shall remain in this land (pp.51- 52).

This makes any misgivings one might have against Ananse's actions less offensive. If the end justifies the means, then Ananse did to the people of Dim-Nyim-Lira what they intended to do with him. We come to realize that his appellations that he quotes at the beginning are all true; he is indeed a supreme strategist. Asare uses Ananse to teach many lessons in this play including the consequences that befall a society if they are governed by unwise and immature leaders. Ananse knows the people of Dim-Nyim-Lira and their reputation for being idiots. The King himself confirms that statement by reiterating that idiots are abound in his land. It comes out as though it is a boost and for him to say that to a stranger without knowing his motivation is asking for big trouble. The king, his elders and people of Dim-Nyira-Lira make it too easy to be exploited. To grant a request to a condemned man is totally unwise. To go against the priestess wish is another mistake. Also other characters like Akpala and Pootagyiri create too much space for Ananse to get into their head and mess with their mind. Pootagyire allows his pride and arrogance to make him belittle a fellow kinsman in presence of a prisoner. Feeling humiliated Akpala has no qualms about killing Pootagyiri for all that he has made him suffer from childhood. It can even be concluded that he takes much pleasure in killing him. It makes him feel superior. Asare also show how the privileged in the society use their positions to bully others. The Prince is not the only guilty party of this crime. The princess is also very rude and insolent to Akpala. Asare teaches that the only reward for such behaviours will only lead to contempt that can cause harm. Again Asare uses Ananse to

comment on arranged marriages in the society. These are time bound honoured traditions. Usually, both parties know something about the other and they study each other to make certain that all is well before a marriage arrangement is agreed upon. From the looks of things it appears that the King and Queen did not know much about their son-in-law. Their inability to recognise Pootagyire is an indication that they have neglected in their duty as parents. How could they have been prepared to give a whole kingdom to someone they don't even know by identity. I am of the perception that Ananse cannot be vilified in this play considering the circumstances and how he managed to get out of it. My perception is shared by Faith Ben-Daniels (2009) who states that Ananse has been presented as a parody of society. He believes that Asare is acknowledging Ananse for his role in shaping society positively and that Ananse must not be considered a villain. Asare makes it clear when he gives Ananse the lines "your world misunderstands. No one accords me my proper place as the prime custodian of ethical, moral and philosophical norms. You say my methods are crude and sly" (p.3). He adds that Asare considered Anansegoro as a cultural outlet that aims at preservation of the art of storytelling through performance art. Asare intends to preserve Anansegoro as a parody and anansem as a social satire that mirrors society's strength and weakness. Therefore if one claims that Ananse is only a villain then its implication is that there is no good virtue in society and all are wicked. Asare employs this folkloric character to teach us how material gains were used to destroy an entire empire. Perhaps behind the story is a deeper denotative meaning which serves as a warning to all leaders and African leaders of states to beware of foreign aids, loans and grants as there is nothing truly free in this our world today. It also calls for a deeper analytical search for ulterior motives before entering into any agreements.

4.12 MARTIN OWUSU: LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Martin Okyere Owusu was born in 1943 in Agona Kwaman. His father was a catechist and he attended secondary school at Mfantipm Secondary School. Owusu entered the world of theatre in 1963 when he continued his education at the University of Ghana to study for a diploma in theatre studies. From there his passion for theatre made him advance to the University of Bristol to obtain M.LITT in Drama Studies in 1973. He then continued to the Brandies University in 1976 to obtain a PhD in English and American literature. Owusu is one of the few personalities who have worked tirelessly to ensure that theatre grows and flourishes in Ghana. He is foremost an educationalist who has taught and mentored many young Ghanaians to take an active interest in the field to build up the nation. He is of the perception that 'No Nation can succeed without the help of the performing arts because theatre plays a massive role in the building of a nation. Throughout his carrier, Owusu has dedicated himself to the performing arts and used his skills to train and instill morality in his students. He believes that drama should be for education and social change. In 1979 he was the Assistant professor of English at Mass Bay Community college. In 1981 he taught at Brandies University and held the post of assistant professor of Drama, African and Afro-American studies. In 1982 he taught at the University of Rhode Island and held the position of Assistant professor of English language. After that he then continued to lecture at University of Massacusetts Boston in 1983.

In 1984 he taught at the Emerson College and returned to Ghana in 1986 to become the productions manager of the University of Ghana, Legon, Drama studio. In 1987 he became a senior lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. He returned to the United States to become a Fulbright scholar in residence at the Southern University in 1993. He came back to Ghana and retained the position of artistic Director of Abibigromma at the University of Ghana in 1997. From there he moved to Drama Section coordinator in 1994 at

Legon and became the acting Department, Head of Theatre Arts (Legon) in 1998. In that same year he became the Head of Theatre Arts (Legon). Between 1986- 2003, he was at the same time a part-time lecturer at the National Film and Television Institute. . In 1975 he was a lecturer in the English and African literature at the University of Cape Coast and was very instrumental in the setting up of the department of theatre studies (Cape Coast). In 1998 he was an associate professor of Theatre Arts at Legon. Owusu carried out several research and creative projects for educational institutions and corporate bodies. During the mid-1970's he was director of the Oguaa Play House at the University of Cape Coast and in 1980's he founded and directed the Abibisemsum Theatre. His involvement in the theatre lies in all areas especially, playwright, acting and directing with production of many Ghanaian and western plays. He was very instrumental in the Ghana at 50 celebrations. He was the coordinating producer of Ghana @ 50 Season of Ghanaian Theatre classics in 2007. He also played an instrumental role in the Africa cup of Nations, Ghana 2008. He was the Casting Director for the opening and closing ceremony of the occasion. He was also the producer of the school of performing arts 40th Anniversary celebration. He has written several articles about Drama and theatre including "Drama and cultural education- A theatre perspective" (2003). He is also a prolific writer who specialises in folklore. His plays include, *The Mightier Sword*(1973), *The Sudden Return*(1973), *A Bird Called Go Back for the Answer, the Story Ananse Told* (1967) *Python: The Legend of Aku Sika*(1999) and *Sasa and the King of the Forest* (1968), *Bolts, Nails and Hammers; A Time to Build* (1997) .

4.13 SYNOPSIS OF *THE STORY ANANSE TOLD*

Owusu presents Ananse as the storyteller of this tale. The tale is about a bachelor hunter called Osugyani who lives alone in the forest. He has on his wall an antelope head which he severed from an antelope he once shot. Before the antelope dies it begs the hunter to hang its

head on a wall with the promise that someday it will do something for the hunter. When the hunter leaves to hunt, the head drops to the floor and transforms into a beautiful woman who cooks and cleans after which it transforms back into an antelope head and hangs on the wall. This mystery continues for 40 years in Ananse's supernatural world without the hunter discovering the identity of the one who cooks and cleans in his absence. One day he hatches a plot to hide under the bed and see what happens in his absence. Lo and behold the hunter catches the beautiful woman in action. The mystery woman strikes a bargain with the hunter to become his wife and uses magic to transform him into a great king with a city and subjects in exchange for his silence about her real identity. Also she extracts certain promises from him such as to never play a drum hanging on the wall and to never be seduced by another woman in the kingdom. The hunter immediately agrees to all her demand without any reservations. He then begins to reign and exert his authority and cruelty on his subjects. Any act of disobedience is immediately met with execution. Ananse is also a character as well and he deliberately tricks the king into suddenly having reservations about the queen and breaking the very rules he swore an oath to keep. The king plays the drum and the monster king appears and leads him into the forest. The king's disappearance causes chaos in the palace and Ananse still remains mute about his involvement in the disappearance of the king. The queen searches for her magic tail to reverse the situation. She however, finds it only after she has sent the Okyeame to search for it and not return without it. Ananse offers to go in search of the Okyeame and bring him back. The queen reverses the disaster the king has caused and brings him back. She discovers later that Ananse indeed has a role to play in manipulating the king. She makes the king repeat the oath again. The king once again immediately agrees. The Okyeame comes across Ananse who once again plays a trick on him as well by directing him to the house of monsters to retrieve the already found magic tail. The Okyeame makes it clear to Ananse that he does not believe him but Ananse convinces him

into believing his lies. At the house of the monsters, the Okyeame is caught as prey by the hungry monsters and he strikes a bargain with them to spare his life and reward them with gold if they will lead him to the king's palace and magic tail. The Okyeame reveals a secret promise he overhears. The Queen tells the King to never love another woman. The monsters then transform into human beings and head for the palace. There they are housed by the king and given a warm reception. The monster daughter seduces the King and the Queen discovers this and transform the king back into a penniless lonely hunter. After the hunter reveals the origin of the Queen to the entire palace, the monsters appear and drug both the hunter and the Okyeame away to make a meal of them.

4.14 LANGUAGE

Owusu employs simple and direct language to tell this story. The English is easy to comprehend and contains no ambiguities.

Hunter: What? Who has been here? The place is swept! (Sniffing) Mmmm... some sweet- scented stew has been mixed in the passing air. Let me see... (he uncovers food) Food! And well prepared too! (Raising his voice) who has been here? Nobody. Whose food is this? Mine of course! Shall I eat it? Why not? This is my own cottage and everything here belongs to me. I shall die, I shall eat it; when I die be known as the hero who ate food prepared by a wicked woman and died (p.32).

This statement made by the hunter is easy to understand. The meaning is very clear and it has no complexities about it. Owusu also employs the local language (twi) as a lingua franca in some of his expressions. When the king scolds the Okyeame for speaking without permission he replies

Okyeame... Nana, mepa wokyew. I apologise (p.39).

Also after the king has spoken the Okyeame translates and ends with

Okyeame: ... Nana kasa brebre, kasa brebre (p.40)

Again when Ananse goes to the king he greets him the traditional way.

Ananse: Nana maakye o!

King: Yaaaaa- akudonto, oh it's you Ananse (P.41).

Also when Ananse tricks the king into breaking his promise he deliberately breaks down after catastrophe has struck screaming,

Ananse: ... Nnipa mbra o! Nnipa mbra O! Nnipa mbra O! Agya ee... Agya ee... I'm calling for help... (p.44).

Owusu also retains the local name for monster which is Sasabonsam. In folktales such as this, it is very creative to use the local terms as they exist in the society. This unique fusion with the English language gives the play some form of local authenticity. Artistically it makes the play very entertaining to watch and read.

4.15 STYLE

Owusu presents this play in four acts. In Act One, we are introduced to Ananse and he begins to tell the tale of the hunter and the antelope head. We get to know that someone cooks and cleans for him, when he is not home. One day he hides under his bed and discovers that the antelope head hanging on his wall has been transforming into a woman and doing the chores. The woman explains that she was the princess of Kundu who refused to marry the river god Pra and was punished with transforming into an antelope. She strikes a bargain with the hunter to keep her secret in exchange for transforming him into a king with a palace and servants at his disposal. In Act Two Ananse enters the scene as both a storyteller and a character; he tricks the King into breaking one of his promises to the Queen. The King is kidnapped by monsters and Ananse pretends not to know anything about what is happening while the entire palace is in chaos. The Queen gets to know that the King's disappearance is in connection with a broken promise and orders for a search of her magic tail to reverse the situation. Ananse once again rushes to their aid by volunteering to go in search of the Okyeame who has been ordered not to return to the palace without the tail. The Queen later finds it and accepts Ananse's request to search for the Okyeame. The Queen is able to reverse

the harm caused by the King and the King returns safely to the palace and swears another oath to which he promises to obey at all cost this time. In Act Three, Ananse finds the Okyeame and plays another prank on him. Okyeame then falls prey to a bunch of monsters family because of Ananse's tricks. In order to survive, the Okyeame strikes a deal with the monsters to betray the King in exchange for his life and wealth. In the final Act the Okyeame returns with the monsters looking like humans. The monster Princess seduces the King into breaking his promise to the Queen. The King also reveals the secret identity of the Queen. The Queen transforms him to his original poor lonely state. The monsters capture the King and the Okyeame as rewards with promises to make a meal out of them.

Act One is set in the forest while Act Two is set in the same locality in the forest in the monsters abode while the final act is set in the palace. Owusu uses the medium of comedy to present this social satire. He also interlaces the dialogue with humour.

Ananse :.... agya ee... agya ee...

Okyeame : Kweku, when I hear you weep like that, it arouses my feelings. I also feel like weeping.

Both: Agya ee... agya ee... mawu oo... mawu oo...

Ananse: (stops suddenly and looks at Okyeame who is still weeping). What are you weeping for? Anything the matter?

Okyeame: (also stops) No, you were weeping, so I wanted to help you.

Ananse: Thank you for your kindness,

Okyeame: I am much obliged.

Ananse: But it was unnecessary,

Okyeame: Oh?

Ananse; But it was unnecessary,

Okyeame: Oh?

Ananse; uncalled for womanish, childish, cowardly, unjust.

In a play, h is one of the devices used by writer's to keep or grasp the attention of the audience while commenting on serious social issues. Owusu therefore employs humour in order to draw our attention to the things he wishes to discuss in his play. Again with the exception of Kweku Ananse and the King who later named himself Nana Daasebre

Kuntunkuni Atrimoden the first, Kookra and Subruku, all other characters do not have special names except titles that depict who or what they are such as Hunter, Woman, King, Monster, Queen, Monster Prince and Monster Princess. By their title it makes it easy to identify their role and who they are. Their title also gives a societal view of how people perceive certain names such as Sansabomsam which connotes demonic creatures likewise Monster Queen, Monster Prince and Monster Princess. One gets to know their roles before reading of their actions. It can therefore be described as a form of foreshadow that indicates the nature of their characters and what they are most likely to do. For instance, Monsters are known to be scary creatures, some of whom feed on all prey. It therefore stands to reason that in the end they capture the wicked King and his Okyeame and make a meal out of them. The executioner is known for sending heads tumbling down the axe. So he gets excited about killing others and goes ahead to kill innocent victims of the Kings wickedness. We are not very surprised at his actions as he is only doing what he has been trained for. Owusu makes it easy to understand his folktale characters and their motivations as most of them live by their nature.

4.16 CHARACTER ANALYSIS/MOTIVATION OF ANANSE

In this play, Ananse is not the protagonist but a character. He is also given the role of the storyteller since he is the custodian of all stories. He starts by telling us who is and the myth and legend surrounding his existence.

Ananse: I am okontompo Kweku Ananse. For a million years I have lived on this earth, I get into trouble always, but I never die. If you challenge me I make you cry; or if you, like laughter will make you sick when I reveal to you just a little trick. All stories... myths and legends... belong to me. Those about the elephant, the hunter, and the bee. Yes I bought Anansesem with my wisdom from Nana Nyankopon in his kingdom. Can you bring alive a dwarf, a python and a lion? Asked Nyankopon sitting high on his throne. 'If you do this task successfully, I shall reward you bounteously'. So with my wisdom and tricks in my bones, I searched through the forest, streams and homes, until I met python and the rest. To cut a long story short, I really did my best

and brought them alive to the sender. From thence, I have never had a challenger. Nyankonsem was changed to Anansesem. That is how I became famous on earth. The old who are dying and the young at birth, know Ananse from head to toe. They tell stories in which I am fooled, yet they always end with Ananse unvanquished. Today I shall also tell you a story, so I entreat you all not to worry. My world is a world of fantasy- supernatural. Do not take any incident to be natural. Once upon a time, there was a hunter (pp.31- 32).

From this statement made by Ananse one can tell a whole lot about his character. One of the ways to characterisation is what the character says about himself. Ananse tells us about his origin and how long he has existed. He also indicates that he loves trouble but always gets away with it. This should clearly spell out the possibility of another trouble in this play. He tells us that he can manipulate our feeling to make us cry or laugh depending on his whim. He also calls himself owner of all stories, myth and legend. He then describes how he rightfully earned the title and what he did to achieve that title. Based on his remarkable wisdom and achievement he had all folktales changed from Nyankonsem to Anansesem, bearing his name and he claims that change of name has accounted for his fame. He boasts that in all tales he comes out victorious. Being the owner of the story he expresses that many people tell stories about him but the time has come for him to also tell a story about other characters. He however warns that it is a folktale therefore it is not natural and his story is also set in the supernatural world where the incidents are fictional people in his world also live for hundreds of years. In this play he actively narrates the story about the hunter and the mysterious antelope head. However he becomes actively involved in the story as both a narrator and as a character. In Act II Ananse plays the dual role of a narrator and a character in the story he is narrating, we are made aware so there is no misunderstanding or confusion as to what is happening.

Ananse: Nana, maakye o!

King: Yaaa-akondonto. Oh, it's you, Ananse,

Ananse: Yes, king.

King: how can that be? You're telling the story,

Ananse: Yes I came because I do not want to be forgotten by the audience.

King: Kweku, I know you, you're going to upset things for me.

Ananse: Not I. This time I leave you all entirely to your fate.

King: Tell me this, my Queen says I should never play this drum, not even touch it, why?

Ananse: Why didnt you ask her?

King: She wouldn't give me any the chance to.

Ananse: I'll tell you. The moment you play it, you'll be superior to her. You'll be immortal and gold will be in abundance. This palace, which is merely made of cement and wood, will turn into gold and oh- happiness shall be king forever... then why do you waste time?

King: I'll play it, then.

Ananse: You will be a fool if you don't. But me go first...(pp.41- 42).

It is obvious from the above dialogue that Ananse's actions appear devious and calculative. He plays a very nasty trick on the King. This trick will lead to a great misfortune for the King. It is unclear whether that is his intention or he is simply amusing himself with a foolish King. Monsters appear and capture the king. Ananse enters the scene unsympathetic and proclaims.

Ananse: When I Okontompo Kweku Ananse tell you to look up, look down. If I tell you to sit, you had better stand, for I'm a trickster. That is something characters in this play do not know. Now I'm going to pretend that I've no idea of the greedy King's disappearance- watch and see... Nnipa mbra o! Nnipa mbra o! Nnipa mbra o! Agya ee... Agya ee... I'm calling for help... (p.44).

He immediately causes chaos in the palace and watches with amusement as the Okyeame and Councilor argue over who is most important and of a higher rank. The Councilor demands that the Queen is not interested in anything Ananse has to tell her so Ananse might as well tell them that is wrong. Ananse tells them- "then you are lost, lost forever, to which Councillor replies 'I don't trust Kweku Ananse' and Ananse answers with; 'you may not trust me; but I've a tale to tell'" (p. 44). This indicates that the people in the story are aware of Ananse's reputation for notoriety and are already suspicious of his actions. They therefore did not believe Ananse when he tells them that he has no knowledge of the missing King and

that he left him the palace. Okyeame immediately demands the whereabouts of the King from him:

Ananse: Well, he has been carried off by Sasabomsam.

Councillor: I don't believe a word Ananse is saying.

Ananse: I don't invite your views, but he's gone. In a few minutes he will be dead (pp. 44- 45).

It is amazing that Ananse actually tells the truth for the first time since he became a character in the story, but is not believed. Who can blame the people in the story, when one appears to be a chronic liar, constantly causing havoc to the lives of others with his trickery? It becomes difficult believing any word out of his mouth. Again when the Queen comes to the scene Ananse does not immediately inform her of the mission drum but asks for reward in exchange for information.

Ananse: If I tell you, what will you give me. (p. 46).

Ananse then concocts a story entirely different from what actually took place.

Ananse: As I sat in my kitchen frying some corn I gathered from my farm twenty-four years ago. I heard Sasabomsam who lives in this forest with his family singing and playing a drum. (He sings the monster song) I stopped cooking, although I was very hungry and looked out. And there Subruku the humble King of this forest walked majestically towards his abode. The drum under his armpit and singing (p.46).

Ananse's mischief seems to be carried unto another level in this play. He seems to delight in toying with the other characters in his tale. To remove suspicion from himself and add credibility which he lacks to his story he adds,

Ananse: I just don't understand. They won't do what they are told. He asked me before why he was forbidden to touch it. I told him, I didn't know. He asked me again. My answer was the same. Then he threatened to execute me in public so.

Queen: so you told him?

Ananse: No I didn't. Ask the audience (p. 46)

For someone telling a lie, Ananse shows no hesitations in asking the audience to be his witness and lie on his behalf. Ananse again appears as a sycophant when he immediately

points out the Okyeame's short comings in order to gain favour from the Queen who immediately sees through him.

Ananse: Excuse me, great Queen, Okyeame, have you the impudence to tell the queen she is not being fair? This is sheer insubordination.

Queen: Ananse, I have not invited your comments or your judgment. You've the tendency to meddle in matters that don't concern you... (p.47).

This indicates that they are also aware that Ananse enjoys meddling in the lives of others for his whims. It makes him lose credibility all the more. That is why when he asks the Queen,

Ananse: Shall I run after him? I don't mind being helpful, even though my honour is abused?

Queen: I haven't asked you to. Anyway, thank you, you may go (pp.47- 48).

When the King comes back to the palace he narrates his version to his disappearance,

King: Don't be angry with me my Queen. Kweku Ananse deceived me.

Queen: impossible,

Councilor: ... All the time I didn't trust Ananse.

King: It was he who forced me to do so- he is a trickster.

Queen: But this same Ananse told us you wouldn't have listened to him?

King: He's a liar, where is he? (p.49).

Note how the King twists the story as well and puts all blame at the doorstep of Ananse. Ananse did trick him but he never forced him to do anything he did not want to do. Because Ananse has a reputation for being a trickster, it makes the people accept everything the King says, hook, line and sinker. In Act III we find Ananse up to his mischief again.

Okyeame: I have to ask you. What are you doing here?

Ananse: Nothing

Okyeame: Nothing? In this dark, silent, dangerous forest?

Ananse; Yes, this forest is dangerous for ordinary beings like you, not for me

Okyeame: who's an ordinary human being? Hold your tongue, Ananse, or I'll lose my temper.

Ananse: (laughing) Fancy an Okyeame, a man of wisdom getting angry. Well I can help you out of your difficulty.

Okyeame:I know you can Ananse, but I've heard enough of your tricks not to be deceived! I shall do without them.

Ananse: You don't want to know where the magical tail is? I thought that's why you came here. Well, if you don't want my help, good luck I'm going.

Okyeame: Wait.

Ananse: Now my honour is abused, my integrity murdered! I'm termed a liar, a trickster, deceitful- unfaithful, cunning, unjust, hot-tempered, a daring, wicked, imaginative, and immature and so forth by you!

Okyeame: Kweku, listen, I beg you. I never said you were a liar and a trickster and deceitful and unfaithful, cunning, unjust, hot-tempered, a darling, wicked, imaginative mature, and so forth, I never did. All I said was I have heard of them. Please help me, where can I get this magic tail?

Ananse: If I tell you, you won't believe me.

Okyeame: I will. I swear by every living goat on this land.

Ananse: People think I am deceitful.

Okyeame: But not I.

Ananse: Yet I seek nothing by the welfare of fellow beings.

Okyeame: That's why I thank you even before you give me your help...

Okyeame: well, where is it?

Ananse: There,

Okyeame: there? Where?

Ananse: With the Queen.

Okyeame: Has she found it,

Ananse: Yes,

Okyeame: Found it

Ananse: No,

Okyeame; What is this yes and no and no and no and yes?

Ananse: They are answers to your questions.

Okyeame: Tell me in simple straight forward sentences, where can I get the magic tail?

Ananse: I shall tell you; go to the house of the royal monsters. You'll find the tail there. But be careful, these monsters are dangerous... especially the women.

Okyeame: Won't they tear me into pieces?

Ananse: Not if you can steal it without drawing their attention. But if they set eyes on you, the gods be with you.

Okyeame: Take me there,

Ananse: I entreat you.

Ananse.: To the house of monsters? I beg your pardon?

Okyeame: Then lead me half way.

Ananse: To land of monsters? I beg your pardon.

Okyeame: Then... then, only a few yards,

Ananse: To land of monsters? I beg your pardon.

Okyeame: So you won't?

Ananse: Tomorrow (pp.51- 53).

From the above passage it is easy to postulate that this time around, Ananse's tricks are premeditated. He did not chance upon the Okyeame and came up with plans to torture the poor man's brains and get him into a dangerous situation. He deliberately asks the Queen to be allowed to go after the Okyeame and bring him back. He wants to cause trouble, something he states emphatically that he loves. All he has to do is inform the Okyeame to return to the palace as what he is looking for has been found but he seizes a misfortune to capitalise on. Though the Okyeame is reluctant to believe anything he says being well aware of Ananse's reputation as a trickster. Ananse claims to be sincere and a victim of abuse by society. He puts on such a convincing act that, the Okyeame falls for it. Ananse knows perfectly well that the man is getting desperate. He finally gives up toying with Okyeame and deceives him. He tells him that the monsters have the magic tail, knowing perfectly well that they do not and that it will be dangerous for the Okyeame to enter dangerous territory. He then refuses to escort him any further anticipating a dangerous outcome. Again it is important to note how Ananse disappears whenever he causes trouble and his victims are about to suffer the consequences of his action.

In analysing Ananse's motivations it is obvious to see that, Owusu intends to use Ananse to teach us about human nature. Our need for power, wealth and ambition. That is why he does not make Ananse the hero of the play but the one narrating the lives of others. If it appears that Ananse deceives the king then it stands to reason that the King is inwardly a greedy person. He hears what he wants to hear so he is convinced his actions are justified. Ananse only makes it easier for his conscience. He wants absolute power without relying on the Queen. He already has questions as to why he cannot play the drum and is determined to discover what will happen if he should play the drum. He is enjoying his power too much to die someday and he yearns to stay alive forever. He states clearly that he wants to be a king

forever (p.42). Therefore if he is captured and dragged away after clearly disobeying an order not to do something how can Ananse be held responsible for the King's action?. He has the freedom of choice and he chooses evil over good. Also the okyeame is very aware of Ananse's reputation but being so desperate he chooses to believe everything he is told. The important thing to note about the play is that, some of the characters end up losing their lives not because they are tricked but because they are self-centered, conceited and greedy. They make bad choices that affect them negatively. The King becomes a pauper after being so rich because of his ungratefulness. He sought to bring down the very person who has made him what he is. Perhaps Owusu intends to teach us important morals about life. Through Ananse's story, we get to learn the vices and virtues of society.

Owusu accords Ananse his proper place as custodian of folktales by making him the story teller. Besides who can tell Anansesem better than Ananse himself. Faith Ben- Daniels(2009) believes that Owusu presents Ananse this way to give him a breather from always being referred to as the "trickster" because Ananse is not the bad 'one' considering the fact that his Anansesem performed the role of a parody. He believes that is what Owusu wants his audience to concentrate on because Ananse only serves as the 'wagon' that transports the moral philosophy in the story. I am inclined to agree with Daniel's assertion because Ananse has been depicted that way for a purpose. His purpose in satires is to mirror society so as to teach many things.

4.17 EFO KODJO MAWUGBE: LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Efo Kodjo was renowned for his writing prowess in drama. BBC international awarded him winner of the Radio Playwright competition 2009 with his play *The Prison Graduates* which was selected out of 12,000 entries across the world. Efo Kodjo was born on 21st April 1954 in Kumasi to Madam Comfort Tulasi, a cook at Africa Hall of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the late Michael Ayivi Mawugbe who worked with the laundry department of the university. He attended Mawuli School and obtained his general certificate of education (GCE) ordinary and advance levels. At Mawuli School, he acquired the interest and passion for drama and joined the schools drama group. He played many roles while he was a member of the club including the role of Senchi in Sutherland's *Edufa*. His talent for writing also started there and he succeeded in writing plays for his house (Trust House) in the school. From there Efo gained admission into the University of Ghana where he studied Theatre Arts and majored in playwriting in 1978. In 1979 he served as a senior research assistant- African theatre at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Centre for cultural studies) and there he aided many student in the development and production of plays. In 1991 Efo Kodjo did a certificate course in senior management development at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). He also studied at the Bauff Centre for Management Calgary, Canada in 1999 and was also sent to the E.T.A Chicago, USA on a USIS- sponsored attachment program in Theatre and events organisation. Efo Kodjo continued to study at the British council, Glasgow and London where he did a certificate program in Theatre Management and Audience Development. In 2006 he returned to the school of performing arts (Legon) to study for a Master of Fine Arts degree in Play-Wright. Due to his work as a teacher he taught in a number of schools and universities. In 1977 he taught English language and literature at the Ghana Empire Secondary School. He also taught the same courses at The Technology Secondary School,

KNUST Kumasi. In 2001 he was a Graduate Assistant for playwriting at the Theatre Arts Department (Legon). In 2004 he taught part-time at the African theatre (Theory and practice) at the Department of English, University of Education, Winneba. In 1991 he was appointed the first director of the Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST Project). Here he planned, executed and managed the PANAFEST event in Ghana and through his efforts PANAFEST still enjoys a continuous celebration to date. In October 1990 he was appointed the Acting Executive Director for the W.E.B. DUBOIS Centre for Pan African Culture. He also serves as the Regional Director of Art and Culture, Centre for National Culture for the Central Region and worked for the Art Council of Ghana in the Eastern Region. In 2001, Efo Kodjo was appointed the Regional Director of the Arts and Culture for the Western Region. He was also director for Research, Information and Public Education of the National Commission on Culture in 2001. Here he planned, monitored, coordinated and evaluated all national cultural programmes for the nation. He also headed the committee that reviewed cultural negotiations between Ghana and other countries. He was in charge of all protocols involving foreign dignitaries and cultural delegations to Ghana. Based on his diligence and hard work he won many awards including the VALCO Literary Award (1979), playwright of the year (ACRAG AWARD). In 1984, Japan Foundation Award- Eminent cultural personalities from Africa- short- term visit (1990). He served as the organising secretary of I.T.I (International Theatre Institute 1991). He was also an executive member of the Ghana Association of writers in 1979. He was the Artistic Director of Kozi- Kozi Theatre in Accra in 1992 and the Board member of the National Drama Company at the National Theatre in 1997. At the time of his death he was the Deputy Executive Director (Artistic) of the National Theatre of Ghana. He was also a judge for TV3's reality show Ghana Most Beautiful and a part-time lecturer at the African University College of Communication.

Efo wrote 20 plays- they include; *A Calabash of Blood* (Radio drama, GBC 1978), *Aluta Continure*, a drama produced for radio, stage and television also distributed in Africa by URTNA (1978), *The Unbending Branch* (Radio Drama, GBC 1980), *In The Chest of a Woman*, a play produced for the stage (1984), *Constable no Rank*, a play produced for BBC, London Africa Service and for the stage (1986), *You play me, I play you* (1989), a comedy for Radio, *Take me to the Altar* (1990) about the sacred institution of marriage, *Tata Amu* (1991) a play on the biography of Dr Ephraim Amu, *The Royals* (1992)- produced by Talents Theatre company for NAFAC 1992, *G-Yard People* (1994) about the undignified conditions under which Africans work to sustain the economy of their nations . His recent plays included *Dear Daba and Mma*- written for the BBC, *Acquired Prison Traumatic Syndrome* (2002), *Ananse-Kweku- Ananse* (2004), *Sister* (2006), *Upstairs and Downstairs* (2001), *Free Jubilee Juice* (2006) and *A Fractured Democracy* (2008). Mawugbe plays mostly focus on contemporary issues in Ghana and Africa. His plays are also social satires and laced with humour. Seidu (2012) believes that Mawugbe is most concerned with social issues and believes that by bringing it to public attention social change can take place. She therefore categories his plays into specific groups such as women empowerment, political, family and friendship and story-telling categories. Mawugbe's contribution to the Ghanaian Theatre was very vast and he inspired many students in the field of Theatre.

4.18 SYNOPSIS OF ANANSE –KWEKU-ANANSE

In Mawugbe's play, Ananse is put on trial to defend his title as custodian of folktales. The story begins with this trail by seven maidens. These maidens accuse Ananse of many wrong doings to which Ananse defends himself against all accusation. They record Ananse's past deeds such as what he did in the marriage of Anansewa, his actions in land of idiots, his role in the story Ananse told among others. They accuse him terribly but he manages to defuse all

accusations. He is later invited to Aflao by Togbeiga to take part in a democratic contest which will determine whether he holds onto title or worse loose it to someone else. Some of the other characters that he's going up against include Nana Ampadu, Konkonsa, Azuma Nelson and Ephraim Amu. Koofori is a popular television personality. Konkonsa runs a political show on radio. Azuma is a national legend and a national hero who lifted the flag of Ghana high in the 80s and Ephraim Amu is also a music legend and a national hero. The outcome of this contest is determined by a scale that is used to weigh each contestants achievements. Whoever's achievement surpasses or weighs more than Ananse's will become the winner and custodian of folktale. Nana Ampadu drops out based on his friendship with Ananse. Koofori and Konkonsa opt out of the contest when they realized there was no way their achievement would surpass Ananse's. In the end only Azuma comes close but he also loses to Ananse when he is unable to answer a question that will determine the winner. Ananse is then able to retain his title of Anansesem and custodian of folktale.

4.19 LANGUAGE

Mawugbe's choice of words in this play is not as simple as that employed by the other playwrights who have also written in the Anansegoro fashion. He merges the Akan and Ewe language in a unique way that brings to bear the aesthetic beauty of folklore from diverse ethnic background. He employs names from different ethnic background to indicate that folktales are encompassing to all ethnic groups in the Ghanaian society Koofori sings a song translated in the Ga language, 'Mofeemo ke etsane aba' (p.44). Konkonsa also makes use some Ewe vocabulary in his speech. ; 'Dzakpate be davio menyaeku o' (p.54). Ananse also in his address to the audience before the commencement of the contest stated 'se wogye obiba na se onsu a enukyere se abofra nu ye wode'. The use of different languages by the different characters is an indication that there is a mixture of different cultures in Mawugbe's

Anansegoro showing the flexibility of Anansegoro. Also Mawugbe echoes the fact that Ananse exists in different ethnic groups all over Ghana. He is therefore not exclusive to the Akan. Folktale,

Okyeame: He gave his name simply as Ananse Kweku- Ananse. Konkonsa: Tso! That is the fellow. He has different aliases. Some call him Ayiyi, others call him spider (p.44).

With this Mawugbe reiterates that Ananse as a folkloric character exists among both the Ewe and Ga ethnic folktales.

4.20 STYLE

Mawugbe presents his Anansegoro in three legs. The first leg can be seen as a trial with the seven virgins who drill Ananse about his past deeds and holds him in contempt for his allegedly wrong doings. Ananse deflates all their accusations with sound logic. They make fun of Ananse's logic explanations. They also make fun of Ananse's wife and disrespect Ananse but in the end Ananse uses his wisdom to outwit them and turn the tables on them. He has them practically eating out of his hands by the time the first leg is over and succeeds in conning them into cooking a variety of food for him. In the second leg, the other contestants especially Konkonsa also becomes weary being well advised about Ananse and his antics. The okyeame abuses Ananse and calls him many names. He strongly believes that Ananse is not fit to be a custodian of folktales. Ananse again turns the table on him and leaves him looking like an idiot. In the final leg all the other contestants are introduced and Ampadu drops out because he did not wish to compete with Ananse who is like a brother to him and who has been his mentor as well. Konkonsa and Koofori also opt out leaving Ephraim Amu and Azuma Nelson. Amu does not measure up but Azuma comes up on the same scale with Ananse. Ananse poses a question to determine the winner and wins as Azuma is unable to answer.

Mawugbe presents us with a Born Again Christian known as Barabas Kweku Ananse, esquire (p. 46). Ananse also appears to be very rude and indulges in using very offensive language in his dealing with other characters.

Ananse: Just give one good reason why I should waste precious time on such absolute stupidity on two legs as you? (p.51).

This could be because he believes that the whole contest is absurd and an insult to his integrity. After successfully undergoing the daunting task of delivering the dangerous python and other Animals including Aboatia to Nyame and being rewarded with the title of custodian of folktale he is now being called after all these years to defend his title. In Mawugbe's ananegoro the okyeame plays the role of the story teller though he is not called the storyteller. He narrates events involving Ananse and tells us how the plot unfolds. Mawugbe does not call him storyteller because he wants all focus to be on Ananse since the action in the play is centered around him.

4.21 CHARACTER ANALYSIS/MOTIVATION OF ANANSE

Right from the beginning of the play it is clear that Ananse is in distress over the situation (The fact that he has been called upon to defend his title as custodian of Folktales). His integrity is being called into question and he has to come up with a way to save his home. He states,

Ananse: Hmm... the only contestant that scares me on the list is Nana Ampedu. That man possesses worthy information to tilt the seal in his favour in the forth-coming contest... I must discourage Kwame Ampadu from taking part in the contest (p.3).

He is so frustrated by the situation he even went on his knees to pray to God to fashion him with a solution to this predicament. As though that is not enough he is attacked aggressively by seven maidens. They accuse Ananse of being a trouble maker and of notorious reputation all over Aflao. They claim he is trouble incarnate and demand an explanation as to his actions leading to the marriage of Anansewa. Ananse explains that he is motivated by his daughters' plight.

Ananse: I need money to buy Anansewa a laptop computer for her secretarial course. The Banks wouldn't lend me money because I had no verifiable collateral apart from my faded web...

All virgin: Yes, what did you do?

Ananse: (emphatically) I did not beg, steal or borrow. I used my brains... (p.14).

They even accuse Ananse of turning the people of Dim-Nyim-Lira into idiot. Ananse explains that the people of Dim-Nyim-Lira are too lazy to do any serious thinking for themselves. They are sitting on gold but choose to hold calabash and beg for nickels and dimes. The entire population from head to common folk have an insatiable appetite for all things foreign in any capacity, be it political, economic or cultural.

Ananse:... You don't blame Kweku Ananse for their self-inflicted impoverishment (p.15).

The virgins then begin to give a list of Ananse's past deeds to which Ananse explains his motivations. He then meets the Okyeame who verbally insults him and calls him a man with no honour. As though that is not enough Ananse now has to sit in a manmade supposedly democratic traditional contest to defend his right to own the title of custodian of folktale or risk losing it to someone else. What is most painful to Ananse is that his close family friend Nana Ampadu whom he shares all his secrets and knowledge with concerning folktales and all that pertain in the animal kingdom is also going up against him. In the end when Ananse is called upon, he defends his honour and accuses Ampadu of being a traitor. Ampadu rightfully

opts out of the competition explaining that he has been misguided and led to believe that Ananse is no more so the position is opened to the general public. Coming into realisation of the truth, he cannot in good conscience go against the person to whom he owns the most. It is clear that Mawugbe's purpose with this play is to ground the undeniable fact that Ananse is essential to Anansem and for that matter Anansegoro. He also intends to make it clear that Ananse as the prime custodian of folktale is undisputed. Again he seeks to make clear the negativity surrounding Ananse and his role in the society. For that reason he begins the play by unleashing the aggressive maidens on Ananse. These maidens can be seen or identified as the opinions of people in the society. Their perception of Ananse leads them to recount all of Ananse's past deeds to which Ananse gives an explanation or account for his actions and acquits himself. Mawugbe deliberately sets Ananse on a paddle with prominent people in the society to determine how each will weigh when set against Ananse. In the end Ananse comes out undefeated. Mawugbe intends to prove that Ananse is not an antagonist but a caricature of society. His actions are intended to mirror that of man. Again Ananse is used to discuss contemporary situations and teach good virtues such as good deeds, faithfulness, loyalty, brotherhood and humanity. Ampadu is the only real opposition Ananse has and he stands a good chance of winning as well. But his brotherhood, friendship and loyalty means more to him than winning the most coveted position in the land. In his actions, true honour and integrity can be seen and commended. Mawugbe teaches that Ananse's role cannot be usurped and to do away with him is a guarantee to ruining society as he stands for preserving societies moral values and beliefs.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 CONCLUSION

This study sets out to examine Ananse as a folkloric character in new Ghanaian Drama. It also seeks to discuss the role and contribution of four Ghanaian playwrights in the creation and development of a kind of drama described here as New Ghanaian Drama. The discussion starts with an overview of the state of theatre in Africa. Evidence is given as to the existence of pre-colonial theatre in Africa. Literary theatre which is brought about as a result of colonialism is also discussed. Here focus is mainly on the choice of language that African writers pursue in their works as well as their various limitations. Attention is also given to trends that existed in the colonial era such as adaptation and transposition of western plays into African theatre. Here it is noted that the reason to the attraction of adaptation of plays, especially Greek plays is due to the fact that Greek plays and themes cut across all cultures and when adapted they mostly maintain relevance to the African society because they have bearing on it. The challenges involved in adaptation or transposition from one medium to the other or one culture to the other is also highlighted. Various studies on the nature of adaptation and the different modes of its classification are also discussed. The discussion of the theatre in Africa is then narrowed to theatre in Ghana, here the different phases to which the Ghanaian theatre has undergone is enumerated. The first phase examines the contribution of the founding fathers, namely Kobina Sekyi, J.B. Danquah and F.K. Fiawoo in the growth and development of theatre in Ghana. The second phase looks at the tireless effort of some Ghanaian writers towards the cultivation of some form of literary theatre which is embedded in the Ghanaian heritage. Sutherland is credited with her experimentation which resulted in the creation of Anansegoro folktales, a kind of theatre based on oral tradition. The nature of Anansegoro which is altered from Anansesem is also discussed. The once popular Ghanaian Drama known as Concert Party is also discussed. New Ghanaian Drama is then examined

under Post-colonial theatre. The damage caused by colonialism on the political, social and economic structures has to be salvaged. The need to revive the Ghanaian national cultural identity in order to ensure national unity is very urgent. New Ghanaian Drama deals with the conscious effort of some Ghanaian writers towards the creation of a drama that is deeply rooted in the Ghanaian heritage. These personalities were inspired by Sutherland in her creation of Anansegoro. These writers adapted and modified Anansegoro in a unique enhancement of their own version of Anansegoro. Anansegoro and Anansesem are discussed in details as well as the features and concept Anansegoro such as music, drumming, dance and a narrator. A profile of Kweku Ananse is also outlined showing his dual nature and a world view of his character. His extraordinary wittiness as well as his delight in trickery is also examined. The concept of folktales in Africa is also discussed. Having set the foundation for the study, attention is then given to four playwrights namely Efua Sutherland, Yaw Asare, Martin Owusu and Efo Kodjo Mawugbe and their contribution to the growth and development of Ghanaian Drama. A detailed analysis of the plays, *The Marriage of Anansewa*(1975), *Ananse in the Land of Idiots*(2006), *The Story Ananse Told*(1999) and *Ananse- Kweku- Ananse*(2004) is given. Here the major concern is to examine Ananse as a character in different lights in order to bring to bear his motive in these plays as well as how he seeks to serve society. It is also vital to prove that Ananse is multi-dimensional and not merely a villain as most people perceive. The language employed by each writer in their play is discussed as well as the style and certain features to Anansegoro are also highlighted. As stated in the objectives, a major aim of this research is to analyse Ananse's character in various plays to bring new perspectives to his actions. This is to bring to bear his negative and positive attributes and not just focus on the negative mold in which many critics seem focused on casting him. The analysis proves that Anansesem is a positive aspect of story-telling tradition in Ghana and Ananse's role cannot be usurped for he is rightly the custodian

of our cultural, moral and philosophical norms. Ananse is very important in contemporary Ghana. The plays' teach that society ought to see themselves in Ananse as well as all the characters that are encountered in the play. Sutherland teaches that Ananse is a yardstick that society must employ as a medium of self-examination. He has all the attributes of man in him thereby making him both good and bad. When he is good, it's an encouragement that one should urge on and continue the struggle for what is right. When he is bad it is a caution for society to beware and learn from his victims so as not to fall prey to the same mistakes. Asare also teaches that Ananse is a survivor and society must learn from him. He finds a solution to every predicament that befalls him and does not let go. He keeps fighting even when all odds are against him and never accepts defeat. That is why he mostly ends up a victor. Owusu and Mawugbe also echo the same fact that Ananse cannot be done away with for he is the rightful owner and custodian of all our folktales. When analysed from this perspective it makes it easier to understand Ananse's antics in plays. Society will then understand and appreciate the positive role Ananse plays in the Ghanaian culture. Sutherland, Asare, Owusu and Mawugbe all recognise Anansegoro as a positive art form. That is why in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ananse emerges as a hero, in *Ananse in the Land of Idiots* he is victorious, in *The story Ananse Told*, he is the owner of the story and he tells us how things are in the society. In *Kweku- Ananse- Ananse* he is undefeated and proves that no one is able to replace him as the custodian of folktale. Ananse is a trickster, selfish, cunning and sometimes even devious but the manner in which he releases his creative energy to get out of the tangled web teaches us that in trouble, whether of our making or not, we must look to ourselves or harness our own energy to get out of trouble instead of looking to others. His ability to use his creativity to get out of trouble is what makes him a hero. He teaches us the importance in preservation of our traditional cultural practices as well as the deference between virtue and vice. To do away with Ananse would be like erasing a part of one's self, culture and heritage.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the course of my research, I came to the realisation that there is more to Ananse as a folkloric character. His role in the society is very important and bears further research. This research however could not examine all of Ananse's many roles based on some limitations. There is therefore the need for further studies and documentations of other works on Anasegoro in order to determine Ananse's role in the society. Also many playwrights remain unstudied though they have made a significant output towards the growth and development of Ghanaian theatre. In order not to lose the effort of these writers over time, there is a need for further studies and documentation of these works so as to provide and determine the current state of theatre in contemporary Ghana. The published plays of Owusu, unpublished plays of Asare, as well as Mawugbe and other contemporary playwrights such as Victor Yankah and Daniel Appiah- Adjei all deserve further attention and study.

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