

# **IBSEN EDUCATION IN GHANA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The use of Ibsen dramas in training theatre professionals in most cultures cannot be overlooked due to the nature, and impact of Ibsen's works on contemporary societies and his contribution to the development of modern drama. This thesis studies the educational use of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian theatre institutions and considers ways in which Ibsen dramas could be promoted to Ghanaian audiences. With a blend of European, American and African theories coupled with interviews of key educators and analysis of themes in Ibsen dramas the research reviews the colonial roots of Ghana's educational system to examine how Ibsen has and is being taught in Ghana.

Observing that Ibsen does not move outside the academic institutions, the research further proposes ways in which Ibsen dramas can be adapted for Ghanaian audiences by examining a Nigerian adaptation of *A Doll's House*, and indigenous Ghanaian performance forms of storytelling and concert party theatre.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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My appreciation extends to my family and friends, my mates in the Ibsen Studies programme, the International Students office, University of Oslo, and all who made this research possible.

Eric Yaw Baffoe.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother (Margaret Kuntso) for her love, care and support.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There have been a number of recent research studies conducted within different fields of Ghana's educational system at the University of Oslo<sup>1</sup>. The success of these studies, I believe, is attributable to the conviction and motivation of the researchers within their chosen area of investigation. The interest of the present writer lies within the realm of theatre education in Ghana and the use of western dramatic text in the academic syllabus of students. Theatre education using western dramatic texts presents different problems depending on the region, structure of education, genre of text, choice of playwrights, and colonial and post-colonial influences. This study concentrates on the works of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906).

## 1.1 Research Problem

The relevance of drama and theatre in general to human society cannot be under estimated. It is emphasized by the human species infinite quest to imitate others. Theatre serves both the recreational and educational needs of people. Theatre education in Ghana was introduced as a subject area in the 1960's when higher education was introduced by the British through the establishment of the University of Ghana. With an educational system established by the colonial masters, the source materials and structure of theatre education in Ghana followed western standards. Equally, the intent of the National Theatre Movement, which developed and supported theatre education in Ghana, was not to relegate indigenous ways of performance, but to develop it using western dramas. The works of Henrik Ibsen played a major role in this regard. Ibsen's plays, particular *A Doll's House* (1879), has survived the test of time and still has a place on the academic syllabus of Ghanaian theatre students.

Today, the impact of colonial culture on theatre has been so significant that the majority of resources, models, and text books used in training theatre professionals are based on western theatre traditions and structures. The mindset of the average theatre practitioner in Ghana is focused on western standards of production and shaped by performing Shakespeare or Greek Tragedies. Little attention is paid to the local Ananse stories and concert party genre that dominated Ghanaian theatre at its highest peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the works of

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.duo.uio.no/discover>

Ibsen and other playwrights are known to theatre and literature students, there are little or no performances of these plays in the theatres. Ibsen does not move beyond the classrooms. Since the promotion and education of Ibsen in Ghana is my desired interest, the basic question for this thesis is: How did the dramatic texts of Henrik Ibsen, which are not present in Ghana's colonial culture, become incorporated into Ghana's theatre educational system?

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this research are:

1. To study how Ibsen dramas, especially *A Doll's House*, which deals with gender and social issues that do not conform to ethics of indigenous Ghanaian society, managed to find a place in an academic syllabus intended to train theatre professionals.
2. To examine how Ibsen's dramatic narratives might be adapted to create new performance works using traditional Ghanaian theatre performance forms of storytelling and concert party in order to attract an audience for Ibsen within Ghana.

## **1.3 Significance of Study**

Like any other research, efforts for this study will be in vain if it has no impact on society particularly the Ibsen scholarly milieu and Ghana's theatre industry. The importance of this research is that, it will:

- Help document the extensive use of Ibsen dramas within the Ghanaian educational system.
- Help identify the origin of the use of Ibsen's texts in Ghana's educational system.
- Propose ways in which western plays principally Ibsen might be adapted to attract indigenous Ghanaian audiences.
- Experiment with the integration of European modern drama into indigenous Ghanaian Ananse storytelling and concert party popular theatre.



## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

According to Toril Moi, “although Ibsen’s plays remain required reading in introductory courses on modern theatre, they are there mostly as obligatory historical markers, hurdles to be got over as soon as possible, so as to get the really exciting stuff, whether it is taken to begin with Chekhov, Artaud, Brecht, or Beckett”.<sup>2</sup> She argues that people ignore Ibsen as the father of modernism and consider him as a boring old realist as a result of specific set of aesthetic beliefs that rose to dominance in the western world after 1945. She further suggests that whether Ibsen is considered as the father of theatrical modernism or not, his relevance in theatre studies cannot be ignored.

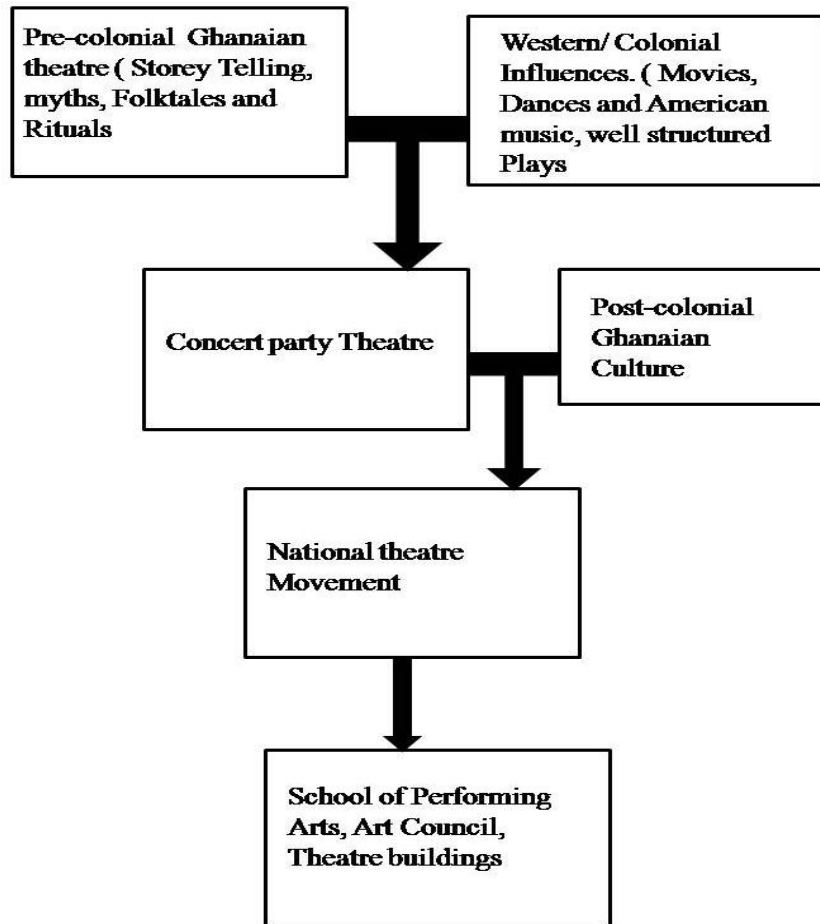
The process of colonization seriously influenced theatre development and education in Ghana. It is reflected in each stage of the developmental process of Ghana’s theatre from independence to the present day. Although Ibsen is not implicated in Ghana’s colonization history, the theatre industry developed with Ibsen as an important figure of foreign literature due to the impact of western dramas on Ghanaian theatre culture. In discussing the impact of colonization, Helen Gilbert and Joan Tompkins argue that;

“Colonization is insidious: it invades far more than political chambers and extends well beyond independence celebrations. Its effects shape language, education, religion, artistic sensibilities, and, increasingly popular culture” (1996, 2).

While they discuss the impact of colonization, they suggest that a post- colonial theory should counter more than the chronological construction of post-independence because the effects of colonization still remain in all aspects of the colonized after independence. The culture of the colonizer in one way or the other becomes the culture of the colony. Ibsen was introduced in theatre education because the impact of colonization on Ghanaian theatre traditions and culture made western dramas ideal for training theatre students after colonization, and survived due to the interest of course instructors in issues discussed in his dramas. The argument I wish to make will also be based on the fact that a great principle of teaching and learning is that of teaching from the known to the unknown and therefore it was easier for theatre institutions to train students with western dramas that were already known and available to them than work from unpublished local dramas (Ananse stories and folktales).

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<sup>2</sup>Moi Toril, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006 page 1-5



## 1.5 Theoretical Design

Theories for this research are organized to follow the structure of the diagram above. It gradually recounts the history and stages of theatre education in Ghana to discover Ibsen’s position in the training of theatre students. The structure introduces readers to pre-colonial indigenous theatre forms like Ananse storytelling. As indicated on the diagram, the concert party theatre was formed in the colonial era by combining western elements with these local elements. Ghana’s concert party flourished with touring groups moving across the West African sub region, and the success of the concert party theatre led to the formation of the National Theatre Movement. Influenced by post-colonial Ghanaian culture, the movement worked as a revolution to change the face of theatre. I believe the National Theatre Movement would have been the best place for the development of a post-colonial tradition of Ibsen performance particularly because Ibsen and other western playwrights were familiar to theatre students, but the movement failed to successfully absorb non-western traditions of

performance practices that were present in the Ghanaian non-colonial education models of storytelling and in the popular theatre form of the concert parties. Since the National Theatre Movement was a revolution against Colonial Culture, it could have developed indigenous performance forms of storytelling and concert party by examining the dramatic discourse of Ibsen dramas to recreate them to suit the needs of Ghanaian audiences through performance techniques and practices already known to the audience. Ibsen performances would have moved beyond the academic institutions if the National Theatre Movement had used indigenous performance forms in their interpretations of the plays as this period of the movement was marked by nationalistic ideals. With reference to the diagram above, the achievements of the National Theatre Movement, particularly the establishment of the School of Performing Arts are considered within the overview of theatre education in Ghana which examines how Ibsen was and is being taught within the Ghanaian education system. The intent of the writer is to examine Ibsen's position in Ghana's theatre educational system by tracing the colonial routes of the education system.

## **1.6 Organization of Study**

The study tries to trace the appearance of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian schools through interviews conducted with earlier students enrolled in the University of Ghana School of Performing Arts and National Theatre Movement. By analyzing interviews and the suggestions of theatre students, lecturers and other theatre practitioners in Ghana, the relevance of Ibsen dramas to the Ghanaian audience is considered. Comprising of six chapters, the first Chapter serves as the introduction. In this Chapter, the significance of this research to the Ibsen scholarly milieu is established with discussions of the basic research questions and methodologies. Chapter two provides information on the context of study (Ghana). It gives an overview of governance in Ghana, demography, economy, religion and culture. Chapter three introduces readers to Ghana's educational system, with a short history on formal education, changes and factors that motivated the establishment of the universities. Chapter four serves as the centre of the study with an analysis and discussion on the factors promoting Ibsen in Ghana. This Chapter examines gender issues in *A Doll's House* by comparing the character of Nora to gender roles within indigenous Ghanaian society. The analysis of gender issues in this chapter is based on gender roles and performativity theories, and considers how religion, the gendered division of labour, and marriage affect Ghanaian women. Further in Chapter four, I discuss the pedagogical use of Ibsen dramas in the

University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast by examining various courses in which Ibsen dramas are used. The Chapter ends with a section on Ibsen performance history in Ghana and the factors accounting for non-performance of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian theatres. This leads into the fifth chapter which is based on data gathered from educators, students and theatre practitioners and their reflections on the reasons for the non-performance of Ibsen dramas in Ghana. Chapter five proposes ways in which Ibsen plays can be adapted to suit the needs of Ghanaian audiences without destroying the structure of indigenous theatre performances and as an example of a successful West African adaptation, I analyze a Nigerian version of *A Doll's House*. The second part of Chapter five experiments with indigenous Ghanaian performance forms of storytelling and concert party popular theatre forms to adapt Ibsen dramas. The Chapter discusses the success of Ghana's concert party theatre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a short historical overview. Chapter five ends with a short story developed from the themes in *an Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House* adapted for Ghanaian storytelling and concert party performance forms. The study is concluded in chapter six with a retrospective description of previous chapters, summary of observations, recommendations and conclusion.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF STUDY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The relevance of context or setting for this research cannot be disregarded. It defines the environment in which the study is carried, time, place and social activities that define the people in question. The setting helps readers understand why Ibsen is relevant not only to Norwegians, but to Africans, Asians and Americans. The context for this study will help readers comprehend and understand why *A Doll's House* is constantly used in schools and not performed in theatres. This Chapter gives a brief historical overview of Ghana, demography and geographical location, people and culture. Very central to this historical overview is an account of Ghanaian politics and governance. This is because Ghana's political history is marked with military take-overs, confusions, polarization, and abuse of power that have seriously affected the theatre industry. Also for a dramatic text to make meaning and provoke social debates in a society, it is important that the discourses within a performance relate to the audience. This context also serves as a background for readers to consider the views quoted within the thesis that come from course instructors and students.

### **2.2 Ghana**

Ghana, located in West Africa was formerly the British colony of Gold Coast. The name was given to the country by its colonial masters due to the abundance of gold in the country. It was the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence on 6<sup>th</sup> March of 1957. The name Gold Coast was changed to Ghana after independence. The name Ghana means Warrior King.<sup>3</sup> It (*Ghana*) was taken from the great Sudanic Empire of Ghana, which existed from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries several hundreds of miles to the northwest of modern Ghana in the Sudanic zone ( a combination of the savannah and Sahel) of West Africa<sup>4</sup>. Ghana later became a republic on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1960.

#### **2.2.1 Geography and Demography**

Located on the West African coast, with countries like Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Benin, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, Mali, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria,

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<sup>3</sup>Jackson John, *Introduction to African Civilisations*, 2001, page 201

<sup>4</sup>Gocking Roger S, *The History of Ghana*. 2005, page 1

Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, Ghana is the eighth-largest country among sixteen nations. It has an area of 238,540 square kilometres, or roughly 9200 square miles which makes it slightly larger than the United Kingdom and slightly smaller than the U.S state of Oregon<sup>5</sup>. Ghana is divided into ten regions namely; Western, Central, Greater Accra, Volta, Eastern, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions.

According to the 2010 population and housing census conducted by Ghana Statistical Service, the country has a total population of 24,223,431, with 11,801,661 males consisting 48.7% of the population and 12,421,770 females consisting 51.3% spread across the ten regions<sup>6</sup>. Even though the country has a high female population than males, the hierarchical composition of society and distribution of gender roles in the communities put the men on a high social standing than the women. It is difficult to generalize gender issues in Ghana because of the diversity of cultural influences within the population. Ghana is ethnically heterogeneous with ethnic groups like Akan, Ewe, Ga-Dangme, Mole-Dagbon, Mande-Busanga, Guan, Gurma, Grusi etc. Due to the large number of ethnic groups, the country has over 60 recognized dialects. Common local languages spoken among Ghanaians are Twi, Ga, Ewe, Dagbaani, Dagomba, Nzema, Kasem, and Dangme. The local languages are complex with peculiar changes among various communities. For example the Akan's speak Twi, but there are two versions of the Twi language namely Asante Twi and Fante. Ghana like many other post-colonial countries has adopted the English language as the official language for instruction in schools and for business conduction in other public places. This is due to the fact that Ghana's educational system was established by the British.

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<sup>5</sup>Ghana is bordered by Burkina Faso to the north, Ivory Coast to the west and Togo to the east. The south is surrounded by the Gulf of Guinea which forms part of the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana falls on the centre of the world with the Greenwich meridian passing through Tema. Tema is the port and industrial city in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It is located on longitude 0° or the Greenwich Meridian and on latitude 5° north of the Equator. It is the closest land settlement nearest or closest to the centre of the world where the Equator and Greenwich Meridian meet at coordinate (0, 0)<sup>5</sup>. Generally, Ghana has a warm climate due to its location near the equator. It enjoys tropical climate with seasonal changes between the wet and the dry seasons. The country has tropical rain forest rich in variety of wildlife, mountains, rivers, lakes, the Atlantic Ocean, oil, reserves, minerals and many agricultural resources.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/2010\\_PHC\\_National\\_Analytical\\_Report.pdf](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/2010_PHC_National_Analytical_Report.pdf)



Image: 1.1 Map of Ghana (African Development Fund African Development Fund)

### ***2.2.2 Culture, Religion and Gender***

Regardless of the cultural diversity within Ghana, communal living with the family as the basic entity for society is common among all the ethnic groups. It is the strongest bond among people and the primary source of identity. To the Ghanaian, obligation to family is superior over all other obligations. The idea of family does not only end with the nuclear family but crosses to the extended family, clan and friends. A person's wealth in Ghanaian communities is not measured by financial wealth, but through obligations towards friends, family and society in general. Some societies in Ghana are matrilineal and others are patrilineal. For matrilineal groups like the Akans, inheritance is gained from the mother's family while patrilineal groups like the Gas and Anglo's inherit from the father's line. It is

interesting to note that even with matrilineal ethnic groups children do not inherit from their mother directly but from their uncles. This is because the society considers men as heads and leaders of the family.

Ghanaian societies are hierarchical. Respect and honour is accorded to people based on age, position, wealth and gender. Traditional rulers are accorded with high level of respect due to their status. Older people are considered to be wise and granted respect. It is required for younger people to greet older people anytime they meet them. It is also considered wrong in most Ghanaian societies for a young person to accuse or point fingers at an older person even when he is wrong. Respect is given to the oldest person among a group, even if they are all at the same level in the group. The oldest person in the group is given special treatment in most occasions and is also allowed to judge and take decisions for the benefit of the group. In most communities men are considered as fathers and heads of households. Wives are supposed to be humble and serve their husbands diligently. Child bearing gives women status in Ghanaian societies and women with children are treated with increased respect and honour. Among most families, doing of house chores and cooking is ascribed to female children while farming and other heavy tasks are given to men. In the rural areas, some families even refuse to send their daughters to school because they believe a woman's position is in the kitchen.

Although Ghana's rural population is high, the rapid growth of urban population, free flow of information and resources reflects the impact of modernization associated with urban life in most communities. It is difficult to clearly delineate between contemporary societies and traditional societies because most urban dwellers are still bound to traditional society through kinship. The only difference in contemporary homes and rural homes is that majority of rural dwellers strongly observe ancestral customs, practices and social organization of family. The father in both the rural and urban context is the head of the household but there is a limit to male domination and power of the father in urban homes. In cases where both the father and the mother have economic power the father's authority is usually limited. Unlike women in rural communities who work on their husband's farms with limited access to education, urban women can be highly educated and compete with men in the professional job market. Urban women without professional jobs engage in trading activities at the markets. Girls in urban homes are often highly motivated to compete with boys in school and encouraged to aim high in the professional world.



Religion is very important in Ghanaian communities. The Christian religion is dominant with a large number of practicing believers, followed by Islam, and then indigenous traditional believers. Christianity is the fastest growing religion with the introduction of several protestant churches, alongside the orthodox churches. The belief system and teachings of religious groups have had an impact on the organization of gender. The various religious denominations play a vital role in socialization, thereby influencing the distribution of gender roles. The teachings of these religious groups shape the conduct of both men and women in Ghanaian societies. For example, polygamous marriage in Ghana is promoted and accepted by the Islamic groups while Christians protest against polygamy. One can also distinguish between Muslim and Christian women based on their choice of clothes and mode of dressing.

### ***2.2.3 Politics and Governance***

Pre-colonial Ghana was divided into states and societies, ruled by kings. The States and societies were organized based on ethnicity and land location. Politics and governance entered the Ghanaian scene with the coming of the Europeans. The Portuguese colonized Gold Coast<sup>7</sup> and built the first European fort in 1482. Following the Portuguese, came the Dutch, the Danes, the Swedes, the Prussians, and the British. Commerce in gold gave way to the slave trade until the latter was outlawed by Great Britain in 1807.

By 1948 a group of educated citizens of Gold Coast led by Kwame Nkrumah championed the fight for independence. Nkrumah was the leader of the socialist party called Convention Peoples Party (CPP). The CPP with its motto “Self Government Now” worked tirelessly, petitioning the Queen of England to grant the Gold Coast freedom. On the eve of 6th March 1957 Ghana was pronounced as an independent country with Kwame Nkrumah as its first president. According to Gocking Roger S, “unfortunately the coming of independence coincided with the fall in the world cocoa prices to what was considered the catastrophic level of \$490 a ton” (2005, 118). With the fall in cocoa prices and other economic crisis hindering development, the CPP managed to rule the country until 24th February 1966 when it was removed by the military. The political history recounted in this section gives an idea of development and hindrance in all sectors of the economy. Each political party or military

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<sup>7</sup>In this chapter, the names Gold Coast and Ghana will be used to refer to the Country depending on the period. Gold Coast for years before independence and Ghana for periods after independence.

regime had its own agenda that moved the country in a particular direction. The Nkrumah administration strongly revolted against colonial culture by implementing policies and establishing movements that will promote a post-colonial identity for Ghana devoid of all colonial influences. In their efforts to revive indigenous theatre, Nkrumah's CPP supported the National Theatre Movement. With Nkrumah's support there was every chance for the development of a strong theatre culture in post-independence Ghana but the political turmoil that followed seriously hampered the growth of an art form that was dependent on the gathering together of large groups of people in the public domain.

The new supreme body of state authority in 1966 was named National Liberation Council (NLC)<sup>8</sup>. It consisted of seven persons; Lieutenant General Joseph Ankrah (Chairman), Emmanuel Kotoka (Deputy Chairman), Chief Inspector Constabulary John Harlley, Bawa Yakubu, Colonel Albert Ocran, Major Akwasi Afrifa and police officer John Nunoo. The leadership of the NLC were all people who played important roles in the coup d'état. The NLC ruled for 3 years and organized a transition that allowed civilian government to rule in 1969. After successful elections, the Progress Party (PP) took over from the NLC as a civilian government and started the second republic. The Progress Party failed to implement its own economic policies but continued with the NLC's policies which had already resulted in a recession and high unemployment rate. The PP was overthrown by another military regime the National Redemption Council (NRC) led by General Ignatius Acheampong on 13th March 1972. General Acheampong later removed some top officials in his administration to make his position stronger and renamed the regime Supreme Military Council (SMC). At a meeting on 5th June 1978, General Acheampong was overthrown by senior members of his regime and placed under house arrest. General Frederick Akuffo became the new leader of the SMC.

The SMC under new leadership was known as SMC-II. A group of junior army officers led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings accused the SMC-II of enriching themselves at the expense of their countrymen. The junior officers rebelled against SMC-II and managed to stage a coup d'état on 4th June 1979. The junior officers called their regime Armed Forces Revolution Council (AFRC). On 24th September, 1979, the AFC transferred power to a civilian government and dissolved its organization. With the exception of Jerry John

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<sup>8</sup>Petchenkine Youry, Ghana: in Search of Stability, 1993, page 35.

Rawlings, who was sent to the United Kingdom and other countries for advanced military training, none of the AFC council members went back to the military. The new civilian government, People's National Party (PNP) was chastised by the Ghanaian populace due to its failure to stabilize the economy. Its rule as the third republic did not last for long. By December 31<sup>st</sup>1981, another coup d'état had been organized by the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC). The PNDC was spearheaded by Jerry John Rawlings. The PNDC ruled for eleven years and organized elections. The leaders of the PNDC resigned from the military and formed their own civilian political party called the National Democratic Congress (NDC), with Jerry John Rawlings as its flag bearer. The NDC subsequently won the election and power was transferred from the PNDC to the NDC. Rawlings and the NDC started the fourth republic, completed its first term in office and won the 1996 general elections for a second term in office. After the 2000 general elections the NDC handed power to a new government, the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The NPP won elections in 2004 and ruled till 2008, when it lost to the NDC. The NDC, under the leadership of John Evans Atta Mills, ruled until he met his untimely death on 24th July, 2012. The leadership of the NDC was transferred to John Dramani Mahama, vice president of Mills to carry the mantle. After a short period in office, elections were organized again in December 2012 and the NDC led by Mahama won the elections.

With all the elections and the military take-overs in the political domain, chiefs also had their role as leaders alongside the national leaders. Their power functions at the local government sector level and they work hand in hand with district assemblies and the ministry of local government. The basic role of a chief is to maintain peace and order and run the daily administration of his traditional area. Article 270 (1) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana's fourth republic, captures and guarantees the position of chiefs. In history, Ghana's political journey has not been a swift journey, especially with the military take-overs, confusions, polarization, and abuse of power. The political instability in the country's history threatened state institutions, economy, education, and social life. Ghana's theatre industry was undermined by this instability and the endless curfews imposed by the state eradicated any urban night life.

### **2.2.4 Economy**

As a major producer and exporter of cocoa in the world, the main cash crop in Ghana is cocoa. Other crops like coffee, rice, peanuts, corn, shea nuts and cassava are grown in most farming communities contributing greatly to the economy. For those in the coastal areas, fishing is their main source of income. Ghana's economy is growing very fast but faces challenges such as corruption and bribery. In the field of agriculture, production of cocoa and other cash crops are reduced because some corrupt government officials smuggle fertilizer meant for local farmers into neighboring countries. Women are mostly affected by the selfish acts of these corrupt government officials. According to a report by the African Development Fund; "Ghanaian women engaged in remunerative work are at a higher risk of poverty on average than men because women are concentrated in the types of employment for which risk of poverty is high (in food production, unpaid workers on family enterprises and informal self-employment)"<sup>9</sup>. The importance of issues of corruption and bribery in Ghana's economy will be made clear in later chapters when I discuss some aspects of the translation of Ibsen's dramatic narratives into Ghanaian context.

There are also frequent reports in the news concerning illegal sale of premix fuel meant for fishermen. For transportation purposes, the country has a large number of poorly maintained road systems and few rail lines in the capital city. The poorly maintained roads affect the agriculture industry causing financial loss to farmers who are not able to transport their products to business cities in time. The issue of poorly maintained roads could also be attributed to the nature of politics in the country and the "party agenda". Political culture of Ghana hinders development of roads because each time a new government comes in power, projects of the former government are abandoned for new ones that will suit the agenda of the political party in power. The national currency is the Ghanaian cedi (¢). It was redenominated in July 2007. The employment sector of the economy is made up of public sector, semi-public, and formal and informal private sector. The public employment sector has the highest number of employees accounting for about 59% of employment in the country.

Minerals like gold, bauxite, industrial diamonds, and manganese are products from the mining sector. Ghana's mining industry is noted for high production and exportation of gold. Revenues from the mining industry provide foreign exchange to help boost the economy. The

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/ADF-BD-IF-2008-237-EN-GHANA-COUNTRY-GENDER-PROFILE.PDF>

identification of offshore petroleum exploration and exploitation in 2007 strengthened Ghana's economy inviting investors and stakeholders in the petroleum and oil sector to the country. In December 2010, oil production from Ghana's jubilee field began. It is estimated that Ghana's oil reserves have jumped to almost 700 million barrels<sup>10</sup>. The subject of Ghana's oil reserves benefiting citizens is a big question because the exploration is done by foreign companies with the country holding a small percentage.

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<sup>10</sup>CIA Factbook 2012

## **CHAPTER 3: FORMAL EDUCATION IN GHANA**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This Chapter gives an overview of Ghana's educational system before and after colonization; it provides the context for analysis of Ibsen's place within Ghanaian curricula. For a post-colonial country like Ghana, an understanding of the educational systems, structures and politics contextualises the use of western books in the teaching of university and college students. Background information on theatre education in Ghana is also provided for readers together with material on indigenous performance and art forms; both of these areas play a vital part in the training of professionals in the universities where Ibsen can be found in the syllabus.

### **3.2 Pre-colonial education**

Pre-colonial education in Ghana was informal and not institutionalized. The process of informal education involved societal elders, parents, and older siblings giving moral, ethical, and religious instructions to children in order to make them better citizens. During the formative years, a child was taught how to speak the local language, table manners, how to greet and treat elders. At puberty, young adults went through the process of initiation. During initiation ceremonies, griots (African storytellers), elders and opinion leaders taught the young adults how to behave themselves. Young girls were taught how to cook, serve their husbands, and keep themselves clean and healthy while menstruating, while young boys were taught basic hunting, farming and fishing skills. At puberty, the men were empowered by their roles as workers and providers while women were trained to serve men. The indigenous culture was structured around male leaders. Choice of occupation in indigenous societies were limited with young men learning their father's trade. In other cases, the process of apprenticeship was used to teach professional skills like carving, pottery, blacksmithing, drumming and gold smiting. Occasionally women were allowed to learn a trade or apprenticed in pottery and basketry. Successful apprentices were equipped with tools and capital to start their own business after completion of training. This type of informal education dates from the pre-colonial era and is still present in Ghana; it sits alongside formal education.

### 3.3 Post-colonial / formal education

Formal education (western-style education) was developed in Ghana as a result of westerners and missionaries quest to communicate with the local people. Since they could not speak and understand the local languages to properly communicate with them, they started teaching them basic reading and writing skills. Early schools were located in the castles and forts which served as trading posts for European merchants. European merchant companies ran the schools and the teaching was done by chaplains assigned to the castles. Students for the early schools were largely the sons of the European merchants and local women, together with a few sons of wealthy African traders living in the urban centres. Subjects taught included reading and writing, arithmetic and Bible instruction. After 1821, the Gold Coast witnessed a major development in education provision when the crown authorities decided to create not one but a chain of government schools directly financed from public funds.<sup>11</sup> Western literatures found roots in the academic syllabus of Ghanaian schools during this period. The schools were established, furnished and maintained by the colonial government and the form of instruction was imported from Britain.

The growth in Government schools was matched in 1841 by a parallel development in mission schools, which later were to absorb them. Unlike the merchant companies who showed little or no concern for the welfare of hinterland inhabitants, the missionaries moved into the interior and took an interest in the welfare of these people. The Basel, Methodist, Bremen and Wesleyan missionaries started to convert and educate indigenous Ghanaians in the hinterlands from the second decade of the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century, many Presbyterian and Methodist schools were founded though most were located in the southern areas of the country. By 1881, there were around 5,000 students attending more than 139 mission schools at primary level.<sup>12</sup> The Basel missionary intensified their work and established a boy's school at Akropong Akwapim in 1843, a girl's school in 1847, then a teacher training college and a catechist's seminary in 1848<sup>13</sup>. Several secondary schools were established by a number of private groups by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The colonial government also implemented new educational policies to improve education. The policies gave way to the establishment of teacher training institutions, equal education for girls and

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<sup>11</sup>Foster Philip, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 1965 Page 49.

<sup>12</sup>Falola Toyin and Salm Steven, *Culture and Customs of Ghana*, 2002 Page 9.

<sup>13</sup>Antwi Mosses, *Education, Society and Development in Ghana*, 1992 Page 30.

increase in the provision of secondary schools. The policy on equal education for girls moved at a slower pace, it involved a change of mindset for most Ghanaians to send their daughters to school. The Independence of Ghana in 1957 and victory of the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) accelerated development plans for education. The leadership of the CPP were a group of educated Ghanaians who believed strongly in formal education. By 1961, the CPP government had started free compulsory primary education and working to provide universal education to everyone. Other governments followed suit and implemented policies to improve education in Ghana. Ghana's education system today includes primary or basic school, junior high school, senior high school, teacher training colleges, polytechnics and universities.

Ghana's educational system is supervised by the Ministry of Education. The overall goal of the ministry is to provide relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians especially the disadvantaged to enable them acquire skills which will make them functionally literate and productive to facilitate poverty alleviation and promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the country.<sup>14</sup>

### ***3.3.1 History of Higher Education in Ghana***

Higher education in Ghana started with the Achimota School. The foundation stone of Achimota College and School was laid on 4th March, 1924. The school was officially opened by Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg in 1927 with full kindergarten and teacher training classes. Primary, secondary and intermediate classes were developed over the years. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Achimota offered pre-university education courses, engineering and external degree courses of the University of London. The first student obtained his degree in 1935.<sup>15</sup> In 1943 the British government established the Asquith and Eliot Commissions to investigate the feasibility of higher education and recommendation for setting up a University in British West Africa. The Eliot commission produced two reports; the first report recommended the establishment of two universities in the Gold Coast, and Nigeria, and the second recommended the establishment of only one university in Nigeria because it had a population of over 20 million. The British government accepted the second

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<sup>14</sup>See <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/governance/ministries/331-ministry-of-education>

<sup>15</sup>See <http://www.achimota.edu.gh/history.htm>



recommendation but their move towards establishing the University in Nigeria was protested by the people of the Gold Coast. Led by Dr. J.B. Danquah<sup>16</sup>, the people of the Gold Coast counseled the Government of the Gold Coast to inform the British Government that the Gold Coast could support a University College.

The British government agreed to the establishment of the University College of Gold Coast. On 11<sup>th</sup> August 1948, the University College of the Gold Coast was founded by Ordinance for the purpose of providing for and promoting university education, learning and research<sup>17</sup>. The University College had Mr. David Mowbray Balme<sup>18</sup> as its first principal and it was located on the Achimota campus until it was relocated later to Legon<sup>19</sup>, its current location. The college council of the university sent an application to the government for legislation to constitute the University College into a University with the power to award its own degrees in the 1960-61 academic year. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1961, the University College of the Gold Coast became independent from the University of London by an act of Parliament with its name changed to the University of Ghana.

In the 1950's, Ghana was under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as prime minister. Realizing the importance of education in building Ghana's economy and human resource, a second institution of higher learning Kumasi College of Technology, was established by an act of parliament in October 1951. It was opened officially in January 1952 with 200 resident teacher training students transferred from Achimota College<sup>20</sup>. The college was upgraded to university status as the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in 1961 by an act of Parliament as a result of recommendations of the Commission of University Education. The CPP government's implementation of the Education Act in 1961 made primary and middle school education free and compulsory. As a result of this more pupils

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<sup>16</sup> Dr. J.B. Danquah was a Scholar and Politician. He played a significant role in Ghana's independence and promotion of girl child education.

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=243&sublinkid=72>

<sup>18</sup> Professor Emeritus of Classics, Queen Mary College, University of London, who helped develop higher education in West Africa.

<sup>19</sup> A suburb of Accra.

<sup>20</sup> Antwi Mosses, *Education, Society and Development in Ghana*, 1992 Page 143.

were enrolled in schools increasing the demand for professional teachers in primary and secondary schools and a general improvement in the education sector.

The government established a third institution, the University College of Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana in 1962. It was incorporated by the University College of Cape Coast NLC Decree, 1967 with effect from October 1966 in affiliation with the University of Ghana (Antwi, 1992). The institution became a full-fledged university as the University of Cape Coast from October 1971 with a primary purpose of producing graduate teachers in the arts and science subjects for the secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and technical institutions. In May 1992, the University of Development Studies was established to “blend the academic world with that of the community in order to provide constructive interaction between the two for the total development of Northern Ghana in particular and country as a whole” (PNDC law 279, Section 279).<sup>21</sup> The University of Development Studies is a geographically multi-campus institution dedicated to development and research training. Also in 1992, the University College of Education, Winneba was established in the central region.<sup>22</sup>

### **3.4 Development of Theatre /Drama in Education**

With an overview of post-colonial education above, the section below gives insight to the development of western style (formal) education of theatre students in Ghana. It traces the roots of western literatures in the academic syllabus of theatre students and how Ghana’s first theatre training school was established. This section serves as an introduction to the beginning of *A Doll’s House* and other western plays in Ghana.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://uds.edu.gh/history.php>

<sup>22</sup> Polytechnics in Ghana were developed in the 1960’s as technical institutions to train human resource for emerging Ghanaian industries. Following 1991 reforms in the tertiary education sector, second cycle institutions under the supervision of Ghana Education Service were upgraded to tertiary institutions. The polytechnics offer 1 to 3 years programmes awarding diplomas and Higher National Diploma (HND). Ghana has a large number of private universities and few professional institutions together with the polytechnics and government universities. Some of the professional institutions are the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ), the Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL), the National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI), Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and Institute of Professional Studies (IPS). Private universities include, Valley View University, Central University, Methodist University, Regent University College of Science and Technology, Wisconsin University and Zenith University. Programmes offered by the universities range from business to natural sciences, social science, and arts.

### **3.4.1 The School of Performing Arts, Ghana**

The School of Performing Arts was established in October 1962 as part of the Institute of African studies at the University of Ghana to link the University with the National Theatre Movement. In 1986, the school was separated from the Institute of African studies with financial support from the National Council for Higher education (NCHE).<sup>23</sup> The school was established to train and supply professionals for Ghana's growing theatre industry and also promote Ghanaian traditional music, dance and drama. In 1987, the PNDC government took over the University's Drama studio located in Accra to build a bigger auditorium for use as a National Theatre. The government constructed a Drama Studio on the University campus to compensate the School of Performing Arts. The school has a resident theatre company (Abibigroma), and a dance company (Ghana Dance Ensemble). The school has three main departments namely; music, dance and drama departments offering Diploma, Bachelor and Masters degree courses. It is managed by a director of the school, three heads of departments for music, dance and drama, and an Artistic Director for the Drama Studio.

The drama department of the school was pioneered by Efua Sutherland and Joe de Graft who later became director of the school. In attempts to train professionals and develop a Ghanaian "theatre that will derive its strength and authenticity from roots firmly planted in the true traditions of the people" they experimented with the Greek Tragedies, and Western dramas from William Shakespeare, Bertolt Brecht, Henrik Ibsen, Eugene Ionesco and Stanislavski. Most of these performances took place in the National Theatre in Accra, until 1987 when the school moved its performances to the Drama Studio on the University Campus.

In the next chapter, I study the significance of Ibsen dramas in Ghana by comparing gender issues in *A Doll's House* with indigenous Ghanaian gender roles and also examine the pedagogical use of Ibsen in two major universities.

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<sup>23</sup>Agbodeka Francis, *A History of University of Ghana*, 1998, Page 186.

## CHAPTER 4: IBSEN EDUCATION IN GHANA

### 4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters I discussed Ghana, post-colonial and colonial education, and finally the development of theatre education in Ghana to give an overview of Ghana's theatre industry and its developmental stages. This Chapter is focused on the main theme of the thesis "*Ibsen Education in Ghana*". It is divided into three main parts namely *Nora and the Contemporary Ghanaian Woman*, *Teaching Ibsen in two main universities* and *Performing Ibsen plays in Ghana*. In the first part, I argue that the dramatic discourses in *A Doll's House* particularly with regard to gender issues are very relevant to contemporary Ghana. This has resulted in the constant use of *A Doll's House* on the academic syllabus of drama students at the University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast. It studies the role of agents of socialization such as the family, religious organisations and expectations of indigenous Ghanaian communities towards married women. The second part discusses the pedagogical use of Ibsen dramas in the University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast considering various courses in which Ibsen dramatic texts are used and the factors influencing course instructors to select Ibsen dramas for students. The Chapter finally ends with a consideration of the performance of Ibsen plays in Ghana and the factors that account for non-performance of Ibsen plays in Ghana outside the university sector.

### 4.2 Nora and the Contemporary Ghanaian Woman

Ghana's educational, social and political history has no direct relationship with Norway but the works of Henrik Ibsen have found a place in the academic syllabus of the Ghanaian Universities for several years. Ibsen's place in the Ghanaian syllabus can be attributed to the nature of his dramas and the issues discussed in his works. The Greek Philosopher Aristotle in his *Poetics* suggested that dramatic performances and text imitated events from real life situations. He described dramatic activities with the Greek term "mimesis"<sup>24</sup> which carries a wide range of meaning relating to imitation, representation, resembling, and similarity. Relating to Aristotle's view on drama, one can suggest that for a dramatic work to be recognized and accepted in a particular society, it needs to address the concerns of that

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<sup>24</sup>Outline of Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy in the POETICS. See <http://www2.cnr.edu/home/bmcmamus/poetics.html>

society through imitation of events. Ibsen's new breed of dramas, popularly known as the social plays, addressed problems of contemporary societies through close imitation of events in the societies. Ibsen's letter to the British critic Edmund Gosse explains what he seeks to present in his new dramas. In the letter Ibsen writes that;

You think my new drama ought to be written in verse, and that it will gain an advantage if it is. Here I must simply contradict you; for the piece is, as you will find, developed in the most realistic way as possible. The illusion I wish to produce is that of truth itself; I want to produce upon the reader the impression that what he is reading is actually taking place before him (1889, 108).

In the process of presenting the illusion of truth, dramas such as *A Doll's House*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *Ghost*, were developed. Although the setting, characters, and properties are Norwegian, the message that the text carries is so powerful that people from other cultures can comprehend and relate to it. The social issues discussed are problems that Ghanaians today find interesting and can relate to as a reflection or imitation of life regardless of the distance in years since Ibsen published these works.

Fischer-Lichte Erika argues that; "audience or spectators be it African, Asian or European can deduce meaning from any performance because they are presented with objects that are not culturally bound to a specific meaning. The spectators are able to understand the text or performance in accordance with their own cultural experiences" (2005, 32). The experiences are developed through socialization in the society. It is therefore impossible for an audience to relate to something unknown to his or her experiences. Thus drama makes meaning when it is a reflection or imitation of relevant events to the audience experiences. It will be impossible to talk about Ibsen in Ghana without mentioning *A Doll's House* and the character Nora. The constant use of *A Doll's House* in Ghana is usually attributed to Nora and to most Ghanaian scholars Nora symbolizes emancipation of women. The question of Ibsen writing *A Doll's House* to advocate for women's right has been highly contested; even Ibsen denied that he was an advocate for women's right:

I thank you for the toast, but must disclaim the honour of having consciously worked for the women's right movement. I am not even quite clear as to just what women's right movement really is. To me it has seemed a problem of mankind in general. (Sprinchorn Evert, 1964, 337).

I do not wish to enter the debate about whether the play advocates for women rights or self-discovery for individuals, my purpose is to discuss the relevance of the text to contemporary Ghanaian society and the issue of women rights. As a Ghanaian, I am of the view that the play is well received and understood by Ghanaians based on their personal experiences, because the elements Ibsen presented in *A Doll's House* are not culturally bound to 19th century Norway. It is possible for a contemporary Ghanaian audience to perceive *A Doll's*

*House* in relation to Aristotle's definition of drama as an imitation of life in a society due to the Nora character. In the daily experiences of the Ghanaian audience, they encounter women in bondage and oppression due to male domination and issues that can be related to Ibsen's 19<sup>th</sup> century work. Notwithstanding Ibsen's stated intention that the theme is the need for every individual to achieve self-realization one could also argue that, although a woman has equal standing with man, in indigenous Ghanaian culture women are ascribed certain roles and it is therefore necessary for individual women to achieve emancipation from social constraints in order to achieve self-realization.

The sections below identify gender issues in indigenous and contemporary Ghanaian societies that make the play relevant to Ghanaian audiences. The character Nora will be compared to Ghanaian women in oppression by identifying demands of society from the women that "puts them in Nora's shoes". The process of socialization will be questioned through agents like family and society, religion, and marriage. In analyzing the situations, reference will be made to both western and African theories. Although it is questionable to make reference to western theories in relation to gender issues in Africa, I believe the use of western sources in addition to African ones confirms the fact that gender inequality is not limited to Africa but exists in various degrees across the world.

#### **4.2.1 Family Socialization**

Gender refers to socially constructed characteristics of women and men as opposed to biologically determined ones. Society plays a major role in the classification of gender as people learn how to behave and relate to others. Gender equality in Ghana and most African societies is related to power equilibrium between men and women that offers them the opportunity to perform certain roles ascribed by society without interference. The roles are supposed to complement each other to perform effectively. Indigenous Ghanaian societies believe that males and females have special features in their nature that gives them the power to perform certain roles effectively. Each role comes with its own status, rights and responsibilities.

The Sociologist Linda Lindsey suggests that;

Females and Males, Mothers and fathers, and daughters and sons are all status with different normative role requirements attached to them. The status of mother calls for expected roles involving love, nurturing, self-sacrifice, home-making, and availability. The status of father calls for expected roles of

breadwinner, disciplinarian, home technology expert and ultimate decision maker in the household (2011, 2).

These roles are well defined and structured in Ghanaian societies such that it is very difficult for people to accept changes in the performances of these roles. Through the process of socialization which starts in the home, girls and boys develop ideas about what they are supposed to do. Girls are encouraged to play with dolls, learn how to cook and do most of the kitchen work while boys learn how to make little furniture, farm and other crafts. At puberty, young adults go through the process of initiation, with training that develops men as providers and women as helpers. This socialization process puts economic power into the hands of men and makes women helpers to men at home. Women who do otherwise are publically ridiculed and chastised. Although Baden, Green, Otoo-Oyortey and Peasgood suggest that West African women predominantly Ghanaians have access to a degree of economic autonomy by illustrating their view with case of 'market queens'<sup>25</sup>, in Ghana, they further claim that;

When all non-market work is accounted for, women work on average considerably longer hours than men. Gender divisions of labour mean that women are responsible for all reproductive labour such as childcare, cooking, washing, fuel wood and water collection etc. (1994,3).

Nora's socialization process can be likened to the fate of most young girls in Ghana especially those in the rural parts of Northern Ghana, where majority of rural folks believe it is waste of resources to educate women even if basic education is compulsory and free. For fear of punishment from their parents the young girls stay home and perform household chores for their parents and finally end up in marriages where they have no right to say anything. In instances where women are allowed to trade and work on small farms, they do so with the consent of their husbands in addition to other household responsibilities. It is quite clear to understand why *A Doll's House* is constantly used in Ghana by reading lines and actions that are closely related to women issues in Ghana. Nora's statements such as;

[Imperturbably] what it means it is: I passed out of Daddy's hands into yours. You arranged everything to your tastes, and I acquired the same tastes. Or pretend to ... I don't really know...I think it was a bit of both, sometimes one thing and sometimes the other. When I look back, it seems to me I have been living here like a beggar, from hand to mouth. I lived by doing tricks for you, Torvald. But that's the way you wanted it. You and Daddy did me a great wrong. It's your fault that I've never made anything of my life (1961, 280).

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<sup>25</sup> 'Market queens' are powerful female traders with high economic standing. Trading of groceries and other accessories in Ghana is usually considered as women's work.

The family as an agent of socialization in Ghanaian<sup>26</sup> communities does not empower women to stand on their own but trains them as helpers to men, thus making it almost impossible for a woman to stand on her own in most communities. Ibsen's reflection of Ghanaian societies can also be observed in the character of Mrs. Linde. Even though Mrs. Linde has managed to survive on her own, she still longs to serve and help a man (1961, 264). The ideology that African women need the support of a man even after the death of husband is reflected in widowhood rites in Ghanaian communities which considers widows still married to the husband's family, and if the widow is young, she may be assigned to a younger relative of her dead husband. The dangers of these widowhood rites in Sotho and Tswana communities of Southern Africa are discussed by B. A Paw (1990).

#### **4.2.2 Religion**

The act of worship is very important in the lives of Ghanaians. It plays a major role in the process of socialization. Institutions like churches, mosques and traditional shrines have their own doctrines to help guide members conduct and behavior. In one way or the other these institutions place women on a lower plane and elevate the men. The Christian religion, which has the highest population of worshipers in the country, trains women to submit to their husbands in all endeavors and insists that they use the Bible as a guide book for conduct. A popular reference from the Bible which encourages women to be subservient to men is from Ephesians 5:22-23 which says; "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." The bible in this instance likens the husband's role to that of Jesus Christ making him a divine authority over the woman.

Majority of Muslims in Ghana come from the Northern part of the country where women are culturally placed on a lower standing than men. Unfortunately the Islamic religion (which could be interpreted as balancing the equation by encouraging men to promote women) applies its teachings in the Northern communities in ways that exacerbate the woes of

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<sup>26</sup> The term 'Ghanaians' or 'Ghanaian communities' in this section refers to indigenous Ghanaian thinking and gender roles that ascribe cooking and other household chores to women. It is generalized for both indigenous and contemporary societies because one cannot demarcate a line between indigenous and contemporary gender roles. Example, the average urban professional woman may have economic power but is still expected by society to cook and do household chores.



women. These teachings emphasize the following texts from the Holy Quran that place women in the control of men;

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand. (Quran 4:34)

This verse from the Quran gives authority to men over women and teaches the women to obey men in all circumstances. The only time it puts the woman in charge, is in the absence of the man and even with that, it gives a limitation to what "Allah would have them guard". It further increases the pain of women by giving their husbands the right to deny them sex and physically abuse them if they disobey. The women have no right when it comes to sex, the men decide how and when to sleep with their wives. During menstruation women are to be seen as unclean and approached only when they finish menstruating and once again are considered clean. The Quran likens a woman's position in sex to a sowing field or farmland owned by the man, and further gives him the mandate to visit the sowing field however and whenever he wishes (Quran 2: 222-223). Training girls in an Islamic family makes it difficult for them to move and take decisions on their own, since they find their mothers obeying everything their father says. It is expected of both mothers and daughters that they stay at home, except when men permit them to go out, but even then the men decide what they will wear (Quran 33:33 and 59).

The indigenous traditional worship system in Ghana is built on the customs and traditions of communities. Their doctrine towards women is similar to some Islamic doctrines. Power is given to men as the head of households, and encourages women to obey in all situations. In some societies women are considered unclean during menstruation, other communities put widows through series of widowhood rights against their wish. In the job market, traditional worshippers ascribe certain spiritual powers to jobs, like carving, hunting, gold and blacksmithing and reserve them for men. Women are limited to pottery and trading in the markets. The impact of the culture and religion on the daily lives of women in Ghana is so high that if efforts to emancipate women are not done effectively it will yield no results. The process of socialization inscribes the idea of a lower being in the minds of women making it difficult for them to accept change. To most of these women, it is natural for a man to be

placed on a higher plane than them because they are taught as young girls to obey and respect men as higher beings, in the home, churches, mosques and other places of worships.

#### ***4.2.3 Marriage and the Ghanaian Woman's Role.***

As mentioned earlier, Ghanaians believe that males and females have special features in their nature that gives them the power to perform certain roles effectively. It is the performance of these roles in marriage that defines them as husbands, wives or children. Lindsey refers to the performance of roles as “Doing Gender” and attributes it to the works of Ervin Goffman who developed a dramaturgy approach to social interaction.

Goffman maintained that the best way to understand social interaction is to consider it as an enactment in a theatrical performance. Like actors on stage, we use strategies of impression management, providing information and cues to others that presents us in a favorable light. (qtd. in Lindsay 2011, 10).

The interaction process between people defines their gender roles and identifies them as children, mothers, wives and husbands. Although the biological and physical features may identify a person as male or female, it is the performance of gender roles that is crucial in the Ghanaian system of classification of people with respect to status. For example a female with all the physical features of a woman while recognized as such, will be chastised and classified as misfit if she decides to dress as a man and perform duties that society ascribes to men. Judith Butler argues that gender is made to seem biological and natural through an enactment of performativity. “Performativity is thus not a singular ‘act’, for it is always a reiteration of norm or set of norms, it conceals or dissimulates the convention of which it is a repetition”(1993, 283). One can therefore say that, a person’s gender is not what is composed of naturally or biologically but it is what one does repeatedly in his/ her interaction with society. It is therefore the repeated performance of gender roles in marriage and other aspects of Ghanaian life that puts women in a lower standing than men because the society allocates power and decisive roles to men.

Marriage in Ghana is a union between two families. Before a couple gets married both families of the bride and groom inquire about each other to make sure that the proposed partner is acceptable. The inquiry process involves asking question about the expectations of both families from their known associates. Questions about the man’s ability to provide for the woman, occupation, temperament and general social standing are asked whereas the woman’s fertility, cooking skills, and temperament are investigated. This marriage procedure

makes the man and woman selected characters for a marital performance of which both society and family are the audience. All the members of the audience (family) have their own expectations regarding the performers. Usually such expectations put economic power and control in the hands of the man as he is considered the head and expected to protect and provide for the family, while the woman is considered a helper who is expected to serve the man with all humility. Opong, 2006 observes that;

Motherhood has been supported and valued, and systems of domestic norms and practices have been geared toward optimizing female reproductive potential over the life course and this therefore increases pressures to procreate from spouse's family (audience) during the reproductive years in Ghana" (656).

The society considers women who serve their husbands with humility well trained. In most Ghanaian societies modest women are supposed to address their husbands as lords. Although there is diversity among ethnic groups, recognition of men by wives with powerful names is common to most societies. Among the Ga people of the Greater Accra region, women usually refer to their husbands as "Minuntso" literally meaning my Lord which is taken as a sign of their modesty, while Asantes refer to their husbands as "Miwura" which can be translated into English as "My owner". The names given to men by their wives and sanctioned by society makes them super humans with power over the home. This common trend which occurs at home repeatedly is somehow imbibed by the children. A reflection of this is presented in *A Doll's House* with names Tovald Helmer uses to describe Nora; Tovald calls Nora little sky-lark, squirrel, and song bird (1961, 202). Tovald reinforces his position and power in the house by describing Nora with names of fragile animals.

Polygamy and dowry is also a feature of the society that causes imbalance in the gender roles among Ghanaians. In Ghanaian societies, a man can marry as many wives as he wants provided he can take care of them, and pay their dowry. Most men therefore feel the payment of dowry is an opportunity to own a wife, and this makes them treat their wives as commodities. Others extend this idea to their daughters.

As Butler states, gender is not something biological, but it is made to seem biological and natural through repeated performance of certain roles in social interactions. Gender roles performed by Ghanaian women usually make them unequal to the men. The issue of gender inequality with regards to performance of roles is a problem facing Ghana and Africa at large. Efforts made by government to implement policies to shake remnants of indigenous thinking in the performance of unequal gender roles include the introduction and promotion of Girl Child Education by the British which dates from 1848, and was strongly adhered to and

promoted by the CPP government after independence; promulgation of the 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees protection of the rights of women and children in Article 27 and 28 respectively; the intestate Succession Law (PNDCL 111), 1985 also ensures that the spouses and children of men who died intestate would have a right to inherit the property of the man irrespective of mediating factors such as state/nature of the marriage/union, cultural norms and practices. This final law empowers widows economically to survive on their own without the help of spouse's family.

Ghana has come a long way in the quest to promote gender equality over the last 56 years. Commitment of government to the plight of women and children led to the establishment of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) in January 2001 to promote the welfare of women and children. The country is also battling domestic violence with the Domestic Violence Bill passed into law in 2007 and the establishment of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service to handle all forms of violence against women. The issue is worrying and has attracted the attention of the United Nations, World Health Organization, NGO's, individuals and other stake holders with interest in gender issues to help solve the problem. With all these government institutions and policies in place, gender inequality and violence against women is still present in various forms across the country.

As there is no equilibrium in the performance of gender roles fifty six years after independence, Ibsen's 19<sup>th</sup> century drama (*A Doll's House*) is a valid reflection of life in Ghanaian communities and the text provokes social debate. The relevance of the play in Ghana is also reflected in its constant use in two major universities that offer theatre studies in Ghana. In discussing gender issues presented in *A Doll's House* with course instructors at the University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast, I discovered that the majority use Ibsen's plays to provoke intellectual debate among students regarding solutions to current gender problems. In the next section, I discuss teaching of Ibsen dramas in two major Ghanaian universities.

### 4.3 Teaching Ibsen in Ghanaian Universities

The preceding section places Ibsen's Nora in contemporary and indigenous Ghanaian societies as a reflection of unequal gender roles. This section discusses the pedagogical use of Ibsen's dramas in two Ghanaian Universities. Although one may find the leap from gender issues to pedagogical use of the text somewhat sudden, it is important to note that from interviews conducted on course instructors at universities teaching Ibsen, most of them claim they use Ibsen dramas because they believe social issues presented in the plays reflect life in Ghanaian communities and can provoke intellectual debate among students. The purpose of this section is to question why Ibsen was incorporated and maintained in the academic syllabus of students by examining the pedagogical use of Ibsen dramas in various courses along with interviews of key educators responsible for teaching Ibsen.

The use of Ibsen dramas in training theatre professionals in most cultures cannot be overlooked due to the nature, and impact of Ibsen's works in contemporary societies and his contribution to the development of modern drama. David Krasner, an established theatre scholar's research *History of Modern Drama* (2012), begins with Henrik Ibsen and ends with Samuel Beckett. His approach to the training of theatre students is reinforced by Moi's argument that one cannot study modern drama without reading Ibsen(2006). The theatre student has no choice, whether Ibsen's works are of interest or not, because his position in modern drama is a necessary bridge to cross in theatre studies. In an explanatory essay, Kimani Gecau explains how *Hedda Gabler* and *An Enemy of the People* were incorporated in the academic syllabus of Kenya students in the 1980s. He stated that, political issues in *An Enemy of the People* were not analyzed thoroughly due to fear of oppression from political leaders, corruption and prevailing political situations in Kenya in the 80's (1997, 202-223). Chipawo<sup>27</sup> group of Zimbabwe and Namibia, which empowers children and educates society through the performing arts, also employs adaption of Ibsen plays in training young theatre professionals.

Ibsen dramas emerged in Ghanaian schools shortly before independence. The attainment of Ghana's independence in 1957 introduced a lot of changes in the country's socio-economic and political culture. One of which was for the country to assume a new identity devoid of all colonial influences in all sectors. The National Theatre Movement was tasked to develop

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<sup>27</sup>See <http://www.chipawozim.org/>

indigenous Ghanaian literature that will reflect the culture and customs of Ghanaians and train professionals for emerging theatre companies. In attempts to train theatre professionals in an educational system developed on British traditions and systems, leaders of the movement resorted to non- Ghanaian dramatic works, mostly European drama's because Ghana at that time had little published dramatic works in its repertoire<sup>28</sup>. Ibsen's works developed roots in the Ghanaian academic curricula during this period. The section is organized to present a short historical overview of Ibsen dramas in Ghana, how they are used in the theatre departments of the University of Ghana and the University of Cape Coast, performance of Ibsen dramas in the academic institutions and factors accounting for non-performance of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian theatres.

#### ***4.3.1 Teaching Ibsen in the University of Ghana***

For several years, Ibsen has played a significant role in the education of drama students in Ghana. The introduction of Ibsen dramas in the academic syllabus of Ghanaian students can be traced back to the National Theatre Movement. In the endeavors of the National Theatre Movement to both train and supply professionals for Ghana's growing theatre industry and to develop Ghanaian literary theatre and performance, several European dramas were used for experimentation. Efua T. Sutherland, a leader of the National Theatre Movement and Joseph Coleman de Graft who was appointed as the first director of the drama studio in 1962, both had advanced drama education in the United Kingdom. Efua Sutherland went Cambridge University, and the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Joe de Graft was also awarded a grant to the United Kingdom and United States to observe amateur, university and professional drama. Their training exposed them to works of western dramatist like William Shakespeare, Bertolt Brecht, Henrik Ibsen, Eugene Ionesco, and Bernard Shaw. Joe de Graft and Efua Sutherland employed the works of these western dramatists to develop a syllabus for drama students.

As was mentioned earlier, the Ghanaian educational system was established by the British government, hence the works of William Shakespeare took center stage in the training of drama students. The British government resourced the university library with books making

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<sup>28</sup>Dramatic works known to Ghanaians during this period were unpublished Ananse stories transferred through oral history in various communities and short plays (unpublished) of concert party groups. The plays and stories did not follow the structure of western plays.

works of William Shakespeare readily available to the university community. While works of Shakespeare took centre stage in theatre performances, Henrik Ibsen, Bertolt Brecht, Bernard Shaw and other playwrights took prominence in the “Play Analysis and Interpretation” class.<sup>29</sup>In my interview with Sandy Akhurst, a lecturer of the School of Performing Arts who had been trained by the National Theatre Movement, he explained that it was Joe de Graft who introduced *A Doll’s House* to the students. Akhurst was among the second group of students that enrolled in the School of Performing Arts<sup>30</sup> in October 1964, and was taught *A Doll’s House* in 1965. He said because of the British influence on the university system, Shakespeare was a requirement every semester but Joe de Graft kept Ibsen alive by introducing students to Ibsen dramas almost every semester and in 1967, during their final year, a student adapted *Peer Gynt*. A group from Norway also came to Ghana to record an excerpt of an African version of *A Doll’s House* in 1957 of which he (Sandy Akhurst), Mary Yerenkyi and another student played the roles of Tovald Helmer, Nora, and Nils Krogstad.<sup>31</sup>

The long use of Ibsen dramas in the School of Performing Arts can also be attributed to lecturers in the school who had their training in the School of Performing Arts. About 90% of course instructors in the drama department in one way or the other were trained by the school. The department gives the opportunity to lecturers to select dramas related to their course of instruction for students to analyze and relate to the study. From the interviews conducted, it is visible that Ibsen was constantly maintained each year by at least one lecturer in the school. Between the period of 1970 and 1980, Sandy Akhurst was the lecturer for “Play Analysis and Interpretation” in the drama department. According to him, studying Ibsen’s works as a student developed his interest in Ibsen such that he constantly maintained *A Doll’s House* every year on his list of dramas for students. He further stated that although he knew Ibsen was being used in the “Modern European Drama Class”, he kept on using his works because his students seem to discover new ideas each time they analyzed *A Doll’s House*.

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<sup>29</sup> Play Analysis and Interpretation is course focused on the techniques of analyzing plays and interpreting them for production or performance, with emphasis on plot structure, character, and stylistic elements.

<sup>30</sup> In this section, name School of Performing Arts, will be used to describe theatre department of the University of Ghana.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Sandy Akhurst, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

Teaching of Ibsen dramas intensified from the 1970's when more courses were introduced in the department. Students therefore had the opportunity to read Ibsen's works not only in 'Play analysis and interpretation' but in Modern Drama studies, Theatre History, Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Introduction to Period and Style, Play writing, Theatre for Development and Drama in Education based on the lecturers choice of dramas. During the field work for this research in August 2012 it was discovered that *A Doll's House* has been in constant use in the Modern European Drama class for final year undergraduate students, the Dramatic Theory and Criticism third year class also had *An Enemy of the People* (1882) on the reading list, with graduate African Theories of Drama students reading *Nneora: an African Doll's House*<sup>32</sup>. Details of the above mentioned courses are presented below.

#### **4.3.2 Modern European Drama Studies**

Ibsen plays a major role in Modern Drama studies in the school. The course involves the study of drama from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century starting with Henrik Ibsen as the father of modern drama. The content encompasses the study of other dramatist like Bertolt Brecht, August Strindberg, George Bernard Shaw, Arthur Miller, and Luigi Pirandello but Ibsen's role in the study process can never be sidelined because the study is structured to begin with realistic plays of Ibsen and move to the works of more recent dramatists. Students are introduced to a short biography and analysis of one major play by all these dramatists on the curriculum; they consider their theatre philosophy, literary and historical values.

Instructed by Awo Mana Asiedu, a lecturer in theatre studies at the drama department, the course is designed to;

- a) Study Ibsen's realistic drama and variety of dramas that emerged after Ibsen.
- b) Study modern plays both as individual texts and in relation to each other and also explore techniques employed by the playwrights.
- c) Study the factors that gave rise to Modernism and how these influenced the creation of Modern Euro-American drama.
- d) To examine whether traditional ideas of genre can be applied to modern plays.
- e) To explore how modern plays reflect the societies in which they are written and how issues discussed can be related to current situations in Ghana.

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<sup>32</sup>*Nneora: an African Doll's House* is a free Nigerian adaption of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* by Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh. A detailed discussion of the text is presented in chapter 5.



- f) Teach students basic research skills, work with peers on group presentations and learn how to do oral presentations.

According to Awo Asiedu, the unavailability of Ibsen dramas limits the choice of books used in class. She further explains that her selection of material for the Modern European Drama Course is first and foremost based on availability of the text and this has resulted in the continued use of *A Doll's Houses* since 1994. Although she has used *Hedda Gabler* and *An Enemy of the People* before, she observed that students preferred *A Doll's House*, not only because the text is readily available, but also because of the message. Although issues of corruption, manipulation, and rebellion are high in Ghana, students find the gender issues very relevant and this usually makes the class lively with debates between male and female students when they discuss Nora's decision.

Rashida Rosario, a teaching assistant for the Modern European Drama class said of all the books on their reading list she finds *A Doll's House* the most interesting because the issues discussed are happening every day in Ghana. She further stated that, women are still being trampled upon;

There are so many women who don't know their rights. I think it is empowering to women if Nora is able to break through, she is able to break free from the bounds of that patriarchal society, I think this play empowers women to do same. Not necessarily within the marital home maybe even in the world of commerce. You can even have a woman being the chief executive and maybe there are men there who don't like that idea and they might want to downplay or bring her down so the play encourages women to break free from those bounds.<sup>33</sup>

Students from the Modern Drama class usually forget about Ibsen's biography and contribution to modern drama because they find issues of his drama more relevant to their society than his personality and his genre innovations according to Asiedu. The course outline for August 2012 gave them the opportunity to study *A Doll's House*, in relation to Chengzhou He's, article '*Ibsen's Men in Trouble: Masculinity and Norwegian Modernity*'. In an interview with some students one week after the class, most of them did not even talk of the biography, but spoke long on the Nora's actions and its impact on the Ghanaian society. They could recount the debate that went on during the class session with some males condemning Chengzhou He's article for turning a blind eye to Nora's crime.

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Rashida Rosario, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2012, Accra.

### **4.3.3 Dramatic Theory and Criticism**

Although Ibsen resources are not readily available in the drama department of the School of Performing Arts, pedagogical use of Ibsen in the School of Performing Arts keeps growing each academic year due to the availability of some selected Ibsen text on the internet. *An Enemy of the People* (1882) was included in the list of dramas for the Dramatic Theory and Criticism course planned for third year undergraduate students in the 2012 academic year. The course is designed to introduce students to evaluation, analysis, and criticism of theories and practice of drama by focusing on innovations of major drama theorist like Aristotle, Stanislavsky, Ibsen, Brecht, Artaud, Grotowski, Boal, and Soyinka. The course encourages students to critically examine theories like drama, tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, and melodrama as well as realism, naturalism through play productions, video productions, and textual analysis for criticism, evaluation and analysis.

Elias Asiamah, a professor in Theatre Arts and lecturer of the course argues that Ibsen's dramatic style and theory qualifies him to be on the set of books for students particularly because his themes address everyday issues of the bourgeoisie. He further states that although there is virtually no copy of *An Enemy of The People* in the school, the internet provides enough information on Ibsen (translated text, movies, and excerpts of productions) which give him the opportunity to break away from the *Doll's House* tradition and use *An Enemy of The People*. Comparing *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*, Asiamah is of the view that his students find *An Enemy of the People* more appealing. Despite the fact that the women issue is equally important, most students take interest in *An Enemy of the People* because of their upbringing, culture and socialization which forbids women to leave their children. The issues of corruption, pollution and degradation of the environment also make topical themes, thus in *An Enemy of the People* is pertinent to Ghana's development.

### **4.3.4 African Theories of Drama**

The African theories of Drama course is structured to help graduate students discover patterns of dramaturgy that may be observed in Africa. The course explores the beginning of African drama, theories and practice, with a careful study of earlier dramatic works considering effects of colonialism on earlier works. It also identifies adapted western plays, carefully studying writer's style, structure and effects, political and social histories on the works. Tracie Chima Utoh- Ezeajugh's *Nneora: An African Doll's House* which is a free

adaptation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a selected text for this course. The universality of Ibsen's themes makes it suitable to address social problems in many countries. Attempts to localize Ibsen for indigenous audiences have resulted in the production of several versions of Ibsen plays, most of which are centered on developmental issues. Kamaluddin Nilu of the Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) in Dhaka and Robert McLaren of the Chipawo group in South Africa and Zimbabwe are noted for such Ibsen performances.

According to Awo Mana Asiedu, instructor of the course, the fact that somebody in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will find *A Doll's House* useful to adapt, makes issues discussed in the play very relevant today. She is of the view that the feminist angle is certainly of interest to her students each time the play is brought up for discussion especially in comparison to the Nigerian adaptation which transports Nora from Norway to Nigeria. In an interview with Maxwell Odoi, a graduate student, he suggested that *A Doll's House* is more popular in Ghanaian classrooms because of its feminist aspects. He stated that "we are in an era where women are becoming more assertive and they need examples of people who have made it to be able to make them more assertive. Our training and culture makes the women succumb to men so the only place to change this ideology is the classrooms" (Interview, 23/08/2012). Asiedu Jon-Paul, a graduate directing student, is also of the view that the Nigerian adaptation will make the message clearer and erase the notions of female emancipation as just an issue of the western world. He further stated that, as a directing student he finds "*Nneora: an African Doll's House* more suitable for the Ghanaian stage as compared to Ibsen's original" (Interview, 23/08/2012).

#### **4.3.5 Teaching Ibsen in the University of Cape Coast**

Teaching of Ibsen in Ghanaian drama institutions is not limited to the University of Ghana. The Theatre Department of the University of Cape Coast although a more recent institution makes extensive use of Ibsen dramas in training its students. Since the establishment of the department in 2004, *A Doll's House*, has been in constant use in the Play Analysis and Interpretation class as well as in teaching Modern Drama. Between the periods of 2009 and 2012, excerpts and dialogues from *A Doll's House* have also been employed to train Acting students. According to Victor Yankah, professor of Theatre Studies and head of the Theatre Department, the use of Ibsen dramas in the University did not start in 2004. He explained that, he taught *Ghost* (1881) and *A Doll's House* to students in the English Department for several years before moving to the Theatre Arts Department in 2004. Yankah is of the view

that, the extensive use of Ibsen in the Theatre Arts Department is due to the controversial nature of themes discussed in his dramas. In response to a question on the repeated use of Ibsen dramas in the courses, he stated that “Ibsen as a realist tries to project on stage what people do not want to talk about and this gives his students enough information to relate the issues discussed in the dramas to current issues affecting Ghanaians, thus making debates and presentations in class very interesting” (Interview with Victor Yankah, 5/09/2012).

#### **4.3.6 Play Analysis and Interpretation**

A major way that Ibsen’s text is scrutinized in Ghana is through analysis and interpretation of students. The course, Play analysis and interpretation at the University of Cape Coast is designed to train students in techniques of analyzing plays and interpreting them for production or performance, based on selected dramatic text, with emphasis on plot structure, stylistic devices, character development in terms of dramatic action and its basic conflicts and resolution. In the study of this course, students analyze *A Doll’s House* critically in relation to characterization, plot, period, culture, symbols and most importantly relate themes to current issues in Ghana. Instructed by Xornam Attah, professor in Theatre Studies, the course is focused on discovering the relevance of dramas to contemporary Ghanaian society. After six years of teaching *A Doll’s House* consecutively, Attah is of the view that the best way to analyze *A Doll’s House* is to forget about Darwin, Marxist and other science theories and use practical issues relating to society because drama is a reflection of society not a science project. He further states that although his students learn about Ibsen and *A Doll’s House* in Modern Drama Studies, they still have the interest in reading it again for analysis and interpretation because it gives them the freedom to express their sentiments.

#### **4.3.7 Modern Drama**

The pedagogy for teaching Ibsen dramas in Modern Drama Studies at the University of Cape Coast is similar to the University of Ghana. The course is centered on drama from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century starting with Ibsen. It tries to look at factors that motivated the modern era, and its impact on the dramas. Unlike the University of Ghana which has limited Ibsen resources, the Theatre Arts Department of the University of Cape Coast has considerable copies of *A Doll’s House* and other Ibsen dramas in its library. With a host of Ibsen dramas to choose from, the Modern Drama Course still keeps to *A Doll’s House* but

approaches it from a different perspective. Professor of Theatre Studies, Efion Johnson, instructor of the course argues that *A Doll's House* is not a feminist play but rather could provide bases for feminist theoreticians to promote their movement. With reference to Ibsen's message to the Norwegian Women's Right League quoted by his biographer (Michael Meyer 1971, 457), he educates his students to approach *A Doll's House* with open minds and forget about the women issues. According to Efion, Ibsen just used a woman (Nora) to send a message about humanity so it is better to forget about the feminist ideology and see the play as something relating to humans. According to Efion, he prefers *A Doll's House* to *Hedda Gabler* because his students could relate better to the themes in *A Doll's House* especially with previous knowledge of the text from their analysis and interpretation class.

Although *A Doll's House* has been used extensively in Ghanaian universities, the approaches used in analyzing the play always bring out new ideas that make the play interesting to students. Comparing Efion Johnson's Modern Drama Class to Awo Asiedu's Class, one could note that even though both courses use *A Doll's House*, Asiedu tries to present the feminist aspect of the text while Efion presents a humanist perspective. The analysis and interpretation class of University of Cape Coast also concentrates the study of Ibsen's themes on its relation to current Ghanaian social issues and how to solve them. The next section studies Ibsen's performance history in the universities.

#### **4.4 Performing Ibsen in the Universities**

As mentioned in Chapter three, the main form of active theatre in Ghana is on university campuses. Performances of Greek tragedies, Shakespeare and African playwrights are all prominent on these stages. Although *A Doll's House* has been used as study material in the universities for decades, its incidence of performance is very low. The University of Cape Coast has not yet performed any Ibsen play since the establishment of the Theatre Arts Department in 2004. According to the director of the Theatres Arts Department, drama performances in the school are rare because the department has no theatre building and it has to use the big auditorium at the University for all its performances. The main way that students get to know the techniques of acting is through a compulsory course, Introduction to Acting. With this course, Theatre Arts students learn the techniques of acting by performing excerpts of plays. Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is one play used in the training. According to Xornam Attah, the elaborate details, stage setting and directions makes *A Doll's House* an

important text in the training of acting students. With excerpts from *A Doll's House*, acting students mime detailed actions in relation to stage direction, costume and props.

The University of Ghana staged a major Ibsen performance in 2006. From 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of April, *A Doll's House* was performed for three nights at the University Amphi-theatre. The play was directed by Jane Owusu, a graduate student from the directing class, as a project assignment. With the exception of a few staff theatre productions, all theatre performances on the university of Ghana campus are student productions directed and performed by students for assessment. As a result of this, most directors try as much as possible to keep to the original text. In this performance, the director presented to her audience with issues affecting women and marriage and attempted to emancipate women through Nora's final exit but culture, society and audience affected the final outcome of the performance. Anku Solace Sefakor, records in her thesis the problems faced by the director in her attempt to perform *A Doll's House*, on a Ghanaian stage. Apparently the director encountered opposition from her supervisor who suggested that the text raised issues that were not suitable for public viewing and should not be performed because of its complex nature.<sup>34</sup>

Although the performance was a success, the director faced a lot of challenges in presenting Ibsen's nineteenth century drama to a twenty-first century Ghanaian audience. Owusu recorded her challenges in her master's thesis titled: *Challenges in Directing Ibsen's A Doll's House*. As it was a student production and was to be assessed by her lecturers, she tried to stage the play in a realistic setting, following most details in the text. Unfortunately the effect of reality was not achieved because she staged the play in an amphi-theatre instead of a proscenium stage. The picture frame effect of the proscenium stage that separates the audience from the action was therefore lost giving the audience poor view of the performances with the elaborate stage setting on the amphi-theatre stage creating site-line problems. Finally Owusu was faced with a culture and audience that frowns on women leaving their marital homes and children, causing her to eventually change the ending of the play. With all the challenges faced by the director, she still managed to break new ground in moving Ibsen dramas from the classroom to the stage.

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<sup>34</sup> Anku Solace Sefakor, *Contemporary Ghanaian Perceptions of A Doll's House*, 2012, unpublished.

#### **4.4.1 Non Performance of Ibsen Dramas in Ghana**

Despite the long use of Ibsen dramas in the training of students within Ghanaian university theatre departments, there is little evidence that Ibsen has been performed in the Ghanaian theatre. In a discussion with directing students of the University of Ghana and the University of Cape Coast, lecturers and other stake holders in the Ghanaian theatre industry, I was able to gather data on the possible causes for the lack of performances of Ibsen's plays on the public stage. The following is a summary of contributing factors as identified by key educators and theatre practitioners:

1. **Availability of Ibsen dramas:** Lack of resources are a key concern for directors and performers in Ghana. Ibsen dramas and related resources on these texts are scarce. It is difficult for directors to get good copies for consideration and performance. In a search for Ibsen dramas at the University of Ghana, I discovered that the bookshop had no single copies of the plays, in fact the only copies available in the libraries were in a collection of plays like *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama*.
2. **Funding:** Funding is a major challenge for most theatre companies in Ghana. Ghanaian businesses do not invest in the theatre industry, thus making it difficult for performance groups to raise funds. In a discussion, most of the directing students that I spoke to at the University of Ghana were of the view that it is too expensive to put up an Ibsen performances especially because of the detailed realistic stage setting and the lack of funds provided by the school for performances.
3. **Ghanaian Culture and Audience Expectations:** indigenous Ghanaian culture encourages women to stay at home and be submissive to their husbands. The culture generally frowns on women to leave their marital home, take up assertive roles and control men. This therefore makes it difficult for directors to present characters like Hedda Gabler and Nora on stage for fear of audience disapproval.
4. **Post-colonial Audience:** Ghana's theatre industry developed out of several colonial and post-colonial experiences and this has a great impact on the interest of the audience. Theatre audiences in Ghana can be categorized into three groups, namely the concert party group, elite and student groups, and the indigenous traditional audiences. It is therefore difficult for a university theatre director to present adaptations of Ibsen that can satisfy all these disparate groups.
5. **Lack of experimentation :** Due to the fact that majority of theatre productions on the university campuses are assignment, directors keep to the performance text with little experimentation on how to make the text attractive to audience outside the university

community. This therefore hampers patronage of the general public on the university theatre productions.



## CHAPTER 5: ADAPTING IBSEN FOR GHANAIAN AUDIENCE

### 5.1 Introduction

Drama is a collaborative art. Be it text or performance, it needs an audience for its potential to be fully discovered. Quality promotion of a text results in larger audiences, creating long patronage of an author's work. For Ibsen's work to be fully recognized by Ghanaian audiences beyond the academic circles, it is significant that the text or performance is appropriated to suit the needs and interests of the audience. The different interests of multiple audiences need to be considered by theatre or literature producers if Ibsen's dramas are to be effectively promoted in Ghana. I believe it is possible to adapt Ibsen to suit the needs of all these Ghanaian audiences because the issues discussed in the dramas can be used to provoke important contemporary social debates. Successful results from adapted Ibsen performances like Kamaluddin Nilu's "*Brand*" that drew spectators from villages all over Bangladesh, makes it clear that Ibsen can be well received through adaption in Ghana. In a paper presented at IX International Ibsen conference, Kamaludin Nilu claimed that; 'it is very vital to present the audience with issues and locations that are common to them'. He compared an adaption of *Ghosts* (*Krishnabibar*) and translation of *The Wild Duck* (*Bunohans*). The adaptation of *Ghost* was successful because names of characters, locations, occupations and ceremonies were changed to suit the everyday life of the Islamic community but the translation (*The Wild Duck*) did not intrigue the audience because they viewed it as something foreign to their culture.<sup>35</sup> The discourse in Ibsen dramas presents problems of contemporary societies. It is therefore necessary for a theatre producer to transport the discourse and localize characters and the other dramatic elements to make the performance interesting for the audience.

Having explained in the previous chapters that Ibsen does not move outside the academic institutions, this Chapter is designed to propose ways in which Ibsen dramas can be adapted to attract indigenous audiences. Based on some of the reasons causing non-performance of Ibsen plays in Ghanaian theatres raised in Chapter four, this chapter proposes three approaches to adapting Ibsen dramas for Ghanaian audiences. This Chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part is focused on the needs of both reading and theatre audiences

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<sup>35</sup>Nilu, Kamaludin. "Staging Ibsen in Bangladesh: Relevance and Adaptation" *Proceedings IX International Ibsen Conference, Bergen 5-10 June 2000*. 2001, 119-125

with interest in structured dramatic works. *Nneora: an African Dolls House*, a free Nigerian adaption of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* authored by Tracy Utoh- Ezeajugh will be discussed. The intention is not to claim that Nigerian culture is similar to Ghanaian, but to show how an adaptation with African cultural and social elements can work in a West African context. In this Nigerian adaptation, traditional elements are combined with Ibsen's dramatic narrative to make a post-colonial version of the text. An analysis of the text and appeal of this form of adaptation to Ghanaian audiences will be considered.

The second part studies pre-colonial theatre traditions in Ghana with an emphasis on storytelling theatre traditions. Storytelling is an indigenous theatrical performance practice that attracts both literate and non-literate audiences in Ghana. It is a good tool for communication, promoting education, entertaining people and transmitting indigenous values and history. It is an age long tradition appealing to both the young and old and is still present in some rural communities in Ghana. The section explains how Ibsen can be adapted to a storytelling performance practice and provides the example of an ongoing theatre for development project that uses *An Enemy of the People* as the basis of storytelling. To further elaborate on the possible use of Ibsen's plays for this storytelling genre *Peer Gynt* is considered as it has similarities to an earlier Ghanaian text (*Marriage of Anansewa*), which was developed through experimentation with western theatre traditions and indigenous Ananse story.

Chapter five ends with a proposed approach of presenting Ibsen through Ghanaian concert party theatre. Concert party theatre is Ghana's popular theatre culture that began in the colonial era. It communicates with a broad audience because of its unique approach to theatre which integrates Ghanaian highlife music, comic scenarios, and characters and topical issues. The central idea for this Chapter is to test whether Ibsen can work as material for adaptation of Ghanaian performance forms of storytelling and concert party popular theatre to shake remnants of colonial performance practices as well as provoke social debate among audiences.

## **5.2 Adapted Ibsen Text (*Nneora: an African Doll's House*)**

The Nigerian text *Nneora: an African Doll's House* published in 2005 is a study of virtues of womanhood in Africa. The Nigerian name 'Nneora' literally translated as 'mother of all'

symbolizes the struggles of a strong and loving heroine who defies all odds to save her family only to realize that, Ikenna, her husband does not recognize her efforts and questions her integrity. When she discovers her integrity is being questioned by her husband, she humbly walks out of the union with her children.

Since the audience is presented solely with objects that are not culturally bound to a specific meaning, any spectator from any culture can receive the objects presented in the context of their own culturally specified experience and deduce meaning. (Fischer-Lichte Erika 2005: 32).

Referring to Fischer-Lichte one can say that most adaptations are successful because the spectators come to consume a finished product (performance) and the success of the performance is relative to each spectator due to his/her own personal life experiences. The product be it a Bangladesh “Brand”, Nigerian or Japanese “Nora” makes meaning to the spectator because the “objects in the performance are not culturally bound”. The performance does not carry a single meaning for all spectators but allows each one to perceive the objects in a special way. Just after eight years of publication, *Nneora: an African Doll's House* has recorded a great deal of success on the African continent. It has been incorporated into the academic syllabus of graduate students of the School of Performing Arts, Ghana. In an interview with Maxwell Odoi and Aseidu John Paul, graduate students from the School of Performing Arts, Ghana, on 23/09/2012, they clearly stated that “*Nneora: an African Doll's House* will have a better performance history compared to Ibsen’s *A Doll's House* in Ghana”. Odoi, compares ‘Nora’ and ‘Nneora’ and further says that “Nora may be roaming all over the world but will be hardly recognized in Ghana, Nneora on the other hand can be identified out of every three market women on the streets of Accra, because Nigeria and Ghana have a similar culture and most importantly fight the same war as far as feminism and gender equality is concerned”.

As an intercultural text, I believe *Nneora: an African Dolls House*, will appeal more to the Ghanaian reading and elite audiences because it is a meeting point between two different cultures and values. The audience in this category also falls in a post-colonial culture with experiences based on western and African ideals. The experience of both western and African culture by the audience makes it possible for them to perceive intercultural works and understand the discourse. In the introduction of *Women's Intercultural Performance* by Holledge Julie and Tompkins Joanne, they suggest that:

Interculturalism is the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions, a temporary fusing of styles and/or techniques and/or cultures. [...] It is impossible to provide an elaborate ‘recipe’ of or for

interculturalism because the nature of the interrelationship between cultures and between artists depends heavily on the individuals and the individual cultures concerned. It also depends on the encounter, the exchange, any financial contributions and the complexities of mixing certain cultures (2000, 7)

The composition of elements makes the text an intercultural work. It is a fusion of elements and issues of 19<sup>th</sup> century Norway and 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. The text is neither completely western nor African but makes meaning to the African audience because of elements familiar to them.

### **5.2.1 Plot Structure and Synopsis**

Unlike Ibsen's *A Doll's House* which is structured according to acts and scenes; *Nneora: an African Doll's House* is structured in two parts and nine 'situations'. While the adaptation is still tied to the Christmas season, it takes place over more than three the nights that create Ibsen's dramatic unity of time. Set in the 21st century Nigeria with modern elements like cars, banks, hospitals, and a combination of Nigerian traditional and modern western costumes, the action of the plot is scattered around several places. It begins in a busy market, and then moves to Ikenna's home, Dr. Frank's office, a busy street and finally ends in Ikenna's home. Part one is composed of five situations with part two having four situations. Part one is devoted to plot exposition and provides background information on all the characters. The play opens with an introduction of Nneora and Ikenna (Nora and Torvald) in situation one as single independent people in the local market. Ikenna, an unemployed university graduate, is attacked by Mama Udauk to pay his debts but he is saved by Nneora who pays the debt and offers to help him secure a job. With the help of Neora's lover (Osita), she manages to secure Ikenna a job in the bank.

The action moves rapidly to show Nneora and Ikenna as a married couple in their comfortably furnished home in situation three. Here Utoh- Ezeajugh presents her audience with a much older and pregnant Nneora, suggesting that several years have passed. Nneora asks Ikenna if she can use the car to pick their daughters from her sister's place, but he refuses. The confrontation between Ikenna and Nneora reveals his condemnation of all women and even of his own girls because his desire is for a male child to perpetuate his name. Ikenna later receives a phone call from a stranger who claims he has delivered to his office a very sensitive letter about someone close. Nneora becomes very worried and

persuades Ikenna to forget about the letter until Christmas Eve. The fourth situation moves the action to Dr. Frank's (Dr. Rank) Office. Dr. Frank seeing Nneora worried tries to cheer her up and informs her that she is going to have twin male children. Situation five ends with part one on a busy street where Nneora meets Mama Uduak and her childhood friend Linda (Mrs. Linde). The context for this encounter in situation five is the performance of a street dancing group in colorful costume.

The major innovation in the structural adaptation of *Nneora: an African Doll's House* is the dramatizing of plot events that precede the opening of Ibsen's play. The dramaturgical technique employed by Ibsen in *Pillars of Society*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Ghosts*, and *A Doll's House*, involves the revelation of past secrets from the lives of his central characters. In the text, Utoh- Ezeajugh dramatizes these past secrets; the first situation in the second part of her adaptation is composed entirely of elements from the retrospective plot in Ibsen's text (Utoh- Ezeajugh, 2005, 60- 88). Situation one of part two occurs in the living room of Nneora and Ikenna. The action begins with Nneora and Linda discussing their past lives. Nneora entreats Linda to move from the hotel and stay with her but she refuses and informs Nneora of her children and the intent to look for her husband. In a reenactment of the past events, the audiences are shown the ordeals that both Nneora and Linda have suffered at the hands of Osita. Nneora finally reveals the identity of Osita to Linda. After both Linda and Nneora have discovered Osita is Linda's husband, Nneora tries to apologize to Linda but she snatches her bag and runs out saying she needs to be alone.

In situation three, the worried Nneora is confronted again by Osita in her home. Nneora tries to plead with him but he refuses and threatens her again. She tries to convince Osita that his family may surprise him this Christmas season but Osita denies saying "he does not believe in miracles", and walks out. The action from situation two to four moves at a faster pace. Situation three is set in the bank premises. At the bank's end of year party, Dr. Frank asks if Ikenna is aware of the good news but Nneora stops him from telling Ikenna the result of her ultra-sound scan. Ikenna retrieves the letter from his office at the Christmas party. Nneora tells Ikenna that she is carrying twins but does not reveal the sex of the children to him. Ikenna laments the fact that the babies could be girls. Situation four starts after Ikenna and Nneora have returned home. Ikenna finally reads the letter and becomes frantic. Discovering the truth about Nneora, he condemns and abuses her, ordering her to leave his house with her children. Some few minutes later Osita and Linda walk in to apologize for Osita's actions

with a promise not to discuss the issue again. Linda accidentally informs Ikenna that Nneora is going to give birth to twin boys. Ikenna realizing Nneora's innocence, and delighted with prospect that he is at last to have sons, tries to apologize and convince Nneora to stay. Nneora decides to walk out of the marriage with her daughters.

### **5.2.2 Plot Changes**

Referring to Tompkins and Holledge, *Nneora: an African Doll's House* is the result of “a meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions or a temporary fusing of styles, techniques, or cultures”. The cultures, techniques and styles involved are the Norwegian culture (European) and Nigerian culture (West Africa). Although the text serves as the meeting point of the two cultural traditions, one can identify distinct cultural elements or issues that can be associated with Norway or Nigeria. Changes in the plot with regards to issues affecting modern day Nigeria are very relevant in the text because it makes it local to the Nigerian and the Ghanaian reader. Although there are distinctive features in Nigerian culture and Ghanaian culture, changes in the plot affecting modern day Nigeria could be relevant to the Ghanaian audience because most African countries are battling the issue of corruption, gender inequality, high unemployment rate, and other social vices.

The major transgression that creates the dramatic action in Ibsen's plot is forgery but, Utoh-Ezeajugh replaces it with infidelity. Nneora is accused of infidelity for a crime she did not commit. Ikenna becomes furious after reading the letter without asking Nneora if the contents are true. The importance of forgery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Norway can be judged by the seriousness with which the contemporary critics judged Nora's actions. I agree with Asiedu Awo Mana that “forgery would have not been enough cause to establish conflict for drama set in a country like Nigeria” (20011, 176). Replacing forgery with infidelity made an impact on the Nigerian audience because marriage in traditional and religious African circles is a sacred institution that gives the couple no right to infidelity. As a country composed of Muslims, Christians and indigenous worshipers, audiences appreciate the importance of infidelity as a factor in the plot and relate it to the teachings of the various religions on marriage. Teachings of Islam and indigenous religions give men the power to marry more than one woman but make the woman the sole property of the man. Therefore for woman to commit adultery means she is offering a body that does not belong to her to another man and this will be highly punished in the society. The idea of ‘bride price’ in marriage creates the

impression that a woman has been honoured and bought at a high price by her husband. So if a woman cheats on her husband, it means she has no respect and honour.

With this major transgression moving the action of the plot forward, the playwright tries to address the issue of corruption from a different perspective. She transfers Tovald Helmer's power and position in the bank to Krogstad to address this issue. Tovald Helmer in *A Doll's House* is the manager at the bank where Krogstad works, giving him the power to dismiss him, but in *Nneoma: an African Dolls House*, Ikenna is a subordinate to Osita (Krogstad). The change in the power relationship between the two characters in which the manager is the figure associated with corruption vividly fits 'Transparency International's definition of Corruption as; 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain'. In a 2009 Statistics of Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Nigeria was recorded as a highly corrupt country as compared to Norway and other countries.<sup>36</sup> Utoh-Ezeajugh adjusted her plot to criticize a common canker that is growing fast on the African continent. Today, most Africans in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and elsewhere are faced with selfish leaders and managers who always "want something to give something". They give the best jobs to their friends and family for special favours and make excessive demands on strangers.

The level of corruption in Ghana makes the Nigerian text meaningful to the reading audience. Although the Ghana government and other NGO's have put in place several measures to control and eradicate corruption, it keeps growing. According to Kwesi Atta Sakyi,

"Most corrupt practices in a country are fanned by political corruption, which emanates from the seat of power. In Ghana, our military leader from 1979 to 2000 tried to stamp out corruption but at long last, he failed because corruption is endemic, systemic and has a deep tap root, so cutting the stump does not get rid of it"<sup>37</sup>.

Most corrupt practices in Ghana are motivated by people in power, because they usually demand favours to do their jobs. Public officials consider bribes as gifts and they find it acceptable because Ghanaian traditional culture encourages gift giving. This problem is affecting development in all sectors of the economy. It is not surprising to see citizens of neighboring countries like Togo and Nigeria with Ghanaian passports due to corruption in passport offices. The average Ghanaian today finds bribery and corruption a necessary evil to

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo?gclid=CNKarPK1i7UCFeN4cAod4XoAUg> Transparency International is an NGO, focused on corruption reduction in the world. See

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=259393>

get what they need. For example, an average Ghanaian will pay 200 Ghana cedis approximately 600 NKR to the Electricity Company to get power in his/her home, but will end up paying about 250 Ghana cedis (720NKR) as bribes to officials of the electricity company just to get the power connected. Abuse of power in public offices is so aggravating that it has given birth to a group of people called “Connection men”. These “Connection men” surround institutions that render public services to the community. They act as middle men between public officials and the public. At the seaports and airports, importers are not allowed to deal with the customs and port officials directly due to corruption. In a documentary video by a popular Ghanaian investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas, at the Tema Seaport in Accra, it was uncovered that bribery and corruption at the port starts from the security men at the main gates of the harbour to the top custom official<sup>38</sup>. It is interesting to note that, politicians, lawyers and judges who make the laws and are expected to uphold and defend them find themselves at the topmost level of the corruption ladder. A common thing running in the Ghanaian political circles today is the payment of ‘judgment debts’. The ‘judgment debts’ has to do with the law court’s ruling in favour of sympathizers of the ruling political party. The sympathizers claim their privately owned companies have rendered unpaid services to the state and the judges pass their rule in favour of the companies without any substantial evidence. Issues of corruption discussed above and their nature confirms the fact that the text reflects problems of African societies and can be used to provoke social debate among Ghanaian audiences. As a result of the “gift giving” traditional African culture and ill-attitude of citizens towards corruption, most public officials do not need much power to serve their selfish interest. Just as Nneora finds it acceptable to give Osita a kiss in his office when he agrees to consider Ikenna for a job (Utoh- Ezeajugh, 2005, 26-27), the Ghanaian citizen also accepts the payment of bribes to a public official for his services.

Another interesting development that will attract the Ghanaian reader is the use of children. Utoh-Ezeajugh makes a profound statement on the position of women through the use of the children, which develops their importance in the on-going conflict between the adults. She

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<sup>38</sup>Anas Aremeyaw Anas is an investigative journalist who uses his anonymity and hidden cameras to uncover corruption and evil in the country. Excerpts of his videos can be found on <http://www.youtube.com/>. See *Enemies of the Nation: The dark secrets of Tema Harbor, Spirit Child, The Spell of the Albino, Illegal mining in Ghana*.



allows Ikenna to complain about how Nneora's daughters disturb him in the house and how delightful he will be if Nneora should deliver a male child. Ikenna even goes to the extreme of associating their daughters to punishments bestowed on his family due to Nneora's infidelity. African societies like Nigeria and Ghana believe in the existence of a supreme God, spirits and other lesser gods that bless or curse their subjects due to their actions. Ikenna's negativity towards Nneora for producing female children draws attention to one of the difficulties women face within marriage in Ghana. Childbearing is a very important in the lives of Ghanaians. Married women with children are highly respected in societies. The representation of the tensions regarding the gender of the children and the implied critique of this attitude throughout the text doubtless attracts audiences interested in radical African works.

The text can be analyzed as critique of Ghanaian attitudes towards corruption encouraging readers to emulate Nneora's actions and confront public officials. With Ibsen's core message of self-emancipation present in the text, changes in the plot linked to abuse of power and the contrast between local and foreign elements could make an equivalent adaptation set in Ghana appealing for local audience. Also resources required for a student director to perform an adaptation like this on the Ghanaian university campus will be minimal as compared to Ibsen's original.

### ***5.2.3 Local and Foreign Elements***

I am confident that the use of elements central to the African audience will make readers understand the text through their personal experiences. Utoh- Ezeajugh used opposing cultural elements to emphasize on the contrast between the 'West' and African societies. The contrast between the two societies reflects the conflict between indigenous and western cultural elements in post-colonial societies. Characters such as Mama Uduak and Osita can be referenced as contrasting characters representing the ideals of the western world and the indigenous Nigerian societies. The character of Mama Uduak is an addition to Ibsen's *A Doll's House* but she plays a very significant role in Utoh- Ezeajugh play. She is introduced to the audience in the opening of the play as a matronly looking woman sitting beside her wares in a busy market where Nneora and Mama Uduak have in their shops; a procession of masquerades are parading through the market asking for gifts. The significance of the

masquerades procession is highlighted by the comment Mama Uduak makes about them as she push them away;

MAMA UDUAK: All I know be say, me I no like dis dere new style. How masquerade go enter market de collect tax? Masquerade no be spirit again? So becos masquerade de find money, woman fit see am now (Utoh- Ezeajugh, 2005, 3).

Masquerade procession is a cultural practice that is rooted within the Yoruba culture of Nigeria. The masquerade is believed literally, to be incarnated dead ancestors who come to bless and cleanse communities during festivals. Masqueraders usually parade streets dressed in heavy masks, beads and other traditional ornaments, or at night they may be naked and accompanied by a group of men. Women are generally forbidden from seeing masquerades and there is an injunction that any woman who violates this rule should be put to death to appease the gods, raped or cursed.<sup>39</sup> While masquerade processions for spiritual purposes is dying out, some group of artists use them during important occasions like Christmas, festivals and funerals to entertain and beg for gifts. Mama Uduak's power and position in the society, coupled with her attitude towards the parading masquerades illustrates the hostility of the older generation to changes in African tradition brought about by western influences. Although masquerade processions in Ghana are not meant for spiritual purposes, this situation can be equated to changes in indigenous traditions such as the abandonment of initiation ceremonies in many Ghanaian communities because of Christian and Islamic religious influences.

The use of masquerade procession for entertainment in Nigerian communities today can also be attributed to the effects of cultural tourism and cultural commodification. Due to the popularity of indigenous cultural performances as tourist attractions, the values and strong restrictions associated with the performances have relaxed drastically, but this business has given economic power to the performers by providing them the opportunity to earn money from their own indigenous cultural practices that previously were reserved for special occasions. The use of cultural performances in the text for financial purposes rather than its designated purpose symbolizes the call for Africans to use indigenous culture for positive gain. This issue is presented again in situation five of part one. The action is set in;

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<sup>39</sup> [Ademola Oladimeji Okeowo, The Night Masquerade and Discrimination in Nigeria: Human Rights in Collision. http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228195190\\_The\\_Night\\_Masquerade\\_and\\_Discrimination\\_in\\_Nigeria\\_a\\_Human\\_Rights\\_in\\_Collision](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228195190_The_Night_Masquerade_and_Discrimination_in_Nigeria_a_Human_Rights_in_Collision) & <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/328253>.

*A rather busy street. A dance group in their colourful costumes perform in the middle of the street. Their acrobatic displays and complicated dance movements gradually attract a large audience. Nneora who is on her way from the hospital joins the crowd of spectators. As she is engrossed in watching the dancers, Mama Uduak taps her on the shoulder and she gives a start. (Utoh- Ezeajugh,2005, 49).*

The dance performance in colourful costumes together with the masquerade procession illustrates the rich Nigerian culture embedded in the figure of Mama Uduak. She is found in situations that involved the two performances. Regardless of the artistic value that the cultural performances add to the text, they illuminate the character of Mama Uduak giving background information on indigenous society and practices. To protect this rich African culture in a post-colonial country, Mama Uduak uses ‘Pidgin English<sup>40</sup>’. The use of Pidgin English by her marks the meeting point between western and African language. Even though the text is written in English, the playwright uses Pidgin English to break the gap between Mama Uduak and the educated characters. The Pidgin English can also be analyzed as a symbolic call to writers in post-colonial countries to blend local language and culture with western influences instead of rejecting the local culture. Even-though Mama Uduak lacks academic excellence she tries to excel in the market business and will not take nonsense from anyone. She establishes the first conflict in situation one to set off the action of the plot by confronting Ikenna to pay back all that he owes. As an elderly woman, she also serves as a guide and help to Nneora in the text representing the communal spirit in African societies.

In contrast to the character of Mama Uduak is Osita (Krogstad) representing the western world. A highly educated bank manager costumed in suits and other fashionable clothes, Osita believes that to be successful means to have a western style education, and abuses his wife because she dropped out of school. Osita’s wife, Linda recounts how she was married off to Osita at an early age and dropping out of school because Osita made her pregnant. She finally reveals how Osita abused her both physically and verbally when he was made director in the bank. Osita as a character is portrayed as an oppressor to women and African ideals. Symbolically, he represents the negative impacts of the western world on African culture. One can argue that Utoh-Ezeajugh developed this character to educate African leaders to stand up and fight for their rights and say no to oppression from the western world. The period of colonization is over but most African countries are still under colonial rule due to aid provision. Countries with oil resources are also experiencing civil war because of the actions of multinationals and selfish leaders. Just as Osita uses his position in the bank to

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<sup>40</sup>Pidgin English is a language developed by blending local Nigerian dialect with English.

make demands from Nneora, some superpowers offer aids to countries in dire need with draconian terms attached.

Ibsen's message of emancipation and self-discovery can be elaborated to the African audience through adapted plays with social, economic and political symbols present in the everyday lives of the audience. Promoting Ibsen to the Ghanaian public will only be possible if literature and theatre practitioners present Ibsen's symbols and ideals to the audience through a medium they can comprehend. Utoh-Ezeajugh, tries to introduce the African audience to Ibsen's ideals through her adaptation. The title of her text *Nneora: an African Doll's House* also creates the passion in the reader to find out more about the European *Doll's House* and this in turn has the potential to lead to a new audience for Ibsen.

### **5.3 Pre-colonial Ghanaian Theatre Traditions**

Theatre in Ghana like most societies dates back to prehistory. Ceremonial, religious and social activities in African societies offer various forms of drama. Drama is rooted in the organization of activities in indigenous Ghanaian societies. Children play games incorporate music and dance, men working on their farms sing songs of inspiration to motivate them in their work, fishing folks usually chant and sing songs when drawing their nets and pulling boats to the shore, women in the markets sing to attract their customers. To the Ghanaian, the life cycle is very important and must be observed with commemorating events, rites and rituals. Rites of passage including birth rites, puberty rites, marriage rites and death rights are very significant in Ghanaian indigenous societies and are enriched by dramatic performances. Storytelling, riddles, singing and dancing also serves as popular evening entertainments. The indigenous forms of performance can be found in all Ghanaian communities. The earliest form of professional theatre was developed as a result of colonial influence and culture on indigenous forms of performance practice. It was known as the Concert Party Theatre. The sections below studies how Ibsen dramas can be performed through indigenous performance practices of storytelling and concert party theatre.

## **5.4 Ibsen through Storytelling Performance Practice**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

This section is designed to introduce readers to Ghanaian storytelling traditions and proposes ways in which Ibsen dramas can be adapted to attract audiences. Readers are presented with background information on storytelling, as well as a section that clarifies my view that Ibsen dramas can be applied in this storytelling form. It is followed by a summary of a storytelling project using Ibsen dramas in Ghana together with a short story based on an Ibsen play that is included in this study by the author to give readers an insight into the dramaturgical conventions of Ghanaian stories.

### **5.4.2 Background Information**

Storytelling has been an age-long practice known in almost all cultures and among every human race in one form or the other. Storytelling is a form of communication known among particularly, indigenous societies. In a case study, Henrich Daniel argues that; “both the “Griot”, or African storyteller who happens to be the main conveyer of collective wisdom, entertainer, educator and communicator among tribal people of Africa and the South Indian “Villaptu” are fading out due to new forms of communication such as television, radio and ICT” ( Daniel Henrich, 2001, 24 -27). The griot used to play a very significant role in many tribal African societies. Griots are not only considered as traditional communicators but as opinion leaders, advisers and role models in society. For example in indigenous Ghanaian societies, griots hold high positions of respect because they are capable of crafting stories to teach and educate the young. The art of proverb speaking, poetry, singing, traditional dancing and history transmission is also associated with the griots. During initiation ceremonies, griots are invited to teach and prepare the young on their journey into adulthood.

The importance of storytelling in Ghana is marked by its existence today despite negative impacts of colonization on indigenous performances. Even though festivals and rituals declined by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to colonial oppression, storytelling flourished as family entertainment and later moved into the public domain. Allen Tamakloe writes that “storytelling drama took a more positive turn for the better during the first world war. It developed into a definite art form which was presented in a unique style” (1975). The war attracted the attention of the colonial masters, allowing the indigenes to develop

storytelling drama with heavy audience participation. Storytelling drama has a large number of audiences in Ghana especially in the rural areas among non-literate folks and families. Presenting Ibsen through storytelling has the potential to increase the spread of his dramas in Ghana because the audience base for this form of entertainment is very strong.

### **5.4.3 Conviction**

Dramatic works of Henrik Ibsen have served artists and audiences in the southern part of Africa through a number of theatre for development and theatre for education projects. I believe these performances were successful because the directors and facilitators identified elements and issues in their local communities that Ibsen's dramas could address. The dramatic styles employed also made it possible to use a non-African text on African stages. In the case of Ghana, Ibsen can work through storytelling drama because of some of the distinctive features imbedded in his drama. Storytelling is a popular and recognized performance form in most Ghanaian communities because of the moral lessons and didactics that this genre can carry. The social critiques in Ibsen dramas with regards to a number of negative societal practices, in particular gender inequality and environmental degradation, make them suitable dramas for adaptation into the storytelling form. In storytelling, the attention of the both the storyteller and audience is centered on the message the story carries; less attention is placed on visual representations of the culture through costume, props and the setting. The task of the storyteller is to develop the story and to identify the themes in Ibsen dramas that will provoke social debate among audience.

Ghana's famous storytelling character the "spider" has a lot of similarities with Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. The spider, known as 'Ananse' among the Akans 'Annanuu', among the Gas and 'Ayiyi' among the Ewes, is a universal character that appears in almost every Ghanaian story. *Anansesem*, the name given to storytelling among the Akans, can be literally translated as spider stories. Ananse, or the Spider, is cunning, wise, all-knowing, and notorious. He is a wanderer, who has traveled through all ages and all lands among Ghanaian communities. The character of Ananse is very similar to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* who travels the world as a boastful dreamer searching for himself only to discover nothing. The structure of *Peer Gynt*, with regard to the series of events and the self-narration by *Peer Gynt* creates similarities with Ghanaian stories. The plot of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* (1867) is structured in such a way that *Peer* is faced with various challenges in each act but comes out victorious due to his cunning nature.

In Act one, he is opposed by the wedding guest but manages to run off with the bride. He is able to deceive the troll king over his daughter and overcome the Boyg in Act two. In Act three to five, he survives as a traveler posing as prophet, a business man, a slave master, an emperor of a mad house and finally manages to return home to solveig.

The epic structure of *Peer Gynt* has similarities to the Ghanaian Ananse story form because the central character's life is portrayed through a series of unrelated scenes in which he overcomes a series of obstacles. Just as the Ghanaian Ananse acts as the storyteller and also plays roles in a number of complex scenarios, so Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* enacts some events and narrates others. The relationship between *Peer Gynt* and Ananse can be clearly understood by comparing the role of Ananse in *Marriage of Anansewaa* (1975), by Efua T. Sutherland to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. I believe if *Peer Gynt*, with all its Norwegian mythic elements, has parallels to the Ghanaian stories, adapting Ibsen social dramas into this storytelling form is possible. The idea of reaching out to indigenous audiences and story lovers in Ghana with Ibsen dramas is nothing new. As recorded in Chapter four, Sandy Akhurst recalls that a fellow student worked on an adaptation of *Peer Gynt* in 1967. There is also a storytelling project which begun in July 2012 that involves an adaptation of Ibsen dramas by Elias Asiamah, and the Akrofo Human and Environmental/ Ecological Development Resource Centre. Below is an overview of Asiamah's project which hopefully will give readers an insight into how I hope to promote Ibsen through storytelling.

#### **5.4.4 Ibsen and Storytelling As a Cultural Heritage Project in Buem of Ghana.**

In the project titled "Ibsen and Re-Possession of Tradition: Storytelling As a Cultural Heritage Project in Buem of Ghana", Asiamah with the help of his students, is developing Ibsen's ideologies and issues presented in dramas like *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House*, and *Peer Gynt* to discuss problems facing the Buem Guan people of the Volta Ghana through storytelling. Responding to interview questions on introduction of Ibsen to his students and factors motivating the storytelling project he said:

Having had training with both foreign and African dramas, as a lecturer I would like to use books like Oscar Brockett, Stanislavski, Shakespeare, Ibsen, because in the bid of trying to be very nationalistic we may lose touch with international and global perspective, so there should be a balance and that is why I introduced Ibsen in my Dramatic theory and Criticisms class. From what I have learnt about Ibsen myself in my undergraduate and graduate levels and the pertaining issues that we have today that

Ibsen's materials and works could address and help us to understand better or reflect effectively, that is why I chose him and his works"<sup>41</sup>.

"The question of sanitation, and environmental and human life conservation, equal justice and right were part of the reason why I came to the School of Performing Arts. In the area where I come from which is the Buem Guan area in the Jasikan municipality in Ghana, women are not allowed to inherit any property from their parents. Looking at this issue and the rate at which our forest is being depleted and the poor sanitation issues, I decided to adapt Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People, A Doll's House* and fuse the ideas into our traditional storytelling to educate people about this situation. From my research on the Buem Guan area, I came across a mythology called the Ohinto Myth, which was propagating and projecting the need for gender equality, protection and conservation of ecological resources and environment and the Buem taboo that forbids people to defecate in water bodies. The project therefore seeks to use the educative and informative power of theatre and storytelling to communicate, inform and educate the Buem Guan people of Volta Ghana using an adaption of Ibsen drama fused with Ohinto Myths".<sup>42</sup>

#### **5.4.5 Ohinto Myth and Buem**

Buem is located in the Jasikan district, which is located in the northern sector of Volta Region in Ghana. 'The district has a total land area of 1.244.75 square kilometers, representing about 6.8% of fifteen districts in the Volta Region (18.093.27sq km.). Jasikan the district capital, lies 260 kilometers North-East of Accra, the national Capital. It is strategically located as it provides a good linkage between south-Eastern parts of the country to the Northern Region. The district is bordered on the east by the Republic of Togo, the North by Kadjebi District and the south by Hohoe District'.<sup>43</sup> Jasikan is topographically hilly and undulating, becoming almost flat in certain areas. It is surrounded by mountain ranges; typically are the Buem-Togo Ranges which is an extension of the Akwapim Ranges. It is composed of towns like Buem, Baglo, Nkonya, Ntumda, Okadjakrom, Ayoma, Teteman and Worawora. People in the district are multi-ethnic with Nkonya, Buem, and Bowiri in the majority. The main occupation is fishing and farming. Ohinto myths in Buem are myths and stories ascribed to "Ohinto". Ohinto in Buem is mythological figure or god that is believed among Buem citizens to be very powerful. According to oral history, Ohinto as a god blesses and protects his people from their enemies. He also punishes them if they wrong him. As a god, Ohinto has a set of rules, laws and taboos to guide the conduct of his people. These laws

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<sup>41</sup>Interview with Elias Asiamah on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2012, at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana Legon.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Elias Asiamah on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012, University of Ghana Legon.

<sup>43</sup> See [http://jasikan.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/?arrow=atd&\\_id=119](http://jasikan.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/?arrow=atd&_id=119)



and taboos are strengthened with the myths and folktales of Ohinto to caution people. For example there is a Buem taboo which forbids citizens from polluting water bodies and this taboo is strengthened with an Ohinto myth that teach citizens the implications of their actions if they should break the taboo and pollute water bodies.

#### **5.4.6 Objectives of the project**

- To retrieve and document indigenous Buem stories: The people of Buem in Volta Ghana are noted for several indigenous stories, myths and games. The project therefore seeks to research into Buem history to retrieve and document these stories for future use.
- To educate the Buem community on the significance of environmental protection and sanitation issues: The issue of sanitation and environmental protection is of major concern in every part of Ghana. All attempts being made by the environmental protection agency and Zoom Lion Ghana to rid Ghana of filth have proved futile due to bad attitudes of citizens towards sanitation and environmental protection. The project hopes to use indigenous Buem stories and myths to teach citizens on sanitation and help change their attitudes towards sanitation.
- To critically re-examine storytelling using Ibsen literary works for education on the environment: Through focus group discussions of students and other participants, ideas from *An Enemy of the People*, *A Doll's House* and some traditional Buem stories will be merged to educate Buem communities.
- To consciously create artistic and cultural heritage materials (products) from the retrieved materials for posterity: If sustained the project hopes to present these stories to different Ghanaian communities regularly and also store retrieved stories, myths and legends in digital form for posterity.

Focused on all interested individuals in the retrieval of indigenous stories, particularly Buem stories in comparison to Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*, Asiamah believes, "theatre is a discipline that allows experimentation, improvisation, creativity, all of which equally promote learning, concentration, flexibility and development. Theatre for Development therefore occurs when theatre is used to educate, inform, to challenge the status quo, break stereotypes, attitudes and thinking of people"( Asiamah, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012 interview). His conviction that Ibsen dramas can be adapted to provoke social debate in order

to cause change in the Buem Guan area of the Volta Region in Ghana through storytelling creates the passion to re-work *An Enemy of the People* for a larger group of audience in Ghana. Although creative writing is not considered as research, I believe the idea of promoting Ibsen through storytelling to indigenous audiences will make more meaning if non-Ghanaian readers of this research are exposed to Ghanaian storytelling with an Ibsen drama developed into an Ananse story.

#### ***5.4.7 Ananse Story with an Ibsen Theme***

This is a short Ghanaian Ananse story I developed from the themes of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. Like most Ananse stories, "Ananse" (the spider) is the main trickster character and the title gives the audience an indication of the story and Ananse's actions. The story is developed for the Akan audience but can be applied to other Ghanaian ethnic groups by translating the names into the language of the intended audience. Animal characters are personified to make the story suitable for both young and old. The locations in the story are fictional with names suggesting issues in the story. For example the name of the village "Biakoye" in Akan can be literally translated into English as "unity is good".

The story can be performed by one narrator enacting events or through the engagement of the audience to enact the events. When the performance involves more than one actor, the leading member of the group acts as a storyteller and introduces the audience to the story while the other characters enact events through improvisation. There is no written text or script for the performers. All that is required is the outlining of the main story line by the storyteller and improvisation by the other actors. For educational purposes, the storyteller is usually an elderly person or someone of high social standing. Occasionally costume and a few props are used to enhance the meaning for the audience.

The audience plays a significant role in storytelling. The presence of a larger audience for this story will make the meaning stronger because the audience will act as both performers and observers. With the use of rhetorical questions the storyteller and actors will engage the audience in the performance. Scenes that require the presence of an entire community or mob will involve the participation of the audience. The audience sits in a circular or horse-shoe formation with the storyteller in the middle. The story begins with a call and response to focus the attention of the audience.

A lot of songs are used during the performance with the songs reflecting on the issues raised in the story. Sometimes the narrator introduces songs and the audience is invited to join in. At other times during the performance, one person from the audience will raise up the hand and say that day “I was there”, and the person will sing a song that reflects on what the narrator has just said:

**Story teller:** *Anansesemsisi o (Ananse stories truly occur)*

**Audience:** *Semsisioo (They truly occur)*

### **Why Ananse Walks on Walls**

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a spider named Ananse in a small village called Biakoye. Ananse was a very intelligent traditional doctor. As a result of his knowledge in plant medicine and hygiene everybody from the village consulted him for health advice and treatment. Biakoye had a lake, which served as a source of water for the villagers. Water from the lake was used for cooking, washing, and watering of farms. People from nearby villages also visited Biakoye to fetch water from the lake. One day, Ananse discovered that the lake was being polluted by the people washing, defecating and bathing in it. He therefore told his cousin, the Monkey, who also happened to be the linguist, to inform Lion the king about the situation and its effect on the health of the villagers and advise them to stop drinking water from the lake and look for alternate sources of drinking water. But the Monkey refused saying Ananse was delusional and that their fathers and forefathers drank from the lake and nothing happened to them. Ananse informed the king and his elders about the situation, suggesting that the villagers should travel to nearby villages for water and a borehole be dug to serve the needs of the village.

Ananse’s suggestion was refused by the king and his elders because his cousin, the Monkey, had already convinced the king that Ananse was delusional and was deceiving the entire village for a reward from the king. Ananse held a town meeting to explain the situation of the lake to the entire community. In his message he condemns the king, elders, linguist and the entire foundation of the village and the idea that the majority is always right. Incited by the Monkey, the villagers found Ananse’s speech unpleasant and destroyed his cottage and tried to lynch him the next morning. Ananse managed to escape from the angry villagers and jumped onto his neighbour’s wall. Ananse was then advised by his friends to descend from the wall and flee the village but he refused all the suggestions and decided to ignore the leaders and stay in the Biakoye village living on peoples walls. He decided to go house to house by crawling on walls and spreading information through his web on the dangers of

water pollution and encouraging himself with the words; “the strongest man in the world is the man who stands most alone and a minority may be right but a majority is always wrong”. A few months after Ananse was attacked by the raging villages. There was cholera outbreak in Biakoye. Death begun to take away prominent people in the village; the queen mother and her two sons, three elders, and the aged in almost every home. The king and his elders decided to invite Rabbit the chief priest to call on their ancestors and the gods of Biakoye to find out what was wrong. After the chief priest had performed all the rituals he received a message from the river god, Nana Nsuo, that she is the cause of Biakoye’s predicament. The chief priest confirmed to the king and villagers that Ananse was and has always been right that the lake was polluted. The king organized a durbar to honour and apologize to Ananse on behalf of the village. Ananse addressed the villagers at the durbar on how to keep water bodies clean and cautioned them to listen to the minority sometimes because the majority is always wrong.

## **5.5 Ibsen through Concert Party Popular Theatre**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

In this section, I will introduce readers to Ghana’s concert popular theatre. Unlike the storytelling approach to Ibsen performance in Ghana that has been used by Elias Asiamah, the concert party approach has not been used in any experimental adaptations of Ibsen. This part is therefore planned to give readers a historical overview of Ghana’s concert party popular theatre, its structure, techniques and the training of concert party actors. I believe that the National Theatre Movement was in the best possible place to integrate adaptations of Ibsen with the concert party form, but it failed to do so because of its inability to utilize local theatre forms. It is for this reason, that I am presenting this hypothetical experiment as the concluding element in this thesis.

### **5.5.2 Background Information**

Adapting Ibsen for Ghanaian audience could be more effective if presented through an intercultural theatre form. Referring to Holledge and Tompkins on *interculturalism*, the concert party theatre as a form is a meeting between two or more cultures, styles, elements or techniques. It was developed during the colonial era as a result of combining elements from the western culture and indigenous Ghanaian culture. Developing Ibsen dramas for concert

party theatre has the potential to promote his dramas beyond Ghana to other West African countries because the importance of this theatre tradition is respected in most Western African countries. The concert party theatre is the most notable form of professional theatre in Ghana. The unique nature of the theatre enabled it to survive throughout the years of political instability, military take-over and curfews. Between the period of 1998 and 2006, when all other forms of theatre were lost from the stages, a section of concert party groups still performed at the National Theatre. Concert party theatre's dramatization of serious events in a comic manner to induce laughter will help to convey the serious issues contained in Ibsen dramas to the Ghanaian public. The theatre is versatile involving dancing, highlife, pop and rock music, stories, western and local elements all of which can be used in the adaption of Ibsen texts for the audience.

### ***5.5.3 Short Historical Overview of Ghana's Concert Party Theatre***

Ghanaian concert party theatre is a form of popular theatre tradition that emerged in Ghana and West Africa in the twentieth century. Concert party theatre is characterized by the dramatization of short laughter inducing plays performed by concert party groups. Performers selected materials from Ghanaian Ananse stories, Asafo and highlife songs, American movies, Latin gramophone records, western music and dances. The concert party theatre was the first form of professional theatre in Ghana. It was a very lucrative form of entertainment and supported many full time and part time performers. The history of concert party in Ghana can be traced back to concerts given by Teacher Yalley in Sekondi (a seaport town in the Western Region). Yalley was the headmaster of Sekondi Elementary School; he began to act in his school's "Empire Day" concerts in 1918.<sup>44</sup> Yalley wore fancy dresses, wigs, false moustaches, and white minstrel makeup to dramatize events interwoven with jokes, singing and dancing. The performances were in English with very expensive tickets attracting mostly elite audiences. Concert party in Ghana originated in the colonial period and developed through independence to the present day. Different concert party groups were formed over time, with performances undergoing constant changes. The most significant change was the introduction of local languages and Ghanaian highlife music to the performances. The local language made performances appealing to indigenous audiences expanding the audience base. Audiences from the 1900 to 1930 were generally coastal Africans with some degree of

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<sup>44</sup>Bame Kwabena, *Come to Laugh African Traditional Theatre in Ghana*, 1985, Page 8.

formal western-style education, but after 1930, the performances became increasingly accessible to the working classes and rural populations, with affordable ticket prices, and convenient venues such as open-air cinema halls, community centers, and large family compounds.<sup>45</sup>

By 1950, concert party was known all over the country and the larger groups were replaced with small trios and groups. Popular groups include Kakaiku's Concert Party, Akan Trio, Royal Trio, Abuakwa Trio, Happy Stars Band, Armahs Band, Bob Coles Ghana Trio, Fanti Trio, Jaguar Jokers and Kwaa Mensah's Band. Many concert party groups moved across the country and even performed in neighboring countries like Ivory Coast, Liberia, Togo and Nigeria. Concert party groups became very successful in the 1950's because they were the most notable entertainment groups in the country. The groups formed the Ghana National Entertainment Association in 1960. The association which aimed at encouraging Ghanaian musicians and actors to improve their arts offered groups some security and strength and also allowed each group to share experiences with others. The association somehow became defunct in the late 1966 but was revived again in 1978 promulgating a new constitution that established the Musicians Union of Ghana (MUSIGA) of which all concert party groups were registered members. Concert party groups were affected by both economic and political changes in the country. Touring groups sometimes delayed their travel due to lack of gasoline and even when the gasoline was available at the beginning of their tour, they may have encountered difficulties in obtaining it at later stops en route.

Increased cost in productions due to high cost of advertising, rent for venues, costumes and other production materials pushed groups to increase the cost of ticket resulting in low patronage of performances. Concert party performances usually start in the evening around 8:00pm and run till dawn. The political instability in Ghana after independence which was characterized by the coup d'états that imposed curfews in the evenings made it impossible for audiences to go out for concert party performances. The curfew and ban on night movement was strongly enforced by the PNDC government to the extent that disobedient citizens were imprisoned. For fear for their lives, Ghanaian audiences lost interest in theatre performances and night life in general. By 1992 when the military government handed power to a civilian

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<sup>45</sup> Cole Catherine, Ghana Concert Party Theatre, 2001, Page 1.

government, Ghanaian audiences have already given up on theatre resulting in the low patronage of theatre in Ghana till today.

#### ***5.5.4 Structure of Ghana's Concert Party Theatre***

Concert party groups were very adaptive and could perform on any stage. They had no elaborate stage setting and used little props. Performances were held in courtyards of village compounds, art centers, community centers, open air cinemas and theatres on stages constructed with wooden boards or raised cement platforms in the center of houses. The nature of the stages did not allow the use of curtains and large props. Changing rooms were usually improvised, with no sophisticated lighting. All the lights needed were a few electric bulbs, hurricane or kerosene lamps to light the stage. The performance is structured in four main parts. The first part of the performance consists of high life music to get the audiences settled and engage the music lovers. The second part is called the “comedies” which function as an audience warm-up; these are performed by two or three performers dressed in tight colored pants and shirts with their faces painted. They perform a series of short displays with singing and complicated dances, and extremely funny gestures to provoke laughter from the audience. Sometimes funny playlets are performed in the second part. The third part of the show is where the main play of the evening is performed. At this stage, the comedians of the night come out to demonstrate their talents to the audience as actors, dancers, and singers. They perform a full play incorporated with singing and dancing. To be a performer in the main play, one has to be very good at improvisation because it does not rely on written scripts. Thematic sources for the main play range from morals, to daily social problems relevant to the audience. The performance ends with the fourth part composed of musicals. The musicians go through their repertoire of highlife music to keep the audience dancing. They perform both old and new songs to appeal to all tastes within the audience.

#### ***5.5.5 Techniques, Talent and Training***

Comedians in the concert parties were all men until the later parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was considered immoral for a lady to perform on stage. Younger male impersonators played female roles. The use of male impersonators was also to create humor and evoke laughter among audiences particularly when muscular and heavily built men were given ironic names that described their appearance performing female roles. The appearance of all the actors was

reflected in their casting. Young men with fresh cheeks play the role of young ladies or women, elderly comedians take up the role of old men and women, handsome and heavily built men often play as business men, elites and chiefs, while skinny and tiny comedians take up the role of “Bob”<sup>46</sup> (joker) or house boy. Concert party performers are professionals who view it as a vocation and are prepared to work and devote all their time and energy to it. They join groups as creative people with talents, techniques and skills as dancers, actors, singers, guitarists, drummers, and impersonators. The comedians do not receive any formal training in acting though some learning is acquired through apprenticeship. A person is either born with the talent or learns to become a comedian by observing other comedians and trying out his skills.

Rehearsal is vital for the success of every concert party group. It is required for many concert party groups to rehearse in the presence of other members of the band, who in turn act as critical audience. They watch and direct performers, pointing out unsatisfactory parts with suggestions. The opinions of this critical audience is respected by the comedians because all members of the group are artists and their creative energies are collectively employed to produce the performance. The idea of the play could be from one person but it becomes a shared idea and realized through an intensely collaborative form of rehearsal. Opportunity for learning to be a concert party comedian arises during rehearsals because other members of the band may be invited to come on stage and demonstrate their ideas. Successful comedians are identified by senior members of the band during tryouts based on histrionic abilities, temperament, singing, dancing techniques and simulating of behavior of characters represented in a convincing manner. The nature of the training endows performers with several skills. A dancer in a concert party group can perform as a singer, a drummer or a comedian. Concert party groups and bands started recruiting formally trained comedians whenever they could afford to expand their membership in the 1960’s when the National Theatre Movement was established. By 1980, many Concert party bands have recruited women from The National Theatre Movement into their bands.

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<sup>46</sup> “Bob” is the joker in the performance, named after Bob Johnson who played a significant role in the development of Ghanaian concert party.





Image 1:2 Bishop Bob Okala of Ghana Concert Party (Credit: Vibe Ghana) <sup>47</sup>

### ***5.5.6 The National Theatre Movement***

The years preceding Ghana's independence were characterized by the formation of various movements aimed at promoting indigenous Ghanaian tradition, art and culture. A ten-man Government Committee of the Ministry of Education was tasked to survey how a national theatre movement could be developed in 1955. Recommendations from the committee saw the establishment of an interim committee for the Arts Council that was to implement a practical policy for a national theatre movement. This resulted in a national cultural policy document to develop theatre in Ghana. Its aim was "to bring into existence a theatre that will derive its vitality and authenticity from roots firmly planted in the true traditions of the people".<sup>48</sup> The National theatre movement worked to modify indigenous Ghanaian traditions to suit the modern theatre. Leaders of the movement created more theatre institutions for artist to operate within their set goals and ideals. For effective coordination artist, writers, and

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<sup>47</sup>See <http://vibeghana.com/2013/03/28/protect-ghanas-concert-party-prof-collins/>

<sup>48</sup>Agovi Kofi Ermeleh, *The Origin of Literary Theatre In Colonial Ghana, 1920-1957*, 1990, Page 3.

performers were organized in groups. During this period, Ghanaian culture was considered of major social importance.

The period between 1957 and 1960 was characterized by nationalistic ideals and the policies pioneered by Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP. In pursuit of the CPP government's ideals, the National Theatre Movement tried to promote indigenous Ghanaian theatre. According to Agovi; while there was a clear obsession with a healthy vision of theatre development, there were no corresponding concerns "to develop effective strategies to neutralize the atrophies of the colonial past in terms of theatre education" (1990, 4). In training students at the School of Music and Dance<sup>49</sup>, the movement resorted to western dramas that were readily available due to the support from the British government. The students had little opportunity to experiment with indigenous forms of performance. I believe the performance of Ibsen and other western plays would have been promoted beyond the academic circles if pioneers and teachers of the National Theatre Movement had focused on ways of performing the western plays to indigenous audiences using Ghanaian performance practices of storytelling and concert party. The Movement barely survived after the overthrow of the CPP government and economic crisis in 1966. The commitment and enthusiasm of members was reduced, causing the movement to produce little or no results.

Although the National Theatre Movement operated actively for a decade, The Movement brought significant development to Ghana's theatre. In 1962, The National Theatre Movement aided in the establishment of the School of Music and Drama at the University of Ghana to promote a school drama programme that would produce professionals for Ghana's theatre industry. It has also developed literary theatre and performance in Ghana by experimenting with indigenous stories and folklore. Under the leadership of Efua T. Sutherland<sup>50</sup>, the National Theatre Movement trained renowned Ghanaian playwrights like Martin Owusu (*The Legend of AkuSika*), Asiedu Yerenkyi (*Kivuli*) and Mohammed Ben Abdallah (*The Fall of Kumbi*).

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<sup>49</sup> The School of Music and Dance was later named the school of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana.

<sup>50</sup> Efua Sutherland is a prominent Ghanaian playwright noted for developing Ghana's folk storytelling tradition to literary drama in her play *The Marriage of Anansewa*.

### **5.5.7 Approach**

Since the idea of adapting Ibsen dramas for concert party theatre is new, I have outlined an approach to performing Ibsen plays in the concert party genre. Concert party groups are travelling bands with multitalented performers who can perform more than one role in the group. Promoting Ibsen through concert party theatre therefore does not require the services of a theatre director, set designer, playwright and other professional theatre practitioners. The groups can perform on almost any form of stage requiring no elaborate stage setting and props. I propose that to perform Ibsen using concert party theatre as a form, one must keep to the four main structures of concert party performances but approach each section with the intended text in mind. Performance of highlife music which is the first step of the concert party structure will help get the audience settled and energize music lovers. In performing highlife music for a concert party theatre intended to promote an Ibsen drama, it would be ideal to prepare the minds of the audience for the intended text. For example if the intended text is *A Doll's House*, songs with themes on marriage, broken homes and children will contribute to the appreciation of the performance. Special songs can also be written for the drama because concert party musicians are great composers who are capable of improvising instantaneously to amuse their audience.

“Comedies” which is the second part, designed to stimulate the appetite of the audience with comic dances, gestures, songs and funny scenarios can be used to foreshadow events in text and provoke laughter as well. To achieve this effect, the comedians can use rhetorical language to ask questions of the audience that are related to scenes from the text and work through a shared humour. The comic display is followed by the main performance (third part), which will feature an adaptation of an Ibsen drama (*A Doll's House*). The main play is usually long and incorporated with music and dance. At this point the full potential of the adapted Ibsen play will be put to use by the comedians of the night demonstrating their skills in improvisation, singing and dancing to entertain and educate the audience. As the thematic sources for the main play range from morals to daily social problems, Ibsen's social dramas are entirely suitable as texts for the main play. Even though these plays are set in Norway, adapting them for a concert party performance would not require an elaborate setting as the theatrical form does not depend on realistic settings. All that is required is a story-line or plot structure on which the comedians can base their improvisations. The comedians are skilled in adapting any text to their own style in order to suit the needs of the targeted audience. The performance finally ends with musicals and dancing that may last throughout the night. The

musicians play both old and new songs from their repertoire of highlife music to keep the audience dancing. At this stage, the musicians can compose a song from final events of the play or final lines of a major character to summarize the performance for their audience.

### ***5.5.8 Synopsis of an adapted Ibsen Play for Concert Party***

I developed this adaption in accordance with the structures and form of concert party performances to give the non-Ghanaian reader an idea of concert party plays. The earliest concert party performances had three main characters, the master or gentleman, his wife, and the bob (comedian) who also acts as the house help. The play was modeled around these three main characters until the 1960s when concert party groups expanded and more characters were added to the performance. The synopsis below is my adaptation of *A Doll's House* for a concert party performance. The play is designed for the three main characters of a concert party group but other characters can be introduced for a larger group.

**Title:** *Marriage Issues*

**Twi Title:** *Aware Mu nsem*

**Characters:** Lawyer Potomanto (Gentleman)

Nana Ama (wife or Madam)

Bob Ziga (House help).

#### **Plot**

Lawyer Potomanto thanks his wife for a good meal. He gives a long speech about how he refused to marry the woman chosen by his parents for him in place of Nana Ama. He then states that a woman's place is the kitchen and the shortest route to a man's heart is through his stomach. Nana Ama Calls Bob Ziga to come and clear the table. Bob walks in singing songs from various ethnic groups in Ghana about the dishes they enjoy. He walks about jumping and dancing and rubbing his stomach before clearing the table. Lawyer Potomanto asks Nana Ama if the money he gave her for housekeeping is still in her purse. She tells him that the money is finished and lunch was very expensive. Lawyer Potomanto complains that Nana Ama spends too much money, she claims that it has all gone on housekeeping. He becomes very angry and walks out on her.

Bob Ziga starts the second scene with songs and comic dancing. He then asks the audience rhetorical questions in a form of stand-up comedy. He asks the audience what will you do if you discover your wife can't cook and clean? What will you do if your husband can't provide food for your family? Or walks like this or like that? In the process of imitating movements

of the men he describes, Nana Ama walks in and he stops immediately. He is sent by Nana Ama to the market to buy some groceries. Nana Ama follows him some few minutes later and returns with a pot of soup and fufu. She starts setting the table for dinner. Bob Ziga walks in and starts whistling. Bob Ziga confronts her and tells her that he saw her at Mama Azonto's Chop Bar buying the food. He tries to blackmail her to increase his salary and give him other benefits or he will reveal her secret to her husband, Lawyer Potomanto. Nana Ama refuses to honour his demands and threatens to expose his habit of picking coins from the master's pocket.

In the final Act, Bob Ziga sings several songs about how difficult it is to lose a job and his plan to blackmail Nana Ama to get back his job. He meets Nana Ama in her home and tries to convince her to plead on his behalf but Nana Ama refuses and tells him she cannot help a thief. Bob Ziga insists and says a woman who has no place in the kitchen is not worthy to be called a wife. Unknown to Bob Ziga and Nana Ama, lawyer Potomanto had just walked in and is standing by the door listening to their conversation. Bob Ziga tells Nana Ama that she is equally guilty of buying cooked food from the market and deceiving her husband that she cooked it. He threatens not only to report her to the husband but also announce to the whole town that she does not know how to cook and walks out. On his way out, they both realize that Lawyer Potomanto has been standing there the whole time. Lawyer Potomanto becomes furious and rains insults on Nana Ama, calling her a thief, a misfit and a lazy woman who does not deserve the love of any man. He tells her that their marriage is over and he will only stay with her in the eyes of society till he finds a second wife. A knock is heard on the door. Bob Ziga returns to apologize for his actions and says that he has found a new job so he will not publically expose them after all. Lawyer Potomanto tries to apologize to Nana Ama with promises of being a better husband and tells her of his decision to hire a cook. Nana Ama rejects him and walks out of the house saying "it's better to stay single than to be in a relationship with a total stranger". Lawyer Potomanto bows his head in shame for a while and start singing sorrowful highlife songs about his long lost lover.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Summary**

The thesis studies the educational use of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian theatre institutions and considers ways in which Ibsen dramas could be promoted to Ghanaian audiences. The first Chapter worked as a prologue to the study outlining the research problems, objectives, theories, significance of the study and a general overview of how the study was organized. The Chapter reported that due to the fact that formal education in Ghana was established by the British government, most resources and models used in the Ghanaian educational systems are modeled on British standards. As a result of this, the formal educational of theatre students is largely dependent on western dramas, this includes the work of Henrik Ibsen. However there is little information available on the ways Ibsen dramas are used within the Ghanaian education system. With a theoretical diagram structured on the developmental stages of theatre in Ghana, opening with pre-colonial theatre, concert party theatre, then to the National Theatre Movement, Chapter one provided readers with an overview to contextualize the research findings on theatre education in Ghana revealed in later chapters. To advance the study, I discussed Toril Moi's claim that Ibsen dramas are obligatory books required reading in introductory courses on modern theatre; it questioned the use of Ibsen dramas in theatre institutions. I later used Helen Gilbert and Joan Tompkins Post-colonial theory to study how Ibsen dramas can be adapted to shake the remnants of colonial thinking as it exists within performance practice.

The second Chapter described the context of study. The Chapter looked at Ghana, politics, education, economy and social life of Ghanaians. It served as backdrop to analyze views and comments of respondents for the examination of the discourses in Ibsen dramas. With a section on gender, religion and culture, the Chapter presented how certain issues are critical in most Ghanaian societies despite cultural diversity among ethnic groups. The essence of communal living, role of the family, and kinship, and the classification of matrilineal and patrilineal groups like the Akans, Gas, and Ewes were discussed in the Chapter. An important aspect of Chapter two was the history of politics in Ghana. In that section, I tried to introduce my claim that theatre performances in Ghana failed to survive after Nkrumah and the CPP due to the political instability and military takeovers that occurred in Ghana after 1966. Chapter two ended with an overview of Ghana's economy. It discussed the agricultural,

mining, public employment and oil sector with my view on how corruption has affected all aspects of the economy.

Chapter three presented an overview of Ghana's educational system. In an attempt to provide a context for analysis of Ibsen's place within Ghanaian curricula, the Chapter previewed readers to pre-colonial education systems of apprenticeship which limited most young men to their father's trade and prepared women for marriage and small jobs like petty trading and pottery. The main part of the Chapter focused on post-colonial / formal education in Ghana. The section traced formal education to the establishment of castle schools by colonial masters, merchants and missionaries. The role of the British government in the development of formal education in Ghana was also discussed in the Chapter. To advance the study to the level of education at which Ibsen dramas are used in Ghana, the Chapter reviewed the history of higher education starting with the Achimota School and concluded with the School of Performing Arts, Ghana.

The central theme of this research was discussed in the fourth Chapter. Divided into three sections, the Chapter opened with a juxtaposition of *A Doll's House* and indigenous Ghanaian gender roles in order to ascertain the relevance of Ibsen dramas to Ghanaian contemporary societies. In the section, I discussed gender performativity theories together with critiques from *A Doll's House* that tied the play to topical issues affecting Ghanaian women attributable to the unequal distribution of gender roles. The family as an agent of socialization in indigenous and contemporary Ghanaian communities was examined. I argued that the process of socialization in the home starts within the family where women are conditioned to a mind-set that makes it natural for men to dominate them. It was also observed that due to strict distinction in the roles, it is difficult for individuals to accept change in the performance of roles. Secondly, the role of religious organizations in educating followers was examined. With a quote from the Holy Bible of Christians which entreats women to submit to their husbands and quotes from the Holy Quran, I criticized teachings of religious groups which put women in a lower standing and therefore empowers men. With a discussion on attitudes of married couples and their families in Ghana, I tried to identify how the performance of gender roles in marriage put women in a lower standing than men. My goal in comparing Nora's character to the performance of unequal gender roles in Ghana was to locate Ibsen's dramatic discourse within contemporary Ghanaian societies. Thus the claim that gender roles ascribed to women by Ghanaian societies can be likened to Nora's situation in *A Doll's*

*House* making the text a reflection of life in Ghanaian communities and that has contributed to the constant use of the text in some Ghanaian universities.

The main part of Chapter four was centred on the pedagogical use of Ibsen dramas in the University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast. The section opened with a short historical overview of Ibsen's introduction to the academic syllabus of University of Ghana and traced the history of tuition of his plays within the school. Various courses were examined and the research findings with interviews from course instructors and students were considered. Courses like Modern European Drama, Dramatic Theory and Criticism and African Theories of Drama were discussed in details to identify factors accounting for the constant use of *A Doll's House* at the University of Ghana. A similar approach was used to review courses like Play Analysis and Interpretation and Modern Drama at the University of Cape Coast. Chapter four studied the performance history of Ibsen dramas in the two universities. The performance history indicated that Ibsen's *A Doll's House* has been performed once at the University of Ghana and never performed at the University of Cape Coast even though excerpts of Ibsen dramas are used in teaching students Introduction to Acting. Observing that Ibsen has a poor performance history in the two major universities, the Chapter concluded with an outline of possible reasons for non-performance of Ibsen dramas in these academic theatres.

Chapter five built on the reasons accounting for non-performance of Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian theatres and the observations from preceding Chapters. It focussed on possible approaches to the future promotion of Ibsen in Ghana. The core argument for the Chapter was that Ibsen dramas need to be promoted beyond the academic institutions in Ghana if future adaptations are going to respond to the needs of indigenous audiences. The Chapter started with an analysis of *Nneora: an African Doll's House*, a free Nigerian adaption of Ibsen's *Dolls House*. I examined similarities and differences between the text and Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in order to present readers with the features that make *Nneora: an African Doll's House* suitable for African stages. An essential aspect of the analysis was my attempt to locate Utoh-Ezeajugh's dramatic discourse and changes in the plot within contemporary Ghanaian societies. The second and third parts of Chapter five were focused on my interest in promoting Ibsen to Ghanaian audiences using the indigenous Ghanaian performance practices of storytelling and concert party popular theatre. With an overview of Ghana's concert party theatre and storytelling traditions, readers were introduced to performance practices that



existed in Ghana before colonization. The section looked at an Ibsen project in Ghana which employed the storytelling genre to give readers an overview of how I intend to present Ibsen to indigenous Ghanaian story lovers. I finally presented my own version of *An Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House* developed for indigenous Ghanaian performance forms of storytelling and concert party theatre. The intent of the adaptations was to propose ways in which Ibsen's works could be adapted for indigenous Ghanaian audiences to shake out the remnants of colonial performance practices, and most importantly, provoke social debate among audiences through the discourses imbedded in Ibsen dramas.

## 6.2 Summary of Findings

The relevance of Ibsen dramas to Ghana and the world at large is illustrated in the constant use of the 19<sup>th</sup> century text *A Doll's House* in an academic syllabus developed to train theatre professionals in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ghana. Although the focus of this study was on the pedagogical use of Ibsen dramas in Ghana, interviews conducted and reviews of relevant materials pertaining to Ibsen and Ghana's theatre industry led to important discoveries. From the research it was discovered that Ibsen dramas were introduced in Ghana in the 1960's by teachers of the National Theatre Movement in their efforts to experiment with available western dramas. The dramas survived in the syllabus due to conscious efforts made by Joseph Coleman de Graft, the first director of the School of Performing Arts. Analyzing courses in which Ibsen dramas are used in the University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast with a careful study of interviews affirms that the discourse in Ibsen dramas presents problems of contemporary societies and it is the discourse that earned Ibsen a place in Ghana's 21<sup>st</sup> century academic syllabus.

Despite the availability of Ibsen scholarships and academic resources on the internet,<sup>51</sup> Ghanaian theatre professionals and students lack resources for further studies in Ibsen dramas resulting in constant use of scrappy copies of *A Doll's House*, and *An Enemy of the People* compiled in anthologies. Directing students with the desire to stage Ibsen dramas are faced with a similar problem. Ghana as a post-colonial country has experienced a lot of changes over the years but the remnants of colonial thinking are still present in theatre performance and practice and this has made it possible for course instructors to use western plays to train students. Ghana's political history is marked with military take-overs, confusions,

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<sup>51</sup> See [www.ibsen.net](http://www.ibsen.net)

polarization, and abuse of power that affected the theatre industry causing low patronage of audiences in theatre performances. As a result of this, 90% of theatre performances in Ghana are student productions with little or no funding making it difficult for theatre directors to perform Ibsen dramas with elaborate stage setting, costume and make-up.

### **6.3 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Research into Ibsen in West Africa is still an under developed academic area. Building on the thesis by Sefakor Afi Anku on *Contemporary Ghanaian Perceptions of a Doll's House* and a research paper on *Nneora: an African Dolls House* by Awo Mana Asiedu published in *Global Ibsen*, this research focused on Ibsen education in Ghana. The basic question of the thesis has been: How did the dramatic texts of Henrik Ibsen, which are not present in Ghana's colonial culture, become incorporated into Ghana's theatre educational system? To address this question, I have presented a detailed view of how Ibsen has and is being taught within the Ghanaian educational system, reviewed the colonial roots of the education and interviewed the key educators responsible for teaching Ibsen to find out why they include the writer in the syllabus. I have also interviewed students to get a sense of their responses to the texts. In the research process, I discovered that *An Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House* are the main texts taught. I therefore studied these texts and found out that the following properties within them are highlighted in teaching:

- The role of Ibsen as the father of modern theatre.
- The relevance of his dramatic discourse to contemporary societies.
- The performance techniques that are taught to young Ghanaian actors.
- Elaborate details and descriptions embedded in his text.

Studying Ibsen performance history in Ghana revealed that Ibsen does not move outside the academic institutions. As a byproduct of the data on Ibsen performance and non-performance in Ghana, I have examined how Ibsen might have relevance within performance and theatre, not just in education and proposed a few methods. One approach might be from Nigeria where *A Doll's House* has been adapted into a Nigerian theatre form with indigenous Nigerian cultural and social elements. When this text (*Nneora: an African Doll's House*) is taught to students it certainly seems to work in the classroom but I think that if Ibsen is to work in performance in Ghana, it should be adapted to storytelling and the concert party form and I have given examples of how this might be approached.

Finally, writing this thesis has led me to conclude that Ibsen can have a more important role in the Ghanaian educational system and in the theatre if the texts are adapted, not just to reflect the social life in Ghana, but also if they are expressed in indigenous performance forms. There is no doubt in my mind that plays like *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People* contain dramatized issues that are relevant to contemporary Ghanaian society but their expression must also suit the tastes, experiences, and expectations of local audiences. When I return to Ghana, it is my intention to develop curricula on Ibsen that pushes this approach to theatrical adaptation which I believe will take the discussions about Ibsen out of the classroom and turn them into a creative approach for performances in the community. In the light of this aim, I conclude this thesis with the following recommendations:

- To effectively promote Ibsen dramas in Ghanaian universities, it is important for text and other study resources to be available. In the case of William Shakespeare, the British government made sure works of Shakespeare were readily available in all the educational institutions. Therefore the Norwegian government, Embassy and other Ibsen scholarship organizations should make efforts to furnish libraries and universities with Ibsen resources.
- Since funding is a major problem for theatre directing students causing them to shy away from performances with huge budgets, the involvement of Ghanaian companies, Norwegian embassy, and other stakeholders in sponsoring theatre productions in the schools will help increase interest of students in Ibsen plays.
- Theatre directors and producers should carefully consider the needs of audiences when putting up an Ibsen play. In as much as the discourse in the dramas can be used to provoke social debates, events in the play could also seem unfamiliar to the audience experiences if the drama does not reflect the social life of the audience and this will result in audience dislike of Ibsen dramas.
- Finally the process of adaption can be used by theatre practitioners through indigenous performance practices of storytelling and concert party theatre as proposed in Chapter five. With this approach the audience will be presented with an Ibsen discourse but through a medium which is already known to them. Adapting Ibsen into Ananse stories and concert party scenarios will also reduce the cost of production.

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